

Study of the Implementation of the *ESEA* Title I — Part C Migrant Education Program

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Executive Summary

The children of migratory agricultural workers and fishers are extremely disadvantaged and more likely than their nonmigratory peers to live in poverty and experience disconnected educational experiences that can hinder their educational progress and success (Berger 2014; Quandt et al. 2016; U.S. Department of Labor 2017; Wiltz 2016). Congress established the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966 through an amendment to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*. The goal of the program under *ESEA*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)*, is to help meet the unique educational needs of migratory children.^{1 2} In particular, the MEP seeks to mitigate challenges associated with mobility that may impede students' academic success, such as differences in curricular or academic requirements as students move between and among states.

In fiscal year (FY) 2018, Congress appropriated \$374.8 million for the MEP,³ with each state's award based on its migratory child count, the number of migratory children receiving summer and intersession services, and the average per-pupil expenditure in the state (*ESEA*, Sec. 1301(b)). In FY 2018, 46 states received MEP funding,⁴ and 304,480 migratory children ages 0–21 in the United States were eligible to receive MEP-funded services and support.^{5 6} The median population of migratory children per state, among the states that receive MEP funding, was 1,555, but the number varied widely across participating states. For example, in 2017–18, Nevada had the fewest eligible migratory children, with 106, and California had the most, with 85,198.

States may award subgrants to regional educational service agencies, local school districts, and/or other local operating agencies, or serve eligible children directly. States have flexibility to administer MEP-funded services and activities however they believe best supports the needs of the migratory children they serve. This flexibility is reflected in the variety of grant-making strategies and local subgrantee types evident in the program. For example, three states made no subgrant awards in 2017–18 and served migratory children directly. Another six states made only one subgrant award, usually to a statewide or regional educational service provider to carry out some or all of the state's responsibilities. The remaining 37 states awarded a total of 826 subgrants to local school districts (716 subgrants), to

¹ Appendix A includes the entire statute, including the statutory definition of a migratory child under *ESEA*. Appendix A is available in a separate technical volume at [insert link here].

² Although the MEP technically serves migratory children and migratory out-of-school youth ages birth through 21, for purposes of readability we reference *children* throughout this report. In addition, *out-of-school youth* refers to *migratory* out-of-school youth, not out-of-school youth in general.

³ States receive MEP allocations each federal fiscal year, which extends from October 1 through September 30. The Department currently awards funds to each eligible state educational agency on July 1. States may obligate those funds for an initial period of 15 months and an additional 12 months granted by the "Tydings amendment" in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). In FY 2019, Congress again appropriated \$374.8 million for the MEP. The U.S. Department of Education reserves up to \$10 million of this amount to conduct migrant education coordination activities (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/mep/funding.html>).

⁴ Connecticut, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and the island territories (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.) did not apply for or receive MEP grant awards in FY 2018.

⁵ Only migratory children ages 3–21 are counted for state funding allocations. However, migratory children from birth to 21 are eligible for MEP services.

⁶ Based on ED*Facts* data for 2017–18, the most recent year for which data were available.

statewide or regional educational service agencies or district consortia (96 subgrants),⁷ and to nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities (14 subgrants).

State MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees carry out a range of activities and services to support the needs of migratory children, including identifying and recruiting migratory children, providing instructional and support services that help bolster and sustain the educational progress of migratory children, and collaborating with other organizations and programs that serve migratory children (e.g., Migrant and Seasonal Head Start,⁸ the College Assistance Migrant Program, or the High School Equivalency Program). MEP grantees and subgrantees vary in how they carry out these tasks. For example, MEP grantees and subgrantees may identify and recruit migratory children directly or assign this task to others. They also have flexibility to provide a range of services, including direct academic instruction, online courses, graduation-planning assistance, health and dental care, clothing, transportation, and other supports that help migratory children progress and succeed in school.

In 2018, this study examined how state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees implemented the program's four central components: (1) identification and recruitment, (2) records transfer, (3) service delivery, and (4) coordination and collaboration—and thereby positioned the program to achieve its longer-term goals of reducing barriers to migratory children's school success, closing the gaps in their academic achievement, and increasing their high school graduation rates. The study focused on four main study questions:

1. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees identify, recruit, and prioritize migratory children for services?
2. How does the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) system facilitate the transfer of educational and health information to support enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migratory children?
3. What services do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees provide to migratory children?
4. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees collaborate with other programs and organizations to deliver services to migratory children?

Key findings from the study include the following:

- Most state MEP grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees and outside contractors to manage the identification and recruitment (ID&R) process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising MEP recruiters. At the same time, states played a significant role in monitoring and quality control.
- Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX had improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states and facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers.

⁷ Because the lead district for a local educational agency consortium provides MEP services to eligible migratory children on behalf of the consortium members, we group such consortia with regional educational service agencies.

⁸ Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- State MEP directors considered a variety of factors in determining specific services to provide or fund for migratory children, including the needs of migratory children, the availability of funds, student outcomes, policy priorities, and the services provided by other programs.
- State MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees that provided direct services to migratory children most commonly provided supplemental instructional services that included reading/language arts instruction and mathematics instruction. Among the state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees that directly provided support services to migratory children, most provided school supplies, language support (e.g., translation or interpretation services), and individual student advocacy services.
- Most state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees that provided direct instructional and support services to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide these services.

Methodology

To answer the study questions, the study included a 2018 national survey of all state MEP grantees and their local/regional subgrantees, including 46 state MEP directors and 821 local/regional MEP coordinators, generating response rates of 100 and 90 percent, respectively.

In addition, the study included site visits in winter 2018 to a purposive and nested sample of 10 state MEP grantees, 20 local/regional MEP subgrantees (two per state), and 40 schools or projects (approximately four per state). Site-selection criteria included the size of the state’s migratory child population eligible for MEP-funded services, the percentage of the eligible population receiving MEP-funded services, the percentage of eligible children identified as Priority for Services (PFS), and the number and type of local/regional MEP subgrantees. Site visitors interviewed MEP staff members, including state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators and their staff, as well as school- or project-based personnel involved in implementing MEP-funded services. The interviews provided examples that illustrate, elaborate on, or give context for the survey findings.

The study team also examined extant data from the U.S. Department of Education’s website ED Data Express,⁹ from Consolidated State Performance Reports for 2010–11 through 2016–17, and from ED Facts data for 2017–18. A literature review (Pratt-Williams, Pilchen, Kistler, Schmidt, and Jonas 2017) summarized information available about MEP services and service partners through public reports, research articles, and evaluation reports of state MEPs. Together, the extant data and literature review informed the study questions, sampling approach, instrument design, analysis plan, and final report.

⁹ <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>

Summary of Findings

Identifying, Recruiting, and Prioritizing Migratory Children for MEP Services

Most state MEP grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees and outside contractors to manage the identification and recruitment process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising MEP recruiters. At the same time, states played a significant role in recruiter training, monitoring, and quality control.

Under Section 1304(c)(8) of *ESEA*, the state is responsible for identifying the number of migratory children residing in the state but has flexibility to decide whether to manage the process on a statewide, regional, or local basis. In 2017–18, the majority of state MEP directors (74 percent, or 34 of 46 states) reported relying on local/regional MEPs to manage the hiring, deployment, and supervision of recruiters who identify and recruit eligible migratory children. Local/regional MEP coordinators confirmed this ID&R management structure, with 78 percent reporting that they managed ID&R activities directly.

Recruiters most commonly identified and recruited migratory children using their contacts in the schools, communities, and businesses that migratory families frequent.

State MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators most frequently reported that recruiters identified and recruited migratory children by developing and maintaining contacts with key groups. These groups included staff in local schools (100 percent of state MEP directors and 96 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), people in communities where migratory families are likely to reside (100 percent and 83 percent), employers who hire migratory workers (96 percent and 81 percent), and local businesses and organizations that serve migratory families (96 percent and 77 percent). In addition, most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that recruiters identified children through referrals from other agencies and organizations (91 percent and 71 percent) and by attending community events (80 percent and 75 percent).

In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators noted that recruiters often struggled to find out-of-school youth because, for example, farmers and facility owners no longer granted recruiters access to the work sites to identify MEP-eligible youth, or out-of-school youth were unwilling to participate in the MEP because they lacked time to attend school.

MEP coordinators used both academic performance and academic risk factors to determine migratory children's Priority for Service status.

Introduced in the 1994 reauthorization of *ESEA* under the *Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)*, Priority for Service (PFS) requires state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees to identify and deliver services to the most recently mobile and academically at-risk migratory children before all others. The PFS requirement has remained a significant focus of the MEP and was further expanded in the 2015 reauthorization of *ESEA* by *ESSA*. The PFS "mobility" factor now includes migratory children who have moved within the previous one-year period (rather than being limited to children whose education was interrupted during the regular school year). The PFS "academic risk" factor now explicitly includes children who have dropped out of school, in addition to those who are failing or at-risk of failing to meet the challenging state academic standards. Because grantees had only begun implementing the expanded definition of PFS a few months prior to the launch of the study survey, they were surveyed only about the criteria they used to define students who were failing or at-risk of failing

to meet academic standards.¹⁰ It is important to note, nevertheless, that *ESEA* requires each state to identify as PFS-eligible migratory children who have made a qualifying move within the previous one-year period, and who: (1) are failing or most at risk of failing to meet challenging state academic standards or (2) have dropped out of school (*ESEA* Sec. 1304(d)).

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators operationalized “failing or at risk of failing to meet challenging academic standards” as migratory children who scored below grade level based on state assessment results (94 percent of state MEP directors and 89 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), were English learners¹¹ (85 percent and 78 percent), and/or were retained in grade for more than one year (80 percent and 71 percent).

State MEP directors and local/regional coordinators also reported prioritizing MEP services for migratory children based on whether they had dropped out of school (89 percent and 70 percent) or on academic risk factors, such as changing schools in the past year (74 percent and 75 percent), chronic absence (44 percent and 52 percent), or truancy (32 percent and 40 percent).

Using the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) to Improve Services and Supports for Migratory Children

The reauthorization of *ESEA* under the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 authorized MSIX, a database¹² to transfer educational and health information across and within states to facilitate timely school enrollment, grade and course placement, and accrual of course credits. MSIX maintains an electronic Consolidated Student Record for each migratory child, including records of a child’s history of school enrollments; high school course history; credit accumulation; achievement testing; medical alert, individualized education program (IEP), English Learner (EL), graduation and Algebra I completion indicators, as well as PFS and immunization records flags. MSIX allows for the Consolidated Student Record to be transferred within and across states. All MEP grantees are required to upload student information to MSIX. Its purpose is to mitigate the effects of educational disruptions for migratory children caused by frequent moves within and across states by providing rapid access to data needed to identify, enroll, and place migratory children.

More than two-thirds of state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states.

Most state MEP directors (72 percent) and local/regional MEP coordinators (70 percent) agreed that MSIX moderately or substantially improved notifications about migratory children moving across states. In an interview, one state MEP director described MSIX as a useful tool for learning when migratory children have arrived in his state: “It is nice for the recruiters to go in [to MSIX] and say ‘Oh, this kid has

¹⁰ This decision was based on guidance provided by the study’s Technical Working Group.

¹¹ The state and local/regional survey instruments asked respondents about children who were “Limited English Proficient,” the term used in the Consolidated State Performance Reports. However, in this report, we use “English learner” because that is the term preferred in the field. “English learner” is also the term used in *ESEA*, as amended by *ESSA*. When presenting survey results in exhibits, we use both terms.

¹² In fact, it is a web-based repository of 76 minimum data elements or MDEs collected and submitted to MSIX by MEP grantees.

moved here’ and see that the kid has been in the [MEP] before.... I know the recruiters, all of them, they use MSIX a lot.”

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers.

Among those who said they knew how MSIX affected the records transfer process (93 percent of state MEP directors and 76 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), more than three-quarters (76 percent of state MEP directors and 82 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators) agreed that MSIX somewhat or significantly facilitated migratory student records transfer across states. In interviews, state and local/regional MEP staff members described MSIX as valuable for expediting enrollment because it provides critical information for migratory children but explained that information from the sending schools is often delayed, incomplete, erroneous, or out of date by the time it is received.

The majority of local/regional MEP coordinators and about half the state MEP directors reported that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved other practices intended to mitigate the effects of educational disruptions for migratory children, such as the appropriateness of course placements and the timeliness of school enrollment.

The majority of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved other practices intended to mitigate educational disruptions for migratory children, such as the facilitation of course credit accrual (62 percent), appropriateness of course placements (63 percent), appropriateness of grade placements (63 percent), timeliness of school enrollment (59 percent), and reduction in unnecessary immunizations (53 percent). About half of the state MEP directors agreed that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved these other practices.

In interviews, state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators identified areas for improvement for MSIX, observing that not all states use MSIX consistently or in the same ways, which can lead to gaps in information about migratory children. Suggested areas for improvement included ensuring that (1) data handlers enter migratory children’s full names in MSIX so that student identification and records transfers can happen faster, and (2) states define student performance as pass/fail to avoid varied and sometimes inaccurate interpretations of how grades or percentages translate into course credits.

Providing MEP Services to Eligible Migratory Children

The core of the MEP is the supplemental instructional and support services provided to migratory children that help mitigate the negative impacts of mobility on school success.¹³ State MEP grantees and their subgrantees have considerable flexibility to determine the services to be provided with MEP funds, “except that such funds first shall be used to meet the identified needs of migratory children that result from their migratory lifestyle, and to permit these children to participate effectively in school,”¹⁴ and state MEP grantees draw on a range of data sources to make their determinations for provisions of services.

¹³ ESEA section 1306(b)(2) requires that “MEP funding be used to address the needs of migratory children that are not addressed by services available from other Federal or non-Federal programs, except that migratory children who are eligible to receive services under part A may receive those services through funds provided under that part, or through funds under this part that remain after the agency addresses the needs” that result from their migratory lifestyle.

¹⁴ ESEA section 1306(b)(1).

Most state MEP directors considered multiple data sources and factors in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children.

The vast majority of state MEP directors identified four factors as important in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children: results from the needs assessments of migratory children (100 percent of state MEP directors), the amount of MEP funding available (98 percent), migratory student outcome data (98 percent), and availability of services from other programs (93 percent).

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that their state information systems permitted the disaggregation of student performance data by migratory status, which they used to help select instructional and support services to offer migratory children.

Most state MEP directors (85 percent) and local/regional MEP coordinators (91 percent) reported being able to disaggregate various data for migratory children. Of those, most reported being able to disaggregate English learner status (97 percent of state directors and 92 percent of local/regional coordinators), dropout status (87 percent and 76 percent), whether they had changed schools during the previous or current school year (87 percent and 84 percent), their state assessment scores (85 percent and 85 percent), and their cohort graduation rates (82 percent and 62 percent).

Notably fewer state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported being able to disaggregate nonacademic dropout-risk factors by children's migratory status, such as involvement with social services (22 percent of state directors and 41 percent of local/regional coordinators), involvement with the juvenile justice system (6 percent and 25 percent), reports of substance abuse (3 percent and 16 percent), and pregnancy or teen parenthood (0 percent and 20 percent).

More than a third of state MEP grantees directly provided supplemental instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children, including college and career supports and subject area instruction.

To mitigate the learning challenges caused by education disruptions that migratory children regularly experience, 19 states provided, on average, six types of instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children. Common types of instructional services and other academic supports states provided directly to migratory children included career exploration and guidance (69 percent), high school graduation planning and assistance (63 percent), reading and language arts instruction (58 percent), mathematics instruction (53 percent), credit-recovery programs (53 percent), and preparation for the postsecondary transition (53 percent). In interviews, state MEP directors described the types of instructional services and other academic supports they directly provided to migratory children, and in most cases, these were special events, such as college visits or summer camps, which embedded direct instructional services.

The vast majority of local/regional MEP subgrantees (93 percent) directly provided supplemental instructional services and academic supports to migratory children, the most common of which included reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, and academic guidance and advocacy.

On average, local/regional MEP coordinators that directly provided supplemental instructional services and other academic supports reported providing nine types of such services and supports to migratory children, including reading and language arts instruction (84 percent), mathematics instruction

(82 percent), academic guidance and advocacy (80 percent), graduation-planning assistance (76 percent), or career exploration and guidance (75 percent).

Local/regional MEP coordinators described in interviews services that were unique to their communities. One local MEP coordinator described providing in-home reading and developmental support to eligible preschool-age migratory children. Another subgrantee ran an after-school program for migratory children in grades K–5 that provided supplemental English language arts and mathematics instruction as well as enrichment instruction, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) lessons combined with soccer drills and artists teaching visual and performing arts. One teacher described the benefits of the after-school support: “These kids need something to come and do after school, and it’s great that they’re getting more one-on-one time with teachers.”

Local/regional MEP coordinators also reported providing instructional services and other academic supports to out-of-school youth, the most common of which were academic guidance and advocacy, reading and language arts instruction, career exploration and guidance, and mathematics instruction.

More than half of the local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing direct instructional services and other academic supports to out-of-school youth that included academic guidance and advocacy (59 percent), supplemental reading and language arts instruction (55 percent), career exploration and guidance (55 percent), and supplemental mathematics instruction (52 percent). In interviews, some local/regional MEP coordinators explained that the selection of services provided to out-of-school youth was largely based on the groups’ needs, interests, and access to sources of support.

More than a third of state MEP grantees provided direct support services to migratory children, including leadership development and language support. Ninety-two percent of local/regional coordinators reported providing direct support services to migratory children, including distribution of school supplies, language supports (e.g., translation or interpretation services), and individual student advocacy services.

In addition to instructional services and other academic supports, state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees also provided an array of support services to address the social, emotional, and health issues that migratory children regularly experience that can impact their ability to attend and fully focus at school. Eighteen state MEP grantees provided direct support services to migratory children that most commonly included leadership development programs (58 percent of states), language support (50 percent), transportation not otherwise provided (39 percent), and individual student advocacy services (39 percent). The least common support services states provided directly were related to home supports, including housing guidance and assistance (16 percent), clothing (11 percent), and child care (11 percent).

Local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing an average of six types of support services to migratory children, including school supplies (82 percent), language support (74 percent), individual student advocacy services (65 percent), mentoring (61 percent), transportation (57 percent), and clothing (51 percent). In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators described helping migratory children enroll in school and obtain proper immunizations, transporting families to obtain medical services, and conducting home visits to identify and address the needs of migratory children and their families.

Collaborating to Deliver Services to Eligible Migratory Children

MEP grantees and subgrantees not only identify needs and provide services to migratory children, but, according to the Department's *Non-Regulatory Guidance for the MEP* (USED 2017a), they are also encouraged to identify other agencies and organizations that might provide a service that addresses an identified need. Coordinating and collaborating with other federal and non-federal programs is both a practical necessity and a statutory requirement for efforts to meet the educational needs of migratory children.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators participated in outreach activities to engage with other agencies and organizations in supporting the needs of migratory children.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported delivering or attending presentations (89 percent of state directors and 61 percent of local/regional coordinators), attending in-person meetings (87 percent and 83 percent), and disseminating materials such as informational letters, brochures, or briefs (80 percent and 78 percent) as part of their outreach efforts. In an interview, one state MEP director described how twice a year the state team brought together all the agencies across the state that work with migratory children, including migrant health services, housing services, and the ED-funded High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). During these meetings, participants described the services they provided, the barriers they encountered, and how they would like to collaborate. Similarly, another state MEP director described holding quarterly cross-agency meetings to talk about the needs of migratory children and the agencies that could meet them.

Half or fewer state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees had formal agreements articulating their commitments to collaborate with other agencies and organizations to address the needs of migratory children.

Approximately half the state MEP directors (49 percent) and 40 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators had a formal agreement, such as a memorandum of understanding or cost-sharing agreement, with an organization or agency to serve migratory children. Among those with formal agreements, about half had more than one formal agreement (57 percent or 13 state MEP grantees and 47 percent of local/regional MEP subgrantees with any formal agreement).

No one type of agency or organization stood out as frequently being a formal partner for state MEPs. In interviews, state MEP directors and staff explained that they often relied on informal agreements with agencies and organizations to serve the needs of migratory children. For example, one state had an informal agreement with a statewide farmworker health initiative to provide healthcare services to migratory families, and another described collaborating with the state's Early Childhood Division (ECD) to include teachers of migratory preschool students in a statewide professional development network.

Most state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees coordinated or collaborated with HEP and/or CAMP to provide services to migratory children.

Overall, 69 percent of state MEP directors and 59 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported collaborating in some way with HEP or CAMP. Most did so to distribute program information to migratory children, youth, and families about HEP (83 percent of state MEP directors and 72 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators) or CAMP (72 percent and 89 percent); or to share information or data on migratory children with HEP (87 percent and 70 percent) or CAMP (69 percent and 87 percent).

Most state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees that directly provided instructional and support services to migratory children, including reading and language arts instruction, student advocacy services, and dental care, collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide these services.

For example, of the eleven state MEP directors who reported that the state directly provided reading and language arts instruction, nine reported doing so in collaboration with other agencies and organizations. Similarly, of the 605 local/regional MEP coordinators who directly provided reading and language arts instruction, more than half (54 percent) reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide these services to migratory children.

When they provided support services directly, most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to do so. Services they collaborated to provide included student advocacy services (all seven states that directly provided this service and 89 percent of local/regional MEPs); dental care (all five states and 90 percent of local/regional MEPs), eye care (all four states and 92 percent of local/regional MEPs), and counseling and mental health services (all four states and 83 percent of local/regional MEPs).

Conclusion

Most state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees have established strategies to identify and recruit migratory children, ensure the transfer of student records within and across states, provide supplemental instructional and support services to address the needs of migratory children not addressed by services available from other federal or non-federal programs, and collaborate with other organizations and agencies to respond to the needs of migratory children. Most MEP grantees and subgrantees built relationships with schools, communities, and businesses that serve migratory families to identify and recruit migratory children. They used MSIX to facilitate MEP participation and the transfer of student records, and in doing so, to help mitigate the effects of educational disruptions for migratory children caused by frequent moves. Most MEPs selected service offerings to meet children's needs, considering funding constraints, outcome data, and other programs available in their area. Most MEP grantees and subgrantees that delivered direct services to migratory children also collaborated with other organizations, formally and informally, to more fully and comprehensively address the educational and health-related needs of migratory children that hinder school success.

In interviews, some state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported implementation challenges that might be addressed by technical assistance and resources. For example, they mentioned difficulties with locating and recruiting migratory out-of-school youth and sustaining their participation in services. They also mentioned areas for improvement in MSIX, observing that not all states used MSIX consistently or in the same ways,¹⁵ which could lead to gaps in information on migratory children moving within and across state lines. One suggested area for improvement was ensuring that states define student performance as pass/fail to avoid varied and sometimes inaccurate interpretations of how grades or percentages translate into course credits.

The full report provides additional details about MEP implementation, challenges, and accomplishments to support program planning and support.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, participation in MSIX is required.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The children of migratory agricultural workers and fishers are extremely disadvantaged and more likely than their nonmigratory peers to live in poverty and experience disconnected educational experiences that can hinder their educational progress and success (Berger 2014; Quandt et al. 2016; U.S. Department of Labor 2017; Wiltz 2016). Congress established the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966 through an amendment to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*. The goal of the program under *ESEA*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)*, is to help meet the unique educational needs of migratory children.¹⁶

Migratory children face many challenges that impede their ability to stay in school, graduate, and go on to college and careers. As described in a 2011 literature review commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Migrant Education (OME), these challenges include poor health, limited access to healthcare, poverty, language barriers, and social isolation (U.S. Department of Education [USED] 2011). A 2013 Housing Assistance Council report described farmworkers, who are largely ethnic minorities or immigrants, as among the poorest groups in the nation, often living in "substandard, overcrowded, and unaffordable" housing. Moreover, the report described farmworker conditions as "further exacerbated by a plethora of legal, cultural, and geographic circumstances that often keeps this population in the shadows of American society and contributes to their economic marginalization" (Housing Assistance Council [HAC] 2013). In addition, migratory children often lack school-readiness skills and are overage for their grade level, having attended school only intermittently (Chavkin and González 2000; USED 2011). Finally, migratory children's parents may lack the educational skills to support their children's growth and development and are often disconnected from the larger community and from available educational supports and services (USED 2011). For these reasons, many migratory children drop out of school before graduation (Human Rights Watch 2000).

