Mandatory Identification and Recruitment of Migrant Students

Accurate identification and recruitment of eligible migrant children, including securing pertinent information to document the basis of a child’s eligibility, are cornerstones of the Migrant Education Program (MEP). Both processes are critical for the provision and implementation of educational programs that meet the unique needs of these students and their families, because:

- The children who are most in need of program services are often those who are the most difficult to find;
- Many migrant children would not fully benefit from school, and in some cases, would not attend school at all, if they were not identified and recruited into the MEP. This is particularly true of the most mobile migratory children, who may be more difficult to identify than those who have settled in a community; and
- Children cannot receive MEP services without a record of eligibility.

Key Steps/Actions
In order to meet the requirements of ESEA Section 1304, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is required 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. To assist in this process, school districts must work cooperatively with their regional Migrant Education Program (i.e., Essex Regional Educational Services Commission or Gloucester County Special Services School District) to:

- Properly report all eligible migrant children in the NJDOE’s NJ SMART database; and
- Accurately identify as “migrant” all eligible migrant children for the purposes of statewide standardized testing and federal reporting requirements.

By September 2019, each regional MEP will provide districts within its respective geographical service area with lists of migrant students identified through region-wide recruitment efforts.

*Please Note:* MEP eligibility is based upon specifically defined criteria; therefore, 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
As recipients of federal funding, the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission and Gloucester County Special Services School District 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 school year, not just at the beginning of the school year. It also must 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.
Regional MEPs also are 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.), and coordinating support services with districts, county, local, and other entities. Finally, the regional MEPs must follow up, monitor, and document the progress of each identified migrant student and/or out-of-school youth.

With all stakeholders working together, New Jersey will attain the goal of ensuring all migrant students and 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
For questions related to the Migrant Education Program (MEP), email migrated@doe.nj.gov.

c:  Members, State Board of Education
    Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
    NJDOE Staff
    Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
    Garden State Coalition of Schools
    NJ LEE Group