DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 385 RC 019 407

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TITLE Services to Migrant Children: Synthesis and Program Options for the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program. Supplementary Volume of the Final Report of the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program.
INSTITUTION Westat, Inc., Rockville, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation.
PUB DATE 93
CONTRACT LC89015001
NOTE 72p.; Some figures may not reproduce clearly. For the final report, see ED 355 329.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Needs; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Eligibility; *Family Characteristics; Federal Programs; Financial Support; *Identification; *Migrant Children; Migrant Education; Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Program Evaluation; Secondary School Students; Summer Programs; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS *Migrant Education Program; Migrant Student Record Transfer System

ABSTRACT

This report characterizes the student population served by the Migrant Education Program (MEP), describes services provided through MEP, and suggests policy options to improve targeting and accountability. Despite legislation that requires currently migratory children to receive priority for MEP services, over half of those served are formerly migrant. Most students served through MEP are enrolled in grades K-6 and have substantial needs for supplementary instructional and support services. Large proportions of the children are limited English proficient, are 1 or more years behind their peers in school, and have reading and language arts achievement that lags behind national norms. Summer programs assist in filling in educational gaps caused by moves during the regular term. The current funding formula for determining state MEP grants creates an incentive for states to identify in-school formerly migrant students, rather than the more needy currently migrant, preschool, and out-of-school migrant youth (ages 18-21). If the MEP is to provide services to the eligible migrant students with the greatest needs, the current state grant allocations process must provide appropriate incentives. This report contains many data tables. (KS)

Services to Migrant Children

A Supplemental Volume to the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program

U.S. Department of Education

Services to Migrant Children

Synthesis and Program Options for the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program

1993

Supplementary Volume of the Final Report of the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program

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Prepared under contract for the U.S. Department of Education by:

**Westat, Inc.
Rockville, Maryland
Contract No. LC 89015001**

This study was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education.

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Executive Summary

This report is a synthesis of research findings since the last reauthorization of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program in 1988. The major topics addressed in this synthesis are the characteristics and educational needs of migrant children, services provided to them, and issues associated with program funding.

The Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program (MEP) was designed to provide services to the children of seasonal agricultural workers who move in response to the changing labor demands of commercial farming or fishing. In 1990 some 597,000 migrant students were identified, recruited, and enrolled in the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), indicating that they were eligible for services offered through the Chapter 1 MEP. About 371,000 of those eligible students received MEP-funded services during the regular term, while 124,000 received services in the summer.

For a child to be eligible for MEP services, the child or the family including the child must have moved within the previous six years, alone or with his or her family, to obtain temporary or seasonal work in an approved occupational activity in agriculture or fishing industries. Children maintain eligibility for the MEP for up to six years following their most recent qualifying move. Those children whose qualifying move was within the previous year are identified as *currently* migrant. Children whose qualifying move was between one and five years earlier are identified as *formerly* migrant.

Distribution and Characteristics of Migrant Students

- The number of migrant children is growing. One estimate suggests that about 800,000 will be eligible for MEP services by the year 2000, which constitutes an increase of about one-third over 1990. Nearly two-thirds of eligible children live in five states, and this concentration is not expected to change substantially by the end of the decade.

- Despite legislation that currently migrant children should receive priority for MEP services, over half of those being served are formerly migrant.

- Legislative expansions of the ages of children and youth eligible for MEP services (reducing the lower age from 5 to 3 and raising the upper age from 17 to 21) have had little effect on who received services in the first two years after implementation, although those eligibility expansions have had the effect of increasing the number of identified children substantially.

The nation's migrant children are not evenly distributed across the country; 64 percent of the children and youth receiving services from the MEP are found in five states: California, Florida, Michigan, Texas, and Washington. Fully 33 percent of the migrant children are in California. At the other end of the spectrum, 16 states have fewer than 1,000 participants each, and collectively these states account for less than 2 percent of the total.

According to the provisions of the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments (P.L. 100-297), currently migrant children "shall be given priority in the consideration of programs and activities" (section 2782[b]). Yet an estimated 56 percent of the migrant students enrolled in the MEP during the regular term are formerly migrant, while 44 percent are currently migrant. During the summer term, about 52 percent of program participants are formerly migrant and 48 percent are currently migrant. About two-thirds of the currently migrant students are classified as *interstate* (i.e., they moved across state lines) and one-third are *intrastate.*

In 1988 Congress revised the MEP by allowing local migrant projects to receive funding to serve preschool children (ages 3-5) and older, out-of-school migrant youth (ages 18-21). States receiving MEP funds are now responsible for identifying migrant preschoolers and older youth and serving those whose needs are not being met by other programs, if their needs are greater than those of other children served by the program. In 1989-90, about half of the regular school-year projects and almost three-fourths of the summer migrant projects reported serving preschoolers; during the regular term, however, only about 4 percent of MEP participants are of preschool age. Services for older migrant youth have to accommodate persons in many circumstances, including migrant students enrolled in secondary school, former students who have dropped out of school before earning a high

school diploma, and migrant youth who recently entered this country and have little education. Recently, secondary-level enrollments in the MEP have increased as a proportion of all MEP enrollments. While total enrollment in the MEP in the regular term increased 8 percent in 1989-90 over that in the previous year, grade 7-12 enrollment increased 12 percent. Participation in MEP services by out-of-school youth appears to be rare; indeed, these youth are actively recruited by only 3 percent of regular-term and 7 percent of summer-term projects; case study reports suggest that the actual number of young people who are recruited and served, even in those projects, is quite small.

Despite increased participation by preschool children and older youth in MEP, the greatest proportions of migrant students identified and served by MEP are enrolled in grades K-6. These are also the grades in which students are easiest to identify and least costly to serve, and in which other compensatory education services are most readily available.

Educational Needs and Migrant Services

- By virtually any measure of educational deprivation or poverty, migrant children, whether currently or formerly migrant and preschool, in-school, or out-of-school in age, are among the neediest children in the nation.

- During the regular school term, most of the educational services provided to migrant children by the MEP go to elementary school students, generally involve Chapter 1-like instruction in basic skills, and are seen as supplementary to the regular education program.

- Summer-term MEP projects, which are seen as a significant portion of migrant children's educational experience, provide a wider array of instructional and support services, include enrichment opportunities as well as basic skills remediation, and are usually provided in lieu of regular education programs. As a result, summer projects are relatively costly, and local personnel often have to decide between high-intensity programs for a few students or low-intensity programs for many.

- While MEP students are eligible for other compensatory education programs supported by federal, state, or local funds on the same basis as nonmigrant children, their participation rates in those other programs appears to be low, particularly when the extensive educational needs of migrant children are considered.

Most migrant children have substantial needs for compensatory instructional and supporting services. Large proportions of the children have limited English proficiency (LEP), many are one or more years behind their peers in school, and their teachers report that, on average, migrant students' reading and language arts achievement lag behind national norms. Currently migrant children show greater indications of these and other educational needs than formerly migrant students.

More than four-fifths of the migrant students eligible for MEP services receive at least some MEP instructional or support service, in addition to identification, recruitment, and entry into MSRTS. Local MEP projects provide a wide array of services to help meet the needs of migrant children. In the case of regular-term projects, instructional services supplement general education programs provided through state and local funding. Service modes may include pullouts, before or after school tutorials, or use of in-class aides. Case studies of local migrant programs suggest that basic skills instruction makes up the majority of instructional services for all groups of migrant program participants, with other subjects also likely to be covered in the summer term. A variety of support services, such as health and dental services, counseling, and transportation are provided.

State and local MEP staff view summer-term services as an important part of the overall academic experience, especially for currently migrant students, filling in educational gaps caused by movement during the regular term, promoting accrual of secondary-school credits, and serving as a link between regular terms. Because many local education agencies offer no district-funded summer services and many projects serve children across several school districts, summer term projects are more likely to take the form of full-time programs rather than part-time pullout or in-class activities.

Because local education programs often are not in session in the summer, MEP summer services are more costly to provide than regular term services. The federal funding formula partially addresses this issue through a summer adjustment that generates extra dollars for states based on a full-time equivalent (FTE) count of migrant children

participating in summer projects. However, this adjustment does not take into account the cost or intensity of services students receive, and inequities based on intensity of services can arise. States that serve proportionally large numbers of students with low-intensity services are perceived to "win" in terms of funding, while states that serve proportionally smaller numbers of students more intensively are often viewed as losing.

Migrant children may be served by any educational or human service programs for which they are eligible; however, during the regular school term, the participation rates of migrant students in other federal, state, and local supplemental programs appear to be low, considering the nature and extent of their educational needs. Only about 29 percent of students served by the MEP in the regular term also receive any other compensatory instructional services; about 80 percent of that subset of students (or about 24 percent of all migrant students served by MEP) receive Chapter 1 basic program services.

MEP State Program Grant Funding

- States with small numbers of eligible migrant students within their borders face problems in generating sufficient funds to carry out student identification and recruitment and other state-level administrative responsibilities while also providing programs of adequate size and quality.

- The current formula encourages states to identify in-school, formerly migrant students because, as a group, they are typically easier to locate and more likely to remain in the state (therefore, generating an FTE) than currently migrant children. Further, in-school, formerly migrant children usually cost less to serve than currently migrant children or children who are not enrolled in school.

- The current funding formula provides no special incentives for identifying preschool children and out-of-school youth. Given the absence of such incentives and the greater costs that may be associated with serving these children, the formula has the effect of discouraging services to them.

- The identified MEP-eligible population has grown in recent years, but funding, particularly when measured in estimated constant dollars, has not kept pace with the population growth.

The funding formula for determining state MEP grants takes into account both the number of MEP-eligible children within a state and the length of residency. It enables states that operate summer projects to gain additional FTE counts, thereby increasing their overall MEP funding allocation. Finally, a per-pupil expenditure factor takes into account some of the differences between states in the costs of education.

State MEP administrators find themselves in a very difficult position. On the one hand, they must encourage active recruitment if they even suspect other states are going to do so just to maintain their relative share of the appropriation; on the other hand, when the total amount to be allocated does not grow commensurate with the population that has been recruited, services cannot be provided as intensively or extensively, or both, to the additional children recruited. This means that administrators face the problem of recruiting students to obtain funds while knowing they may not be able to provide them with services.

The compromises that states have made between recruitment and service have the effect of precluding the active recruitment of some students who could benefit from the MEP, and those children very likely come from groups that are most difficult to identify and recruit, such as currently migrant students in general and currently or formerly migrant preschool-age children and out-of-school youth. The data reviewed for this report indicate that those children are precisely the ones who are most likely to have educational needs that are not being met by other special programs and who are, other things being equal, the ones who should either receive services directly from the MEP or have services made available by other agencies through the MEP's advocacy.

State and local project personnel may not believe that the costs of locating, identifying, and recruiting preschool children and out-of-school youth are justifiable because the amount of funds they generate is small, the cost of serving them may be high, and the MEP's traditional clients have been K-12 students. Costs of service may be higher for preschool children or youth who are not enrolled in school because the facilities,

transportation, and nutrition services that the school district routinely provides for school-age students may not be available for out-of-school children unless paid for by MEP.

Program Options

If the MEP is to provide services to the eligible migrant children who have the greatest needs, the current state grant allocation process should be modified to reduce disincentives for recruiting and serving currently migrant children, preschool children, and out-of-school youth. The grant allocation process should provide incentives to encourage states to identify, recruit, and serve currently migrant children, particularly those in the special preschool and out-of-school youth categories.

Providing incentives to encourage these activities does not mean that formerly migrant children or migrant students in elementary or secondary school should be neglected. As a group, migrant children, whether currently or formerly migrant in status and whether preschool, in-school, or out-of-school in age, have severe educational needs that should be met. At the same time, when resources are shrinking and the number of potential participants is growing, as has been the case for this program, the MEP must serve the neediest migrant students, while other programs--and especially the regular education program--should ensure that the needs of other migrant students also are met. The MEP legislation also should indicate clearly that state and local education agencies are accountable for ensuring that appropriate services are available to all currently or formerly migrant students, whether the services are provided by the MEP or another program.

THE CHAPTER 1 MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM: SYNTHESIS AND PROGRAM OPTIONS

1

Introduction

This report is a synthesis of research findings and their implications since the last reauthorization of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program in 1988. It is one volume of the report on the National Assessment of Chapter 1 that was requested by Congress in P.L. 101-305, the "National Assessment of Chapter 1 Act." The major topics addressed in this report are the characteristics and educational needs of migrant children, the services provided to them, and issues associated with program funding.

