

West River Foundation (SD) proposes to implement and enhance systemic and effective family engagement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvement in student development and academic achievement. The applicant plans to emphasize evidence-based practices and resources that impact disadvantaged/underserved students and families, which includes economically disadvantaged learners, English learners, minorities, students with disabilities, homeless children and youth, children and youth in foster care, military- or veteran-connected students, and migrant students. Students include those in early learning environments (B-5), K-12, and adult learners. Project goals are (1) to implement parent education, family engagement and leadership programs and (2) to provide long-term, systemic training and technical assistance to South Dakota educational agencies, schools, and community-based organizations (CBOs). Objectives include providing resources to families and educators to increase their skills to help all students reach their full academic and developmental growth; supporting families and schools as learners adjust to ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; increasing family skills to support transitions into, throughout, and out of PreK-12 environments; implementing collaborative opportunities for families to work with educators to ensure family voice and family engagement strategies; disseminating effective family-friendly resources that help families, CBOs, and educators understand and address ESEA policies; coordinating efforts with other federal, state, and local programs; and maintaining an effective Advisory Committee. Key activities include the Family Voice project; Courage to Lead for Families; Family Friendly Walk-Throughs; online courses and face-to-face trainings for families, CBOs, and educators on trauma-informed practices, social emotional learning; family voice and family engagement; and Advisory Committee meetings which include families, CBOs, educators, and students. The SD SFEC will provide cradle-to-career support for students, educators, parents, families, and community-based organizations in all 149 public school districts (136,468 students) as well as Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and private/Tribal school districts. Using learnings and best practices from the first SFEC grant cycle, the project team will serve 50,000 participants.