

Title I-C Round Table Discussion

ESEA Grants Workshop, April 2014

NEEDS ASSESSMENT Q & A

Excerpted from Pages 55-61, 102 & 104 of the *Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children*, updated October 2010

Statutory Requirements:

Title I, Part C, Sections 1304(b) and 1306(a)

Regulatory Requirements:

34 CFR 200.83

MUST DISTRICTS IDENTIFY THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ALL ELIGIBLE MIGRANT CHILDREN?

Yes. Sections 1304(b)(1) and 1306(a)(1) of the statute require the State to ensure that the districts identify and address the special educational needs of migrant children.

Districts must conduct a needs assessment in order to provide services that will meet the identified needs in accordance with the comprehensive State plan for service delivery.

At the district, a needs assessment determines: (1) the extent of the needs of migrant students in that project area and how those needs relate to the priorities the State has established; (2) how to design local services; and (3) which students should receive services. Districts identify such critical elements as the specific needs of children by grade levels, the academic areas in which the project should focus, the instructional settings, materials, staffing, and teaching techniques.

WHAT IS A “NEEDS ASSESSMENT”?

A “needs assessment” is a *systematic* assessment and decision-making process that progresses through a defined series of phases to determine needs, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action. A needs assessment:

- Focuses on the *ends* (i.e., outcomes) to be achieved, rather than the *means* (i.e., process). For example, reading achievement is an outcome, whereas reading instruction is a means toward that end.
- Gathers data by means of *established procedures and methods* that are thoughtfully selected to fit the purposes and context of the needs assessment.
- *Sets priorities and determines criteria* for solutions so that planners and managers can make sound decisions.
- *Sets criteria* for determining how best to allocate available money, people, facilities, and other resources.
- Leads to *action* that will *improve* programs, services, organizational structure and operations, or a combination of these elements.

WHAT ARE THE "SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS" OF MIGRANT CHILDREN?

The “special educational needs” of migrant children, as defined in 34 CFR 200.83(a)(2), are those educational *and* educationally related needs that: (1) result from the migrant lifestyle, and (2) must be met in order for migrant children to participate effectively in school.

Alaska has identified four needs: academic support in reading & math, high school graduation support, school readiness skills, and support services. These needs should be the focus of the district program's design and interventions.

MUST THE STATE ENSURE THAT THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES OF THE DISTRICTS ARE CONGRUENT WITH THE STATE'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES?

Yes. Because the State's comprehensive State plan for service delivery is the basis for all uses of MEP funds in the State, the State and districts must jointly ensure that needs assessment procedures at the district level align with those at the State level. They also must jointly ensure that local projects focus on the unmet needs of migrant children who have "priority for services" before serving other migrant children.

SHOULD STATES AND DISTRICTS USE STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND ASSESSMENT DATA TO HELP IDENTIFY THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF MIGRANT CHILDREN?

Yes. Student demographic and assessment data are key data sources that districts should use to construct a local profile of migrant children as compared to non-migrant children and/or other appropriate comparison groups. These data are particularly useful if they are disaggregated by: (1) priority for services, (2) grade level, and (3) project area (where the number of students served is sufficiently large for the data to be reliable).

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVALUATING THE MEP?

Both the State and the districts have evaluation responsibilities. In a written evaluation, the State must measure the effectiveness of the implementation and results of its program on a statewide basis against its measurable outcomes and the State performance targets. Likewise, districts must conduct a local project evaluation that measures both the implementation of the project and student performance against the project's measurable outcomes, the State's measurable outcomes, and the State's performance targets. (See 34 CFR 200.84.)