Congress established the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program (MEP) through the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1966 (P.L. 89-750) as part of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, P.L. 89-10). By its actions, Congress recognized that both poverty and the condition of migrancy experienced by the children of temporary or seasonal farmworkers or fishers are directly related to lower achievement in school. As a consequence, Congress accepted a measure of responsibility for ensuring that migrant children had access to educational programs, and that compensatory programs were available to help what came to be called the "nation's children." The MEP is now authorized as part of the August F. Hawkins, Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297).

The MEP has grown in participation and scope since 1966. It now serves more than 371,000 children ages 3 to 21 in regular-term programs, and more than 124,000 in summer-term programs. Projects are located in 51 states or jurisdictions,[1] and annual appropriations slightly exceed $300 million.

The Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program consists of two major sections. Section 1201 provides funds to state education agencies to "establish or improve, either directly or through local educational agencies, programs of education for migratory children." Section 1203 provides authority to the Secretary "to make grants to, and enter into contracts with, State educational agencies . . . for activities to improve the interstate and intrastate coordination among State and local educational agencies" in providing educational services for migrant children. The majority of section 1203 funds are used to support the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), a computer-based data base and information transfer system that maintains education and health records of migrant children, transfers those records when migrant children move to new schools, and provides a basis for determining the number of identified full-time equivalent (FTE) migrant children residing in a state.

[1]Hawaii is the only state with no MEP project; the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico do have projects.

2

Characteristics of Migrant Children and Their Families

Since the average farmworker's career is less than 10 years, by the year 2000, migrant farmworkers and their children will have all the disadvantages normally associated with poorly educated immigrants who were employed in a seasonal industry which offered almost no career ladders and almost no fringe benefits. Their educational, health, and social services needs will continue to be great. Consequently, the migrant assistance and education programs will be targeting a much more needy population than ever before (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992).

Migrant children are among the most disadvantaged children in our nation.[2] Many live in poverty and have limited access to health and social services. As a result of their moves, migrant students miss valuable school experiences, suffer disruption in instructional sequences, and lose high school credits when transferring from one school to another. A large percentage of migrant children have limited proficiency in English, which undoubtedly affects their school performance to some extent. Dramatic improvements in keeping migrant students in school have been achieved in recent years, but migrant students still drop out of school at a very high rate, thereby limiting their social and economic opportunities (National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education--NASDME, 1992; National Commission on Migrant Education--NCME, 1992).

Over the years, the migrant youth population has become heavily Hispanic and, in terms of percentages and absolute numbers, more foreign born (usually from Mexico). Among migrant youth are increasing numbers of young immigrant males entering the country with

[2]Because the size and composition of the total population of migrant children are unknown, the discussions in this section are based on studies of subsets of that population; however, there is no reason to believe that the findings would differ significantly for the total population.

work crews as unaccompanied minors. Some authorities consider this large group (estimated between 169,000 to 200,000) to be among the most overlooked of those who might benefit from the MEP but who may not qualify for MEP assistance under current program eligibility criteria (NCME, 1992).[3]

Racial/Ethnic Composition

Most migrant children are ethnically Hispanic, and increasingly they are likely to be members of native Mexican families who have immigrated to the United States or who are working here temporarily. Exhibit 1 depicts the racial/ethnic composition of the subset of migrant students enrolled in the MEP. The predominance of Hispanic migrant students represents a significant change from the earliest years of the MEP, when most participants reportedly were U.S.-born blacks or non-Hispanic whites. Although members of both those racial/ethnic groups are still represented within the migrant work force, their numbers and proportions have decreased. The recently completed national descriptive study of MEP and its predecessor of a decade earlier provide two different snapshots of the racial/ethnic characteristics of MEP participants (see exhibit 2).

Socioeconomic Status

The association between living in poverty and not being successful in school has been well-documented over the past three or four decades, and many migrant students live in poverty. Migrant families, as a group, have extremely low income levels. About 84 percent of MEP participants, for example, are eligible for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) free or reduced price lunch program, compared with slightly more than 30 percent of all students (Cox et al., 1992). Furthermore, over two-thirds of migrant children come from households with incomes below the federally defined poverty level (NCME, 1992).

[3]These "emancipated youth" may not qualify for the MEP because they are not traveling with their parents or legal guardians to follow the crops, or they may not have parents who work as migrant laborers.

Exhibit 1: Percentage of MEP Participants by Racial/ethnic Group and School Term, 1989-90.

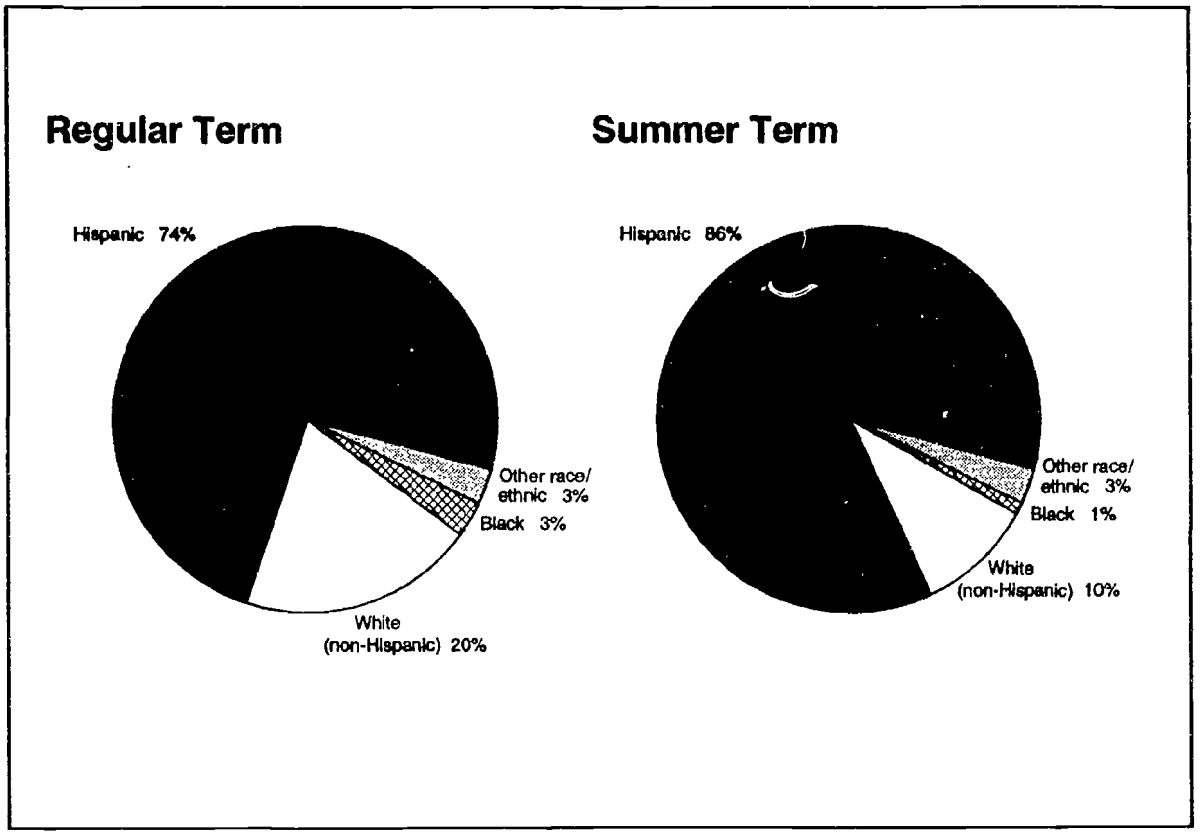

Exhibit reads: About 74 percent of MEP student participants during the regular term are Hispanic.

Source: Henderson et al., 1992.

Exhibit 2: Racial/ethnic Profiles of MEP Participants, 1979 and 1989

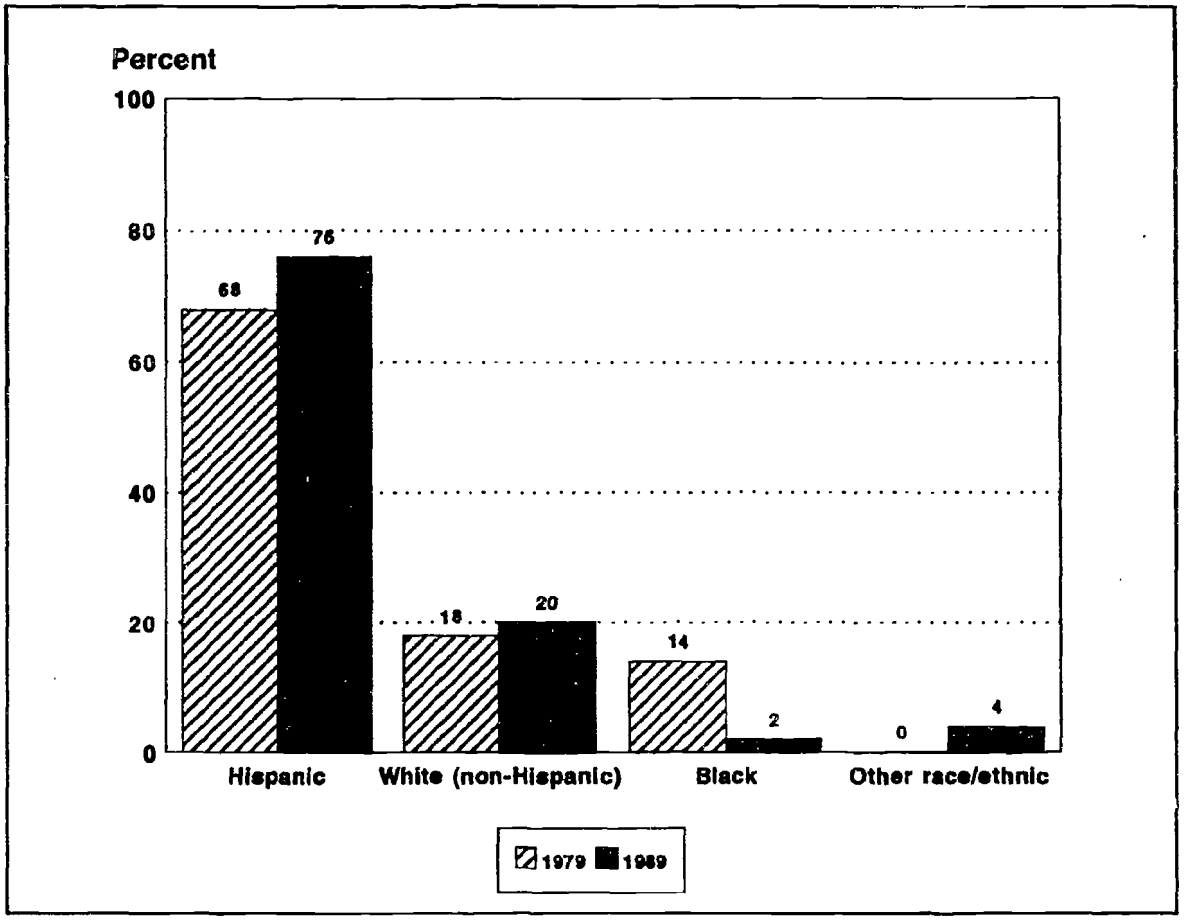

Exhibit reads: About 68 percent of MEP participants were Hispanic in 1979, and about 76 percent were Hispanic 10 years later.

Source: Cox et al., 1992; Cameron, 1981.

Educational Attainment

The close relationship between the educational attainments of parents and their children is another well-documented finding. Adult migrant farmworkers, as a group, have very little education. Of the 1.3 million applicants for the Seasonal Agricultural Services program who said they did 90 days of farmwork in 1985 and 1986, the median had a fifth-grade Mexican education; most had not finished primary school in Mexico or other countries of origin (Martin, 1992).

Limited English Language Proficiency

Students who have difficulty with English-language instruction, whether in speaking, listening, reading, or writing, are less likely than others to perform well in school. English is the second language for many migrant families; more than 90 percent of adult migrant farmworkers primarily speak a language other than English, and 84 percent speak little or no English. While the great majority of the migrant workers speak Spanish, other languages also are represented; for example, one survey indicated that about 65,000 adult migrant farmworkers speak only indigenous Native American languages (Martin, 1992). Even though they are extensively exposed to English in school, roughly 40 percent of migrant students participating in the MEP are rated by their teachers as lacking proficiency in oral English to such an extent that it interferes with their classroom work (Cox et al., 1992).