In FY 2018, Congress appropriated \$374.8 million for the MEP,¹⁷ with each state's award based on its migratory child count, the number of migratory children receiving summer and intersession services, and the average per-pupil expenditure in the state (*ESEA* Sec. 1301). In FY 2018, 46 states received MEP funding,¹⁸ and 304,480 migratory children ages 0–21 in the United States were eligible to receive MEP-funded services and support in the 2017–18 performance reporting period.¹⁹ ²⁰ The program is intended to address the unique needs of the children of migratory agricultural workers and fishers.²¹ Specifically,

¹⁶ Appendix A includes the entire statute, including the statutory definition of a migratory child under *ESEA*. Appendix A is available in a separate technical volume at [insert link here].

¹⁷ States receive MEP allocations each federal fiscal year, which extends from October 1 through September 30. The Department currently awards funds to each eligible state educational agency on July 1. States may obligate those funds for an initial period of 15 months and an additional 12 months granted by the "Tydings amendment" in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). In FY 2019, Congress again appropriated \$374.8 million for the MEP. The Department of Education reserves up to \$10 million of this amount to conduct migrant education coordination activities (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget19/19action.pdf>).

¹⁸ Connecticut, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and the island territories (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.) did not apply for or receive MEP grant awards in FY 2018.

¹⁹ Only migratory children ages 3–21 are counted for state funding allocations. However, migratory children ages birth through 21 are eligible to receive MEP-funded services.

²⁰ Based on *EDFacts* data for the 2017-18 performance reporting period (September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018), the most recent year for which data were available.

²¹ In addition, migratory agricultural workers and fishers can themselves be recipients of MEP services if they meet the definition of a migratory child.

it is intended to ensure that migratory children stay in school, achieve the same educational standards expected of all children, graduate from high school, and go on to college and careers. In particular, the MEP seeks to mitigate challenges associated with mobility that may interfere with migratory children's academic success, such as differences in curricular or academic requirements that students encounter as they move between states. The MEP is also intended to help migratory children overcome additional challenges unique to their migratory status that may impede their educational success, including educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, and social isolation (*ESEA* Sec. 1301).

States have administrative responsibility for services and activities intended to achieve the goals of the MEP, namely, identifying and recruiting often hard-to-find migratory children, prioritizing services for children who have moved in the last year and are failing, are at risk of failing, or have dropped out of school; conducting comprehensive needs assessments; ensuring the inter- and intrastate transfer of student records; providing instructional services and supports that address the identified needs of migratory children and that ultimately help them succeed in school; and coordinating and collaborating with other organizations and programs to strengthen and expand the array of services and supports delivered.

Study Overview

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study of the implementation of the Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program was to examine how state and local/regional MEP-funded programs are addressing the needs of migratory children.²² The study addressed four questions:

1. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees identify, recruit, and prioritize migratory children for services?
2. How does the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) system facilitate the transfer of educational and health information to support enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migratory children?
3. What services do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees provide to migratory children?
4. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees collaborate with other programs and organizations to deliver services to migratory children?

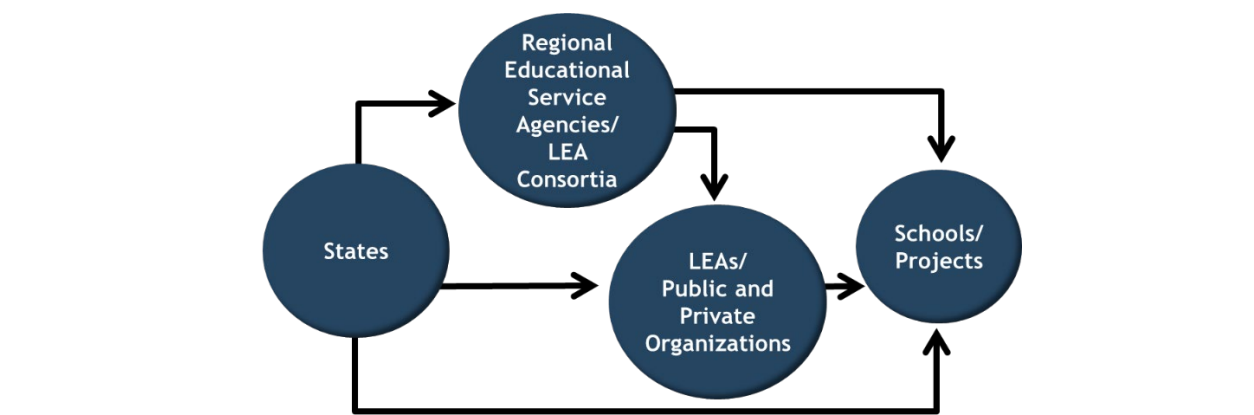
This chapter provides the context for the overall study, including background information on the MEP program, the study sample, data collection, analysis, and limitations.

²² Although the MEP technically serves migratory children and migratory out-of-school youth ages birth through 21, for purposes of readability we reference *children* throughout this report. In addition, *out-of-school youth* refers to *migratory* out-of-school youth, not out-of-school youth in general.

Program Administration

The MEP aims to improve the educational outcomes of migratory children and youth. States with MEP grants can administer MEP-funded services and activities in ways they believe best support the needs of the migratory children they serve. This flexibility has yielded a variety of grantmaking strategies and local subgrantee types. For example, states may award subgrants to local operating agencies such as regional educational service agencies or local educational agency (LEA) consortia, individual LEAs, public or private agencies, or to a combination of regional educational service agencies, LEAs, and public or private organizations. Regional subgrantees may then deliver services directly or award subgrants to LEAs. Finally, state educational agencies may choose to serve migratory children directly (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1. State subgranting and service-delivery structures for the Migrant Education Program



Distribution of Migratory Children

In 2017–18, 304,480 migratory children in the United States ages 0–21 were eligible for MEP-funded services and support.^{23 24} The median population of eligible migratory children per state was 1,555, but the number varied widely across states. Exhibit 2 presents states by the number of migratory children identified as well as the number served. For example, California identified 85,198 eligible migratory children in 2017–18 and served 61,483 of them, whereas Nevada identified 106 eligible migratory children and served 94 of them.

As shown in Exhibit 2, three states (Hawaii, New Hampshire, and North Dakota) made no subgrant awards and served migratory children directly. Another six states (Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Vermont) made only one subgrant award, usually to a statewide or regional educational service provider. The remaining 37 states awarded a total of 826 subgrants to local school districts (716 subgrants), to district consortia (15 subgrants), to statewide or regional educational service agencies (81 subgrants), and to nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities (14 subgrants). On average, states awarded a total of 18 subgrants, with the number varying widely, from 1 to 161 subgrantees within a state; the median number of subgrants awarded was 10.

²³ Based on the Department's ED*Facts* data for 2017–18, the most recent year for which data were available.

²⁴ Only migratory children ages 3–21 are counted for state funding allocations. However, migratory children ages birth through 21 are eligible to receive MEP-funded services.

Exhibit 2. Number of migratory children ages 0–21 identified as eligible to receive MEP services and number of MEP subgrantees, by state, 2017–18

| State | Number of eligible migratory children identified | Number of eligible migratory children served | Number of subgrantees | | | | Total |
|----------------|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|------------|
| | | | School districts | District consortia | Regional and statewide service agencies | Nonprofit organizations | |
| Total | 304,480 | 216,661 | 716 | 15 | 81 | 14 | 826 |
| California | 85,198 | 61,483 | 5 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 20 |
| Washington | 30,798 | 12,650 | 59 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 60 |
| Texas | 30,602 | 23,265 | 151 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 161 |
| Florida | 24,454 | 23,720 | 34 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| Oregon | 21,625 | 11,242 | 9 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 19 |
| Alaska | 13,379 | 9,679 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Arizona | 10,494 | 6,693 | 21 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Georgia | 9,055 | 6,274 | 68 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 69 |
| Arkansas | 5,784 | 4,491 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,374 | 4,822 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Kentucky | 5,368 | 5,022 | 34 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 39 |
| Colorado | 5,365 | 5,147 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Michigan | 5,258 | 3,880 | 24 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| Nebraska | 5,252 | 3,887 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| North Carolina | 5,213 | 3,852 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| Idaho | 5,164 | 3,634 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 42 |
| Kansas | 4,570 | 3,724 | 36 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 41 |
| New York | 4,550 | 4,036 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| Iowa | 2,532 | 1,062 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Alabama | 2,168 | 1,879 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Indiana | 1,917 | 1,848 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| Louisiana | 1,814 | 1,287 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| Hawaii | 1,650 | 1,598 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Minnesota | 1,459 | 399 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Tennessee | 1,409 | 1,010 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Illinois | 1,310 | 786 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Missouri | 1,295 | 363 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| New Jersey | 1,226 | 1,102 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Montana | 1,131 | 1,072 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Ohio | 1,081 | 673 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| New Mexico | 1,003 | 781 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| South Dakota | 836 | 363 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Wisconsin | 794 | 335 | 18 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 20 |
| Utah | 677 | 617 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Oklahoma | 589 | 532 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| South Carolina | 572 | 567 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Virginia | 564 | 549 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Mississippi | 552 | 528 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Massachusetts | 508 | 421 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| North Dakota | 496 | 224 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maine | 388 | 348 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Vermont | 303 | 242 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Delaware | 285 | 269 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Maryland | 174 | 96 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| New Hampshire | 138 | 115 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nevada | 106 | 94 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

Exhibit reads: California had 85,198 eligible migratory children in 2017–18 of whom it served 61,484.

Source: 2017–18 EDFacts. Consolidated Data on number of subgrantees provided by state MEP directors.

Study Design Overview

To understand program implementation, the study used surveys, site visit interviews, extant data, and a literature review. In particular, the study findings reflect:

1. **Surveys** of all 46 state MEP directors and 821 local/regional MEP coordinators. All 46 state MEP directors and 90 percent of the local/regional MEP coordinators (739) completed the survey. The survey for state MEP directors was parallel in structure to that for local/regional MEP coordinators, with minor differences based on their expected responsibilities. The questions addressed efforts to identify and recruit migratory children, uses of MSIX to improve services and supports, the types of instructional and support services MEPs provided to meet the needs of eligible migratory children, and whether and how MEPs coordinated and collaborated with other programs and organizations to strengthen and expand the reach of the MEP to better identify, recruit, and serve migratory children. The two surveys are in Appendices B and C.²⁵
2. **Site visits** to a purposive and nested sample of 10 states, 20 local/regional subgrantees (two per state), and 40 schools (approximately four per state) to interview MEP staff members, including state, regional, and local MEP administrators and their staff, as well as school-based personnel involved with the MEP. The interviews expanded on the survey topics and allowed interviewers to probe for the rationale and context underlying the design and administration of the MEP. The protocols contained both structured and semi-structured interview questions that could be tailored based on individual roles and on background knowledge gleaned from a review of site-specific documents. The two interview protocols are in Appendices D and E.²⁶
3. **Extant data** obtained from the Department of Education website,²⁷ from the Title I, Part C portion of the Consolidated State Performance Reports, submitted for ESEA programs, from 2010–11 through 2016–17, and from EDFacts data for 2017–18.
4. **A literature review** (Pratt-Williams, Pilchen, Kistler, Schmidt and Jonas 2017) summarizing information available about MEP services and service partners, including prior literature reviews (USED 2011); descriptive, correlational, and casual studies; and recent state evaluation reports on MEP-funded services and supports delivered to eligible migratory children. Together, the extant data and literature review informed the study questions, sampling approach, instrument development, analysis plan, and final report.

Sample Selection

Surveys

The targeted survey respondents comprised the full population of state MEP directors and all local/regional MEP coordinators. Surveying the population of all current grantees and subgrantees (867 respondents) enabled the study team to (1) account for variation in subgrantee strategies within a state so the data could capture the full variation in approaches to providing MEP services, (2) efficiently encompass the wide variation in the number of MEP subgrantees (and the projects they supported) by

²⁵ Appendices B and C are available in a separate technical volume by visiting [insert link here].

²⁶ Appendices D and E are available in a separate technical volume by visiting [insert link here].

²⁷ <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>

state rather than designing a complicated sampling frame, and (3) reduce the margin of error based on a 90 percent response rate.

Site Visit Sample

The study team identified a nested sample of 10 states, 20 subgrantees (two per state), and 40 schools or projects (approximately four per state) to visit and interview personnel. While not statistically representative of the population of MEP grantees and subgrantees, the sample selection enabled site visits in states with different sizes of eligible migratory child populations, in different geographic regions²⁸, and with different numbers of MEP subgrantees. The interviews were intended to provide examples of administrative activities and services.

State-level site visit sample. The study team based the state site-selection criteria on data from ED Data Express and data collected from state MEP directors on the number and type of MEPs in their state. A review of the data (for 2015–16²⁹) and of the number and type of subgrantees (in 2017–18) revealed wide variation in: (1) the size of the state’s migratory child population eligible for MEP-funded services, (2) the percentage of the eligible population receiving MEP-funded services, (3) the percentage of eligible students identified as Priority for Services (PFS), and (4) the number and type of subgrantees. The selected site visit states and their characteristics are shown in Exhibit 3.

Local-level site visit sample. Once each selected state confirmed its participation, the study team gave each state MEP director a preliminary list of subgrantee sites to visit (approximately three to five per state). State MEP directors confirmed that the preliminary list reflected the within-state distribution of subgrantees by pertinent program characteristics, including service-delivery model, grant size, and number of schools or projects serving migratory children. State MEP directors also provided information about features to consider in finalizing the list of nominees, such as innovative programmatic initiatives or strategies to identify and recruit migratory children. Using this list, the state nominated three local/regional MEP subgrantees from which the study team and the Department approved two for the site visit sample.

Local school or project site visit sample. The final stage of the selection process involved choosing a sample of 40 MEP-supported local schools or projects based on recommendations from the selected local/regional MEP subgrantees. The study team invited each subgrant coordinator to nominate two MEP-funded schools or projects that were representative of the (1) size of the population of migratory children, (2) service-delivery model (e.g., year-round, summer), (3) school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and (4) promising or innovative practices for serving migratory children.

²⁸ Because Florida and Texas were recovering from hurricanes at the time of data collection, these states were not included in the potential sample frame for site visits.

²⁹ The site visit sample was selected in 2017, at which time 2015–16 data were the most recent data available.

Exhibit 3. Characteristics of site visit states based on 2015–16 data

| Size of eligible migratory child population | Geographic region | Total number of eligible migratory children | Percentage of eligible migratory children served | Percentage of eligible migratory children identified as PFS | Number of subgrantees |
|---|-------------------|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| Small (<i>N</i> < 500 children) | Northeast | 320 | High (77%) | Low (2%) | 1 |
| Midsize (<i>N</i> = 500–1,349 children) | West | 966 | High (91%) | High (63%) | 5 |
| | West | 879 | High (90%) | Medium (20%) | 20 |
| | South | 724 | High (88%) | High (81%) | 6 |
| Large (<i>N</i> = 1,350–8,000 children) | West | 5,110 | High (86%) | High (30%) | 5 |
| | South | 4,092 | High (85%) | Low (7%) | 39 |
| | Midwest | 1,473 | Low (29%) | Medium (19%) | 10 |
| Very large (<i>N</i> > 8,000 children) | West | 96,928 | High (66%) | Low (6%) | 20 |
| | South | 8,992 | High (64%) | Medium (17%) | 69 |
| | West | 19,854 | Low (47%) | High (37%) | 19 |

Exhibit reads: The states selected for site visits included a state with a small migratory child population in the northeast region.

Source: 2015–16 ED Data Express and Consolidated State Performance Report.

Data Collection

The data collection activities were designed to provide complementary information. The survey captured information on the full population of state and local/regional MEP grantees, while the site visits produced detailed, nuanced data from a subset of states, regional or local sites, and schools.

Surveys

All 46 state MEP directors and 739 of the 821 local/regional MEP coordinators (90 percent) completed an online survey between January and March 2018. Email follow-up with nonrespondents began one week after the survey launch. The study team continued following up with nonrespondents via email approximately once a week for three weeks. For persistent nonrespondents, the study team followed up by telephone.

Site Visits

The study team conducted site visits to 10 states from January through March 2018. A pair of researchers—a senior researcher and one other member of the project team—spent approximately five days on site in each state, interviewing between 9 and 28 respondents per state. Types of respondents were as follows:

- State personnel (e.g., state director of migrant education, other MEP staff members, other state education agency staff members)
- Directors of other state agencies and organizations collaborating with the state MEP
- Local/regional MEP personnel (MEP coordinator, other local MEP staff members)
- Directors of other local or regional agencies and organizations collaborating with the local MEP
- School or project personnel (e.g., school principals, instructional personnel, counselors, and others who provided services to migratory children and youth)

Before each site visit, team members identified a contact person at each site and requested background documents for review, including grant applications, administrative records, and evaluation and monitoring reports. This preparation helped the site visitors use time on site efficiently, become aware of local terminology and priorities, and more accurately understand respondents' answers.

Altogether, the study team interviewed 195 individuals during site visits: 27 state staff members, 18 directors or staff members of state agencies and organizations collaborating with the MEP, 73 local MEP staff members, 36 directors or personnel of other local or regional agencies and organizations collaborating with the MEP, and 41 school, project, or other personnel working with the MEP.

Analysis Methods

The study team used the survey data collected from state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees to answer the research questions. The interview data provide illustrative examples of the rationale and context underlying MEP administrative activities and services and the ways MEP grantees adapted strategies to meet local needs.

Surveys

The study team used descriptive techniques including frequencies, means, counts, standard deviations, and *t* tests to analyze the survey data and compare results across demographic and program characteristics. As a first step, the team looked at the number of subgrantees across states and flagged one state with a disproportionately high number of subgrantees (161), well above the overall mean of 18 and the median of 10 per state. To determine whether responses from this state's subgrantees might overrepresent the state and underrepresent the other states, the study team applied post-stratification weights to the survey responses to determine whether the overall subgrantee survey results might change. Because the results yielded no statistically significant differences when comparing the weighted versus the unweighted data, using post-stratification weights was deemed unnecessary for this report.

The next step was defining the demographic and program characteristic variables to use in disaggregating the survey results. The study team statistically tested three variables for possible use and found no significant differences. The variables tested were: size of the state population of eligible migratory children, size of the population of out-of-school migratory youth (categorized as less than a third versus more than a third of the total population of eligible migratory children), and size of the population of PFS-eligible migratory children and youth (categorized as less than a tenth of the total eligible migratory child population versus more than a tenth). In tests of statistical significance for

differences between groups, analysts used a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. Because the study team found no significant differences in survey responses by demographic and program characteristics, those analyses are not included in the report.

Finally, the same report sections and even sentences often describe the work of state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees together. The purpose is not to draw comparisons between the two. Instead, the goal is to accurately and comprehensively reflect the full array of efforts by state and local/regional MEP service providers to serve the needs of migratory children and to underscore the point that some state MEP grantees are engaged directly in on-the-ground MEP activities, including managing recruiters and directly overseeing the delivery of instructional and support services to migratory children.

Site Visits

The study team organized and coded the site visit data using the following steps: completed debrief guides, participated in a debriefing meeting to discuss commonalities and differences found in the interviews, and coded and organized the interview data by survey question, based on initial survey analysis. After the initial analysis of survey and interview data, the study team integrated the findings from the surveys with illustrative examples from the interviews to address the study questions.

Study Limitations

The study findings are based on self-reported survey data that were not independently verified. In addition, interview statements about program processes, challenges, and successes represent the perspectives of the individuals making them and may not depict the full range of views among state, regional, local, and school or project personnel.

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Chapter 2. Identifying, Recruiting, and Prioritizing Migratory Children for MEP Services

“The recruiters are critical because they are the lifeblood of our program. If we don't identify students, we can't serve them.” – Local MEP Coordinator

The extent to which states can adequately serve migratory children's educational needs depends first on whether they can identify the children. Although many migratory children arrive to states in established patterns for known harvests, continually changing patterns in agricultural migration and labor practices pose a core challenge in finding or identifying migratory children for all MEPs. The identification and recruitment (ID&R) process not only establishes eligibility for MEP services, it also provides the basis for MEP funding by establishing the authoritative count of eligible migratory children in each state.

Under section 1304(c)(8) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in 2015, the state is responsible for determining the number of migratory children residing in the state. However, states have flexibility to determine whether to manage the process on a statewide, regional, or local basis. A migratory child is eligible to receive MEP-funded services if the child:

- is not older than 21 and is entitled to a free public education through grade 12 in the state or is not yet at a grade level at which the LEA provides a free public education (generally, this means the individual has not graduated from high school or earned an equivalent diploma);³⁰
- made a qualifying move in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher or did so with or to join a parent, guardian, or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher;³¹ and
- moved because of economic necessity from one residence to another and from one school district to another.³²

Each time a migratory child completes a qualifying move, as described above, the child's 36 months of MEP eligibility is renewed.

The ID&R process is complex and labor-intensive. The U.S. Department of Education's *Non-Regulatory Guidance for the MEP* (2017a) suggests that effective ID&R includes the following strategies:

- Mapping all areas in the state where migratory families are likely to reside;
- Collecting and maintaining current information on the state's agricultural and fishing activities;

³⁰ See 34 CFR § 200.103(a).

³¹ ESEA section 1309(3).

³² A “qualifying move” means a move due to economic necessity from one residence to another residence and from one school district to another school district. In a state with only a single school district, however, a qualifying move includes if a child has moved from one administrative area to another within the district or if a child resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates 20 miles or more to a temporary residence. The definition of a “qualifying move” is found in ESEA section 1309(5).

- Developing an ID&R network by coordinating with other organizations and agencies that work with migratory populations;
- Developing a recruitment plan;
- Training and guiding recruiters on how to identify and recruit migratory children;
- Deploying and monitoring recruiters to carry out ID&R; and
- Implementing quality-control procedures.

As part of a quality-control system, the state reviews eligibility determinations of a representative sample of Certificates of Eligibility (COE)³³ to ensure consistent application of the statutory and regulatory definitions of migratory status and program eligibility.

This chapter describes how state grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees managed ID&R, including specific strategies used to identify and recruit eligible migratory children as well as how they prioritized them for MEP services.

Managing the Identification and Recruitment Process

Managing the ID&R process requires MEP directors and/or coordinators to hire, train, deploy, and supervise qualified recruiters. In addition, because migratory patterns change, and new influxes of migratory workers can sometimes appear unexpectedly, managing the ID&R process also entails relying on data and outside groups, organizations, agencies, and individuals to learn about and stay abreast of the migratory patterns and needs in the state. The following describes how states organized their management of the ID&R process to ensure that they identified and recruited all eligible migratory children in their jurisdiction.

Most state MEP grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees and outside contractors to manage the identification and recruitment process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising MEP recruiters. At the same time, states played a significant role in recruiter training, monitoring, and quality control.

The majority of state MEP directors (74 percent, or 34 of 46) reported relying on local/regional coordinators and/or outside contractors or other entities to manage the ID&R process (Exhibit 4), while the state maintained oversight responsibilities. Local/regional MEP coordinators confirmed this ID&R management structure, with 78 percent reporting that they managed ID&R activities directly.

In interviews, one regional MEP coordinator described creating a full-time recruitment position to manage and deploy recruiters more efficiently and to centralize the effort, which in past years had fallen on district staff who had other responsibilities. Another regional MEP coordinator described the ID&R process as multilayered, iterative, and ongoing. He described employing a team of recruiters who, when needed, also worked across regions to assist during periodic scans in areas where unidentified families might be residing. He noted that a critical component of managing ID&R is hiring strong recruiters, and

³³ The Certificate of Eligibility is a form the Department created to document every migratory child's eligibility for the MEP. "The COE serves as the official record of the state's eligibility determination for each individual child. A child must have an SEA [state education agency]-approved COE before MEP services may be provided" (USED 2017b).

that to be effective, recruiters must have cultural and linguistic expertise that enabled them to connect with children, especially newer immigrants.

