Mandatory Identification and Recruitment of Migrant Students

As part of the New Jersey Department of Education’s (NJDOE) obligation to identify all eligible migrant students living in New Jersey, local school districts must work with their regional Migrant Education Program to properly report all eligible migrant children.

Sections 1304(c)(7) and 1309(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), require the NJDOE to identify and recruit every eligible migrant student residing in New Jersey for the Migrant Education Program (MEP). Recruitment for the MEP will also extend to out-of-school youth, defined as youth up through age 21 not currently enrolled in a K-12 institution and who may have dropped out of school, are working on a general equivalency diploma (GED)/high school equivalency diploma outside of a K-12 institution, or are “here-to-work” only.

Key steps/actions

Accurate identification of New Jersey’s migrant students is critical. Section 1304(b)(3) of ESSA requires state education agencies to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of the MEP by providing educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records (including health information) when children move from one school to another, regardless of whether the move occurs during the regular school year. Thus, all school districts must work cooperatively with their regional MEPs, either the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission or the Gloucester County Special Services School District, to ensure all eligible migrant children are properly reported in the NJDOE’s NJ SMART database and identified as “migrant” for the purposes the statewide standardized testing, and federal reporting requirements.

As with previous years, each regional MEP will provide districts within its respective geographical service area with lists of migrant students identified through region-wide recruitment efforts. Districts must code those students as “migrant” in the NJ SMART database and identify those students as “migrant” for the purposes the statewide standardized testing. Conversely, because MEP eligibility is based upon specifically defined criteria, districts must remove the “migrant” designation from students who have been identified by the regional MEP as having reached the end of MEP eligibility.

Background

The Essex Regional Educational Services Commission and Gloucester County Special Services School District, which receive federal funding via a discretionary grant process developed by the NJDOE, are responsible for assisting all non-migrant funded districts with the identification and recruitment (ID&R) of their migrant children. For ID&R to be effective, it must occur throughout the entire year, not just the school year. It must also be collaborative, relying upon the school district, local community and local employers to be included in the efforts to identify and recruit all migrant children and their families living within district boundaries.
In addition to the aforementioned ID&R activities, regional MEPs are also responsible for determining individual academic and support needs of each migrant student and out-of-school youth, identifying available resources and making referrals to address students’ needs (e.g., tutoring, GED/high school equivalency diploma, etc.), coordinating support services with districts, county, local and other entities. The regional MEP must also follow up, monitor, and document the progress of each identified migrant student/out-of-school youth.

With all stakeholders working together, New Jersey will attain the goal of ensuring that all migrant students/out-of-school youth have access to appropriate services so they may successfully attend school and be prepared for transition to postsecondary education, further learning opportunities, and/or productive employment.

Contact information
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