Health Characteristics

Health problems compound the problems of poverty. The Migrant Clinicians Network reports that health problems among migrant children, such as nutritional diseases, dental diseases, and parasitic infections, are much more common than in the U.S. population as a whole and resemble those in third-world countries (Dever, 1991).

3

MEP Eligibility and Participation

Eligibility for MEP Services

The two major MEP-eligible occupational categories are agriculture (including dairy work) and fishing for commercial sale or as a principal means of personal subsistence. Agricultural activities are defined more broadly than in other federal programs and include production or processing of crops, dairy products, poultry, or livestock, and the cultivation or harvesting of trees. Similarly, fishing activities are also broadly defined to include catching or processing fish or shellfish (Martin & Martin, 1991). The percentage of students served by the MEP who are eligible as a result of migrant fishing activities is quite small, 4 percent in 1989-90 (Henderson et al., 1992). The remaining 96 percent of participating students qualify under agricultural activities.

To be eligible for MEP services, a child, from birth to age 21, must have moved within the past 6 years, alone or with his or her family, to seek temporary or seasonal work in an approved occupational activity. (Children age birth to age 3 may be served in the MEP, although they do not generate Federal MEP funds as do older children.) In addition, once migrant students receive a terminal secondary-level diploma or its equivalent, they are no longer eligible. The move must have taken the child across school district boundaries, across major administrative areas within geographically large districts, or a distance of at least 20 miles within districts of 18,000 square miles or more (NCME, 1992).

The MEP was designed to provide services to the children of seasonal workers who move because of the changing demands of farming or fishing. In 1990, the program identified more than 597,000 eligible students in 51 states or jurisdictions.

Determining student eligibility for the MEP is quite complex because it depends not only on student characteristics but also on parental occupation, mobility, and consent.

Children whose qualifying move was within the past 12 months are identified as *currently* migrant. Children whose qualifying move was between 12 and 60 months prior are identified as *formerly* migrant.

An unknown number of migrant children who may be eligible for services are not identified by the migrant program. In addition, estimates of the number of migrant children in the nation vary because of differences in definitions and identification methods among programs.

Three different estimates of the number of migrant children in the nation are reported in exhibit 3. MSRTS includes all students identified by the MEP and enrolled in the program. Enrollment requires a completed certificate of eligibility and, if formerly migrant, parental consent. MSRTS is updated as children are enrolled or lose their eligibility; the counts reflect all students registered as eligible within the previous year.

The Descriptive Study of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program (Cox et al., 1992) estimates the number of eligible migrant students based on a point-in-time survey of local education agencies. Therefore, the number reflects only those students who are eligible for the MEP on a particular date, who are recorded as such in local student files, and who are currently attending that school; as a result, the Descriptive Study's figure is substantially lower than the MSRTS figure. Both the MSRTS and Descriptive Study figures reflect qualifying moves and employment criteria as defined by the MEP for program eligibility.[4] The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) estimates the number of children in the United States who were migratory sometime during 1990 at 587,000.[5] Formerly migrant students are not counted in this estimate; if the formerly

[4]MEP eligibility hinges on the description of a parent's occupation as agricultural or fishing; the states often permit local interpretation of such designations, but within fairly narrow limits. Further, industrial surveys, by permitting determinations that some "permanent" agricultural or fishing work is treated by workers as temporary, can result in expansions of the list of qualifying occupations, and thus the number of potentially eligible children.

[5]This annual data collection on general farmworkers also collects data on the current seasonal agricultural work force. The NAWS seasonal farmworker data reflect only those persons employed in crop agriculture and who have traveled at least 75 miles in search of work; this definition of a seasonal farmworker is more restrictive than that used by the MEP, in terms of industry and length of eligibility.

Exhibit 3
Estimates of the Number of Currently and Formerly Migrant Children in the Nation

Source of Estimate	Currently	Formerly	Total
Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS)--1991*	281,000	316,000	597,000
Descriptive Study of the Chapter 1 MEP 1990**	176,000	279,000	455,000
National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS)--1990***	587,000	NA	NA

Notes:
* Unduplicated, full-year count.
** Unduplicated, regular-term only count.
*** NAWS uses different definitions and includes only children who would be considered currently migrant by the other estimates.

NA: Not Available

Exhibit reads: MSRTS reports indicated an estimated 281,000 currently migrant children were in the United States during 1991.

Sources: MSRTS counts and NAWS estimates are from NCME, 1992.
Descriptive Study estimates are from Cox et al., 1992.

migrant students who are enrolled in MSRTS are added to the NAWS total, the NAWS-based estimate of eligible children would exceed 900,000 (NCME, 1992).[6]

There are several reasons for the discrepancies among the total numbers of migrant children identified through MSRTS, the Descriptive Study of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program, and the NAWS survey. The most important reason is that both the MSRTS and Descriptive Study estimates are based on actual counts of children who have been formally identified and recruited as eligible for the program, while the NAWS relies on surveys of adults and does not take program eligibility requirements into account.

The MEP does not identify all of the children who are potentially eligible for the program, and some of the identified children are not recruited into the program; furthermore, the actual number of potentially eligible children is unknown. Some of the factors that lead to a child's not being identified or recruited are as follows:

- o A lack of MEP projects in some parts of the country. Active identification of migrant children does not occur in all areas of the country. Typically, only those areas with MEP projects actively identify students. There are an estimated 1,661 regular-term projects (Cox et al., 1992), which generally serve one school district but may cover several school districts and may even be administered by an agency other than a school district. Even in California, the state with the largest number of migrant students, several entire counties as well as areas within other counties are not served by a MEP project.

- o Different recruitment practices across project areas. In areas that have projects, some of those projects recruit more actively than others. This is true across all eligible age groups, but is particularly true for recruiting 3-to-5 year olds and out-of-school 18-to-21-year-olds. Projects that go door-to-door seeking out migrant children may identify a large majority of those who are eligible; other local projects, particularly those that cannot structurally handle increased MEP enrollments, may not be as active.

[6]The total number of potentially eligible migrant children cannot be known, of course, although there are several ways to estimate that number. For example, if the ratio of currently to formerly migrant students found in MSRTS is applied to the NAWS data, then the number of potentially eligible migrants would exceed 1.2 million. This estimate is roughly similar to what would be obtained by projecting the estimated number of potential Migrant Head Start-eligible children (ages 0 to 5) across the age 3-to-21 population. On the other hand, state MEP personnel believe that their programs' identification and recruitment procedures have found most of the eligible children, which suggests the MSRTS estimates may be closer than the other estimates to the actual number (Cox, et al., 1992).

- Selective nonparticipation. Not all migrant families want to be identified or to have their children participate in the MEP. For example, although public education programs are required to serve children regardless of the immigration status of their parents, local MEP personnel report that many families do not trust the schools and avoid contact with them.

- Varying application/interpretation of program eligibility criteria. The definition of migrant student, although stipulated in the MEP legislation, is slightly open to interpretation at the local level because of ambiguities in the information needed to establish a migratory move or employment. To the extent local personnel desire to avoid audit exceptions, they may adopt strict eligiblity standards.

If the eligibility criteria remain unchanged, the number of migrant students eligible for MEP is projected to grow throughout the rest of this decade. One estimate, presented in exhibit 4, projects the number of migrants enrolled in MSRTS as growing from fewer than 600,000 in 1990 to about 790,000 in the year 2000 (Cox et al., 1992). The reasons for the expected increase in the number of identified migrant students include more active recruitment of migrant students in unserved areas, more active recruitment of preschool-age children and older out-of-school youth, and an increase in the number of families engaged in migrant farmwork.

MEP Participation

The number of migrant students identified and served by the MEP increased considerably between the years 1984-85 and 1990-91. In 1984-85, about 440,000 were listed as eligible for the program on in MSRTS but, in 1990, over 597,000 students were listed in MSRTS. About 371,000 of the 1990 eligible students actually received MEP-funded services during the regular term and 124,000 received services in the summer term.

Exhibit 4: MEP Enrollment Projections, 1979-2000.

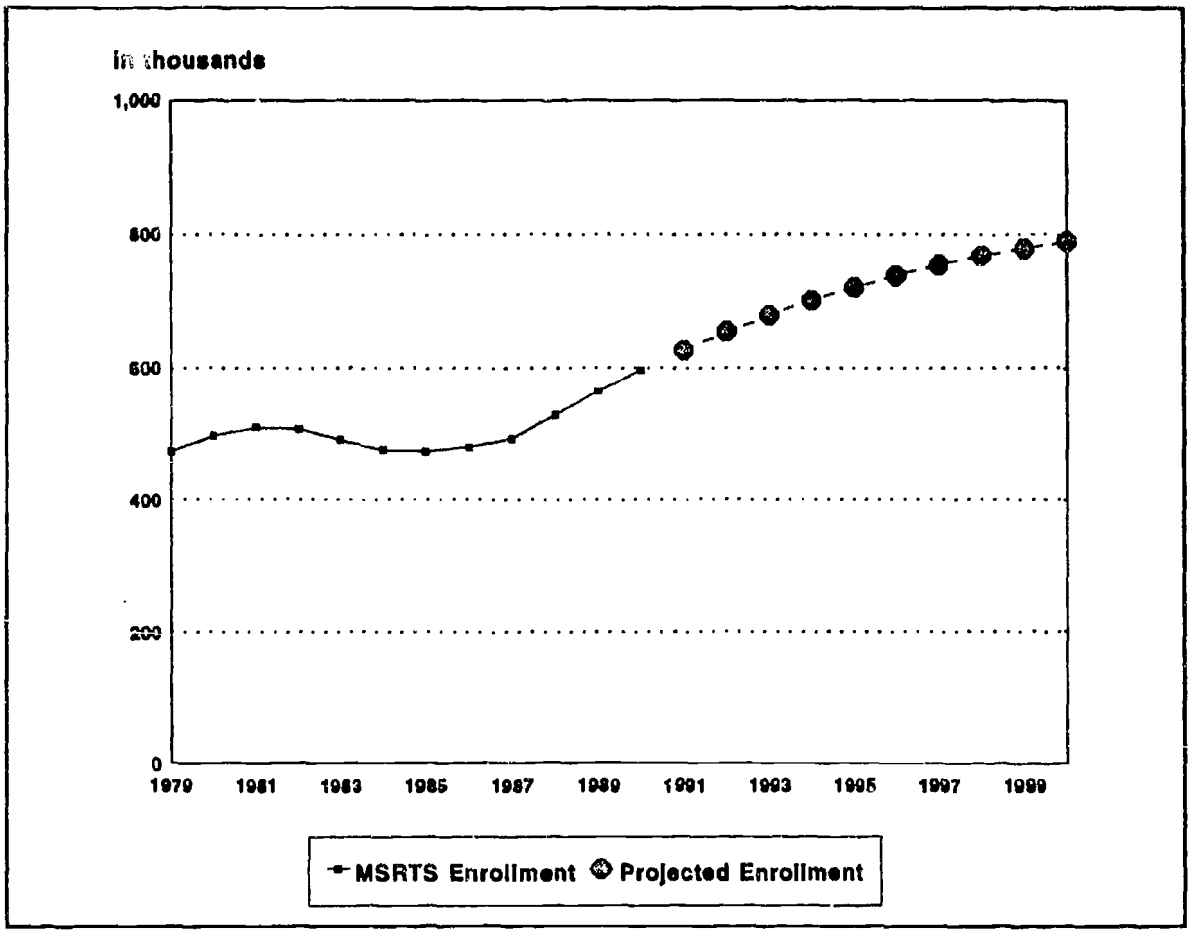

Exhibit reads: About 600,000 children were reportedly eligible for MEP services during 1990, and an estimated 790,000 will be eligible in 2000.

Source: Cox et al., 1992.

About 64 percent of children and youth receiving services from MEP reside in five states--California, Florida, Michigan, Texas, and Washington--and 33 percent of those being served are in California. At the other end of the spectrum, 16 states have fewer than 1,000 participants, and collectively these states account for less than 2 percent of the total (Henderson, Daft, and Gutmann, 1992). About two-thirds of the currently migrant students are classified as *interstate* movers, meaning they moved across state lines within the past 13 months. The other one-third of currently migrant students are intrastate movers.