Exhibit 4. State MEP ID&R management structures, 2017–18

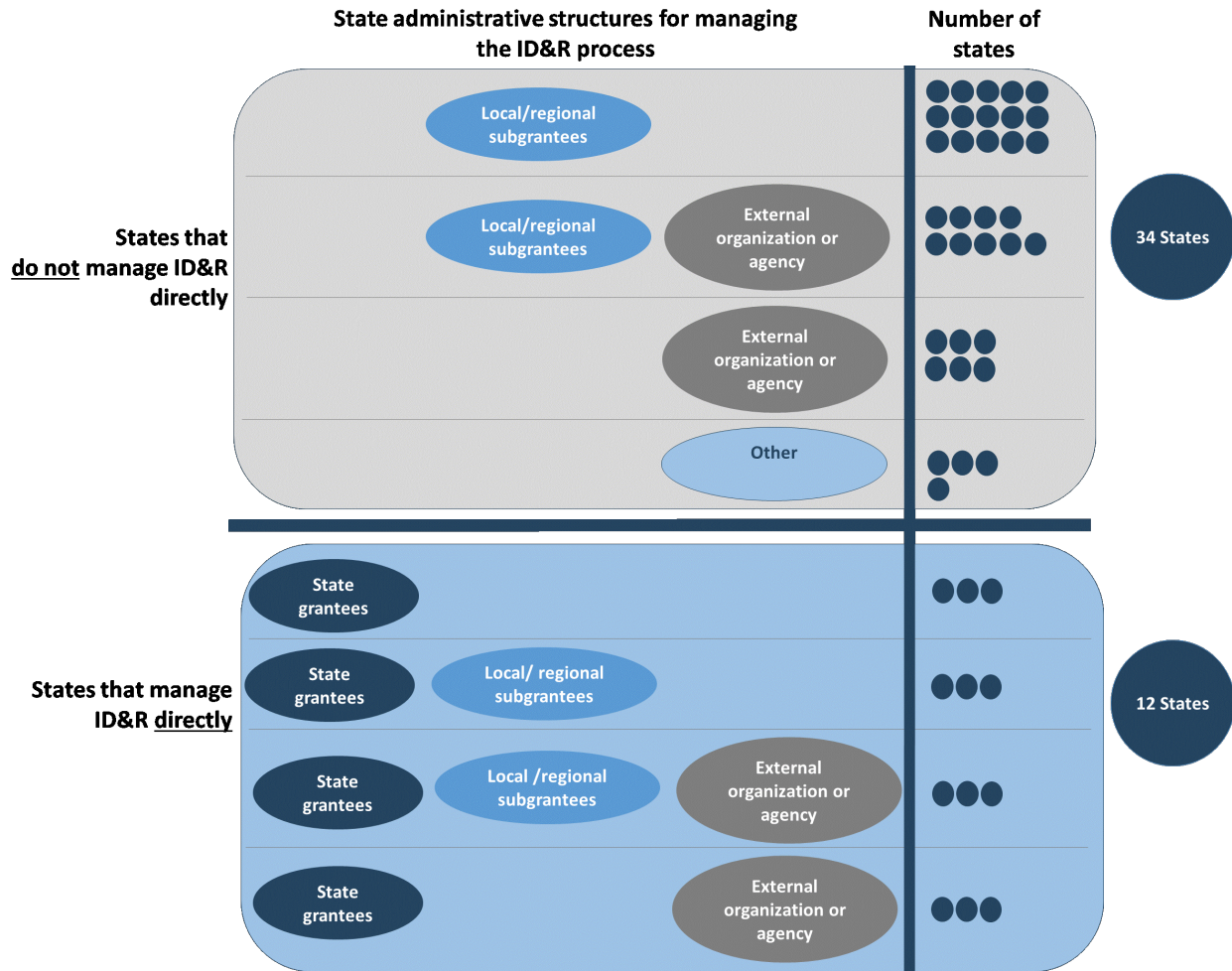


Exhibit reads: Thirty-four state MEP directors (top gray box) reported that they did not manage ID&R activities directly but instead relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees to hire, deploy, supervise, and train MEP recruiters. Of those 34 states, 15 relied on their local/regional subgrantees to manage the ID&R process entirely, 9 relied on their subgrantees as well as on contracts with external organizations or agencies, six relied only on contracts, and four relied on other sources to manage ID&R activities.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Items 2 and 3 (n = 46).

In interviews, several state MEP directors explained that the state did not manage ID&R directly because there were simply not enough state staff members available to appropriately attend to the many and varied ID&R-related MEP requirements. One state director described a staffing scenario that was common among the site visit states. He explained that there was only one full-time MEP employee (the director) and one part-time MEP data specialist at the state level: “We subgrant out all of the services, such as ID&R, and all of the direct services, all of the contracts and special projects. I cannot hire anyone for the state office.” Another state MEP director described contracting with a regional service agency to carry out the state’s ID&R activities, including training the 65 recruiters working at the state, regional, and local levels. Similarly, another state director reported contracting with an external organization to

provide ID&R technical assistance to local MEPs as well as to train recruiters, which included developing training tools and manuals.

Although most states relied on their subgrantees or contractors to manage ID&R, about a quarter of state MEP directors (12 of 46) reported managing the ID&R process directly. Three reported managing the ID&R process exclusively, without support from other sources; three reported managing the process along with their local/regional MEP subgrantees; another three managed the process directly as well as contracted with an external organization or agency to help; and three worked with their subgrantees and with outside contractors to identify and recruit migratory children (Exhibit 4).

In an interview, one state director described how the state worked together with its ID&R contractor to support ID&R for local/regional MEP grantees by participating in identification “blitzes” or “sweeps” in areas believed to house unidentified migratory populations. These periodic efforts to canvass locations with potentially high numbers of migratory children, youth, and families usually corresponded with known or anticipated times of migration or followed observed changes in qualifying activities. As one state MEP director indicated, “We are all recruiters. We are all in it together.”

State MEP directors also described actively assisting and supporting the ID&R process even if they did not directly manage recruitment. For example, one state director explained that the state MEP funds training and support for local MEP recruiters: “I see my role more as providing [recruiters] with professional development and resources on how best to do that identification and recruitment.” Another state MEP director reported reviewing and providing feedback on local/regional MEPs’ ID&R plans as well as training and providing recruitment tips to new recruiters (e.g., how to approach potential migratory families to discuss their eligibility).

One state MEP director described encouraging his regional MEP subgrant coordinators to support each other in the ID&R process. As this state MEP director explained, “We are coming together as a state to figure out ID&R.... Resources are not bound by [regional or district] lines.” In this state, all state MEP staff members (eight full-time and two part-time) and their regional MEP subgrantees participated in ID&R training approximately every seven weeks.

Finally, all interviewed state MEP directors described their role in reviewing and confirming the accuracy of the COEs that recruiters use to document every migratory child’s program eligibility. Several MEP directors described their review of COEs as providing important insights into the effectiveness of the ID&R process. One described reviewing a sample of COEs every month to identify local MEPs with high discrepancy rates that needed to develop corrective action plans as well as to identify and share promising ID&R practices across local MEPs. Another state MEP director, who contracted with an external organization to manage ID&R, decided to institute ID&R time logs for all recruiters based on his review of COEs:

We decided that recruiters have to devote 60 percent of their time to active recruitment. Twice a year they hand in logs of time spent recruiting because, before the logs, the state average was 28 percent [of recruiter time spent on active recruitment], so no wonder they weren’t finding families. Now [the percentage of time spent recruiting is] in the 70s and so people are doing a better job of finding migrant families.

Strategies Used to Identify and Recruit Migratory Children

Recruiters systematically identify migratory children, determine their MEP eligibility, and seek to enroll them in the MEP following the statutory and regulatory requirements such as qualifying work and moves. Recruiters may work for the state grantee, for local/regional subgrantees, or for external organizations or agencies contracted to conduct ID&R activities on behalf of the state or regional educational service agency.³⁴ As stated in the Office of Migrant Education's (OME) *Non-Regulatory Guidance* (USED 2017a):

Identification and recruitment are critical activities because the children who are most in need of program services are often those who are the most difficult to find ... [and] many migrant children would not fully benefit from school, and in some cases would not attend school at all, if [state education agencies] did not identify and recruit them into the MEP.

Recruiters most commonly identified and recruited migratory children using their contacts in the schools, communities, and businesses that migratory families frequent.

Overall, state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that recruiters used an average of 6.7 and 5.5 different strategies, respectively, to identify and recruit migratory children. These included developing and maintaining contacts: with staff in local schools (100 percent of state MEP directors and 96 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), in places or communities where migratory families are likely to reside (100 percent and 83 percent), with employers who hire migratory workers (96 percent and 81 percent), and with local businesses and organizations that serve migratory families (96 percent and 77 percent). In addition, most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that recruiters identified children through referrals from other agencies and organizations (91 percent and 71 percent) and by attending community events (80 percent and 75 percent) (Exhibit 5).

Consistent with the literature (USED 2011), the site visit interview data indicated that the ID&R process was not easy. The ever-changing migratory patterns and populations, as well as changes in the employers of migratory workers, kept recruiters busy as they quickly adapted, developed new strategies and expanded their searches to new areas where migratory families resided. In an interview, one local MEP coordinator described the ongoing challenges associated with identifying the whereabouts and the needs of a transient population: "We have to follow the population as it surges and decreases. We're constantly chasing after people wherever they pop up. These are mobile populations and we've got to be where they are. So, in terms of data, it's where the kids are ... but where are the kids? Where are we growing and where are we shrinking?"

³⁴ Ultimately, however, the state is responsible for the "proper and timely identification and recruitment of all eligible migrant children in the State" (USED 2017a, p. 36).

Exhibit 5. Strategies state and local/regional recruiters used to identify and recruit migratory children, 2017–18

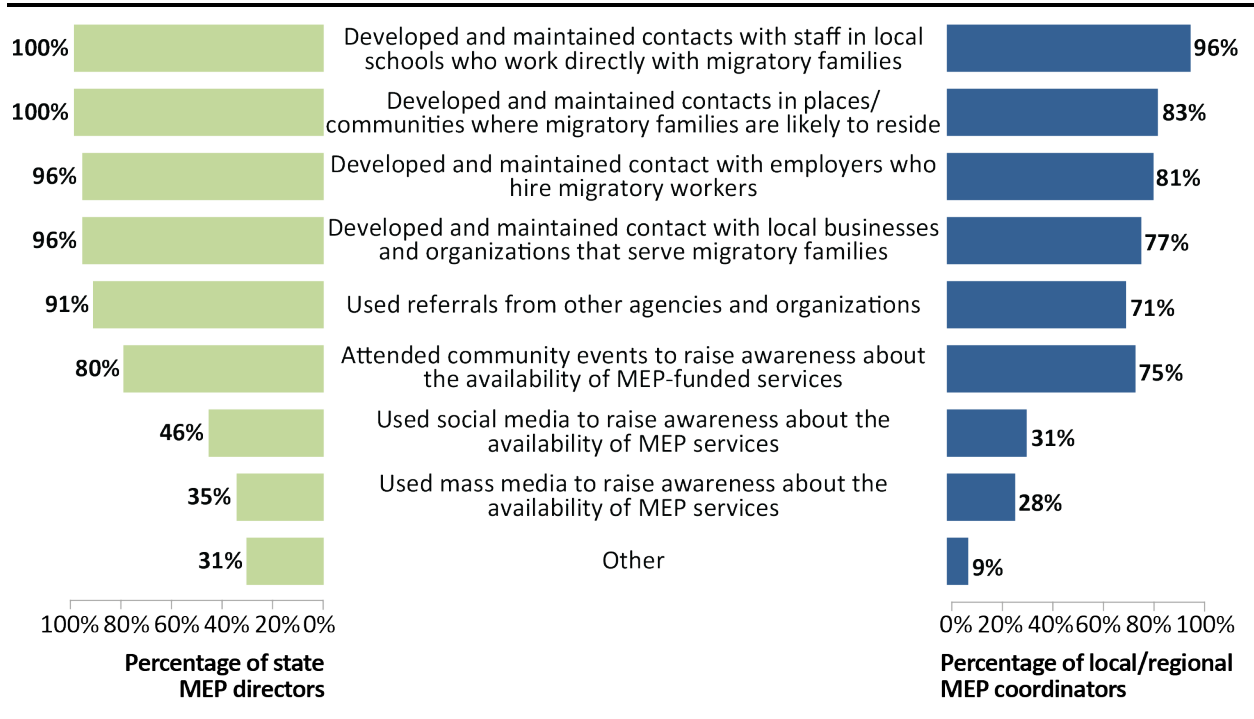


Exhibit reads: One hundred percent of 46 state MEP directors and 96 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that recruiters identified and recruited migratory children by developing and maintaining contacts with staff in local schools who work directly with migratory families.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 5 (n = 46); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 8 (n = 721).

Nearly universally, recruiters reported that relationship-building with families, agencies, employers, and school personnel was key to identifying and recruiting eligible migratory children. As one local respondent explained, “I’ve been doing it for 20 years, so the families know me. I get contacts through the families, the schools, the outreach programs in all the areas that I work, the reservation schools, the Catholic schools ... almost all the schools and the homeless liaisons ... everyone in my network understands our MEP [because] I explain to them how people qualify.” Recruiters also leveraged relationships with other school staff who regularly talk to families and might know of others who are eligible or coming to the community soon, saying to those staff: “We know who’s here, but is anybody else coming or anybody else you know of in the area that’s migrant that we haven’t reached?”

With respect to developing contacts with employers, one local MEP coordinator explained that the MEP had relationships with area farmers who let recruiters know when new migratory workers arrived. A MEP recruiter in another state described how helpful her relationship with a local employer had been: “We have gone to their worker orientation trainings, bothering them, introducing ourselves to the [workers], but the managers work very well with us, and they will make sure to tell us when a new family has arrived.” In another state, MEP recruiters frequently visited migratory worker camps, particularly during the peak season for local crops. Her description also referenced the value of personal relationships and word of mouth in identifying migratory children:

Right now, in the wintertime, I go maybe once a month [to the camps] just to check [things] out and make sure that no one new has arrived. I know that people start arriving in late February or early March. I know people who work at the camps, like the maintenance guy who goes to my church. When I see him, I ask him if [the migratory families have] arrived yet. He told me this Sunday at church that [the families] should be coming in the second week of March, so I know that I'll need to start checking more often then.

Local MEP staff in several states also described the ID&R strategy of working with the local Walmart, where many migratory families shop. In one local MEP, Walmart staffers called MEP recruiters to introduce them to migratory families while the families were still in the store. In other local MEPs, recruiters placed MEP fliers in the local Walmart or waited in the Walmart parking lots and distributed MEP fliers to families who might be migratory. In addition to finding families where they shopped, recruiters visited the apartment complexes where the majority of migratory workers resided and hung posters and fliers describing the MEP in the common areas of the buildings.

Recruiters working for other local MEP subgrantees revealed locally relevant strategies to locate hard-to-find migratory families. In one, recruiters described attending garage sales at the start of the season because many families need to pick up furniture or other items as soon as they move to the area. In another, MEP recruiters attended the community fair for agricultural workers. As one recruiter explained, "We have thousands of agricultural workers participating in this event.... Parents are getting information about the resources the community has to offer to them [there], so we're invited to that, and we pass along MEP brochures." In another local MEP, a coordinator described collaborating with a variety of agencies and organizations to identify migratory children:

We collaborate very closely with job services, migrant health, and all of the other agencies around the state, including legal services. When we do intake for individuals for our program, we provide food when they come in and gas if they need it to get to the next job. We set up a table with job services so that as these parents come in to get food and whatever they need, we catch them and then get their kids enrolled.

Recruiting Eligible Migratory Out of School Youth

In interviews, several local/regional MEP coordinators described how locating and recruiting migratory out-of-school youth was becoming increasingly difficult. Farmers no longer granted recruiters access to the work sites, and out-of-school youth were unable or unwilling to participate in the MEP because their work schedules limited their time to attend school. One coordinator explained, for example, that while recruiters had identified and recruited out-of-school youth in the past and provided them with services, it was more of a struggle now.

It's just that they are not here, or we don't have access to them if they are here. I have a recruiter who is honestly recruiting out of Walmart now, because she's found that a lot of the younger men are going to Walmart after hours. Some of them are wiring money from the [grocery store]. So, she is trying to pick up out-of-school youth on the streets because she can't get in the migrant camps.

One state MEP director explained that recruiting out-of-school youth was challenging at least in part due to their lack of interest in the services, particularly with respect to earning a high school diploma. "Out-of-school youth are here to work," explained one state respondent, "and sometimes they just don't want the high school diploma." However, some recruiters described how they were able to recruit OSY

by adapting the services to address their specific needs and interests. For example, one MEP provided out-of-school youth English/Spanish dictionaries (for native Spanish speakers) and first-aid kits that included a demonstration of proper treatment for injuries and sunburn.

MEP coordinators also described the challenges with sustaining the interest of out-of-school youth in the program. Another MEP coordinator explained that, for example, a recruiter might generate initial excitement but then have difficulty finding that person again to participate in future lessons or MEP events.

Prioritizing MEP Services for Qualifying Migratory Children

After migratory children are identified as eligible for MEP services, MEP staff determine which children should be designated for Priority for Services (PFS). Introduced in the 1994 reauthorization of *ESEA* under the *Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)*, the PFS provision requires state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees to identify and deliver services to the most recently mobile and academically at-risk migratory children before all others. The PFS requirement has remained a significant focus of the MEP and was further expanded in the 2015 reauthorization of *ESEA* by *ESSA*. The PFS “mobility” factor now includes migratory children who have moved within the previous one-year period (rather than being limited to children whose education was interrupted during the regular school year). The PFS “academic risk” factor now explicitly includes children who have dropped out of school, in addition to those who are failing or at-risk of failing to meet the challenging state academic standards. Because grantees had only begun implementing the expanded definition of PFS a few months prior to the launch of the study survey, they were surveyed only about the criteria they used to define migratory children who were failing or at-risk of failing to meet academic standards.³⁵ It is important to note, nevertheless, that *ESEA* requires each state to identify as PFS-eligible migratory children who have made a qualifying move within the previous one-year period, *and* who: (1) are failing or most at risk of failing to meet challenging state academic standards or (2) have dropped out of school (*ESEA* Sec. 1304(d)).

PFS Eligibility Criteria

MEP coordinators used both academic performance and academic risk factors to determine migratory children's PFS status.

State MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators used multiple criteria related to migratory children's academic performance to determine the academic risk PFS factor. These criteria included scoring below grade level on state assessments (94 percent of state MEP directors and 89 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), being English learners (85 percent and 78 percent), and/or being retained in grade for more than a year (80 percent and 71 percent). Many state and local/regional coordinators also reported prioritizing MEP services for migratory children based on dropping out of school (89 percent and 70 percent), or on academic risk factors, such as having changed schools in the past year (74 percent and 75 percent), being chronically absent (44 percent and 52 percent), or being truant (32 percent and 40 percent) (Exhibit 6).

³⁵ This decision was based on guidance provided by the study's technical working group.

Exhibit 6. Academic risk criteria state grantees and local/regional subgrantees used to define PFS eligibility, 2017–18

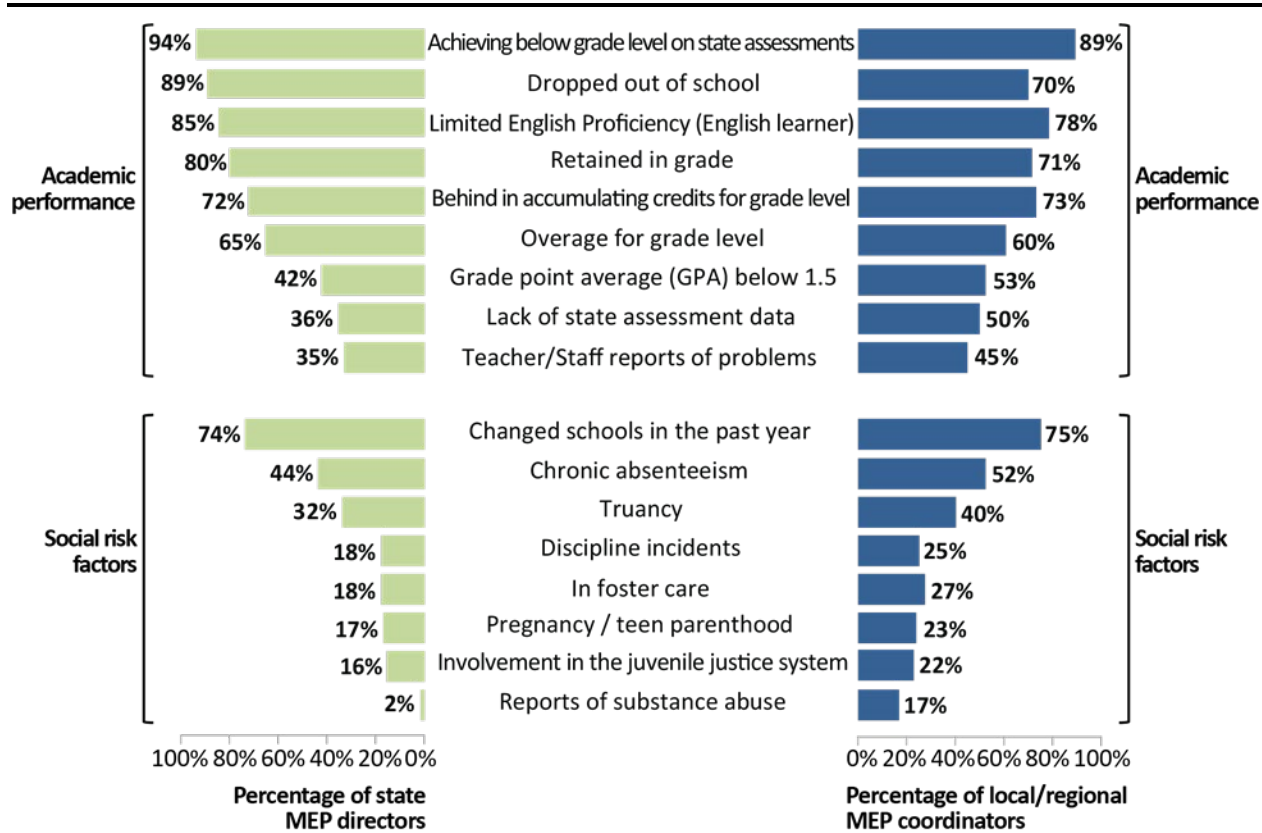


Exhibit reads: Ninety-four percent of 46 state MEP directors and 89 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that achieving below grade level on state assessments was among the academic risk criteria they used to determine migratory children’s PFS eligibility.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 6 (n = 46); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 9 (n = 738).

In response to changes from *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* to *ESSA*, more than half the state MEP directors and about a quarter of local/regional MEP coordinators reported making at least one change to their program’s PFS eligibility criteria.

The most common change in the transition from *NCLB* to *ESSA* was adding “dropped out of school” to the criteria for PFS (reported by 22 percent of state directors and 9 percent of local/regional coordinators), directly reflecting *ESSA*’s addition of dropouts to the PFS eligibility criteria. Further, some state grantees and local/regional subgrantees reported eliminating “changing schools during the previous or current school year” as a criterion under *ESSA* (15 percent and 6 percent) (Exhibit 7), also reflecting the *ESSA* change from educational interruption during the regular school year to moves during the prior 12-month period.