According to the provisions of the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297), currently migrant children "shall be given priority in the consideration of programs and activities contained in applications submitted under this section" (section 2782[b]). Yet an estimated 56 percent of the migrant students participating in the program during the regular term are formerly migrant and 44 percent are currently migrant. During the summer term, about 48 percent of program participants are currently migrant.[7] The majority of formerly migrant students (52 percent in the regular term) served in the MEP have had a qualifying move within two years (Henderson et al., 1992). MSRTS data suggest that currently migrant students make an average of 1.2 qualifying moves per year; that is, for every four currently migrant students, five moves were reported during the previous year. Exhibit 5 presents data on the number of months since the last qualifying move for a national sample of migrant students identified and recruited by the MEP.

Although the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments expanded the age range for identifying children and youth that could be counted for program funding, reducing the entry age

[7]Data reported by the states, which cover an entire school year or summer term rather than a single point in time, suggest that the percentage of currently migrant students participating in the program may be somewhat different. In the 1989-90 school year, states reported that about 47 percent of participants in the regular term were currently migrant, and 48 percent in the summer term were currently migrant (Henderson et al., 1992). In addition, the large proportion of formerly migrant students being served in the summer does not mean that the summer projects did not attempt to identify and serve currently migrant children, but that currently migrant students are often more difficult to identify, and formerly migrant students certainly may be served.

Exhibit 5
Percentage of Formerly Migrant Students, by Number of Months Since Qualifying Move

Number of Months Since Qualifying Move	Regular School Year Students	Summer-Term Students
13-24 months	28%	28%
25-36 months	24	31
37-48 months	17	17
49-60 months	15	12
More than 60 months	16	12

Exhibit reads: About 28 percent of formerly migrant students who were enrolled in the MEP during the regular term made their qualifying move between 13 and 24 months previously.

Source: Cox et al., 1992.

from 5 to 3 and raising the upper limit from 17 to 21, most MEP participants are in the elementary grades. As noted in exhibit 6, students in grades K-6 account for 61 percent of all those served by the MEP in the regular school term and 66 percent in the summer term. Students in grades 7-12 account for 34 percent of participants in the regular term and only 19 percent in the summer term. From 1988-89, the first year of P.L. 100-297 implementation, to 1989-90, there was a slight increase in the number of 3-to-4-year-olds (from 11,900 to 13,100) and 18-to-21-year-olds (from 4,500 to 5,500) participating in the program. Nonetheless, the percentage of students served in those two age groups remains relatively low.

Exhibit 6: Percentage of MEP Participants by Grade Level and School Term, 1989-1990.

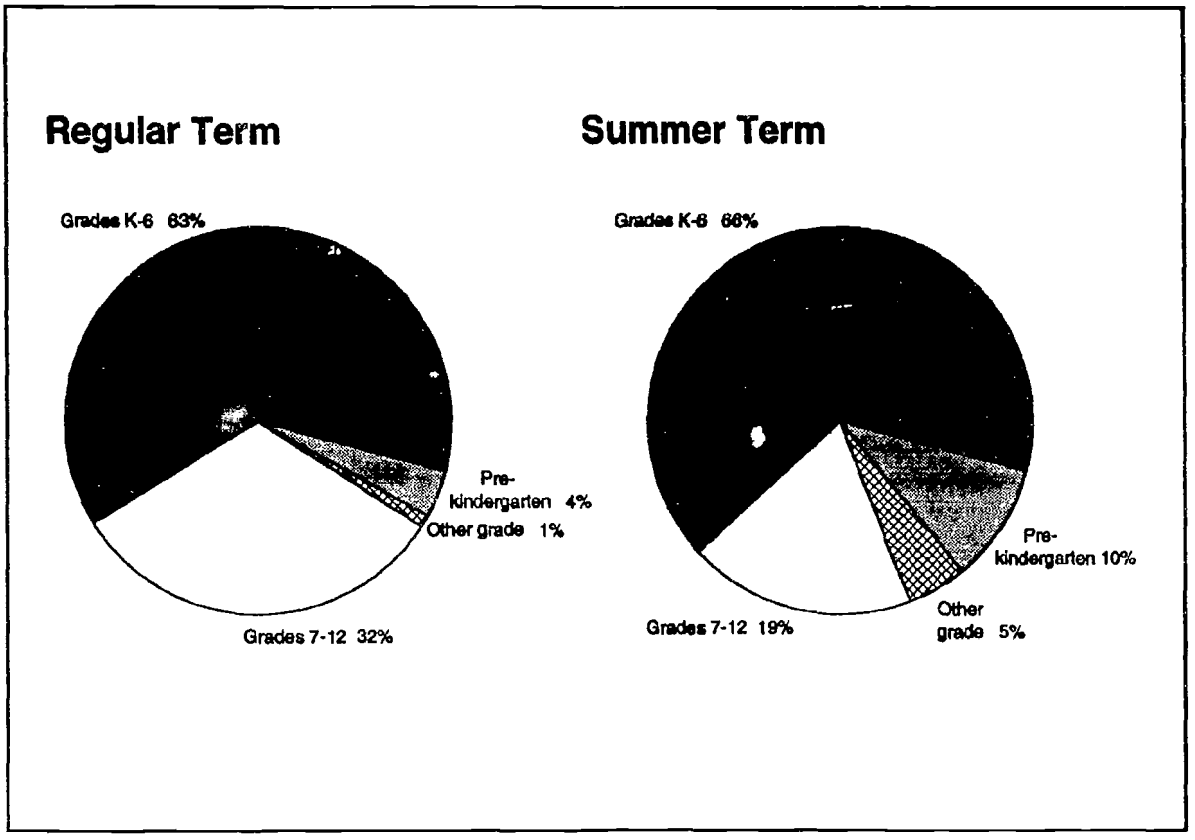

Exhibit reads: Approximately 63 percent of regular-term MEP participants are enrolled in grades K-6.

Source: Henderson et al., 1992.

4

Educational Needs and Services

Educational Needs of Migrant Children

Most of the migrant children who are eligible for MEP services have substantial needs for compensatory instructional services.[8] Large proportions of the children are limited English proficient (LEP), and many are one or more years behind their peers in school. Their teachers report these students' reading and language arts achievement is similar to that of nonmigrant children participating in the regular Chapter 1 program. Exhibit 7 compares levels of reported needs of currently and formerly migrant students in terms of the percentages of students who lag behind their age cohort by one or more grades; who are eligible for Chapter 1 basic grant services; or who are reported to have reading, language arts, and mathematics achievement scores below the 35th percentile (Cox et al., 1992).

These and similar indicators of educational needs are easy to measure and categorize, but they do not completely capture the instructional and other problems these students face. Some migrant children fall behind their nonmigrant peers because they change schools more often as a result of migration. For example, an estimated 23 percent of regular term participants did not enroll in the school they were attending on March 1, 1990, until more than 30 days after the beginning of school; these children missed a month or more of the crucial days at the start of the school year, and the reason at least some of the children missed those days was migrancy (Cox et al., 1992). Furthermore, these children may also have missed instruction in a necessary skill because of local differences in curriculum scope and sequence. It can be difficult for even the most

[8] It is not possible to determine the extent of educational needs among the unknown numbers of unidentified migrant children and youth, so data on needs rest on that subset of students that is identified and eligible.

Exhibit 7
Percentage of Regular Term and Summer Term MEP Participants with Selected Educational Needs, by Migrant Status

Selected Educational Need	Regular Term		Summer Term	
	Currently Migrant	Formerly Migrant	Currently Migrant	Formerly Migrant
One or more grades behind age cohort	38%	36%	37%	44%
Eligible for Chapter 1	53	44	36	17
Estimated reading achievement below 35th percentile	50	42	39	20
Estimated mathematics achievement below 35th percentile	39	33	28	15
Estimated English language arts achievement below 35th percentile	47	40	36	20

Exhibit reads: Among MEP participants during the regular term, 38 percent of currently migrant students and 36 percent of formerly migrant students are reported to be one or more grades behind their age cohort.

Source: Cox et al., 1992.

experienced teacher to detect skill gaps, particularly when the skills involved should have been learned a year or two earlier. Although the MSRTS data base may include information about skill levels and individual student needs, teachers rarely tap those data, and some "sending" projects seldom update the files (Cox et al., 1992; Strang et al., 1992).

Also, migration can cause migrant children to miss out on the social and extracurricular opportunities in schools that not only benefit them directly but may also make an important indirect difference in whether the migrant child feels enough attachment to the school to keep attending. The threat of dropping out may be greatest when the migrant child sees nothing in the school for him or her, and many of that child's migrant peers have dropped out to earn what looks like quick money in the fields.

In still other situations, poverty-related problems can directly interfere with a child's ability to benefit from instruction. For example, a child's parents may not be able to afford eyeglasses or even clothes. Undocumented workers may be afraid to seek medical or dental care for their children. Parents may lack knowledge about availability of and access to social services. (See exhibit 8.)

Needs Assessments for Migrant Students and Migrant Projects

Conducting needs assessments is a MEP requirement that calls for programs to be designed to meet the educational needs of individual migrant students. In practice, needs assessments are actually done for three separate purposes--program documentation, program design, and student placement--and the data sources are different for each purpose.

The most formal purpose of the needs assessment, seen from the perspective of local administrators, is to have a document to include in the grant application. To prepare the document, administrators assemble whatever data are available about migrant students

Exhibit 8
Educational and Support Services Needs:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

There is general (but not unanimous) agreement in one southwestern project about several needs of migrant students. First, movement leads to skill gaps for these children, due to students missing days or weeks of school, and having to adjust to different districts' curricular scope and sequence. For currently migrant students, this problem is seen as somewhat more acute, and most staff agreed the gaps decrease in importance the longer a child is settled out, but they are never eliminated. Tied to this is the winter-in-Mexico phenomenon; that is, for periods ranging from a few weeks to a couple of months, whole families return to their Mexican homes to work their own crops, help their older relatives, and maintain family ties. Second, lack of English language proficiency is frequently cited, but with a recognition that this is a problem for many non-migrants in the community too. In general, formerly migrant and currently migrant students in this district are seen as sharing this problem equally, with a subset of each group being most in need of assistance in mastering English. These subsets consist of those with the least educated parents, older students who have recently immigrated, or students who have lived in largely Spanish-only environments. Third, migrant students are seen as lacking in self-esteem; they are reported as being more shy than their peers, especially among the older students, and less involved in their schooling and activities.

According to MEP personnel in a second local project, also located in the southwest, a lower level of English language proficiency is the primary difference between the needs of migrant students and other students. As a result, the local migrant program targets intensive services at these students for three years, at which time almost all have been placed in regular classrooms. The other needs of migrant students are reported to be related to the class time missed and the inconsistencies in school curricula that students experience during migrancy. These needs are not viewed as insurmountable, however. Indeed, as the high school counselor noted, motivation, discipline, and dedication are no problem with migrant students--they know what hard work is all about and realize the opportunity that an education provides them.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

served by their program or residing in the area. In general, reviews of several project-level needs assessment documents during site visits for the Descriptive Study of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program indicate that migrant students are reported to have so many needs that almost any instructional or supporting service can be justified (Strang, Carlson, and Von Glatz, 1993). These documented project-level needs assessments tend to rely on aggregate measures, such as standardized test scores, proportions of students with limited English proficiency, and retention rates; only infrequently are the data specific to grades or schools. In addition, although most needs assessment documents report the views of teachers and migrant parents, representative data are rarely obtained from individual members of these groups; parents' views, for example, often are sought only from parent advisory council (PAC) members.

The second purpose of needs assessments is to plan programs. Case study reports indicate that local MEP administrators seldom base their plans on the information reported in the needs assessment document (exhibit 9). As is the case for other programs that operate on a fairly routine basis, MEP administrators appear to give their available facilities, budget, existing staff, local education philosophy, own beliefs, and similar factors more weight than formally collected information about unmet needs when designing their programs (Strang et al., 1993).

Many migrant educators apparently have been concerned about the quality and utility of the formal project-level needs assessments, and they have recently developed alternatives that are now being implemented with the goal of being able to plan their programs better. The Migrant Education Needs Assessment and Evaluation System (MENAES) was developed explicitly to fulfill the requirements for project-level needs assessment, evaluation, and reporting without increasing the data burden on state and local staffs. This system uses the MSRTS data base for aggregating national, state, and local data on student achievement and other outcomes. Similarly, the California State Department of Education developed the Student and Program Needs Assessment (SAPNA). Data from MSRTS that are considered vital to instruction are selected; they

may be aggregated and used at the school, district, regional, or state level to profile student needs.

Exhibit 9
Needs Assessments at the Project Level:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

As part of its annual application to the state for Chapter 1 (both basic grants and migrant), state compensatory, and Chapter 2 funding, this local project's school district is required to show evidence of needs assessment, including the criteria used to determine need and to describe any assessment instruments employed. The document provided to the state education agency is, however, only a general matrix of test scores by grade level along with selected demographic data about some of the migrant students; the document does not detail the conclusions school personnel reached from the information. This information is included in the state application for funding by the MEP project director (who is also responsible for the other programs contained on the application). No other individual or other sources seem to have been involved in any formal manner in preparing or reviewing the document.

In another local project, the migrant specialist writes up a "needs assessment" document which he submits to the regional office in preparation for the annual budget submission. He indicates that he does this needs assessment on his own. It is not extrapolated from student records or based on surveys but rather based upon the migrant specialist's sense of what is needed. He reportedly talks on a regular basis with parents, teachers, and administrators to form his conclusions. The report does not describe any data collection process but simply announces needs that exist and the mix of services that will be provided.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

Individual student needs assessments are carried out primarily for placement purposes. Case study data suggest that individual needs assessments that match migrant students with services in some local projects are sometimes quite detailed, but the procedures are informal and not routinely used in other projects. Often the specificity of the individual needs assessments of migrant students depends on whether the district uses specific procedures for all its students. Most individual needs assessments consist of procedures normally used by classroom teachers and other professionals to make initial placement decisions about new students or to decide on special placements for children reported to

have difficulty. Children are rarely assessed solely because they are migrants; they are assessed because they are new or are having trouble (Strang et al., 1993).

MSRTS data are often available to facilitate teachers' assessments of migrant children new to their classrooms, but those data are seldom used as the sole source of information; in fact, they are used in only one-third or fewer local projects. Local projects report that about 28 percent of school or project personnel examine MSRTS records to assess instruction received at the previous school; 16 percent, to help determine grade-level placements; and 15 percent, to see what credits secondary-school students need to graduate (Cox et al., 1992).

Instructional and Support Services Provided for Migrant Students

More than four-fifths of the migrant students who are eligible for MEP services receive at least some MEP services in addition to identification, recruitment, and entry into MSRTS (Cox et al., 1992). The services that a student receives depend mostly on whether the student is served in a project during the regular term or summer term; what the student's grade level is; and, to a lesser extent, whether the student is currently or formerly migrant and the student's assessed individual needs.

Instructional Services

Instructional services differ significantly by term and grade level (exhibit 10). Reading, mathematics, and language arts instruction make up the majority of instructional services for all MEP participants, and are particularly common for elementary school students and students being served during the regular term. Other subjects, such as science or social studies, are much more likely to be covered in the summer term (Cox et al., 1992). Case study reports suggest that most of the regular term instruction in reading, mathematics, and language arts covers basic skills, not higher-order or more advanced skills (Strang et al., 1992).

Exhibit 10
Percentage of Regular Term and Summer Term MEP Participants Receiving Selected Instructional Services, by Elementary or Secondary Grade Level

Instructional Service	Regular Term		Summer Term	
	Elementary Level (K-6)	Secondary Level (7-12)	Elementary Level (K-6)	Secondary Level (7-12)
Reading	55%	41%	65%	57%
Other Language Arts	48	36	58	50
Mathematics	42	35	60	51
Other	18	56	63	72

Exhibit reads: About 55 percent of the elementary-level MEP students who participate in the program during the regular term receive instructional service in reading.

Source: Cox et al., 1992.

For MEP participants in elementary school, the regular-term program generally consists of supplementary instruction in basic skills to small groups in pullout settings or to individuals within the regular classroom through the use of in-class aides (exhibit 11). Often the only factor that seems to distinguish MEP services from Chapter 1 basic services during the regular term is that instructional staff often rely on Spanish to help LEP migrant students, and that difference is noted only in schools serving a substantial number of Spanish-speaking students (Strang et al., 1993). During the summer term, in contrast, the MEP often provides a half- or full-day replacement program in which basic skills instruction may be provided in addition to numerous other subjects and enrichment activities.[9] (Summer programs are described in more detail in a subsequent section.)

At the secondary level, the topics of instruction during the regular term are more varied. Most older students receive tutorial assistance in one-on-one settings during study halls or outside school hours to help them complete particular courses with which they are having trouble. Tutorials remain common in the summer term and are designed to facilitate credit accrual, but self-directed study also is used extensively.

Finding time for supplemental programs is an ongoing problem in schools. This is a particular problem for compensatory or supplementary programs because most researchers and educators agree that, other things being equal, more time generates more learning; however, that time has to come at the expense of something else in the crowded school day. Most migrant students do not receive extensive additional instruction from the MEP. During the regular term, nearly three out of five local projects reported that migrant program participants generally received MEP-funded supplementary instruction for three or fewer hours per week (Cox et al., 1992). These data are for all subjects and are an average across all grade levels; further, no information is available on what students miss during their MEP-funded instructional periods. Fewer than 30 percent

[9]Replacement programs provide alternatives to the regular program, usually in a self-contained setting; in the summer, these replacement programs can be considered supplemental because no other appropriate services are usually available to migrant students.

of regular term migrant students reportedly receive any instructional services outside regular school hours (Cox et al., 1992).

Exhibit 11
Regular Term MEP Instructional Services:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

In all three elementary schools in this project, selected migrant children in grades 1-6 receive supplemental English as a second language in a pullout setting for 45 minutes per day. A bilingual teacher and an aide work with students primarily on oral language acquisition. Migrant students are selected based on language proficiency as measured by the IDEA test, with eligible currently migrant students receiving priority for services. One of the elementary schools also provides a before-school drop-out prevention program in which three academically successful secondary-level migrant students are paid to tutor migrant students in grades 3-6 who are receiving a D or F in language arts or mathematics. Classroom teachers assist in the tutoring sessions, which are held twice a week for 30-45 minutes.

In a project serving secondary-level students, the services provided through MEP are student-specific and student-directed. Especially for the older students, the tutor helps students with whatever they want help on. Some students drop in to see the MEP tutor several times a day and others come only when they need help; typically students come for one period a day in the high school.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

Support Services

Most migrant students participating in the MEP also receive one or more support services (exhibit 12). As was the case with instructional services, the significant factors that appear to explain differences in the services that individual students receive are the term of enrollment (i.e., summer or regular) and the student's grade level, along with smaller differences between currently and formerly migrant students. For example, transportation services are provided to about half of the summer-term participants, but only about 1 of 10 regular-term migrant education program participants receives transportation services

Exhibit 12
Percentage of Regular Term and Summer Term MEP Participants Receiving Selected MEP-funded Support Services, by Elementary or Secondary Grade Level

Support Service	Regular Term		Summer Term	
	Elementary Level (K-6)	Secondary Level (7-12)	Elementary Level (K-6)	Secondary Level (7-12)
Health	24%	20%	26%	18%
Dental	14	12	21	16
Nutrition	11	11	51	55
Transportation	10	10	50	48
Social work, guidance, etc.	37	39	17	30
Other	23	21	16	8

Exhibit reads: About 24 percent of the elementary-level MEP students who participate in the program during the regular term receive health support services.

Source: Cox et al., 1992

because the school district is generally responsible for pupil transportation during the school year (exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13
Support Services for MEP Participants:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

The support services provided through MEP include health/dental services, clothing and supplies, and counseling. As part of the health/dental services, the nurse may refer migrant or Chapter 1 students to one of three local physicians (one pediatrician, one optometrist, one general practitioner) or one of two dentists for free medical/dental care. The students must be Chapter 1 or MEP eligible, have no insurance, and qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The district will pay a flat fee of $20 per visit, with a total outlay of no more than $100. In 1988-89, approximately 150 migrant students and 150 Chapter 1 students received free medical or dental care through this program. Each year, private funds are given to the MEP for clothing (mostly shoes), eyeglasses, and school supplies. Sources of funds include the Lions Club, Realtors Association, and the United Way. MEP funds are also used to employ counselors and counselors' aides. At both the elementary and intermediate schools, one counselor is funded 25 percent by MEP and a counselor's aide is funded 40 percent by MEP. At the high school, a counselor's aide is funded 40 percent by MEP. These individuals serve all students in the school and are responsible for the maintenance of student records, individual or group counseling when required, and standardized test administration.

For supporting services in a second local project, the community service assistants (CSAs) suggested the needs for their assistance declined greatly the longer a family had been settled out. This was because the families learned where to turn for local services and had made their own connections. For supporting services, the CSAs and others felt that no one else was providing outreach to migrant families, much less linking those families to other agencies and services. The extent to which this is the case is unknown, but repeated questioning kept getting the same answer: "No one else is doing this."

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

MEP participants are much more likely than Chapter 1 basic grant service recipients to receive support services. Reasons for this are the attention that each student and family receives as part of the recruitment process; the restrictions on local agencies' use of Chapter 1 basic grant funds for health, social, or nutrition services; and the federal emphasis on using Chapter 1 funds for instruction (Heid, 1992).

Participation of Migrant Students in Other Supplemental Educational Programs

Many state and local MEP officials believe that other federal, state, or local programs should address the needs of migrant students for compensatory education or other special needs before the migrant students receive supplemental services from the MEP. Given this belief, and considering the extent and nature of the needs of migrant students, the participation rates of migrant students in other supplemental programs appear to be very low. For students participating in summer-term MEP projects, the MEP is frequently the only available provider of educational services, so the issue of whether students are receiving services from all the special programs to which they are entitled does not usually arise.

Only about 29 percent of migrant students who are served by the MEP in the regular term receive compensatory or supplemental instructional services other than those provided by the MEP, and over 80 percent of that set of students (about 24 percent of all migrant students) receive Chapter 1 basic program services. Participation in other major supplemental programs appears to be even lower for migrant students receiving MEP instructional services: about 9 percent participate in Title VII bilingual education programs, and about 12 percent receive state or local special English language services; 5 percent participate in special education; and fewer than 1 percent participate in gifted and talented programs (Cox et al., 1992).

Migrant students who do not receive MEP-funded services participate in supplemental programs at even lower rates. About 16 percent participate in the Chapter 1 basic program, 7 percent are in special education, and 2 percent receive Title VII-funded bilingual education services (Cox et al., 1992). These lower participation rates may reflect a lower level of need for supplemental services among these students.

Only about half of the migrant students who are eligible for Chapter 1 services receive them, according to the cumulative records of a sample of those students (Cox et al.,

1992). School personnel cited several reasons why migrant students do not participate in Chapter 1 to the extent that the students' cumulative records would indicate they should (exhibit 14). One set of reasons provided by the students' principals, accounting for about 40 percent of the students, is that the students who are not in Chapter 1 are not reported to be educationally disadvantaged; that is, they are ineligible for Chapter 1 based on the local eligibility criteria because, for example, they have test scores that are too high or they have not been recommended by their teachers. Another 40 percent of the migrant students are not served in Chapter 1 because principals indicated that Chapter 1 services are not available at the schools where the migrant students are located or at the migrant students' grade levels. To some extent, this pattern reflects the concentration of Chapter 1 services at the elementary level; 79 percent of Chapter 1 participants are in grades K to 6 (Sinclair & Gutmann, 1992), and only about two-thirds of migrant students participating in MEP are in those grades. Another 16 percent of migrant students do not participate in Chapter 1, according to their principals, because they are participating in other special programs that are presumed to meet their needs better than Chapter 1 or because they are participating in another class that conflicts with the Chapter 1 schedule. A small percentage reportedly have missing test scores or arrived too late to be admitted to a full Chapter 1 program (Cox et al., 1992).

Detailed explorations of the participation of migrant students in Chapter 1 have been carried out in Pennsylvania and Arizona. Although there were some state-to-state differences as well as differences between the state and national findings, the state-specific findings were in general agreement with the national results (Quilling, Lotwen, and Williams, 1992; Duron & Swenson, 1993).

To coordinate services offered by different supplemental programs, some local programs provide MEP services along with services funded by other programs through instructional

Exhibit 14
Percentages of Currently Migrant and Formerly Migrant Students Who Do Not Receive Chapter 1 Basic Grant Services, by Principal-Reported Reason(s)

Principal-Reported Reason	Percentages of Students		
	Currently Migrant	Formerly Migrant	Total Migrant
Not eligible/test scores too high	23%	35%	30%
Not eligible/not recommended by teacher	11	9	10
Not offered in student's school	32	18	24
Not offered at student's grade level	14	18	16
Student is enrolled in MEP	10	7	8
Student is enrolled in other special program	6	10	8
Missed test/short enrollment period/ Chapter 1 class full	2	0	1
Other reason(s)	1	3	2

Exhibit reads: About 23 percent of currently migrant students reportedly do not receive Chapter 1 basic grant services because they are ineligible, usually because their test scores are higher than the locally implemented cut off.