Exhibit 7. Changes to PFS academic risk eligibility criteria under ESSA, 2017–18

| | State criteria | Percentage of state MEP directors | Local/regional criteria | Percentage of local/regional MEP coordinators |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Criteria most often added under ESSA | Dropped out of school | 22% | Dropped out of school | 9% |
| | Pregnancy/teen parenthood | 11% | | |
| | In foster care | 11% | In foster care | 5% |
| | Retained in grade | 7% | | |
| | Lack of assessment data | 7% | | |
| Criteria most often dropped under ESSA | Changed schools during previous or current school year | 15% | Changed schools during previous or current school year | 6% |
| | Chronic absenteeism | 7% | Chronic absenteeism | 6% |
| | Teacher/staff reports of problems | 7% | | |
| | | | | |

Exhibit reads: Twenty-two percent of 46 state MEP directors and 9 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported adding “dropped out of school” as an academic risk criterion under ESSA to determine migratory children’s PFS eligibility.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 6 (n = 46); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 9 (n = 738).

Ensuring That MEP Subgrantees Prioritize Services for PFS-Eligible Migratory Children

Almost all state grantees (93 percent) used one or more strategies to ensure that MEP subgrantees prioritized services for PFS-eligible migratory children. The most common strategy used among state grantees was to apply a weighted funding formula for MEP subgrantees based on the number of identified PFS children (77 percent).

While the statute does not require states to make subgrants with program funds, if a state chooses to do so, ESEA section 1304(b)(5) requires that it take into account the PFS requirement in determining the amount of any subgrants awarded.

Seventy-seven percent of state MEP directors who made subgrants reported allocating MEP funding to local/regional subgrantees based on a weighted funding formula tied to the number of identified PFS children as a strategy for adhering to the statutory requirement. Other, less common strategies states used to ensure that MEP subgrantees prioritized services properly included requiring subgrantees to provide a minimum level of instructional services for PFS children, such as a minimum number of hours or contacts (23 percent) or basing the selection of MEP subgrantees in the state on the number of identified PFS children (14 percent) (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. State strategies used to ensure local/regional subgrantees prioritize services for PFS migratory children, 2017–18

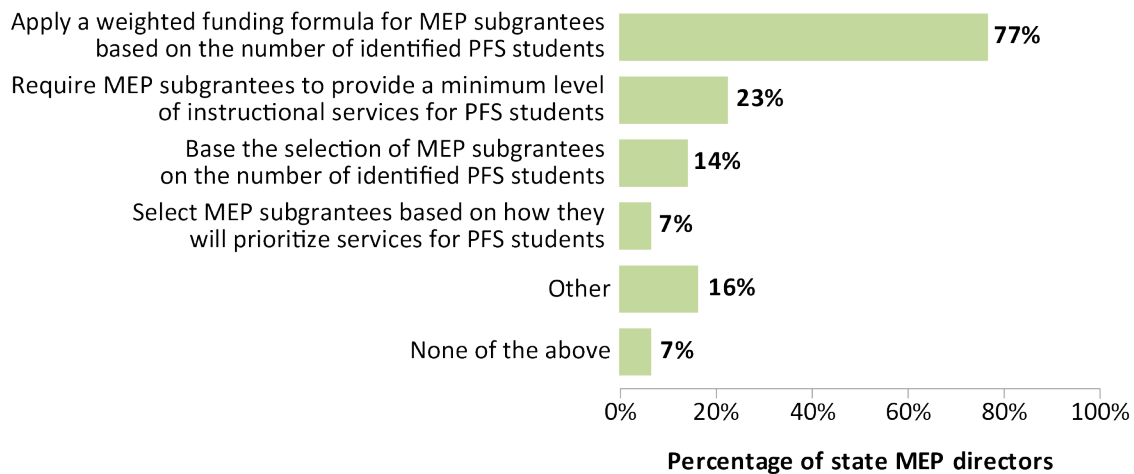


Exhibit reads: Among states that made MEP subgrant awards, 77 percent of 43 state MEP directors reported applying a weighted funding formula for MEP subgrantees based on the number of identified PFS children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 14 (n = 43).

In interviews, state directors and local/regional coordinators described the services they provided PFS children. For example, one regional MEP provided a four-week summer program of reading, mathematics, extracurricular activities, and field trips. Within this program, the most mobile children with the greatest academic needs worked in small groups with specialists who provided extra time to work on language development and reading. In another state, the family engagement and graduation specialists in every local/regional MEP worked with PFS-identified children, tracking their progress and entering notes on their interactions in a student database. These specialists kept a running list of children most academically at risk and those who had dropped out, which prompted home visits and one-on-one check-ins with the children and their families.

Despite the statutory requirement that MEPs serve PFS children first, state directors and local/regional MEP coordinators explained in interviews that implementing this requirement poses challenges. That is, while they described trying to provide services to PFS children before serving non-PFS-eligible migratory children, this was sometimes difficult. One MEP specialist, for example, described the difficulty of serving PFS-identified children at the expense of others who also had significant needs but did not meet the PFS eligibility criteria:

[A]t the migrant education [program], they ask us to prioritize. My target kids are ... the ones that have been new arrivals within one year. Those are my priority ones. Those are the ones that I should put a lot of my efforts into, but then I also have kids [whose] attendance is not that good. Then I go by their grades, because one is related to the other.... [And] then [I look at] the credits [in terms of deciding whom to serve].

Finally, in interviews several state MEP directors reported that the change in PFS eligibility did not require major changes to their program administration, for various reasons. In one state, for example, some migratory children who were explicitly added due to ESSA’s changes to ESEA (such as dropouts) had always been defined as PFS in their state. MEP directors in several states also noted that their population of migratory children was so small they had no need to distinguish between services for PFS

and non-PFS children; their funding was sufficient to serve all eligible migratory children. As one state MEP director explained, “I am going to start by saying because of our numbers we’re not a huge state like Arizona, where we’re having to make decisions about who to serve and who not to serve.... We’ve never had to prioritize like that.”

Chapter Summary

The extent to which states can adequately serve migratory children’s educational needs depends on whether they can identify the children. The ID&R process encompasses many moving parts, and the success of the program hinges on states getting that process right. States have wide latitude to manage ID&R in the way they deem appropriate. Most states ultimately relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees to hire, deploy, and supervise recruiters.

Recruiters’ efforts to find eligible migratory children involved an array of strategies, including maintaining contacts in the schools, communities, and businesses that migratory families frequent. In interviews, MEP coordinators described changes in migratory patterns and populations and in the employers who hire migratory workers, which kept them busy as they adapted existing strategies and developed new ones, including going to new locations where migratory families might shop, access services, and reside.

Following identification and recruitment, MEPs determine which migratory children are PFS because they are the most mobile and they are academically at risk or they have dropped out of school. MEP coordinators reported using an array of criteria to determine PFS eligibility, including data on whether children are achieving below grade level based on state assessments as well as English proficiency status. In addition, more than half the state MEP directors and about a quarter of local/regional MEP coordinators reported making at least one change to the PFS criteria in response to *ESSA*’s changes to *ESEA*. The most common change was adding “dropped out of school.” Still, interviews suggested that local/regional MEPs decided how to operationalize the PFS requirement and that addressing the needs of PFS-eligible migratory children over the needs of non-PFS-eligible migratory children was sometimes challenging.

Chapter 3. Using the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) to Improve Services and Supports for Migratory Children

The reauthorization of *ESEA* under the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001 authorized the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), a data base³⁶ to transfer educational and health information across and within states to facilitate timely school enrollment, grade and course placement, accrual of course credits, and MEP participation for migratory children.³⁷ MSIX maintains a Consolidated Student Record for each migratory child, including records of a child's history of school enrollments; high school course history; credit accumulation; achievement testing; medical alert, individualized education program (IEP), English Learner (EL), graduation and Algebra I completion indicators, as well as PFS and immunization records flags. MSIX allows for the Consolidated Student Record to be transferred within and across states. All MEP grantees are required to upload student information to MSIX. Its purpose is to mitigate the effects of educational disruptions for migratory children caused by frequent moves within and across states by providing rapid access to data needed to identify, enroll, and place migratory children as well as confirm that their health records are complete and that they are neither under- nor over-vaccinated.

All states that receive MEP funds are required to participate in MSIX. Each state system performs regular uploads of a minimum set of data elements established by regulation, which are then available to all active MSIX users, including recruiters, MEP directors and coordinators, data specialists, and migrant advocates and tutors at the state, regional, and local levels. In addition, MSIX supports Migrant Education Program (MEP) recruitment by incorporating move notifications that MEP staff within the MSIX network can send back and forth to alert each other when new families move within or across states. MSIX data can also help recruiters determine migratory children's eligibility for MEP services by recording qualifying moves and providing other information needed to make eligibility determinations.

This chapter describes the use of MSIX by state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators to facilitate the sharing of information in support of enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migratory children and their participation in the MEP.

Notification of Intra- and Interstate Moves

More than two-thirds of state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states.

Among those who said they knew whether MSIX improved timely notifications when migratory children moved across states,³⁸ 72 percent of state MEP directors and 70 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators agreed that MSIX did improve the timeliness of notification about migratory children

³⁶ In fact, it is a web-based repository of 76 minimum data elements or MDEs collected and submitted to MSIX by MEP grantees.

³⁷ MSIX is the current version of a records transfer system that was first introduced in 1969.

³⁸ About 10 percent of state MEP directors and a quarter of local/regional MEP coordinators did not know whether MSIX improved the timeliness of notification when migratory children move across states.

moving across states (Exhibit 9). In an interview, one state MEP director described MSIX as useful for knowing when migratory children have arrived in their state: “It is nice for the recruiters to go in [to MSIX] and say ‘Oh, this kid has moved here’ and see that the kid has been in the [MEP] before.... I know the recruiters, all of them, they use MSIX a lot.” Similarly, another state director described MSIX as a helpful recruitment tool: “Our recruiters use the system a lot. They log in, they see where the kids are. If they have any history of moves from other states that helps [recruiters] determine eligibility in our state.”

Exhibit 9. Extent to which MSIX improved timely notification when migratory children move across states, 2017–18

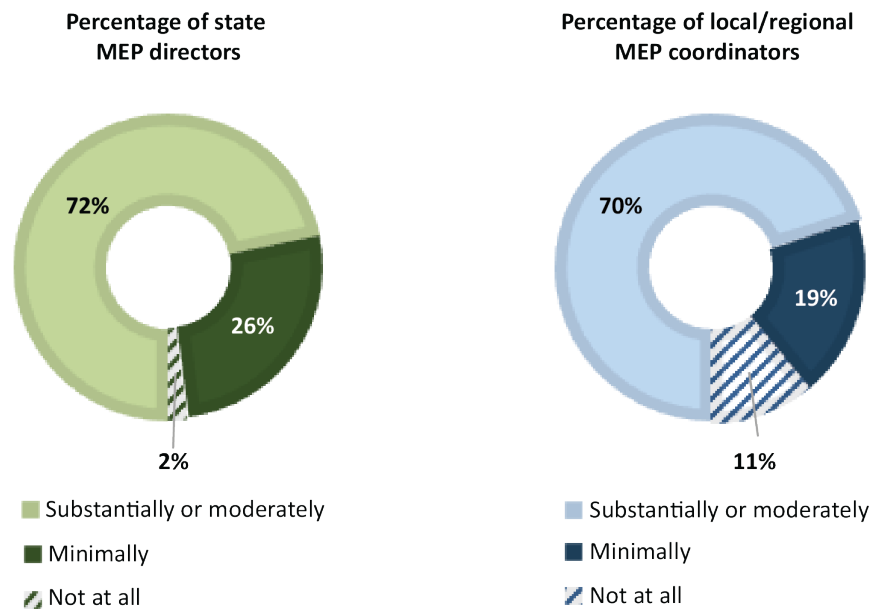


Exhibit reads: Of those who said they knew, 72 percent of 42 state MEP directors and 70 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved timely notification when migratory children move across states.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 29 (n = 42); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 34 (n = 543).

Another state MEP director explained how he relied on MSIX to provide notification of interstate moves of migratory children, which he shared with recruiters. However, because intrastate moves can be somewhat sudden and unpredictable, the director reported that MSIX is less reliable about these moves because updating new information can take time. For real-time recruitment updates, he said, he considered word-of-mouth a more reliable source. He explained that, for example, when migratory workers arrive in a county seemingly overnight, word of mouth is faster and more reliable than MSIX. As another state MEP director explained, while MSIX can be critical for notifying states about interstate moves of migratory children, districts are less dependent on the system for the identification and recruitment of children making intrastate moves:

When we have students who move within the state, our districts are really good at going ahead and just shooting an email to the staff saying, ‘Hey, my student just moved over to your area. Just making sure that you know that he received MEP services.’ The challenge is that districts are required to send notifications that the student moved through MSIX, but sometimes it takes a little

while to get all of that and try to reach out to the families. A simple email from the district to just me would be much faster in being able to sign the student up for the Migrant program.

Facilitating Interstate Student Records Transfers

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers.

Among those who said they knew,³⁹ more than three-quarters of state MEP directors (76 percent) and four-fifths of local/regional MEP coordinators (82 percent) reported that MSIX somewhat or significantly facilitated migratory student records transfer across states (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Extent to which MSIX facilitated migratory student records transfer across states, 2017–18

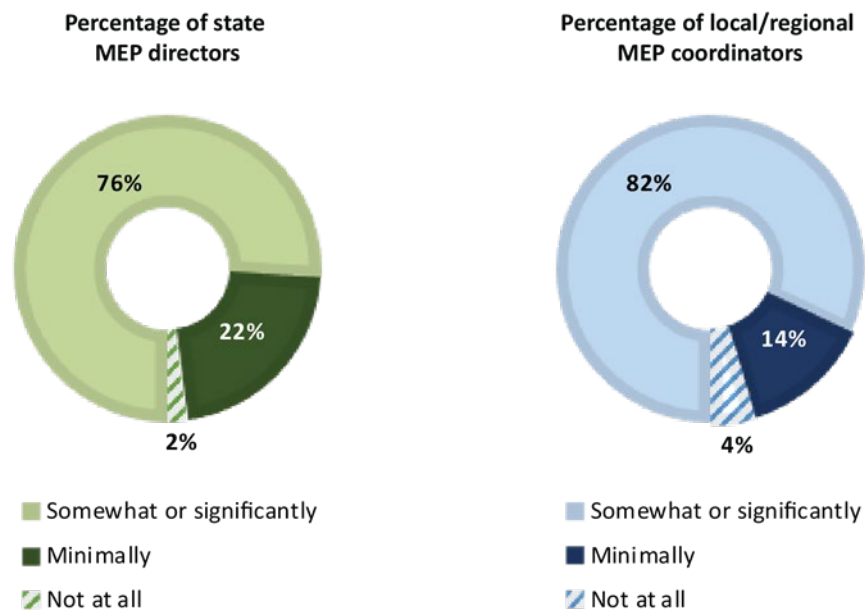


Exhibit reads: Of those who said they knew, 76 percent of 46 state MEP directors and 82 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX somewhat or significantly facilitated migratory student records transfer across states.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 27 ($n = 46$); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 32 ($n = 735$).

In interviews, state and local/regional MEP staff described MSIX as valuable for expediting the enrollment process because it provides critical information that sending states⁴⁰ normally supply through other means but that is often delayed, incomplete, erroneous, or out of date. One state MEP director explained that using MSIX expedited school enrollment for interstate moves “because [students’] data are readily available” rather than arriving slowly from the sending school district.

³⁹ About a quarter of local/regional MEP coordinators did not know whether MSIX had facilitated migratory student records transfer across states.

⁴⁰ A “sending state” is the state where a migratory child was previously enrolled in school, i.e., from which the child was sent. A “receiving state” is the state to which the child moves and enrolls in school, i.e., is received.

State MEP directors also described relying on relationships with sending states to strengthen the quality of data transfers across states outside of or in addition to MSIX. One state MEP director, for example, described building relationships by attending a conference on secondary credit accrual held in a sending state and which many staff from receiving states also attend: “It’s a way of knowing what other states are doing and how to coordinate with [the sending state] counselors,” he explained. This formal collaboration also built the relationships necessary for more informal collaboration throughout the year: “Most of the [migratory] students don’t have the necessary documentation for us to continue their education when they arrive, so having that network already established [with the sending state] helps me get the student records or be able to talk to a counselor so that we can place the kid as fast as we can and eliminate some of the interruptions.”

Improving Practices Intended to Mitigate Educational Disruptions for Migratory Children

The majority of local/regional MEP coordinators and about half the state MEP directors reported that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved other practices intended to mitigate the effects of educational disruptions for migratory children, such as the appropriateness of course placements and the timeliness of school enrollment.

Of those local/regional MEP coordinators who said they knew,⁴¹ the majority reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved the facilitation of course credit accrual (62 percent), appropriateness of course placements (63 percent), appropriateness of grade placements (63 percent), timeliness of school enrollment (59 percent), and reduction in unnecessary immunizations (53 percent) (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11. MEP directors’ and coordinators’ perceptions of the extent to which MSIX improved practices intended to mitigate educational disruptions for migratory children, 2017–18

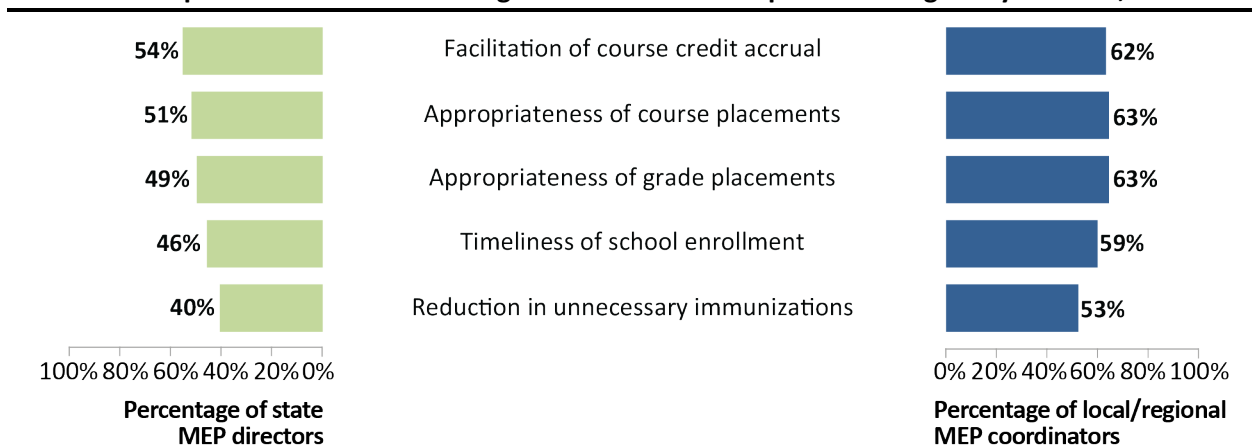


Exhibit reads: Of those who said they knew, 54 percent of 41 state MEP directors and 62 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX moderately or substantially improved the facilitation of course credit accrual.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 29 ($n = 41$); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 34 ($n = 542$).

⁴¹ About 7 percent of state MEP directors and a quarter of local/regional MEP coordinators did not know whether MSIX had improved other practices intended to mitigate the educational disruptions for migratory children, such as the appropriateness of course placements or the timeliness of school enrollment.

Local MEP coordinators reported in interviews that MSIX had improved over the years so that MEP staff could now access migratory children's grades and course-taking records, as well as learn where migratory children last attended school. As one local MEP staff member explained:

MSIX has gotten better. When it was first introduced, it was supposed to have provided a variety of information on migratory students but could only really generate information about which states migrant students were coming from and nothing more. Now we're getting the schools that migrant students come from as well as their grades and coursework. For example, if you have a high school student that's coming in and they aren't sure whether they had taken Algebra 1 or Algebra 2, you can look in the MSIX and, if they're coming from a school in the United States, you can see, 'Okay, yeah, here's where they are.'

Half or fewer state MEP directors agreed that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved practices intended to mitigate educational disruptions for migratory children such as the facilitation of course credit accrual (54 percent), appropriateness of course placements (51 percent), appropriateness of grade placements (49 percent), timeliness of school enrollment (46 percent), and reduction in unnecessary immunizations (40 percent). Among those interviewed, one state director said that MSIX had helped schools quickly identify what services and supports a student might need based on the child's previous academic performance and other non-academic data (e.g., disciplinary incidents). Another said he used MSIX "constantly" to help with validity checks and confirm data accuracy. "In fact, sometimes I will go to MSIX to find errors in the system because I believe that MSIX has better filters in catching data [errors]." In another state, the contractors who manage the identification and recruitment (ID&R) process explained that MSIX can sometimes be the only source of student data for facilitating the school enrollment process, particularly in the summer months when the sending district might be closed:

[MSIX] is a good way of looking at an incoming student and whether he or she had been migrant or is migrant and then looking at where to place them correctly and start facilitating that communication using that tool. Sometimes when we have our students come here, [the sending state] school district might be closed so we rely on MSIX.

Another state MEP director explained that before use of MSIX, migratory children were sometimes inoculated two or three times if a district or state did not have their immunization records: "Remember, families were moving all the time. There were many health risks.... That's why we developed the health record [for MSIX]."

On the other hand, state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators also described some challenges in the use of MSIX. State MEP directors, whose staff managed MSIX data verification and data-entry requirements, observed that not all states used MSIX consistently or in the same ways. One state director, for example, noted that while one state might use MSIX regularly, another state might not, which could lead to gaps in information about migratory children. These information gaps can lead to delays in school enrollment and in the delivery of educational services to migratory children:

... there is a whole comment box [in the MSIX database] that's usually empty. We give any information that we possibly can [about a family's impending move], but often, sending states just give us '[STATE] to [STATE],' and that's where I think some of the students may be falling through the cracks, because when they get here, they either don't know to tell us that they have previously been qualified for migrant, or they don't even know that we have a migrant program.

Another state director pointed out other data challenges, such as one state entering letter grades while another uses percentages or numbers, which can cause inconsistencies in how states awarded credits. “How do you translate [into] letter grades when the school district might give one, two, three, and four?” the director asked. She suggested that MSIX provide information about whether migratory children passed or failed a course: “Then nobody needs to interpret whether a grade translated into course credit.”

A state director in another state cited intrastate data-entry discrepancies as a problem, saying that school registrars, who are “on the front lines” of student enrollment, might not know, for example, that most migratory families have a surname comprising two separate names (e.g., Alvarez Leon) and that recording both is important: “You can’t pick which one you like better and record that last name; you need to record both last names [or we cannot find that student in the system],” she said. Finally, one state MEP director pointed to issues arising from receiving states’ data-use practices, saying that states undercut the benefits of MSIX if they did not accept incoming children’s credits or grades awarded by the sending states: “I feel that that’s delaying the process for our students to graduate, and when you delay the process, then students get discouraged, they give up, they don’t have hope.”

Additionally, not all state MEP directors who were interviewed believed that MSIX improved or expedited the enrollment process for migratory children. One state director, for example, explained that her state was largely uninterested in accessing student records from sending states because local school districts would conduct their own needs assessments to validate those records: “Otherwise, the instructional services or support services we provide won’t be very precise and targeted. So, we think there is a lot of duplication of effort [with MSIX], which may not be necessary.”

At the local level, one MEP coordinator explained that while much of their information came from MSIX, it was usually a semester old (e.g., it lacked spring semester data for migratory children arriving in the summer), thereby limiting its utility. The MEP coordinator instead contacted school counselors with whom he maintained personal relationships. As one contractor in charge of ID&R explained:

MSIX is only as good as [the data] entered ... students coming here at the end of May or early June are all exiting [the sending state at the same time]. That’s a lot of data entry, and there is a lag time between what [coursework] they completed in the spring and how soon that information gets into the system, so we can’t rely solely on the MSIX. It will tell us if they pass things in the first part of the year, but the spring [grades and test scores] will not always be in there yet, and so we really rely on that one-on-one communication.

Chapter Summary

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that having MSIX improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states and facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers. Interviews with state directors and local coordinators, however, highlighted areas in which MSIX had some room for improvement, particularly concerning consistency and accuracy in data-entry practices, including consistent entry of family names and course grades, and timeliness of data entry.