Source: Cox et al., 1992.

aides or teachers who are jointly funded by multiple programs (Strang et al., 1992). Some of the local programs combine MEP funds with regular Chapter 1, bilingual education, or state or local compensatory education funds. Because many students are eligible for more than one of these programs, many local administrators view this approach to service delivery as a means of stretching funds and facilitating the provision of services to individual students from multiple sources.

Summer Migrant Projects

Summer instruction can be an important part of the academic experience for migrant students, especially currently migrant ones, filling educational gaps caused by movement during the regular term, permitting secondary-school students to earn credits toward graduation, serving as a link between school years, and providing enrichment opportunities that might otherwise not be available to them. In 1989-90, 46 states funded summer MEP projects. The largest summer projects tend to be located in receiving states, or in states, such as California, that function as both sending and receiving states (Henderson et al., 1992).[10]

The environment in which summer-term projects operate may be quite different from the environment of regular-term projects. In many local education agencies, particularly in the rural areas where migrant students are found, no district-funded summer services are offered. Therefore, the MEP, which may cover the service areas of several school districts, may be the only educational service being offered during the summer months. As a result, summer-term projects are likely to be provided in the form of a full-time replacement program (exhibit 15). Summer MEP projects may have to provide supporting services, such as transportation, health care, and food services, that would be provided by the district during the regular school year. They also may need to make provisions, particularly for older students, for evening classes because many secondary-school-age

[10]"Sending" states, sometimes called "home-base" states are those where relatively large proportions of currently migrant families make their homes when they are not traveling. "Receiving" states are those where relatively large proportions of the migrant families spend time working crops while traveling.

Exhibit 15
Instructional Services in Summer Projects:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

This summer project serves students in grades PK-12. The preschool program includes readiness activities in the primary language along with some English language development and support services such as meals and dental screening. Students in grades K-8 receive a full-day education for 18 days. Emphasis is on whole language and thematically based instruction to allow consistent focus on two or more topics for reading, math, science, and art. One fourth-grade class, for example, focused on space, and a second-grade class used the theme of bears. Secondary students can receive up to 5.5 weeks (66 hours) of assistance in completing portable-assisted study sequence (PASS) high school courses. The PASS courses are provided through tutors at the community college.

The summer school offerings in another project are geared toward secondary school students; they include all academic subjects, ESL, remedial and special education, migrant PASS, and work experience. Classes are 2 hours or 4 hours long, providing 5 or 10 credits respectively. The project offers support to migrant students through in-class aides. There is one teacher employed by the program to teach two sessions of PASS, and students may enroll in any of the PASS subjects.

This third summer project serves currently migrant elementary age students, all of whom are LEP. Instruction includes a focus on English along with writing and other basic academic skills. Cooperative learning is used extensively, though more from the need to deal with grades K-7 in the same room than for pedagogical reasons. Local field trips are frequent to provide new experiences. There is an ongoing discussion within the project and between project and LEA personnel about the appropriate emphasis to place on academics versus enrichment experiences. Services are provided for 10 hours/day for 8 weeks.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

migrants work in the fields all day (Strang et al., 1992). At the same time, if local districts make summer school programs available to all of their students, the MEP summer project typically retains the supplemental role of the regular term, providing additional assistance for migrant students through pullouts, in-class aides, or before- and after-school services (Cox et al., 1992).

MSRTS reports on students are used somewhat more during the summer term than during the regular term (Cox et al., 1992). Nonetheless, along with general complaints about inaccuracies and lack of timeliness of MSRTS reports, summer project personnel believe that they have too little time at the start of the term to use the reports while also gearing up the program (Strang et al., 1992).

Classrooms in summer projects are generally staffed by a certified teacher and one or two instructional aides. Pupil-staff ratios are commonly lower than would be typical of the regular school year (e.g., 20 to 1). At the elementary level, summer projects typically offer multiple subjects to participating students. For secondary-school students, course offerings often target the graduation requirements that many migrant students have not met (Cox et al., 1992).

One of the unusual ways that several summer-term projects try to meet the multiple educational needs of older migrant students is through residential summer programs. Residential programs allow middle-school or high-school students an opportunity to participate in an intensive educational experience, frequently on a college campus, for periods ranging from one to six weeks. While in the residential programs, students not only can learn about new subject areas or make up credits that were missed, but they also have opportunities to participate in leadership, social, and extracurricular activities that may not be available to them during the regular school year. While one goal of these programs is to help students complete their high school requirements, another is to encourage them to consider postsecondary education (exhibit 16).

Some local projects select residential participants from among their most promising students; others choose students who are perceived to be at greatest risk for dropping out; still others make the residential opportunity available to any interested student. Students who choose to participate in a residential program, of course, will not be earning money in the fields. One statewide project has addressed this problem of lost income by coordinating with the Department of Labor's Job Training Partnership Act. In that state,

the statewide Private Industry Council provides a training stipend to the residential program participants to encourage them to attend (Strang et al., 1992).

Exhibit 16
Summer Residential Programs:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

The college-bound program is a five-week summer program operated through a cooperative agreement between the regional MEP project and a local college. Academically promising students who are juniors or seniors in high school attend summer classes at the college. They are exposed to college experiences, interact and take courses with non-migrant college students, and learn that they can work and go to school at the same time. They earn high school credit for the courses they complete. This year, 45 students attended the college-bound program. Many of those students have already been accepted at the college for the fall semester. Others will go to other colleges or back to high school for their senior year.

The second example of a summer residential program is for at-risk high school students, the students generally receive 5 contact hours/day of instructional services for 5 days/week for 6 weeks. This is 150 hours over the course of the program. Each class is taught by a certified teacher with a teacher/pupil ratio of about 1:10. Students must complete a minimum of 1/2 and a maximum of 2 credits of required courses (i.e., courses they have failed). If a student is repeating a failed course, he/she must complete 60 hours to receive 1 credit, or 30 hours for 1/2 credit (if the student failed one semester). If the student is taking a course he/she has never had before (and thus never failed)-- referred to as an "impulse course"-- he/she must complete 120 hours to get 1 credit (or 60 hours for 1/2 credit). In addition, 3 hours of activities are scheduled during the evening hours, some of which are academically oriented, such as the homework/tutorial hour. At this time students can make up academic class time for excused absences (e.g., doctor visits). Other evening activities include personal and motivational counseling.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

There appears to be a greater focus on supporting services in the summer term than in the regular term because district-funded or other locally provided services are frequently unavailable. In addition, because of the slightly higher proportions of currently migrant students in summer projects than in regular-term projects, the need for support services may be somewhat greater in the summer projects. Summer projects often coordinate

delivery of support services with other agencies and private organizations. For example, USDA programs may provide lunches and other meals at school, and other organizations provide health and dental screening to summer MEP students. Recreation departments often agree to provide access to community pools or other facilities (Cox et al., 1992; Strang et al., 1992).

Because summer MEP projects fund most of the instructional services that children receive, the services are often more costly to the MEP than in the regular term, when the basic school program pays most of the cost of schooling out of local or state funds. The federal funding formula partially takes this difference into account with an adjustment that generates extra dollars for states based on an FTE count of migrant children participating in summer projects (Pringle & Rosenthal, 1993).

But this summer adjustment does not take into account the cost or intensity of services students receive. A student receiving home-based instruction for six weeks generates the same level of program funds as a student participating in a six-week college campus-based residential program. Thus, inequities based on intensity of services can arise. States that serve large numbers of students with low-intensity services can be perceived as "winning" in terms of funding, while states that serve equivalent numbers of students more intensively are often seen as losing. Given the funding formula and the program's limited resources, states sometimes must consider cost rather than educational need when deciding which services to offer. States often will compromise by offering both kinds of services, using low cost services for many students to subsidize high cost services to a few others (Pringle & Rosenthal, 1993).

Services for Preschool Children

Congress revised the MEP in 1988 by allowing states and local migrant projects to count identified, eligible children age 3-5 in the funding formula. Prior to that time, preschool-age migrants could receive MEP services, but the cost of those services was not borne by the federal government. States receiving MEP funds are now responsible for identifying

migrant preschoolers and serving those whose needs are not being met by other programs in keeping with service priorities and the results of needs assessment for all migrant children who reside in the state (exhibit 17).

In 1989-90, when this new requirement was implemented, about half of the regular school year projects and almost three-fourths of the summer migrant projects reported serving at least some preschoolers. MEP projects reported they served slightly more than 13,000 preschool migrant children during the regular term (which is about 4 percent of the total number of migrants served) and slightly less than 13,000 during the summer term (about 10 percent of the total number of migrants served). In both terms, there were more currently migrant children than formerly migrant children in this age group being served (Henderson et al., 1992). Moreover, the vast majority of those projects not offering preschool services noted an intent to begin such services (Cox et al., 1992).

Exhibit 17
Early Childhood Services:
Example from a Case Study of Local MEP Projects

The most widely implemented early childhood activities in this large, regional project generally involved training parents to be the child's first teacher. Several specific English-language and Spanish-language programs were being used, and training of trainers was occurring to expand the first teacher activities throughout much of the region. As implemented, school- or district-based instructional aides visited homes or camps throughout their service area to seek parents interested in participation. When interested parents were identified, then the aide would set up a regular schedule of visits to teach the parent how to provide educationally valuable opportunities to the preschoolers. When necessary, the aide would also work with the parents on other parenting skills and nutrition, and would inform the parents about other services that may be of use to them and their children from MEP and other agencies.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

Preschool programs must be comprehensive and intensive for migrants because these children have multiple needs, and their health, nutritional status, academic readiness, and future educational performance are closely interrelated. In addition to the MEP, several other federal, state, local, and private programs provide preschool services to migrant and other low-income families. At the federal level, these include Head Start, Migrant Head Start, Even Start, and Migrant Education Even Start.

The Head Start program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), serves about 620,000 preschool-age children each year, an unknown percentage of whom are migrants. Head Start services are comprehensive, addressing cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health, nutritional needs, parental involvement, and other considerations that enable children to develop social competence.

Migrant Head Start, which was established specifically to serve the preschool migrant population, also is funded by DHHS. This program provides services in areas similar to those addressed by the regular Head Start program. This program served about 23,500 preschool migrant children in 1989-90. A 1986 study estimated that Migrant Head Start served about 19,000 children at that time and judged that number to be only about 6 percent of the eligible population, which suggests more than 300,000 children ages 0 to 5 could be eligible[11] (O'Brien, 1986).

Under the Even Start program, initiated in 1988 through P.L. 100-297, the U.S. Department of Education provides funds to assist children through age 7 and their parents. Even Start provides preschool, child care, adult education, and parenting education to poor families. It is designed to provide parents with the literacy skills they need to help their children with school work and to obtain higher-paying jobs. In

[11]This number would include all children too young to attend kindergarten; if the same population proportion is used for the population age 21 and younger, this estimate suggests the existence of about 1,200,000 eligible children and youth. This estimate seems very high, particularly since the Migrant Head Start program's eligibility requirements only permit one year of eligibility for formerly migrant children.

1990-91, Even Start served about 6,100 families and was funded at about $24 million (St. Pierre, Swartz, and Murray, 1993).

Migrant Education Even Start is similar in goals and activities to regular Even Start. Its purpose is to support preschool projects that increase readiness to learn in school and promote literacy among migrant parents by integrating early childhood and adult education. Support services include child care, rehabilitation, and transportation. This program was first implemented in fiscal year (FY) 1989 with an appropriation of less than $500,000; in FY 1990 the program operated in four states and served about 1,000 parents and their children. By FY 1991 appropriations approached $1.5 million, with grants awarded to nine state education agencies.

Head Start and Migrant Head Start programs have reportedly been successful in serving preschoolers from low-income families, including migrants. However, these programs do not have enough funds to serve all the migrant preschool-age children in need, along with the much larger number of nonmigrant children who qualify (NCME, 1992). In addition, each program has its own eligibility criteria, which are usually more restrictive than those used by MEP, so that not all needy migrant children may be eligible for one or another of the programs (Martin & Martin, 1991). Although coordination among programs serving preschool children would seem to enhance the achievements of preschool programs, instances in which MEP and other service providers share facilities or coordinate identification and recruitment activities are the exception rather than the rule. In addition to the normal difficulties involved with coordinating programs within a single agency, for preschoolers the MEP often also has to deal with several different agencies (Strang et al., 1992; NCME, 1992).