Chapter 4. Providing MEP Services to Eligible Migratory Children

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) is designed to provide supplemental instructional and support services to help mitigate the negative impacts of mobility on school success for migratory children. Indeed, mobility has a sweeping and significantly negative impact on student outcomes, including test scores, grades, graduation rates, behavior, and nonacademic outcomes such as community involvement and accessing local resources (Rumberger 2011; Reynolds, Chen, and Herbers 2009; USED 2011). A 2003 study found that the educational disruption and adjustment caused by frequent moves can derail the educational progress of migratory children, requiring up to four to six months for them to “recover academically” (Walls 2003; USED 2011). Finally, frequent mobility is specifically associated with significantly lower reading and mathematics achievement (Reynolds, Chen, and Herbers 2009).

States and their MEP subgrantees have considerable flexibility “to determine the [services] to be provided with funds, except that such funds first shall be used to meet the identified needs of migratory children that result from their migratory lifestyle, to permit [migratory] children to participate effectively in school.”⁴² Guiding the design of MEP-funded activities, state grantees complete a planning process that includes a Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Service Delivery Plan (SDP) conducted in consultation with migratory parents. The plan identifies the unique needs of migratory children and specifies how states and their MEP subgrantees will address those needs. Each state plan must show how the MEP is integrated and coordinates with other federally funded programs, addresses the unique needs of migratory children, and does not supplant other federally funded education programs. Ultimately, as part of the planning process, the MEP must ensure that migratory children have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic standards that all children are expected to meet. States review and revise the plans as needed to ensure they remain current.

Required SDP elements include performance targets for all migratory children that align with the state’s performance targets (e.g., achievement, graduation rates, and English learner progress) for all children established in the consolidated state plan for implementing the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* (which reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [ESEA]* in 2015); needs assessment results that identify the unique educational needs of migratory children; Measurable Program Outcomes (MPOs) in reading, mathematics, high school graduation, and early childhood education that the MEP will achieve statewide through specific educational or educationally related services; and a plan for evaluating the services provided. Additional elements may include the state’s plan for determining priority for service (PFS) and serving PFS students, a parent involvement plan that describes state consultation with parents in a language and format they can understand, an identification and recruitment plan, and a student records plan that describes the state plan for requesting and using migratory student records.

Within the SDP, state MEP grantees use their broad flexibility to provide services that are intended to address common areas of concern for migratory children that include, but are not limited to, the following, as defined by the Office of Migrant Education (OME) (excerpted from OME’s *Comprehensive Needs Assessment Toolkit*⁴³):

⁴² ESEA 1305 b.1 [20 U.S. CSCSC.6395].

⁴³ <https://results.ed.gov/cna-toolkit/article/2-c-list-of-resources-and-tools-for-step-2/common-areas-of-concern-handout>

- **Educational Continuity.** Because migratory children often are forced to move during the regular school year, children tend to experience a lack of educational continuity. Efforts to overcome this pattern are needed to strengthen educational continuity.
- **Instructional Time.** Mobility also impacts the amount of time children spend in class and their attendance patterns. Developing ways to ameliorate the impact of family mobility and delays in enrollment procedures are essential.
- **School Engagement.** When children are not engaged in school, they may be at risk for school failure. Migratory children need avenues that ensure they are valued and have the opportunities that more stable children have.
- **English Language Acquisition.** Since many migratory children have a home language other than English, migrant programs must find avenues to alleviate the difficulties faced by migratory children in English language acquisition that arise due to their unique lifestyle, while not supplanting Title III program activities.
- **Educational Support in the Home.** While many migratory parents value education for their children, they may not always know how to support their children in a manner consistent with school expectations nor have the means to offer an educationally rich home environment. Efforts to inform families are crucial.
- **Health.** Families often need assistance in addressing health problems that interfere with their children’s ability to learn.
- **Access to Services.** Since they are not perceived as permanent residents, migratory families may have difficulty obtaining services.

This chapter describes how state and local MEPs identified and addressed the unmet educational needs of migratory children. It first describes the sources of influence on the services selected to meet migratory children’s needs, including evidence of effectiveness and progress on MPOs, student performance on state assessments, and student graduation rates. Next, it describes the types of supplemental instructional, support, and referral services that states and local/regional MEPs directly provided to migratory children in 2017–18, drawing particular attention to efforts to help migratory out-of-school youth complete their high school equivalency.

Selecting Services to Meet Migratory Children’s Needs

State grantees and local/regional subgrantees have substantial flexibility to decide which instructional and support services to provide, and they draw on a range of data sources and strategies to make their service determinations. This section describes how state MEP directors and local/regional coordinators use data to inform the planning and delivery of MEP-funded services.

Sources of Influence in the Selection of Services

Most state MEP directors considered multiple data sources and factors in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children.

The vast majority of state MEP directors identified four factors as important in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children: results of the needs assessments of migratory students (all the state MEP directors), the amount of MEP funding available (98 percent), migratory student outcome data (98 percent), and availability of services from other programs (93 percent) (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Sources of influence on state MEP grantees' determination of specific services for migratory children, 2017–18

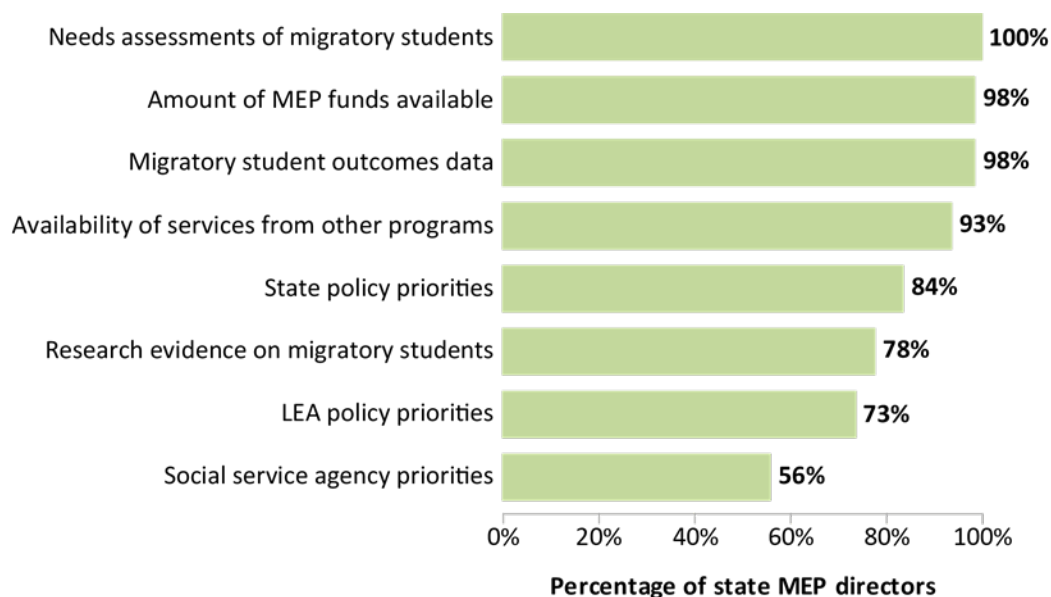


Exhibit reads: One hundred percent of 45 state MEP directors reported that needs assessments of migratory students were an important or very important influence in their determination of the services and supports provided or funded to meet the needs of migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 7 (n = 45).

Interviews suggested that state directors also used other information sources to determine what services would best address their migratory children's needs. For example, one state MEP director described visiting 80 to 100 schools a year, particularly the schools with the largest number of migratory children. He described using these visits to consult with local/regional MEP coordinators, meet with parents, and interview principals and students to identify the instructional and support services that migratory children need:

Some states only have 12 people on their committees, and I said, I want as big a number as possible.... I want everybody in leadership to, as much as possible, engage in the dialogue and the decision-making so that when it's a completed project, they have buy-in. They know why we chose what we chose; they've seen the data. They've argued which direction to go, and their programs are stronger because of that.

Another state’s MEP director described working with counselors in their migratory children’s sending state and schools to determine how their MEP-funded summer program could best serve these children’s needs. The counselors determined that because these children stayed in the director’s state only briefly during the summer, it made more sense to design their services around the academic standards of the sending state. Using this information, local MEP staff created individualized study plans that addressed the academic and credit requirements the children would face upon returning to their sending state. The MEP director pointed out the added value of this approach: “Your average state summer school program is not going to know anything about [another state’s standards].”

Finally, one state MEP director reflected upon the overall quality of services delivered to migratory children and described prevailing on MEP subgrantees to focus on providing more intensive, longer-duration instructional supports across all academic subject areas rather than continue offering limited supports lasting only one or two days.⁴⁴

You're not going to learn with a one-day intervention, which is a problem I have with the funding formula, because it provides funding on the basis of a service, but it doesn't say how long the service has to [last]. So, I am constantly battling with all the subgrantees, because they want to offer a two-day service ... but it doesn't meet the students' academic needs, necessarily.

While state MEP directors lead the development of the Service Delivery Plan and determine the general types of services to provide, local/regional coordinators also consider various factors when selecting from the menu of services defined in the Service Delivery Plan. Like state MEP directors, most local/regional MEP coordinators reported that the important or very important sources of influence on their determination of specific services for migratory children were needs assessments of migratory students (95 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), the amount of MEP funding available (93 percent), and migratory student outcomes data (91 percent). Local/regional MEP coordinators also reported that state (92 percent) and local (74 percent) policy priorities were an important or very important source of influence on their determination of services for migratory children.

Using Evidence and Data to Inform the Selection of MEP-Funded Services

Most state MEP directors review and consider at least one data source in selecting the instructional and support services that they deem best suited to their migratory children’s educational needs.

About two-thirds of state MEP directors used at least one source of information, such as the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Science’s [What Works Clearinghouse](#) or Johns Hopkins University’s [Evidence for ESSA](#) websites, to select evidence-based instructional and support services for migratory children. No one source, however, garnered use among a majority of state MEP directors.

⁴⁴According to the *Non-Regulatory Guidance* (USED 2017a), “‘Services’ are those educational or educationally related activities that: (1) directly benefit a migrant child; (2) address a need of a migrant child consistent with the SEA’s comprehensive needs assessment and service delivery plan; (3) are grounded in scientifically based research or, in the case of support services, are a generally accepted practice; and (4) are designed to enable the program to meet its measurable outcomes and contribute to the achievement of the State’s performance targets” (Section A1, p. 53).

Fewer than half the state MEP directors reported using resources from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)⁴⁵ (45 percent), Evidence for ESSA⁴⁶ (39 percent), the Regional Educational Laboratories⁴⁷ (34 percent), or the Comprehensive Centers Program⁴⁸ (32 percent) as sources of information for selecting evidence-based instructional and support services for migratory children. A few state MEP directors (7 percent) reported using the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, a searchable online registry of mental health and substance abuse interventions. It is important to note, however, that the survey did not ask whether any of these sources offered information on evidence-based instructional and support services for migratory children. Indeed, about a third of state MEP directors (34 percent) reported using none of the information sources listed in the survey, and six states reported using other sources of information to select evidence-based instructional and support services, including research organizations, regional educational service centers, and school district staff. Most local/regional MEP coordinators (75 percent) reported that the state MEP director or other state MEP staff members were their preferred sources when selecting evidence-based instructional and support services for migratory children.

Finally, to inform the planning and delivery of MEP-funded services, most state MEP directors and local/regional coordinators used progress on Measurable Program Outcomes (93 percent of state directors and 75 percent of local/regional coordinators), student performance on state assessments (93 percent and 87 percent), or student graduation rates (84 percent and 71 percent). In an interview, one state MEP director described his decision to expand statewide access to a middle school camp based on one district's graduation rates:

We have one district that ... had 27 [migratory students], and all of them are graduating and all of them are going on to college. So, you have to stop and look at that and ask, 'What are [they] doing that's making that so?' They started sending their middle school kids to camp and getting them motivated to not only graduate, but to make the most of middle school.... So, they've been doing that consistently over the last five or six years.... So now it's a statewide camp; we provide that option for all the programs because we see the bang for the buck in it.

In another state, a local/regional MEP coordinator recognized that a growing population of migratory youth spoke indigenous languages and was not progressing academically, so they began to provide additional support services for those students. "When we started focusing more on that population, we noticed that [children] had shown almost no growth at all [over three years]. That wasn't right. So, we started providing more services for them, so they can at least show some growth per year."

⁴⁵ The WWC reviews research on education programs, products, practices, and policies to help educators make evidence-based decisions.

⁴⁶ The Center for Research and Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University provides an online resource at www.evidenceforessa.org, to help schools identify reading and mathematics programs based on ESSA-required evidence standards.

⁴⁷ Administered by the Department's Institute for Education Sciences, Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) work in partnership with states, districts, and other educational stakeholders to produce and use evidence-based strategies to improve student outcomes.

⁴⁸ Administered by the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Comprehensive Centers Program awards discretionary grants that support 22 comprehensive centers to help increase state capacity to assist districts and schools in meeting student achievement goals.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that their state information systems permitted the disaggregation of student performance data by migratory status, which they used to help select instructional and support services to offer migratory children.

Most state MEP directors (85 percent) and local/regional MEP coordinators (91 percent) reported being able to disaggregate various data for migratory students. Of those, most reported being able to disaggregate English learner status (97 percent of state MEPs and 92 percent of local/regional MEPs), dropout status (87 percent and 76 percent), whether they had changed schools during the previous or current school year (87 percent and 84 percent), state assessment scores (85 percent and 85 percent), and cohort graduation rates (82 percent and 62 percent) by migratory status (Exhibit 13).

Notably fewer state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported being able to disaggregate nonacademic dropout-risk factors such as involvement with social services (22 percent of state MEPs and 41 percent of local/regional MEPs), involvement with the juvenile justice system (6 percent and 25 percent), reports of substance abuse (3 percent and 16 percent), and pregnancy or teen parenthood (0 percent and 20 percent).

Exhibit 13. Percentage of state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees that could disaggregate various types of data by students' migratory status, 2017–18

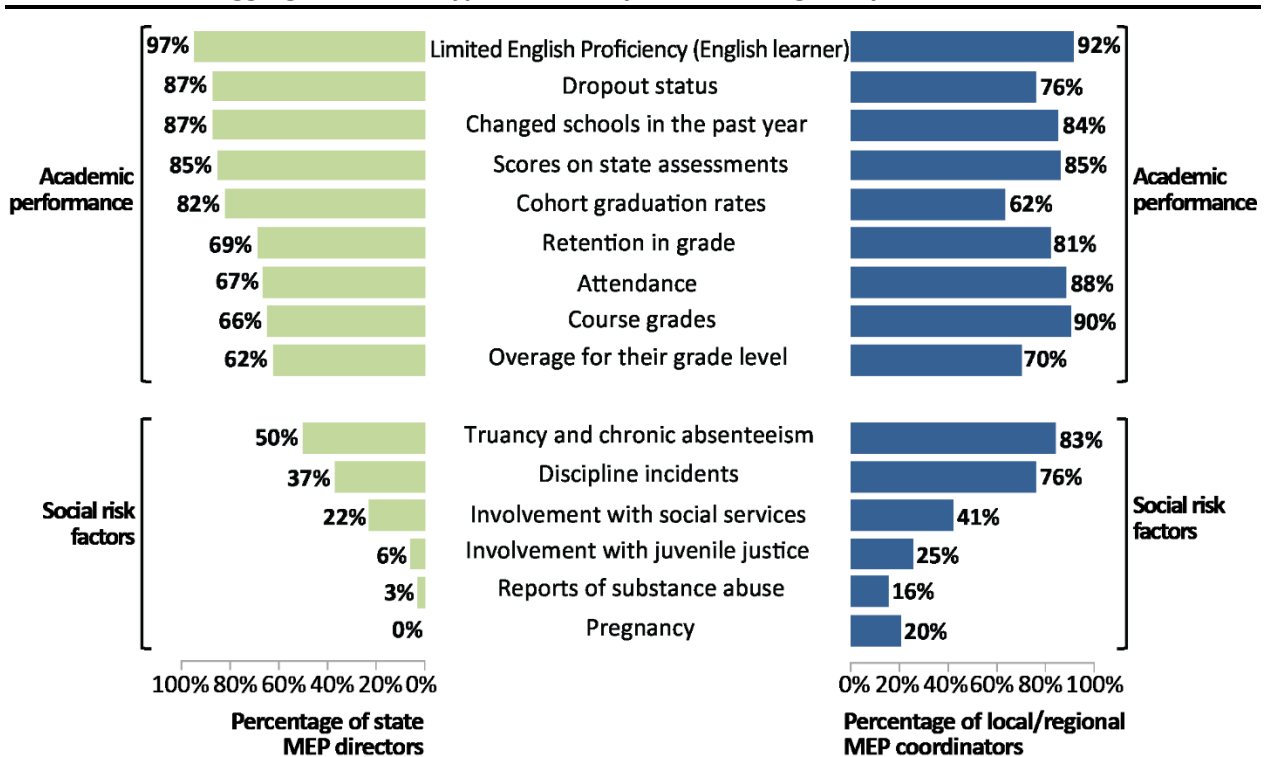


Exhibit reads: Ninety-seven percent of 39 state MEP directors and 92 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported being able to disaggregate migratory student data by their limited English proficiency (English learner) status.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 24 (n = 39); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 29 (n = 596).

Sometimes the ability to disaggregate data by students' migratory status, however, was limited by the data available in the system. For example, because migratory students are often absent when state testing occurs, one local MEP coordinator instead collected his own twice-yearly teacher ratings on migratory students' performance on state standards.

In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators also described using qualitative data sources for decisions on planning and delivery of services, such as talking to MEP participants and their families to collect their impressions of the benefits of program activities. One local MEP coordinator explained that yearly interviews with parents, students, teachers, and community members provided the most informative data for planning purposes: "Honestly, to me, the most important part of the [process] is not finding out whether students are high or low academically, it's figuring out *why* they're high or low academically.... We can't know that stuff unless we're out there in the field talking to those folks." Another MEP coordinator described using information collected from counselors at students' home-base school to create individualized study plans that not only were aligned with students' academic history, but also prepared students for the academic requirements they would face when they returned home.

Serving the Instructional and Support Needs of Migratory Children

The primary purpose of the MEP is to help mitigate the negative impacts of mobility on school success.⁴⁹ The following describes the types of instructional and support services state and local/regional MEPs provided to migratory children to help them succeed in school. Each section begins by describing the varied administrative structures states created to deliver both instructional and support services to migratory children. As explained earlier in the report, the purpose of describing these administrative structures is to accurately and comprehensively reflect the full array of state and local/regional MEP service providers and to underscore the point that some state MEPs are engaged directly in on-the-ground MEP activities, including overseeing the delivery of instructional and support services to migratory children.

Instructional Services

State MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees provided migratory children a variety of supplemental instructional services intended to help them stay in school, achieve to the same educational standards expected of all students, graduate from high school, and go on to college and careers. Types of supplemental instructional services included academic instruction, such as reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, English as a Second Language instruction, and online courses; academic support, such as academic guidance and advocacy, diagnostic evaluations of educational needs, and other online education supports; support for college and career preparation,

⁴⁹ ESEA section 1301 describes the purposes of the MEP to include: "(1) support[ing] high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves; (2) ensur[ing] that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the states in curriculum, graduation requirements, and state academic content and student academic achievement standards; (3) ensur[ing] that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner; (4) ensur[ing] that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet; (5) design[ing] programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and prepar[ing] such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment; and (6) ensur[ing] that migratory children benefit from state and local systemic reforms."

such as graduation planning, career exploration and guidance, preparation for postsecondary transition, or credit-recovery programs; and preschool or early childhood education.

More than a third of state MEP grantees (19 of 46) directly provided supplemental instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children.

Nineteen state MEP directors reported that their state provided direct instructional services to migratory children (Exhibit 14, top blue box). Of these, two state directors reported that their state was the sole instructional service provider to migratory children, with no help from subgrantees or contractors; 10 reported that their state provided direct services but that local/regional MEP subgrantees also provided instructional services; six reported relying on their local/regional subgrantees as well as on outside contractors to serve the instructional needs of migratory children; and one state MEP director reported that the MEP provided direct services as well as relied on their outside contractors, but not on local/regional subgrantees, to serve the instructional needs of migratory children.

The remaining 27 state MEP grantees (Exhibit 14, bottom gray box) did not provide direct instructional services, but rather relied on their subgrantees to provide these services. Of these, 17 relied solely on their subgrantees, and another 10 relied on both their subgrantees and outside contractors to serve the instructional needs of migratory children.

Exhibit 14. State MEP structures for providing instructional services to migratory children, 2017–18

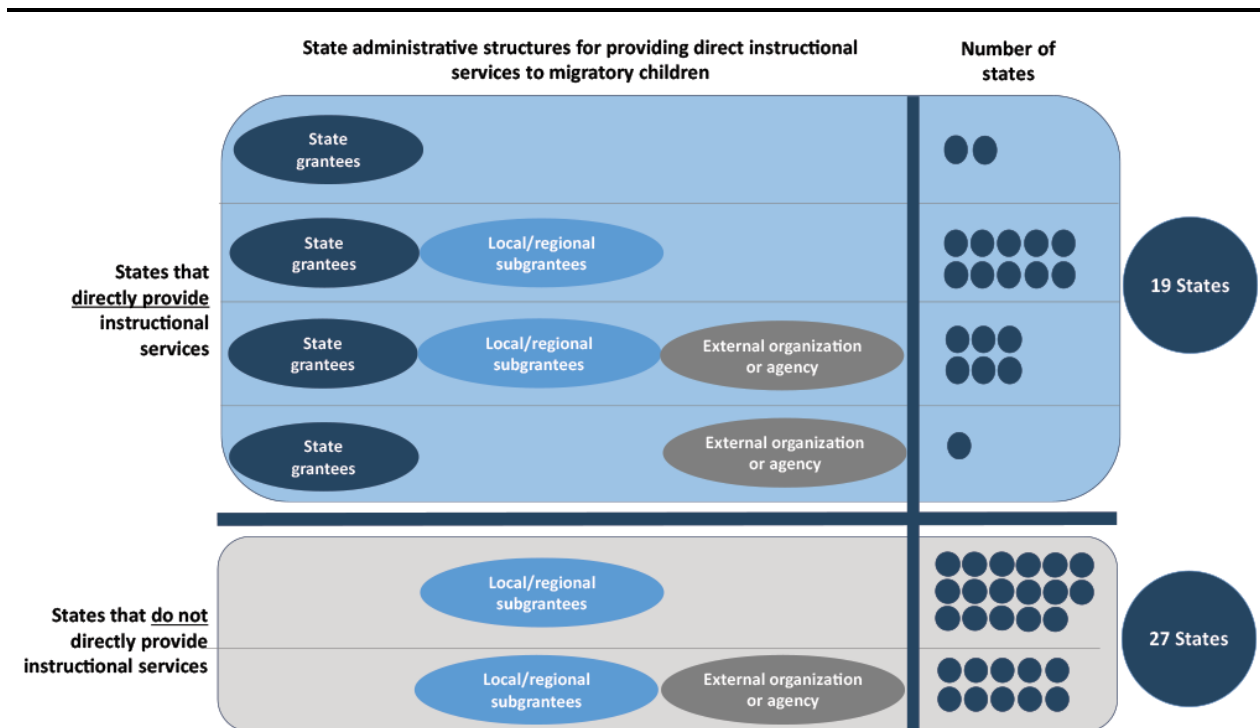


Exhibit reads: Nineteen state MEP directors (top blue box) reported that their state provided direct instructional services to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Items 2 and 9 (n = 46).

Among the 19 states that provided direct instructional services to migratory children, most reported providing college and career supports and academic instruction.

In states that provided instructional services directly to migratory children, state MEP directors reported providing an average of six types of instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children. Common types of instructional services and other academic supports states provided directly to migratory children included career exploration and guidance (69 percent), high school graduation planning and assistance (63 percent), reading and language arts instruction (58 percent), mathematics instruction (53 percent), credit-recovery programs (53 percent), and preparation for the postsecondary transition (53 percent). (Exhibit 15).