Services for Secondary-School-Age Youth

The characteristics and needs of migrant students ages 15 to 21 have gained increased attention in recent years as service providers attempt to combat the high dropout rates common to migrant youth. Programs for older migrant youth serve persons in a variety of

situations, including migrant students who are enrolled in secondary school, migrant youth who have dropped out of school before earning a high school diploma, and migrant youth who are not in school and do not have a high school diploma. Compounding the challenges of serving these older migrant young people is the fact that secondary schools often have few other supplemental educational programs (such as Chapter 1 or bilingual education) available, leaving a larger responsibility for the MEP.

Services to in-school migrant youth

Secondary-level enrollments in the MEP appear to have increased as a proportion of all MEP enrollments following implementation of provisions in P.L. 100-297 that allowed states to receive MEP funds based on the numbers of youth identified as residing in the state. Total enrollment in the MEP in the regular term increased by 8 percent from 1988-89 to 1989-90, while enrollments in grades 7-12 increased 12 percent (Henderson et al., 1992).

Regular-term services for secondary school migrant students consist mainly of tutorials, sometimes provided outside regular school hours or during study periods, or 45-to-90-minute pullout sessions for assistance in course work. This assistance is intended to help the students make up for work they have missed or to provide native-language assistance to LEP students who have trouble keeping up in class. Additional dropout-prevention efforts usually take place outside school hours and frequently revolve around provision of tutorials and homework assistance to help students meet credit or competency test requirements for graduation (exhibit 18). Counseling is often devoted to ensuring that credits earned at one high school are honored at the high school to which the student will move.

Migrant students have the lowest high school graduation rate of any student population in this country (NCME, 1992; NASDME, 1992). Among national, state, and local efforts to address this problem, two major credit-accrual projects have been established to help migrant students complete course work even when they are migrating. They are

Exhibit 18
Problems in Credit Accrual for Migrant Students in Secondary Schools

The National Commission on Migrant Education (1992, pp. 58, 80-81) emphasized problems of continuity in credit accrual:

Students, unaware that graduation requirements vary by school district, usually learn this fact after they are denied a high school diploma for insufficient credits. Understandably, these students often become discouraged and are more likely to be tempted to earn money by working in the fields. ... At the secondary level, students find that courses for which they have received partial credit are not available in their next school. ... For secondary-school-age children, interstate coordination can make the difference between dropping out of school or graduating from high school. Although many schools try to communicate with each other to transfer high school credits, the process is imperfect and depends on how comparable the courses are.

(1) Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) and (2) the National Project for Secondary Credit Exchange and Accrual Project.

PASS originated in California in 1978 as a component of a Secondary High School Dropout Project. The PASS project has developed 40 courses for middle-school and high-school students based on a semi-independent study program framework. Course credits can be issued either by the school district where the migrant student finished the course or by the home-base school district where the student normally lives. PASS courses are offered free of charge to MEP students (exhibit 19).

PASS courses are a regular feature of many summer-term projects but are used less during the regular school year. In some states, secondary students who sign up in the summer receive several weeks of concentrated assistance from tutors or teachers in completing PASS courses. The student must complete the course to receive credit.

The National Project for Secondary Credit Exchange and Accrual was established by the U.S. Department of Education in October 1990 and funded through a three-year grant to

the Texas Education Agency. The project is developing model processes for secondary credit accrual and exchange, including PASS and other correspondence courses, and will provide assistance to SEAs in developing or enhancing secondary programs and services as well as credit accural and exchange systems. The project is also seeking a national consensus on ways to accept summer credits and to record all earned credits on MSRTS.

Exhibit 19
Implementing the PASS Program:
Examples from Case Studies of Local MEP Projects

Secondary students in this district may take advantage of the PASS program. Since most students in this age range need to work in the field, the school has set up a tent in the camp, and a teacher offers tutorial assistance three evenings a week. PASS is also offered in the school for students who can attend.

The district housing this migrant program requires the migrant students to attend PASS class in order to participate in the PASS program, but the PASS teacher mainly serves as a resource. He helps them find the answers to their questions and has access to the answer keys that accompany PASS assignments. Twenty-three students took PASS classes in the 1990 summer project, some earning as many as 20 credits. Students in the PASS class claim to like the independent study approach. They feel they can earn more credits in a limited amount of time than if they attended regular summer school classes. The students and teacher in the PASS program feel that the curriculum is on the proper academic level.

Source: Strang et al., 1992.

Services for out-of-school migrant youth

Since 1988, the MEP has had an additional responsibility to identify and recruit young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who are not in school and do not have a diploma. It is the job of each state migrant project to search out, identify, and recruit those youths who have dropped out and, consistent with the results of a needs assessment for all children in the state, to ensure that appropriate services are available for them. This task is potentially large and difficult, given the great numbers of migrant youth who are not enrolled in school. As of the 1989-90 school year, very few projects actively sought out

18-to-21-year-olds. Only 3 percent of all regular school-year projects and 7 percent of all summer-term projects are engaged in identifying and recruiting 18-to-21-year-olds (Cox et al., 1992). Furthermore, it is not known whether these projects recruit 18-to-21-year-olds only when the opportunities arise during routine recruitment activities or whether they actively recruit them. Case studies of MEP projects found that most of them did not actively seek out youth in this age range (Strang et al., 1993).

Even though only a small percentage of projects recruited these youths, about half of both the regular-term and summer projects reported offering MEP services to 18-to-21-year-olds during the 1989-90 school year (Cox et al., 1992). These services included referring the youths to other, non-MEP services (23 percent of regular-term projects and 10 percent of summer-term projects) and providing tutoring or GED/adult education instruction (14 percent of school-year projects and 19 percent of summer-term projects). About 9 percent of the regular-term projects and 15 percent of the summer-term projects report offering 18-to-21-year-olds the same services that are available to other age groups. Direct services for this group appear more likely to be a summer activity than a school-year function.

Other programs for migrant youth

Several other federal programs, including the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), and the Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Job Training Program, also target services to migrant youth.

CAMP is the only national support program directed solely toward migrant college students. CAMP is a full-service program helping first-year migrant college students (who usually work, in addition to taking courses) to make the transition from high school to college and to complete a college education (NCME, 1992). CAMP's services include counseling, tutoring, skills workshops, financial aid, stipends, and housing assistance.

CAMP is authorized by section 418A of the Higher Education Act and administered by the Office of Migrant Education (OME). As of 1992-93, CAMP is funded through five-year

grants awarded to postsecondary institutions and nonprofit organizations. As of FY 1991, CAMP appropriations amounted to about $2 million for seven CAMP locations serving a total of 347 students. The average cost per student was $5,625, which includes all support for enabling the student to complete a full academic year. This small program selects its participants competitively; on average, sites receive 200 applications for every 40 slots (NCME, 1992).

The High School Equivalency Program originated in 1967 in the Office of Economic Opportunity and was transferred from the U.S. Department of Labor to the U.S. Department of Education in 1980, where it is funded through the Higher Education Act and administered by OME. HEP serves about 3,000 students annually out of an appropriation of about $8 million. Amendments enacted in 1992 provide that to be eligible for HEP a person must be a migrant farmworker or dependent, lack a high school diploma, be at least 16 years old, and need the services HEP provides. Five-year HEP grants (they were three-year grants before 1992-93) are given to postsecondary institutions and other nonprofit organizations to provide out-of-school migrant youth with counseling, health care, financial aid, stipends, housing assistance, and exposure to cultural and academic programs. HEP's primary mission is to give young migrant adults the same level of preparedness as regular high school graduates, primarily through helping them earn a general educational development (GED) diploma in a supportive and enriching academic environment offered in a college setting.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Job Training Partnership Act program (section 402, JTPA) is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. The program is intended to serve migrant farmworkers by leading them to unsubsidized or nonagricultural employment. In FY 1990, the program served approximately 12,100 migrants (of 55,000 total participants); information is not available on the proportion of those under age 21. The annual cost per participant was about $1,200.

5

MEP State Program Grant Funding

Although the identified MEP eligible population has grown dramatically in recent years (in part because of changes in age-range eligibility criteria), funding for the MEP does not appear to have kept pace with inflation or with the growth in the number of program participants. Appropriations for section 1201 grants have increased over the past 10 years. When measured in current dollars, the increase is from approximately $266 million in FY 1982 to about $295 million in FY 1992, for an overall increase in current dollars of about $29 million.[12] If considered in terms of estimated constant dollars (a measure of what the appropriations can buy after accounting for inflation), funding levels have declined approximately $70 million in value during that same period (exhibit 20).[13]

Per-participant appropriations for the MEP, whether measured in current or estimated constant dollars, have declined over the past decade as a result of the combined effects of increases in the number of identified migrant students and relative stability in appropriations. The decline in per-participant appropriations appears particularly large when those effects are combined with the effects of inflation during that period. In 1981-82, the per-participant allocation in current dollars for all identified students was about $524; the level was about $450 in 1991-92, a decline of about $74. In estimated constant dollars, the decline was $313 per participant.

[12]Additional funds are appropriated to carry out coordination activities, including support for MSRTS, under section 1203. In FY 1991 activities under this section received about $9 million.

[13]This constant-dollar estimate is indexed to 1982 based on the index for State and Local Purchases of Services, Fixed Weight version. This analysis can be found in NCME (1992).

Exhibit 20: MEP Appropriations in Current and Constant Dollars, 1982-92.

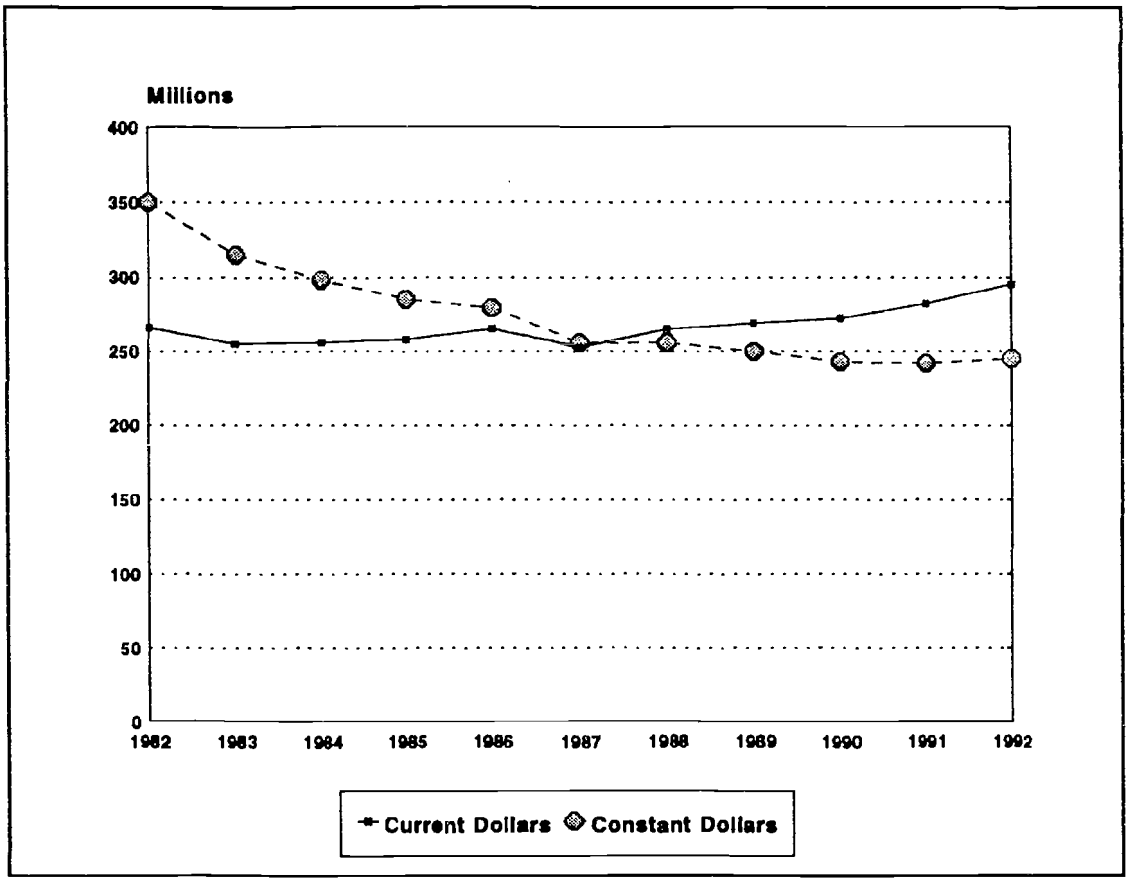

Exhibit reads: During 1982, current dollar MEP appropriations were approximately $265 million, while, in estimated constant dollars, the value was about $350 million during that year.