In interviews, several state MEP directors noted that the direct instructional services and other academic supports they provided included special events, like college visits or summer camps. One state MEP director explained that the regional and local MEPs provided more traditional instructional services such as tutoring in reading and language arts or mathematics, whereas the state sponsored special activities such as the College Experience Days program through which migratory students visited a college and learned about the college application process. In addition, the state ran five separate residential one- to three-week summer camps at a state university that helped middle and high school migratory students develop their literacy, writing, and leadership skills. Similarly, another state MEP director described having run a statewide speech and debate program and an annual leadership institute in the past.⁵⁰ Finally, one state MEP director described the impact of a leadership institute that the state contracted with a local university to provide to migratory high school students. As the state MEP director described it, the program had been effective in helping migratory children stay in school, graduate, and go on to college and careers:

We have a high school leadership institute [camp] that started in 2009, and students today who weren't even planning on going to college are now going to graduate [from high school], go to college, and make a difference in their lives. We had been sending nine students from each subgrantee site to the leadership institute, but this year we're expanding that to 18, and next year it will be 27. When we ask seniors to what they owe the fact that they are graduating, they give us three answers: (1) they went to a high school camp, which turned their life around; (2) their parents sacrificed everything to get them an education; or (3) a mentor or teacher pulled them aside and said they were going to be somebody.

The vast majority of local/regional MEP subgrantees directly provided supplemental instructional services and academic supports to migratory children, the most common of which included reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, and academic guidance and advocacy.

The vast majority of local/regional MEP subgrantees (93 percent) directly provided migratory children an array of instructional services and other academic supports to mitigate the learning challenges caused by education disruptions that migratory children regularly experience.⁵¹ On average, local/regional MEPs reported providing nine types of services and supports to migratory children. Local/regional MEP coordinators most commonly reported providing reading and language arts instruction (84 percent),

⁵⁰ The state now provides additional funding to subgrantees to offer these programs.

⁵¹ The remaining seven percent provided instructional services through their sub-subgrantees or contracted with external organizations or agencies to do so.

mathematics instruction (82 percent), academic guidance and advocacy (80 percent), graduation-planning assistance (76 percent), and career exploration and guidance (75 percent) (Exhibit 15).

Exhibit 15. MEP-funded instructional services that state grantees and local/regional subgrantees provided directly to migratory children 2017–18

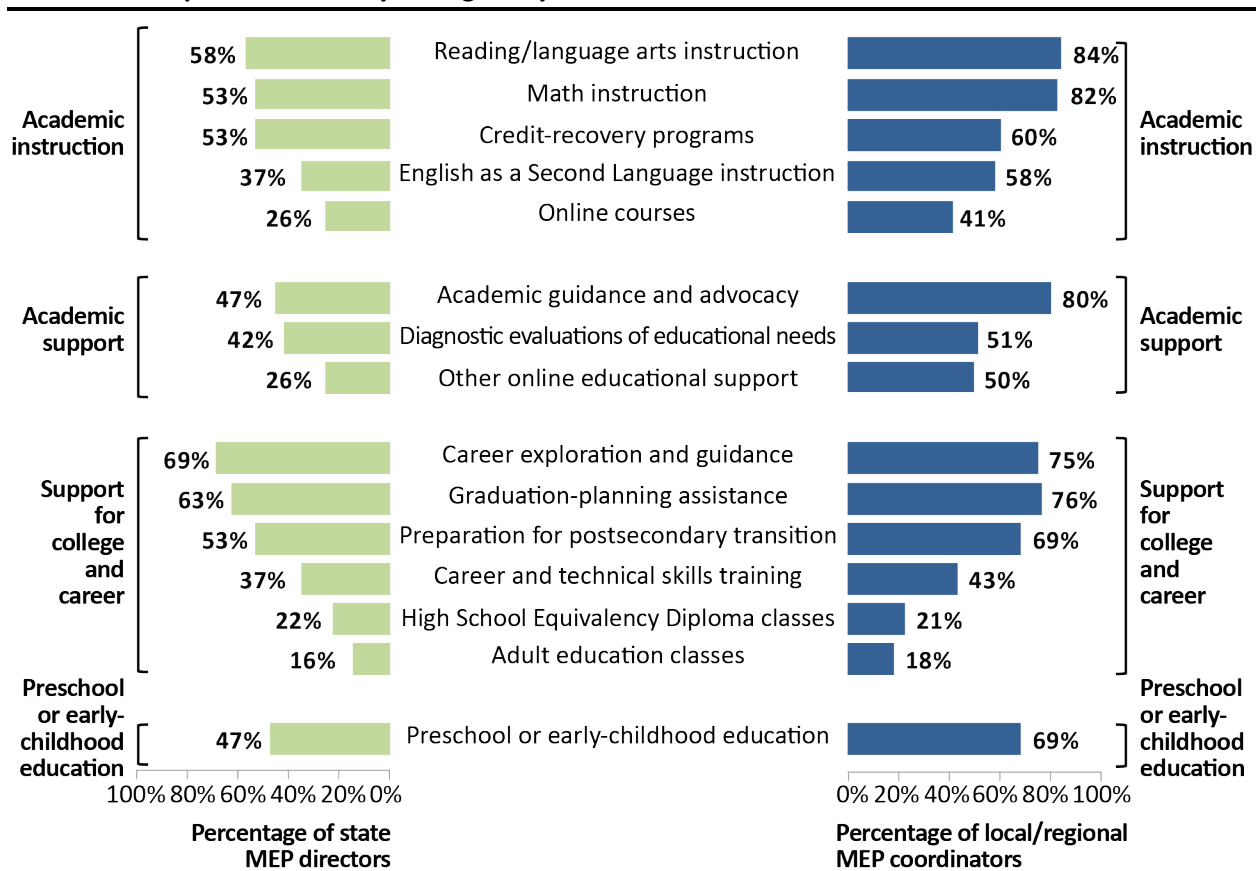


Exhibit reads: Of those who directly provided instructional services, 58 percent of 19 state MEP directors and 84 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing reading and language arts instruction (e.g., tutoring, remedial education, or other instructional services) directly to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 9 ($n = 19$); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 12 ($n = 736$).

In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators described the reading and mathematics instruction they directly provided to migratory children. One local MEP coordinator, for example, described providing in-home reading and developmental support to eligible preschool-age migratory children. Another local coordinator ran an after-school program for migratory children in grades K–5. Three days a week, credentialed teachers from the district provided supplemental English language arts or mathematics instruction for migratory children, and two days a week two outside organizations contracted by the district provided enrichment instruction, including STEM lessons combined with soccer drills and artists teaching visual and performing arts. One teacher described the benefits of the after-school support: “These kids need something to come and do after school, and it’s great that they’re getting more one-on-one time with teachers.”

One local MEP coordinator described enrolling his district’s migratory children in a statewide MEP program that hired college students from across the state — particularly former migratory students interested in pursuing careers in education — to tutor the migratory students. According to one principal, the benefits of the program are notable:

[The tutors provide] exposure to a role model, a Latino student who’s enrolled in college and is staking out a career path.... They need to see that: ‘Oh, this person has a background like me, and grew up like me, and sat in these seats, and now they’re going to college and they’re on a career path,’ and they need to see that because there’s probably not too many people in their family that have been to college.

In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators also described a range of approaches to helping migratory children stay in school and prepare for college and career. One local MEP coordinator, for example, identified credit accrual as the number one challenge because the children’s biannual moves make it difficult to obtain and transfer credits from state to state. Accordingly, this local MEP focused its services on credit recovery and planning for graduation. Another local MEP coordinator described offering a STEM-focused career exploration program for high-school-age migratory youth that consisted of eight Saturday sessions followed by two experiential learning events, including a Code Day Hack-a-thon and an overnight trip to visit tech companies to “see the careers in action.”

Other approaches to helping migratory children prepare for college and career included graduation advocates and college visits. In interviews, for example, a regional MEP coordinator described creating a program that provided a graduation advocate in each area of the state where large concentrations of migratory children attended school. The advocates delivered instructional support services including tutoring and after-school help. Another local MEP hosted a College Day event to help migratory children learn about postsecondary educational options and how to apply to and prepare for college. As one respondent explained: “I encourage the students, as well as their parents, to attend [College Day] because they also learn about the dual enrollment program and how they can take college-level classes and earn up to an associate degree without actually going to college.”

Finally, local MEP coordinators described using online courses for a variety of purposes, including skill reinforcement, credit accrual, and credit recovery. For example, one local MEP coordinator explained that the MEP had just begun offering an online reading program for migratory sixth graders that helped them develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills: “There are 29 different reading levels with 30 different books at each level that they can [work on] online...it’ll give them their fluency and check for comprehension.” A local MEP coordinator in another state described providing one migratory out-of-school youth with access to online programs that allowed him to “come in, get his credits, do his core content, and then get out there and go to work.” Finally, a local MEP coordinator in a third state explained that the Migrant Education Program offered an afterschool online credit-recovery program: “[Migratory children] come in, and if they failed a class, and they need to make up the credits, they are able to take the [online credit accrual program] online. They have a range of subjects, [including] English, health, and some math courses.”

Helping Migratory Out-of-School Youth Complete High School

The Office of Migrant Education (OME)-commissioned literature review (USED 2011) identified school-based strategies to meet the needs of out-of-school youth, such as offering flexible credit accrual options, pre-high school equivalency diploma (HSED) and HSED instruction, health education, life-skills

courses, advocacy, and transportation. The review also noted that services for out-of-school youth should focus on job training and career preparation, such as programs that promote work-based learning, connect out-of-school youth to future job opportunities with employers, and educate them about the culture of work, including dress, communication, and attendance. This section describes the types of instructional services that state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing to out-of-school youth.

Local/regional MEP coordinators also reported providing instructional services and other academic supports to out-of-school youth, the most common of which were academic guidance and advocacy, reading and language arts instruction, career exploration and guidance, and mathematics instruction.

Among the local/regional MEP coordinators reporting providing direct instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children, more than half reported providing direct instructional services specifically to out-of-school youth, including academic guidance and advocacy (59 percent), reading and language arts instruction (55 percent), career exploration and guidance (55 percent), and mathematics instruction (52 percent).

Exhibit 16. Percentage of local/regional subgrantees that provided various instructional services to migratory out-of-school youth, 2017–18

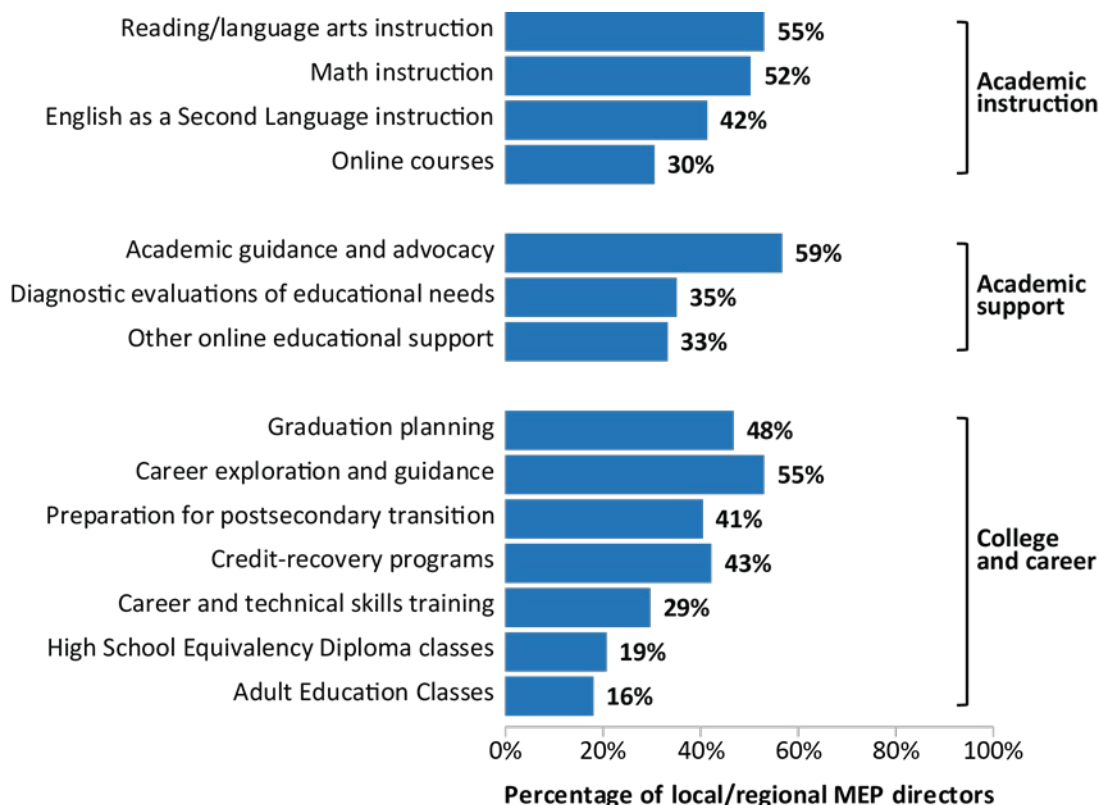


Exhibit Reads: Of the 736 local/regional MEP coordinators who reported providing direct reading and English language arts instruction to any migratory children, 55 percent reported providing the service to migratory out-of-school youth in particular.

Source: Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Items 12 and 14 (n = 736).

In interviews, some local/regional MEP coordinators explained that the services made available for out-of-school youth reflected their needs, interests, and access to other sources of support. For example, one MEP coordinator explained that program staff delivered services at locations and times convenient for out-of-school youth, such as at the library, the youth's residence, or another central location. Another local MEP coordinator explained that the program focused primarily on tailoring MEP services to address the expressed needs of out-of-school youth, which meant connecting them to ESL classes and providing them with work supplies, such as water bottles and first-aid kits. A MEP coordinator in another state described providing migratory out-of-school youth with MP3 players so that they could "practice and learn English...when they are at home or maybe, if they are allowed to, in the field so they can learn while they are working."

Most local/regional coordinators reported using partner agencies and recruiters to serve the needs of migratory out-of-school youth. Most local MEPs collaborated with other organizations and agencies (70 percent) and used recruiters to provide out-of-school youth with on-demand support, such as referrals, support materials, and supplies (78 percent). In addition, they used recruiters or MEP staff to help out-of-school youth enroll in a classroom or online credit-recovery program (64 percent) or to refer them to ESL programs (61 percent).

Support Services

State grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees also provided migratory children an array of support services to address the social, emotional, and health issues that migratory children regularly experience that can impact their ability to attend and fully focus at school. Types of support services included: school supports, such as school supplies, transportation, language support, and leadership development programs; health supports, such as health, dental, and eye care, as well as counseling and mental health services; home supports, such as housing guidance/assistance, clothing, and child care; or personal guidance supports, such as individual advocacy and mentoring supports.

The majority of state MEP directors (28 of 46) reported relying completely on local/regional subgrantees and outside contractors to provide support services to migratory children. However, more than a third (18 of 46) reported that their states directly provided at least one support service to migratory children.

Eighteen state MEP directors reported that their state directly provided support services to migratory children (Exhibit 17, top blue box). Of these, one state director reported that the state MEP was the sole support service provider to migratory children, with no help from subgrantees or contractors; nine reported that their state provided direct support services but also relied on their subgrantees to do so; seven reported providing direct services but also relying on their local/regional subgrantees as well as on outside contractors to serve the support needs of migratory children; and one state reported providing direct services as well as relying on outside contractors, but not on local/regional subgrantees, to serve migratory children.

The remaining 28 state MEPs (Exhibit 17, bottom gray box) did not directly provide any support services to migratory children, but rather relied on their MEP subgrantees to do so. Of these, 18 relied solely on their subgrantees, and another 10 relied on both their subgrantees and outside contractors to serve the support needs of migratory children.

Exhibit 17. State MEP structures for providing support services to migratory children, 2017–18

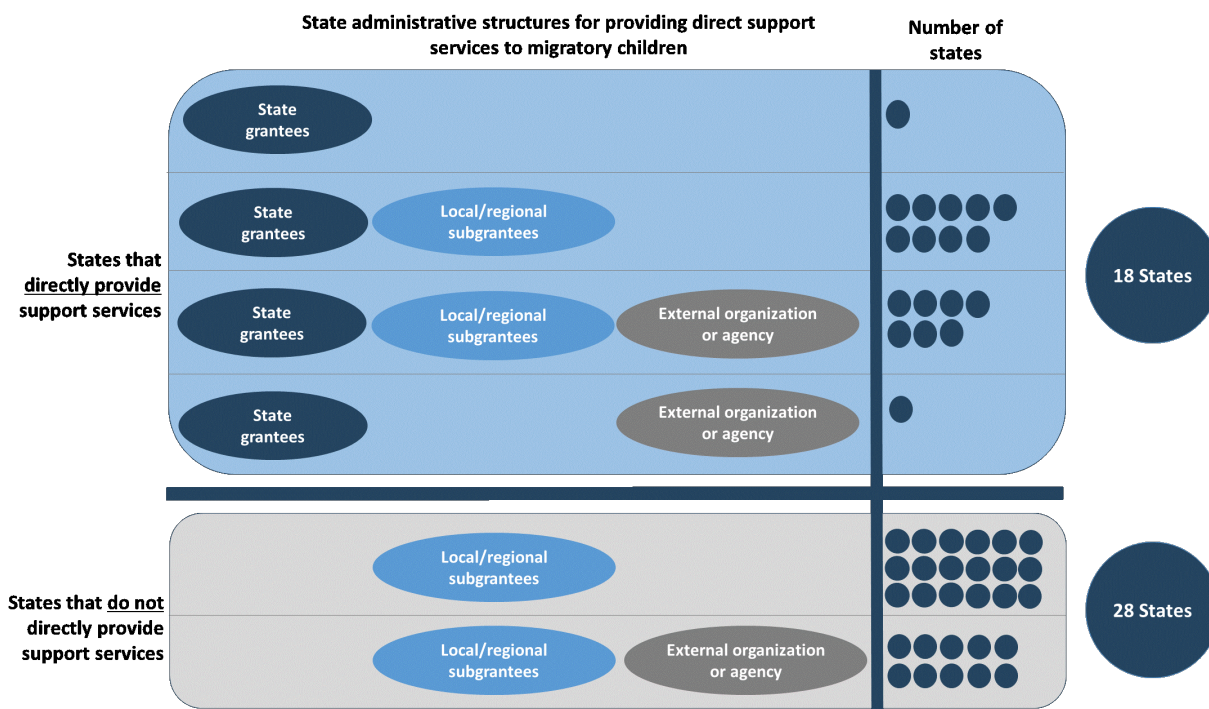


Exhibit reads: Eighteen state MEP directors (top blue box) reported that their state directly provided support services to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Items 2 and 13 (n = 46).

Among the 18 states that directly provided support services to migratory children, the most common were leadership development and language supports.

On average, state MEP directors reported providing four types of support services to migratory children. The most common services were leadership development programs (58 percent of states), language support (i.e., translation or interpretation services not otherwise provided) (50 percent), transportation not otherwise provided (39 percent), and individual student advocacy services (39 percent) (Exhibit 18). The least common support services states provided directly were related to home supports, including housing guidance and assistance (16 percent), clothing (11 percent), and child care (11 percent).

Almost all local/regional MEP subgrantees directly provided support services to migratory children, the most common of which included distribution of school supplies, language supports (e.g., translation or interpretation services), and individual student advocacy services.

The vast majority of local/regional MEP subgrantees (92 percent) directly provided support services to address the social, emotional, and health issues that sometimes prevent migratory children from attending school.⁵² On average, local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing six types of support services to migratory children, including school supplies (82 percent), language support (74 percent),

⁵² The remaining eight percent provided support services through their sub-subgrantees or contracted with external organizations or agencies to do so.

individual student advocacy services (65 percent), mentoring (61 percent), transportation (57 percent), and clothing (51 percent) (Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18. MEP-funded support services state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees provided directly to migratory children, 2017–18

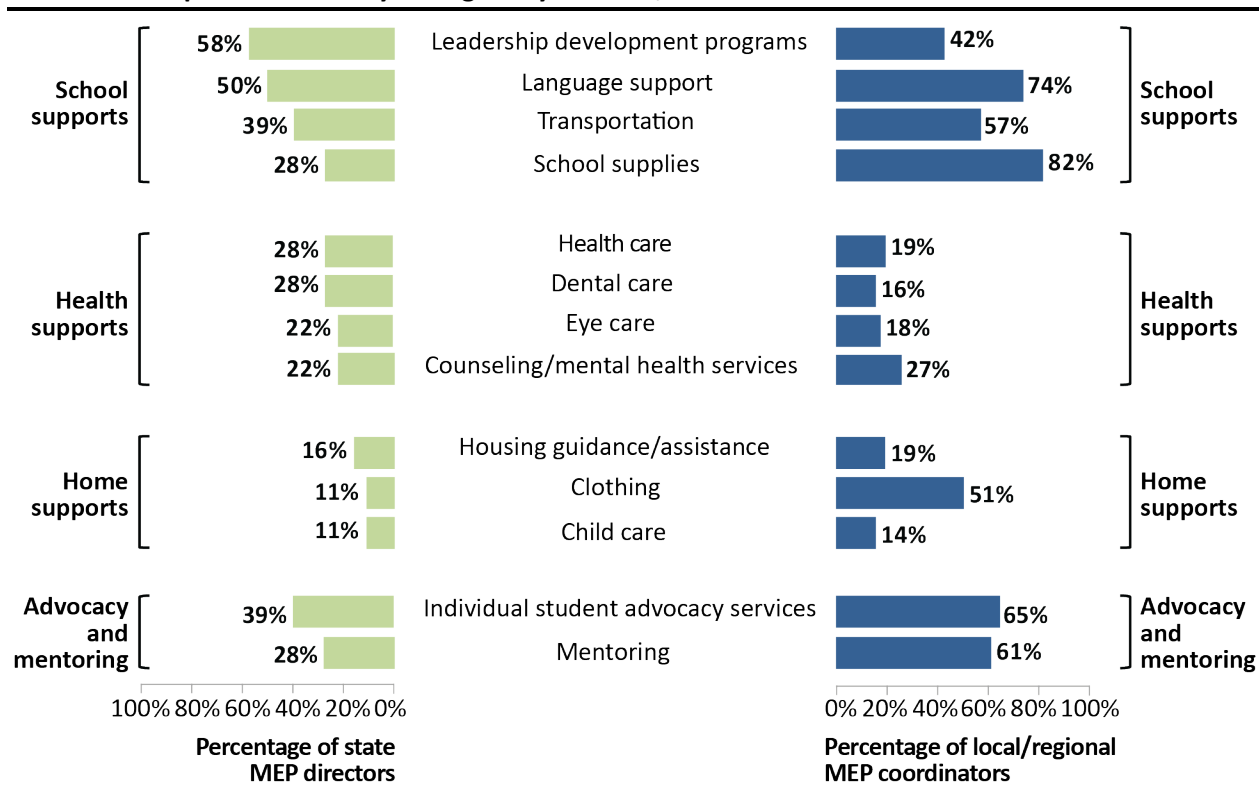


Exhibit Reads: Of those who directly provided support services, 58 percent of 18 state MEP directors and 42 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing leadership development programs directly to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 11 (n = 18); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 12 (n = 737).

In an interview, one regional MEP coordinator described MEP staff working creatively to address migratory children’s needs through support services. For example, upon learning that some migratory children were avoiding school because they had no clean clothes, MEP staff worked with a community foundation to have a washing machine and dryer donated to the elementary school. In addition, they set up a clothing bank so that migratory children could have a clean change of clothes upon arriving at school and while washing their clothes. In another local site, the MEP staff helped families apply for Medicaid, food stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Local/regional MEP coordinators also described providing advocacy services for migratory children and their families. Staff in one regional MEP, for example, conducted home visits to migratory families: “As a recruiter, I go and find the families. But then as an advocate, I go and see what their needs are and then basically find whatever it is that they need, transport them to wherever they need to go, and be an advocate for their students at the school for whatever it is that the student may need as far as their education or their health.” In a local MEP in another state, a recruiter described focusing her work on increasing parents’ engagement in their child’s education. Specifically, the recruiter traveled from home to home and used Facebook to connect with parents to educate them about academic credits,

healthcare, or other information such as immigration services. Another local MEP helped migratory children enroll in school and helped families navigate the enrollment process, for example, by helping them obtain proper immunization records, a prevalent enrollment obstacle. As one respondent explained:

One of the girls was having trouble enrolling in high school, and I literally felt like if I was not there, she would [not] have been able to enroll. It took me two weeks to get that girl enrolled. I had to pretty much go to the superintendent and look at the [state] laws and just be like, 'This girl needs to be in school.' I felt like the parent would have believed that their child really can't be in school.

While local/regional MEP coordinators provided most of the support services directly, 8 percent also contracted with external organizations and agencies to provide services. In interviews, one local coordinator described contracting with a local family services agency to provide two therapists for one-on-one or family counseling and mental health services for migratory children. The therapists reported working with migratory children to address a wide variety of needs and challenges, including fear and anxiety about family separations and deportation, domestic violence, substance abuse, homelessness, and more general behavioral and relational difficulties.

Referral Services

To help migratory children stay and succeed in school, MEPs include in their Service Delivery Plans referrals to non-MEP-funded programs and organizations that can fulfill a need.

Fourteen state MEP grantees and the majority of local/regional MEP subgrantees referred migratory children to other organizations for services, including language support, healthcare, and eye care.

Twenty-eight percent of state MEP grantees referred migratory children for at least one instructional or support service. State MEP directors most frequently reported referring migratory children for language support (71 percent), health care (64 percent), eye care (64 percent), and meal or nutrition programs (64 percent).

Among local/regional MEP subgrantees, 91 percent referred migratory children to other organizations for at least one instructional or support service, including school supplies (79 percent), language support (75 percent), healthcare (73 percent), clothing (73 percent), and eye care (71 percent) (Exhibit 19).

In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators described some of these referrals. One local/regional MEP coordinator, for example, helped families not qualifying for federal aid (e.g., Medicaid), by referring them to doctors and dentists who worked on a sliding scale, adjusting their cost of service in accord with families' ability to pay. Local MEP staff also described referring migratory families for housing services and supports. For example, a local MEP subgrantee provided beds through the local university's Build a Bed project: MEP staffers completed an application to the program and identified the number of beds needed; if selected, all or some of the migratory children received a bed built by college students, along with a comforter and sheets. In another state with severe housing shortages in its urban areas, migratory high school students were often technically homeless. One local MEP coordinator described addressing the problem: "We have a good connection with the food banks and the shelters, but for the families, especially our homeless kids, the shelters are not safe, and we have a program ... that we can refer the kids to, which is really good at getting them the mental [health] help that they need, because when they're homeless they are worried about everything."

Exhibit 19. Services for which the state MEP grantees or local/regional subgrantees referred eligible migratory children to others, among referring MEPs, 2017–18

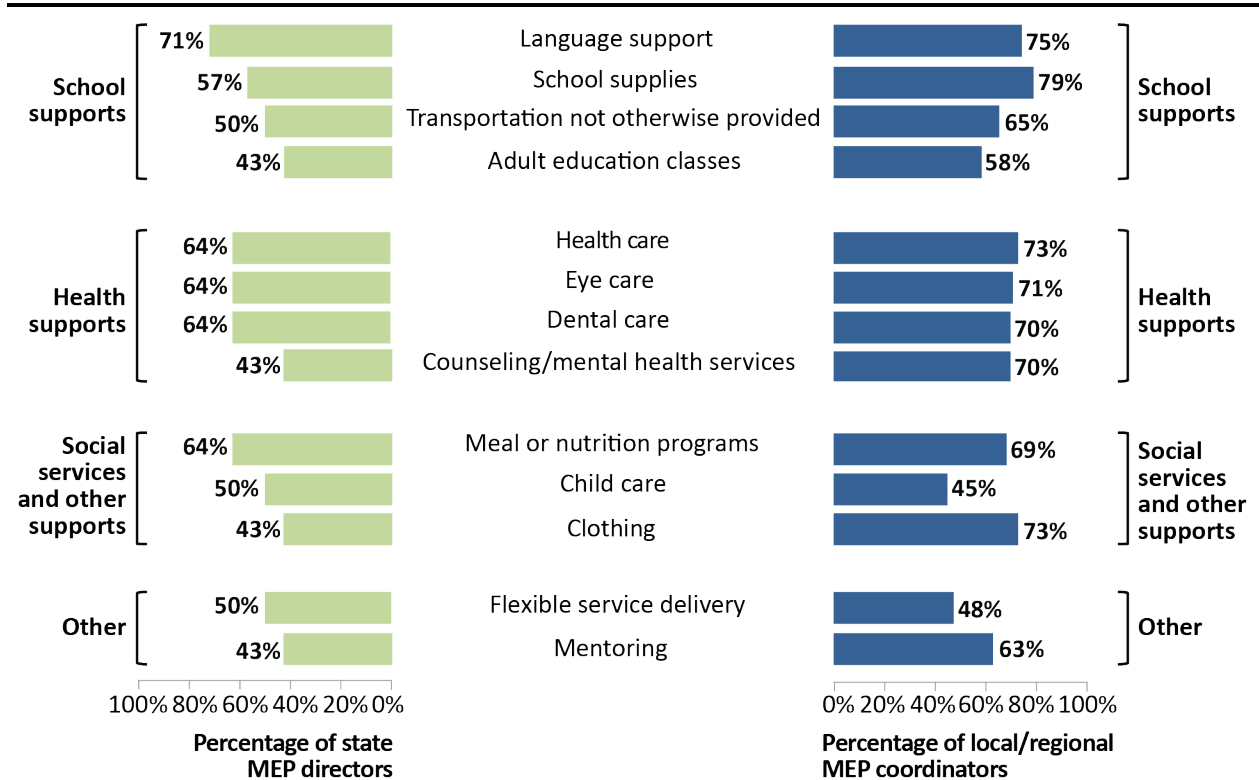


Exhibit Reads: Of those who referred migratory children for services, 71 percent of 14 state MEP directors and 75 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported that their MEP referred migratory children for language support.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 13 ($n = 14$); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 20 ($n = 692$).

Chapter Summary

Nearly all state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators used data to inform the planning and delivery of MEP services, including progress on Measurable Program Outcomes, student performance on state assessments, and student graduation rates. In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators also described using qualitative data sources for planning and delivery of services, such as talking to MEP participants and their families, which one MEP coordinator described as helping administrators understand not only whether migratory children were succeeding or failing, but also why.

MEPs provided migratory children an array of instructional and support services that most commonly included reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, and academic guidance and advocacy, as well as leadership development programs, language support, school supplies, and graduation planning and assistance.

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Chapter 5. Collaborating to Deliver Services to Eligible Migratory Children

Migrant Education Program (MEP) grantees and subgrantees not only identify needs and provide services to migratory children, but the Department of Education’s *Non-Regulatory Guidance for the MEP* (2017a) also recommends that they identify other agencies and organizations that might provide a service that addresses a recognized need. Coordinating and collaborating with other federal and non-federal programs is both a practical necessity and a statutory requirement for efforts to meet the educational needs of migratory children. As a 2004 study of MEP implementation asserted, program partnerships “can address problems that lie beyond any single agency’s purview” (Salinas and Fránquiz 2004). The law specifies that state MEPs and the programs and projects they support must coordinate and jointly plan with other federal programs operating within each state. Section 1308 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* directly supports coordination of MEP activities across and within states. The *Non-Regulatory Guidance* recommends that MEP grantees, particularly states, coordinate and collaborate “in a way that leverages other program funds and optimizes the use of MEP funds for the unique needs of migrant children” (USED 2017a, p. 70) and to remain in close contact with organizations to “strengthen cross-program planning and tap into different resources regarding the location and needs of migrant families” (p. 72) to ensure that migratory children receive services required to address their needs.

The potential benefits of collaboration are well documented. The 2011 literature review (USED 2011), for example, noted that collaborations can be leveraged to expand funding and programming options and that coordination with other agencies and service providers is critical to identifying and recruiting migratory families into programs. Other studies have demonstrated that schools and communities can work closely together to create more opportunities for parents and families of migratory children to connect with teachers, administrators, other migratory families, and the local community (Torrez 2014; St. Clair, Jackson, and Zweiback 2012).

This chapter describes how MEPs developed and formalized collaborative relationships with other organizations and programs. In addition, because other Office of Migrant Education (OME)-administered programs such as the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), could provide specific opportunities to strengthen and expand the array of services and supports provided to migratory children, it discusses ways in which MEPs collaborated with those programs. Finally, this chapter describes the types of instructional and support services that MEPs partnered with other agencies and organizations to provide to migratory children.

Developing and Formalizing Collaborations with Other Agencies and Organizations

The following discusses the advocacy and outreach efforts of state directors and local/regional MEP coordinators to develop formal and informal partnerships with other agencies and organizations to serve the needs of migratory children. It then describes coordination and collaboration with other OME programs, including HEP and CAMP, as these programs can offer a potentially seamless set of services and supports specifically targeted to high school-aged and out-of-school youth.

Advocacy and Outreach

Given that collaborations with other agencies and organizations can strengthen the continuity of instructional and support services provided for migratory children, it is important to understand how, through advocacy and outreach, MEPs identify potential collaborative partners and forge collaborative relationships with other organizations and agencies to serve the needs of migratory children.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators participated in outreach activities to engage with other agencies and organizations in supporting the needs of migratory children.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported delivering or attending presentations (89 percent of state directors and 61 percent of local/regional coordinators) and attending in-person meetings (87 percent and 83 percent), as well as disseminating materials such as informational letters, brochures, or briefs (80 percent and 78 percent) as part of their outreach efforts to other organizations (Exhibit 20). In an interview, one state MEP director described how twice a year the state team brought together all the agencies across the state that worked with migratory children, including migrant health services, housing services, and HEP and CAMP projects. During these meetings, participants described the services they provided, the barriers they encountered, and how they would like to collaborate. Similarly, another state MEP director described holding quarterly meetings to confer about the needs of migratory children and the agencies that could meet them:

We sent invitations to as many community agencies that we could think of who could potentially touch the lives of a migrant family. We brought them together and created a vision for our collaboration ... we came up with an annual migrant support conference. The conference started around building partnerships and coordinating services. The group meets quarterly to discuss any community agency initiatives or new projects of interest to migrant families, as well as changes among the migrant population either under way or anticipated [as related to an influx of refugees]. As a result, [the group is identifying] new organizations who felt they were missing the educational lens of working with the migrant population [and are supporting those needs now].

Exhibit 20. Outreach activities state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees used to engage with other agencies and organizations to support the needs of migratory children, 2017–18

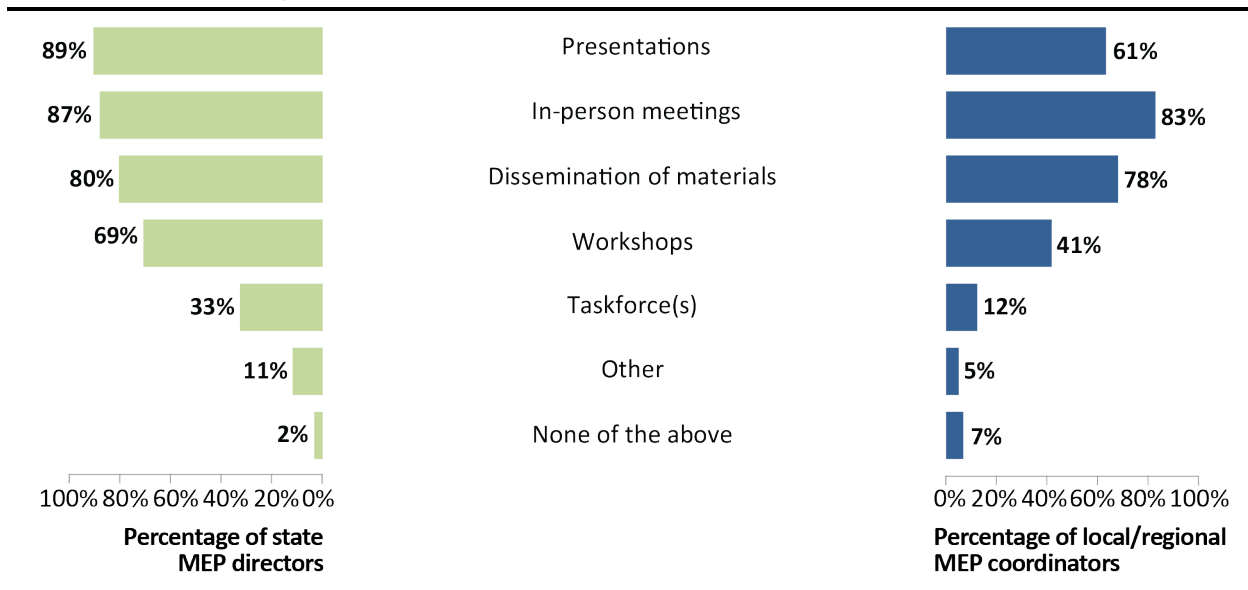


Exhibit reads: Eighty-nine percent of 45 state MEP directors and 61 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported using presentations to engage with other agencies and organizations to support the needs of migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 17 (n = 45); Local/regional MEP Coordinator Survey, Item 22 (n = 739).

Formal Agreements

The *Non-Regulatory Guidance* suggests that collaborations between MEPs and other organizations might result in a formal agreement, memorandum, or “letter of understanding” that “specifies the services that each program will provide” (USED 2017a, p. 71). For example, a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program might agree to reserve slots for migratory children. Formal agreements help enforce delivery of services because they enumerate each partner’s expectations and obligations and sometimes provide for legal remedies when promises are breached.

Half or fewer state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees had formal agreements articulating their commitments to collaborate with other agencies and organizations to address the needs of migratory children.

Approximately half the state MEP directors (51 percent) and 40 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators had at least one formal agreement, such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or cost-sharing agreement, in place with an organization or agency to serve the needs of migratory children.

Among those that reported having a formal agreement, about half had one formal agreement (43 percent of state directors and 53 percent of local/regional coordinators), while the other half had more than one (57 percent of state MEP grantees and 47 percent of local/regional MEP subgrantees).

No one type of agency or organization was reported as a frequent formal partner for MEPs. For example, state directors and local/regional coordinators most commonly reported having formal

collaboration agreements with nonprofit organizations (16 percent of state MEP directors and 14 percent of local/regional coordinators) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) (16 percent and 11 percent), but the frequency of formal agreements with these partners was low. Other organizations and agencies with which MEPs had formal collaboration agreements included districts in the state without MEP subgrants (15 percent and 9 percent), and other state or local government agencies (9 percent and 8 percent) (Exhibit 21).

Exhibit 21. Types of organizations and agencies with which state grantees and local/regional subgrantees had at least one formal agreement to collaborate, 2017–18

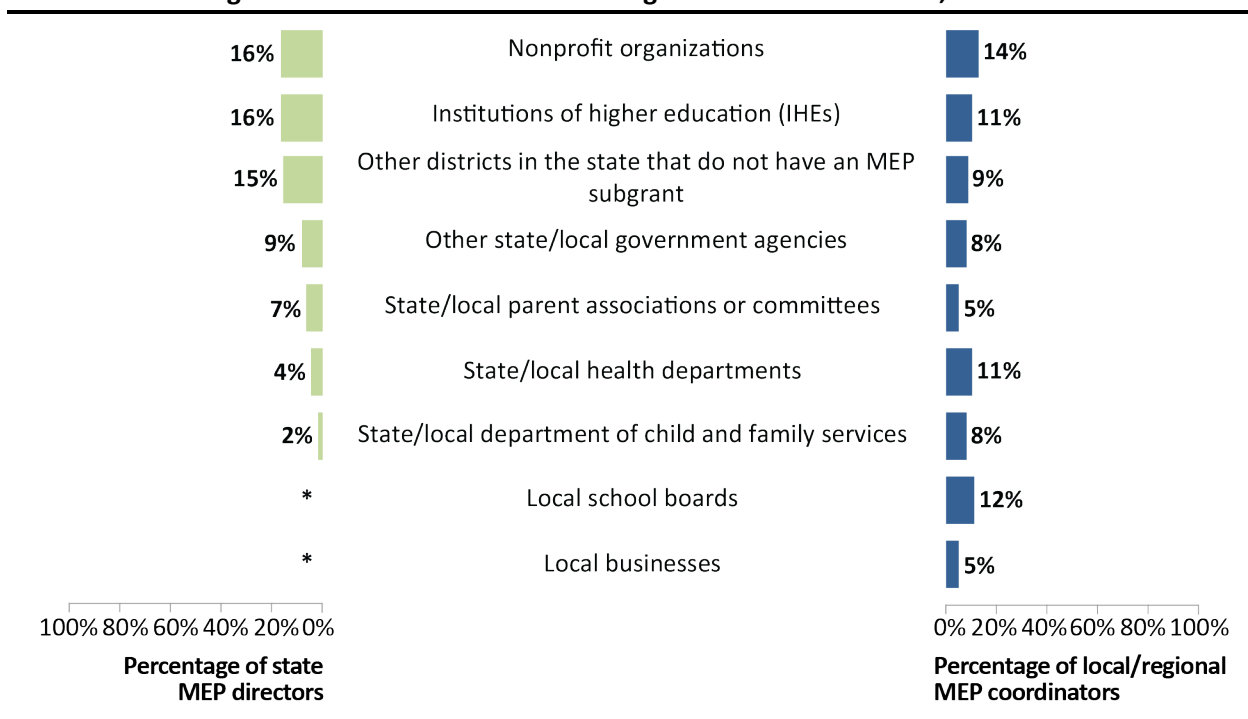


Exhibit reads: Sixteen percent of 45 state MEP directors and 14 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported having at least one formal agreement to collaborate with nonprofit organizations.

* Items not included on the State Director Survey.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 20 (n = 45); Local/regional MEP Coordinator Survey, Item 25 (n = 640).

In interviews, state MEP directors and staff described forging both formal and informal agreements with agencies and organizations to serve the needs of migratory children. For example, one state had an MOU with a sending state to administer the sending state’s assessments when children arrived near the end of the school year. Another state had an MOU with the state’s Child Development Center (CDC) to provide preschool services for many local MEPs within the state. In addition, the MOU required local MEPs to meet with local CDCs to identify ways in which to collaborate. A third state had an MOU with the state Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program to share recruitment efforts: “When we go recruiting, they go recruiting; when we go to a migrant camp, they go to a migrant camp,” explained the state MEP director. “They say, ‘I’ll take the cabins on the right. If you find one of my kids, we’ll meet in an hour and coordinate information.’” Also, at the state level, one statewide MEP subgrantee coordinated with a statewide migratory farmworker health initiative that provided health and dental services for seasonal and farmworker adults and children. The subgrantee had an informal agreement with the farmworker health initiative to work at all levels across the state to provide access to basic and emergency healthcare providers, including doctors and dentists. The subgrantee also coordinated,

informally, with Migrant Legal Aid, special education, adult education, Head Start programs, as well as with local colleges and universities. In this state, representatives from state agencies served together on state-level committees, and they spoke at each other's trainings and conferences (e.g., staff for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program and Indian Education programs had spoken at MEP events) to build awareness of student needs, services, and shared opportunities for recruitment. At the local/regional level, one regional MEP coordinator described an MOU with the local schools requiring school staff to inform MEP recruiters about any potentially eligible migratory children attending the school and to help register students for the MEP.

Several state MEP directors noted that *ESEA*, as amended, offers opportunities to coordinate funding for different programs. For example, in one state, the MEP and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs shared one eligibility specialist, so both programs had an expert with whom to consult on questions about migratory child eligibility. In another state, the MEP director described encouraging local MEPs to work with the local coordinators of Title I, Part A, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program, and foster care programs to coordinate funds and services. Finally, one state MEP director described collaborating with the Early Childhood Division (ECD), also in the state department of education, to include teachers of preschool migratory children in a statewide professional development network. The ECD worked with MEP leaders to identify topics relevant to teaching migratory children (e.g., dual-language learners, social-emotional learning, parent engagement, classroom management), and then offered additional professional development sessions — through statewide preschool professional state leaders' trainings and technical assistance — on those topics specifically for teachers of preschool migratory children across the state.

Collaborating with HEP and CAMP

The *Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended in 2013 under PL 113-67, authorizes the CAMP and the HEP, both administered by OME. These programs present opportunities for state and local/regional MEPs to expand the array of services available to high-school-age migratory children, migratory children who have dropped out of school, and migratory children who have graduated high school and are in their first year of college. CAMP awards competitive grants to institutions of higher education or other private, nonprofit organizations to recruit and provide academic and financial support to help migratory and seasonal farmworkers and members of their immediate families complete their first year of college and continue in postsecondary education programs. CAMP services can include academic testing and special academic, career, and personal counseling; tutoring and supplementary instructional services; and other essential support services to ensure the success of CAMP participants.⁵³

HEP seeks to help migratory and seasonal farmworkers and members of their immediate family obtain a high school equivalency diploma that meets the guidelines for high school equivalency and gain or upgrade employment or placement in postsecondary education or training via competitive grants to institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations.⁵⁴

It is important to note that the CAMP and HEP programs are small, serving approximately 2,500 and 5,000 students nationwide, respectively, each year, and they do not operate in all states, regions, or school districts.

⁵³ <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/camp/index.html>.

⁵⁴ <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/hep/index.html>.

Most state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees coordinated or collaborated with HEP and/or CAMP to provide services to migratory children.

Overall, 69 percent of state MEP directors and 59 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported collaborating with HEP or CAMP. Of those, most collaborated by distributing program information to migratory children, youth, and families about HEP (83 percent of state MEP directors, and 72 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators) or CAMP (72 percent and 89 percent). They also coordinated to share information or data on migratory children with HEP (86 percent and 70 percent) or CAMP (69 percent and 87 percent); and to identify and contact eligible high school-aged migratory children about HEP (70 percent and 68 percent) or CAMP (70 percent and 89 percent). Some also participated in an interagency task force or committee for migratory children with HEP (60 percent and 63 percent) or CAMP (55 percent and 76 percent) (Exhibit 22).