Source: NCME (1992)

Historical Development of the Funding Formula

Between 1966 and 1973, MEP grants to states were based on estimates of migrant children derived from Department of Labor farm labor statistics. These statistics reportedly often underestimated the migrant student population in some states while overestimating it in others. These estimates also did not account for each child's length of residence in any state. As a result, in 1972, the state directors of migrant education established the Migrant Student Record Transfer System. The MSRTS data base contains data on individual migrant children and has become the basis for determining grants to states. The data from MSRTS allow the funding formula to take into account the number of children identified and the children's length of residence in each state (exhibit 21).

Exhibit 21
Computing Section 1201 Grants to States

The actual amount states receive in migrant program funds is based on four factors:

- *the total size of the federal appropriation for MEP (total available pool of funds),*
- *the number of FTE MEP-eligible children (enrolled on MSRTS) recruited in a state over the preceding calendar year,*
- *the number of FTE students enrolled in the state's MEP-funded summer project, and*
- *the state's per-pupil expenditure for education compared to the national average.*

The amount of each state's grant award is based on the full-time-equivalent (FTE) number of children (currently or formerly migrant) residing in the state during the calendar year (section 1201[b][1]), as recorded in MSRTS. Differences in educational costs between states are also factored into the state grant formula.

Because migrant children are frequently migrating during the summer months and are, therefore, in short-term residence when schools are not operating, the state grant allocation formula was modified in 1978 to "take into account the special needs of those children for summer projects and the additional costs of operating such programs in the summer" (section 1201[b][1]). Thus, on a practical basis, states receive grants based on the FTE number of identified migrant-eligible children who *reside* in the state during the year. States receive funds for summer projects based on the FTE number of eligible children who are *served* by the summer projects during the project's enrollment period (with a 109-day summer period counted as one FTE).

In 1981 the federal appropriation for MEP was capped, and MSRTS statistics were no longer used as the basis for determining national levels of program funding. However, they continued to be used as the basis for state grant allocations, with states, in effect, competing against each other for funds through their statewide recruitment efforts. By changing the basis for MEP appropriations, Congress curtailed the growth in the MEP budget, even though it continued to expand the statutory requirements and responsibilities of grant recipients. These statutory changes included increasing the age range of the MEP population that could be counted for formula purposes (from ages 5-17 to ages 3-21) as well as expanding administrative requirements for program operation (e.g., program evaluation and reporting requirements).

Program Implementation Incentives Associated with the MEP State Funding Formula

State MEP administrators are in a difficult position. On the one hand, they must encourage active recruitment to maintain their relative share of the appropriation. On the other hand, when the total amount to be allocated does not grow commensurate with the population that has been recruited, services cannot be provided as intensively or extensively, or both. The method of funding the states based on FTE counts of eligible children carries within it the ironic effect of encouraging states to recruit while knowing that effective recruitment may mean reduced services for any additional individual migrant

students that are enrolled. In brief, across states the MEP operates as a "zero-sum" game.

The formula leads states to devote ever-greater shares of ever-scarcer resources to finding and counting students, while discouraging states from addressing the educational and support needs of their new recruits by actually providing them with the services they need. To be sure, some local program personnel point out they want to serve all that they identify as eligible, and they even avoid recruiting if they believe that their resources are insufficient to serve additional students, but it is not clear that this identify-only-who-can-be-served attitude is widespread (Strang et al., 1993). Furthermore, if this attitude is encouraged statewide, all of the state's migrant students would end up with fewer services available to them.

It appears from the data reviewed in this report that states have made a reasonable compromise, from their perspective, between recruitment and service. This compromise is to recruit enough to protect the state's relative funding position, but not so actively that the costs outweigh the additional revenue that is generated.

At the same time, of course, this compromise has the effect that some students who could benefit from the MEP are not being recruited and served, and those children more than likely come from those groups that are most difficult to identify and recruit. In general terms, those groups include currently migrant students as well as currently or formerly migrant preschool age children and out-of-school youth. The data reviewed for this report indicate that these children are most likely to have educational needs that are not being met by other special programs, and, therefore, they are precisely the ones who should either receive services directly from the MEP or have services provided by other agencies through the MEP's advocacy.

On a larger scale, the formula rewards states that identify large numbers of formerly migrant children and penalizes states that serve predominantly currently migrant children, because a portion of the currently migrant children (those who move across state lines)

produce a smaller FTE in any given state when compared with formerly migrant children. Furthermore, for intrastate currently migrant students, states incur the added costs of tracking the students as they move from district to district and of coordinating program services for them, only to generate funds equivalent to those produced by formerly migrant children.

To help keep costs down, state and local program staff may be inclined to conduct identification and recruitment primarily in areas with high concentrations of easily identified migrant families, such as migrant camps or within the schools themselves, rather than "beat the bushes." The higher costs of locating, identifying, and recruiting a family that resides in an isolated area may not be easily justified within a project, given the level of funds generated.

In addition, state and local project personnel may not find the higher costs of identifying, recruiting, and serving preschool children and out-of-school youth justifiable, because the amount of funds these expensive recruits generate is the same as the amount generated by in-school students; furthermore, the MEP's traditional clients have been K-12 students. In addition to higher costs for recruitment, service costs may be higher for preschool children or youth who are not enrolled in school because the facilities, transportation, and nutrition services that the school district routinely provides for school-age students may not be available for out-of-school children unless directly paid for by the MEP.

In summary:

- The current formula encourages states to identify formerly migrant school-age students who are typically easiest to locate, who are probably going to remain in the state and generate a full FTE, and who, other things being equal, are less costly to serve than currently migrant children and preschool children or out-of-school youth regardless of their currently or formerly migrant status.

- The current formula provides no special incentive for identifying and recruiting hard-to-locate migrant children, particularly preschool children out-of-school youth, and currently migrant students in general.

6

Migrant Education Program Options

The Migrant Education Program does not exist in a vaccuum. While migrant children have particular educational needs stemming from the condition of their families' migrancy, and those needs should be addressed, they also share the educational needs of all other children. Simply stated, they are children first and only secondarily are they migrant children. Therefore, as is the case for all children, meeting their common educational needs is primarily the responsibility of state and local educational agencies--not the MEP.

Recognizing that meeting the special educational needs of migrant children does not affect all state or local agencies equally, the migrant education program was designed to support supplemental services for those migrant students who are most in need. Other federal, state, and local special programs also are available to meet some of the special needs of this group of children.

The data developed since the most recent reauthorization of the MEP and reviewed here suggest that the MEP does not always target its services to the migrant students who need the supplemental assistance the most. Those data also suggest that migrant education programs appear to provide some compensatory education services in reading and mathematics basic skills that are provided to non-migrant children as a matter of course by the regular educational program or by other federal, state, or local categorical programs. While we believe that ensuring children with special needs receive help from any available source is important, we question whether the MEP should be the source if other resources are available for other children. This is particularly the case since migrants have educational needs, such as having to meet diverse high school graduation requirements, that may receive less attention if the program's resources are being expended on services that duplicate those made available from other sources. In short,

MEP-funded services sometimes duplicate those available from other sources for non-migrants, and those MEP-funded services sometimes may not address the greatest needs stemming from migrancy.

If the MEP is to focus its services on eligible migrant children with the greatest need, the current state grant allocation process should be modified. The grant allocation process should provide specific incentives that would encourage states to (1) identify and recruit currently migrant children and those in the special preschool and out-of-school youth categories, and (2) serve, either directly or through advocacy, those migrant children with the greatest educational needs.

We emphasize the importance of targeting currently migrant students and the out-of-school children and youth primarily because those young people are the least likely to be receiving services from MEP or other programs.

We emphasize the advocacy role for MEP for two reasons. The first reason is practical: the MEP's funds are limited, so if suitable programs are available from other sources, it simply makes sense to work locally to ensure the migrant students are equitably included in them. The second reason is that many of the needs of migrant children are not the results of migrancy per se but of, for example, poverty or limited-English-proficiency that also affect many non-migrants. Those needs are appropriately the concerns of others, although local experience has shown that the MEP sometimes has to push to ensure that those others accept their responsibilities.

Providing incentives to MEP project administrators to encourage these activities does not mean that formerly migrant students in elementary or secondary schools should not be recruited and be provided services to meet their migrant-related needs. As a group, migrant children, whether currently or formerly migrant in status and whether preschool, in-school, or out-of-school in age, have severe educational needs that should be met. At the same time, with the growing number of eligible participants, clearer priorities must be

set. The current legislation does not appear to have been as effective as hoped in encouraging recruitment and targeted service for the neediest migrant children.

In addition, state and local education agencies should be held directly accountable for ensuring that appropriate services are made available to currently and formerly migrant children. This should be the case whether these services are provided by the MEP or by another program; in particular, the regular education program has the single largest responsibility because it is the single most significant source of services to migrant children. For example, currently and formerly migrant students in elementary school should not be kept out of Chapter 1 or other compensatory education programs because they are migrants. It should be noted that this view of local accountability for the results of categorical programs, while adding to the burden of state and local personnel, simply returns accountability to where it belonged before categorical program managers were effectively assigned that responsibility.

There are several possible ways in which the funding formula for MEP might be changed to alter the incentives that now operate within the system. The formula might be revised to favor currently migrant children, preschool children, out-of-school youth, or other groups of migrants that are particularly costly to recruit and serve. Another approach would be to limit the period of services to formerly migrant students to a period shorter than the current five years. Either approach would improve targeting of children and services without also creating unnecessary problems in local operations if it is implemented along with straigtforward guidelines on the requirements to serve migrant children with the greatest educational needs stemming from migrancy.

APPENDIX A

Sources of Data

This report is a synthesis of research findings and their implications since the last reauthorization of the MEP in 1988. The synthesis relies heavily on the following three primary sources:

(1) *Invisible Children: A Portrait of Migrant Education in the United States*, the final report of the National Commission on Migrant Education. The commission was established by Congress under section 1439 of P.L. 100-297 expressly for the purpose of studying issues related to educating migrant students to inform the reauthorization of the program. Data for the report were collected through public hearings around the country, reviews of previous research, and commissioned studies.

(2) *Descriptive Study of the Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program* (Cox et al., 1992), which was conducted for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Policy and Planning by the Research Triangle Institute. This study combines surveys of state and local migrant education personnel with reviews of migrant student records and case studies of individual migrant education projects. The study describes the MEP in terms of targeting, services, administration, and communications.

(3) *A Summary of State Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program Participation and Achievement Information* (Henderson et al., 1992), the annual report series, covering the period from 1984-85 to 1990-91 prepared by Westat, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Policy and Planning. The report includes data submitted by state education agencies to the federal government regarding student participation by age, grade, and migrant status; services received; and achievement data for migrant students participating in the MEP.

In addition, many other reports have been reviewed, and their findings are incorporated and cited as appropriate.

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Acknowledgements

We are in debt to Joanne Bogart at the Planning and Evaluation Service, U.S. Department of Education, for her ongoing assistance and support as the project officer for this report. Without her assistance, it likely would be still "in press" and certainly would be far less comprehensive.

Ellen Tenenbaum and Adrienne Von Glatz at Westat played significant roles in preparing the sections of this report on summer-term programs and services for secondary-age youth.

Many people at the U.S. Department of Education read and commented on drafts of this report, and they deserve special thanks for the valuable assistance they provided:

James English, Office of Migrant Education
Adriana de Kanter, Planning and Evaluation Service
Mary Jean LeTendre, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Richard Melman, Office of the General Counsel
David Moguel, Planning and Evaluation Service
Valena Plisko, Planning and Evaluation Service
John Rebstock, Office of Migrant Education

Other people in and out of government helped by serving as sounding boards for several of the ideas presented here (although we remain responsible for them, particularly when we did not take their advice):

Diane August, Delia Pompa, Vic Rivera, Jim Gonzalez, and the other participants in the Stanford Working Group on Improving Federal Education Programs for Limited-English-Proficient Students' meeting on migrant education
Carol Whitten, Lisa Carlos, and Robert Suggs, staff of the National Commission on Migrant Education
Phyllis McClure and the other members of the Independent Review Panel

We are particularly grateful to those who helped us put the report together:

Saunders Freeland, Westat
Joyce Jones, Westat
Priscilla Taylor, EEI