Exhibit 22. Ways in which state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators coordinated and collaborated with HEP or CAMP, 2017–18

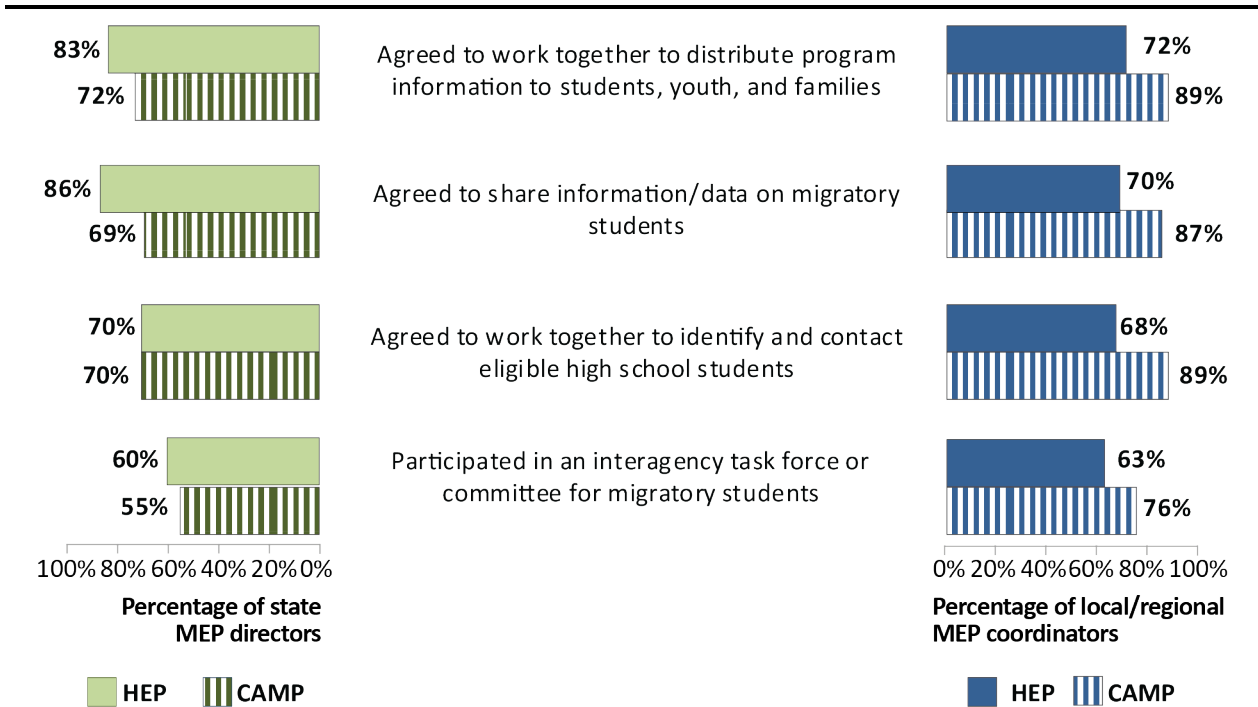


Exhibit reads: Eighty-three percent of 29 state MEP directors and 72 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators who collaborated with HEP reported that their MEP agreed to work together with HEP to distribute program information to migratory children, youth, and families.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 17 (n = 29); Local/regional MEP Coordinator Survey, Item 21 (n = 408).

In interviews, MEP coordinators described how collaborating with HEP and CAMP extended the MEP’s reach to provide more and varied services to high-school-age migratory children. One state MEP director, for example, reported that CAMP increased the number of migratory children receiving services because CAMP has different eligibility requirements and serves children who are not eligible or are no longer eligible for MEP services. Another state MEP director described relationships with the HEP and CAMP programs that, together with MEP, essentially guaranteed that migratory children in their state would receive services from at least one OME-administered program from pre-K through college.

Collaborating with Other Agencies and Organizations

For MEPs, collaboration with other agencies and organizations must leverage other program resources that can serve the needs of migratory children. In addition, collaborating with other agencies and organizations may help identify and recruit MEP-eligible migratory children into the program.

The survey data show that state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators took seriously their charge to collaborate: 84 percent of state MEP directors and 90 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators that directly provided services reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide at least one instructional or support service to migratory children (Exhibit 23). In interviews, MEP coordinators regularly referenced the programs, agencies, and organizations with which they worked closely to knit together a comprehensive set of services and supports intended to enable migratory children to succeed in school.

Exhibit 23. Collaboration between MEPs and other agencies and organizations to directly provide at least one instructional or support service to migratory children, 2017–18

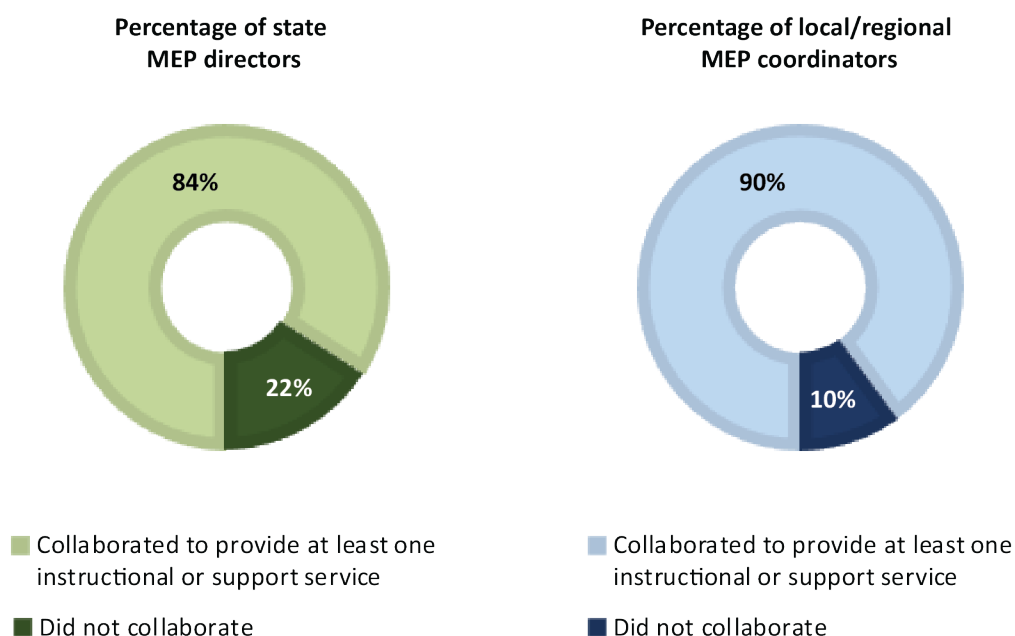


Exhibit reads: Eighty-four percent of 18 state MEP directors and 90 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators that directly provided services reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide at least one instructional or support service to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Items 9, 11, 18, and 19 ($n = 18$); Local/regional MEP Coordinator Survey, Items 12, 16, 23, and 24 ($n = 696$).

These findings provide some context for interpreting the results presented in Chapter 4—serving the instructional and support needs of migratory children—further underscoring the notion that to meet migratory children’s needs, MEPs must work closely with other programs in a way that maximizes the menu of services and supports that migratory children receive.

The following describes the types of instructional and support services that MEPs collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide to migratory children.

Collaborating to Provide Instructional Services

Most state MEP grantees that directly provided instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to do so.

In the 11 states that directly provided reading and language arts instruction, for example, 91 percent of MEP directors reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide these services. Similarly, in the eight states that directly provided academic guidance and advocacy services, 89 percent of directors reported collaborating with others, and 100 percent of directors in the seven states providing career and technical skills training participated in collaborations. In addition, 89 percent of the directors in the eight states providing preschool or early childhood education collaborated with others to offer these services (Exhibit 24).

Like state MEP grantees, most local/regional MEP subgrantees collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children.

The majority of local/regional MEP coordinators who provided instructional services to migratory children reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide these services. For example, among the local/regional subgrantees that provided English as a Second Language instruction, 61 percent of MEPs reported coordinating with other agencies and organizations to provide that type of instruction. Other instructional services and academic supports provided by local/regional subgrantees in collaboration with other entities included support for college and careers, the most common of which were adult education classes (69 percent of the local/regional MEP subgrantees that provided this service collaborated with other agencies and organizations to do so), high school equivalency diploma classes (68 percent), career and technical skills training (67 percent), and career exploration and guidance (66 percent). Local/regional MEP coordinators also reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide preschool or early childhood education programs (69 percent), academic guidance and advocacy services (62 percent), credit-recovery programs (60 percent), and online courses (60 percent) (Exhibit 24).

Exhibit 24. Collaboration among state MEP grantees, local/regional subgrantees, and other agencies and organizations to directly provide instructional services to migratory children, 2017–18

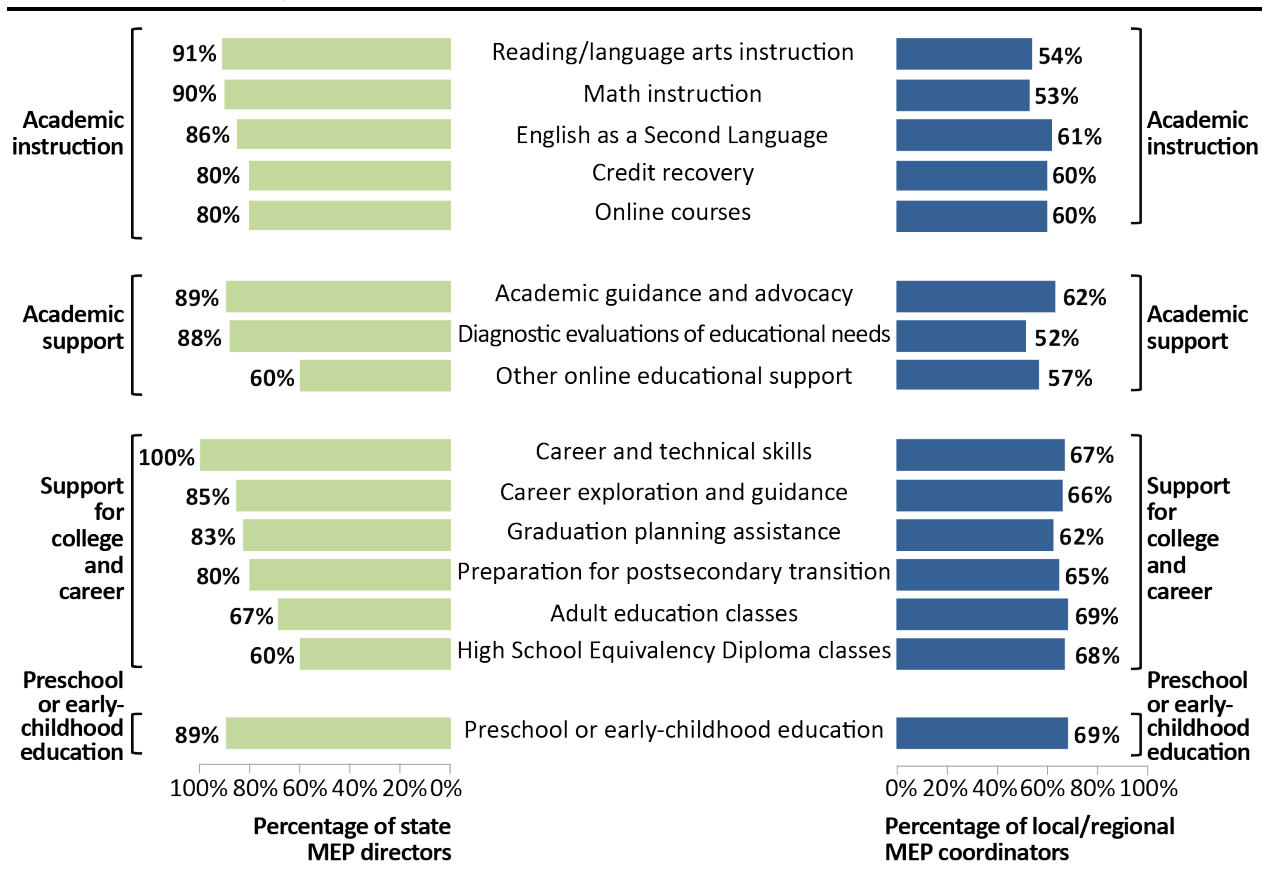


Exhibit reads: Ninety-one percent of 13 state MEP directors and 54 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators that directly provided reading/language arts instruction reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide those services to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 18 (n=13); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 23 (n = 605).

In an interview, a local MEP coordinator reported that collaborating with other agencies and organizations presented an opportunity to avoid duplicating services, thereby stretching scarce MEP resources further: “So, if there is a computer class in [the nearby town], we’re not going to offer a computer class, we’ll offer something else. We also refer students to the adult education classes in [the nearby town]. Those are very effective programs that are offering classes in the morning and in the evening.”

Interview responses offered examples of how collaborating with other agencies expanded their program’s ability to provide instructional services. For example, to help migratory children prepare for the postsecondary transition, one local MEP collaborated with local colleges to host financial-aid workshops for migratory parents as well as college visits for migratory students. Similarly, another local MEP subgrant coordinator collaborated with a center affiliated with a nearby university to provide free school supplies, training, and curriculum packages to any teacher in the state serving migratory children. One community college respondent described the benefits of the collaboration:

We make connections, I think, as we expose [migratory] students to other opportunities they might not be aware of. We expose them to fields of study in which they can make a very good living. One of the cool things is that we have asked alumni who were former migrant students to speak to the prospective students about their journey.

Another local MEP coordinator described bolstering the literacy supports delivered to migratory children by working closely with their local 21st CCLC program to ensure that the 21st CCLC's mobile after-school reading program included the neighborhoods where migratory families live.

Collaborating to Provide Support Services

As with instructional services and other academic supports, nearly all the state MEP grantees that directly provided support services to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide those services.

When they provided support services directly, most state MEP directors reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to do so. Services they collaborated to provide included leadership development programs (100 percent), eye care (100 percent), dental care (100 percent), housing guidance/assistance (100 percent), and individual student advocacy services (100 percent).

Like state MEP grantees, most local/regional MEP coordinators that directly provided support services to migratory children reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide those services.

Most local/regional MEP coordinators reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide support services, including eye care (92 percent), dental care (90 percent), individual student advocacy services (89 percent), and counseling/mental health services (83 percent) (Exhibit 25).

Exhibit 25. Collaboration between state MEP grantees, local/regional subgrantees, and other agencies and organizations to directly provide support services to migratory children, 2017–18

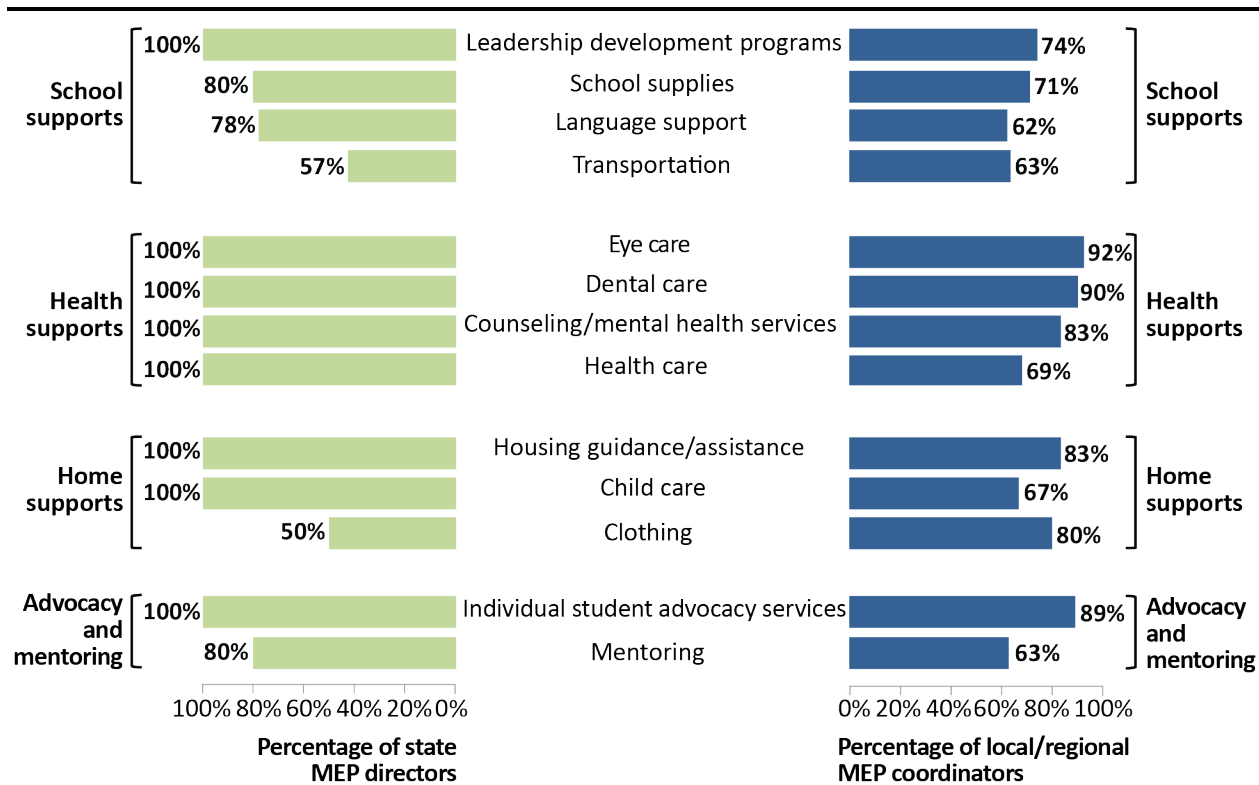


Exhibit reads: One hundred percent of 11 state MEP directors and 74 percent of local/regional coordinators who provided leadership development programs to migratory children reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide this service to migratory children.

Source: State MEP Director Survey, Item 19 ($n = 11$); Local/regional Coordinator Survey, Item 24 ($n = 598$).

In interviews, local MEP coordinators described how they coordinated with other agencies and organizations to provide support services to migratory children. One local MEP coordinator, for example, described regularly meeting with agencies and organizations serving migratory populations and informally determining, together, how to address the needs of migratory children:

[We have] the Migrant and Immigrant Council and that meets four times every year. That would be various churches, the [County] Health Department, [Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, Legal Aid, and others]. They give us information about what camps are open and how many people they'll hold. Rural Health not only does the dental, but they also do clinics at the camp. They'll go in a couple of nights and they'll just do screenings, they'll do TB [tuberculosis] and blood pressure and diabetes and all of that. The Lions Club will do vision screenings for children during the health fair that we have during summer school.

Several local MEP coordinators described working closely with other agencies and organizations to assemble the supports migratory children need, particularly access to healthcare services. One MEP coordinator, for example, described partnering with a community health organization (CHO) that provided dental and medical health services. A CHO representative described the collaboration and its benefits:

We saw where a lot of the [migratory] kids were missing their [medical] appointments. The parents couldn't take off from work.... Through the outreach program we do, you name it, we do it. We help with medical, dental. We help with prescriptions, transportation. If we cannot [see the child], we will refer them to a specialist [in another area].

Another local MEP coordinator described how their MEP collaborated with local nonprofit organizations to provide migratory children with backpacks full of food, school supplies, and other needed materials. They also collaborated with Migrant Health to offer migratory families basic medical checkups, and they worked with local nonprofits to connect families to shelters as well as food and clothing banks. The local MEP coordinator described how these collaborations not only benefited migratory families but also strengthened and expanded their network through which MEP staff identified and recruited migratory children: “So now, if a doctor’s office knows that we are well intentioned and that families thrive with our support, they are going to spread that word.”

Finally, one local MEP staff member described three factors that affected the ability of their MEP to coordinate with organizations and agencies to serve the needs of migratory children:

- The willingness and capacity of partners (e.g., one county’s public health department was willing to collaborate whereas another was not, due to lower staff capacity)
- The availability of partners (e.g., one county had a clothing bank that migratory families could benefit from; the other county did not)
- The requirements of organizations for their clients (e.g., most food banks in one county required Social Security numbers)

Chapter Summary

Coordinating and collaborating with other programs and organizations is a statutory requirement and practical necessity for MEPs to address the often unmet educational and health-related needs of migratory children that create barriers to school success. MEP coordinators described their efforts to develop collaborative relationships with other organizations and programs, including participating in advocacy and outreach activities to engage with other agencies and organizations in supporting the needs of migratory children. While the interview responses suggested that MEPs have collaborative relationships with many organizations and programs, the survey data suggested that few MEPs formalize these collaborations through MOUs or cost-sharing agreements. Even without formal agreements, nearly all state (84 percent) and local/regional MEPs (90 percent) that directly provided instructional and support services to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to do so. Types of services that they collaborated to provide included supplemental reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, career exploration and guidance, career and technical skills training, preschool or early childhood education programs, English as a Second Language instruction, individual student advocacy services, dental care, eye care, and counseling and mental health services.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Congress established the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966, through an amendment to the 1965 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, to address the significant barriers that prevent the children of migratory agricultural workers and fishers (some of whom are migratory agricultural workers and fishers themselves) from staying in school or meeting the same educational standards expected of all students. The goal of the program is to help meet the unique educational needs of migratory children.⁵⁵

This study of the implementation of the Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program examined how states and their subgrantees were serving the needs of migratory children in 2017–18. This report describes implementation of four key components of the MEP: identification and recruitment of migratory children; the use of MSIX for records transfer within and across states to improve services and supports for migratory children; provision of supplemental instructional and support services that address the educational needs of migratory children not addressed by services available from other federal or non-federal programs; and coordination and collaboration with other organizations and programs serving migratory populations.

Migratory children must be identified in order to ensure that they gain access to the support to which they are entitled. The identification and recruitment (ID&R) process, as established in *ESEA* and further explicated in the program regulations and *Non-Regulatory Guidance*, has very specific requirements, and while states have wide latitude in how to manage ID&R, they ultimately bear the responsibility for ensuring that all migratory children in the state are identified. Most of the 46 state grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees to manage the ID&R process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising recruiters. However, the interview responses suggested that even when states were not directly involved in ID&R, they still played a significant role in monitoring and quality control.

Recruiters' efforts to find eligible migratory children entailed an array of strategies, including maintaining key contacts in the schools, communities, and businesses that migratory families frequent. In interviews, state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators explained that changing migratory patterns and populations, as well as changes in the employers who hire migratory workers, has kept recruiters active as they adapted and developed new strategies and searched new areas where migratory families reside, shop, and obtain other services.

Interviews also suggested that local/regional MEPs decided how to operationalize the MEP requirement to give priority for services (PFS) to the most mobile and most at-risk migratory children and addressing the needs of PFS-eligible migratory children over the needs of non-PFS-eligible migratory children was sometimes challenging.

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators agreed that MSIX improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states and that it facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers. In addition, the majority of local/regional MEP coordinators and about half the state MEP directors agreed that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved practices intended to mitigate educational disruptions for migratory children, such as the facilitation of course credit

⁵⁵ Appendix A includes the statute for the Migrant Education Program under *ESEA*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015*, including the statutory definition of a migratory child. Appendix A is available in a separate technical volume by visiting [\[insert link here\]](#)

accrual, appropriateness of course placements, appropriateness of grade placements, timeliness of school enrollment, and reduction in unnecessary immunizations. Among those interviewed, one state director said that MSIX had helped schools quickly identify what services and supports a child might need based on the child's previous academic performance and other non-academic data (e.g., immunizations). Interviews with state directors and local coordinators, however, identified data consistency, data use consistency, and accuracy as areas in which MSIX could be improved.

The next step in serving the needs of migratory children is to identify their needs and determine a suitable set of instructional and support services to meet those needs. Most MEP coordinators used progress on Measurable Program Outcomes (MPOs), student performance on state assessments, and student graduation rates to inform the delivery of MEP services. In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators also described using qualitative data sources to inform planning and delivery of services, such as talking to MEP participants and their families, which one MEP coordinator described as helping administrators understand not only whether migratory children were succeeding or failing, but also why. After identifying needs, MEP coordinators provided migratory children an array of instructional and support services which most commonly included supplemental reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, academic guidance and advocacy, school supplies, language support, and individual student advocacy services.

Finally, coordinating and collaborating with other programs and organizations is a statutory requirement for MEPs to address the often unmet educational and health-related needs of migratory children that create barriers to school success. State MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators described their efforts to develop collaborative relationships with other organizations and programs, including participating in outreach activities, to support the needs of migratory children. While the interview responses suggested that MEPs had collaborative relationships with many organizations and programs, the survey data suggested that few MEPs articulated these collaborations through formal agreements such as MOUs or cost-sharing agreements. Despite not having formal agreements, nearly all state and local/regional MEPs that directly provided instructional and support services to migratory children reported that they collaborated with other agencies and organizations to do so. The types of services that they collaborated to provide included supplemental reading and language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, career exploration and guidance, career and technical skills training, preschool or early childhood education programs, English as a Second Language instruction, individual student advocacy services, dental care, eye care, and counseling and mental health services.

This study examined how state grantees and local/regional subgrantees implemented the Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program and addressed the needs of migratory children. The study identified both common and unique program strategies to identify and recruit migratory children, implement instructional and support services, and coordinate and collaborate with other agencies to better meet the needs of migratory children and youth. The findings can be useful to MEP grantees and subgrantees and to the Department as a tool to describe the Migrant Education program and the children it serves to educators, legislators, and others who may be unfamiliar with the MEP. The findings may also be used to inform program planning and support by state MEP grantees, local/regional MEP subgrantees, and the Department.

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