COMMON AREAS OF CONCERN

1 Educational Continuity

Because migratory students often are forced to move during the regular school year and experience interruptions due to absences, students tend to encounter a lack of educational continuity. Often, students need to learn and adapt to different methods of instruction, behavioral expectations, and classroom rituals and routines with every move. Ensuring continuity of education and seamless credit accrual opportunities for all students is a priority due to this pattern.

2 Instructional Time

Mobility also impacts the amount of time students spend in class and their attendance patterns. Such decreases in the time students spend engaged in learning leads to lower levels of achievement. These factors are particularly present for preschool children and out-of-school youth (OSY), who either do not have access to free public education or are unable to take advantage of available programs due to mobility and/or the need to work. Ways to ameliorate the impact of family mobility and delays in enrollment procedures are essential.

3 School Engagement

Various factors relating to migrancy patterns impact student engagement in school. Students miss summer programs and extracurricular activities that help foster school engagement. Students feel unwelcome and/or disconnected from school systems where they may only be spending a few weeks. There is little time for students to establish and develop meaningful friendships within their peer group at school.

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4 English Language Development

English language development (ELD) is critical for academic success. In the school setting, ELD focuses on the literacy skills applicable to content area learning. Since many migrant students have a home language other than English, migrant programs must find avenues to supplement the difficulties faced by migrant students in ELD due to their unique lifestyle, while not supplanting Title III program activities.

5 Educational Support in the Home

Home environment is associated with a child's success in school, reflecting exposure to reading materials, a broad vocabulary, and educational games and activities. Such resources reflect parent educational background and socio-economic status. While migrant parents value education for their children, they may not always know how to support their children in a manner consistent with school expectations nor have the means to offer an educationally rich home environment. Efforts to inform families in a manner that fits cultural and economic circumstances are crucial.

6 Health

Good health is a basic need that migrant students have difficulty maintaining. The compromised dental and nutritional status of migrant children is well documented as are high rates of obesity. They have higher proportions of acute and chronic health problems and there are higher childhood and infant mortality rates than those experienced by their non-migrant peers. They are at greater risk than other children due to pesticide exposure, farm injuries, heat-related illness, and poverty. They are more likely to be uninsured or under-insured and have difficulties with health care access. Families often need assistance in addressing health problems that interfere with the student's ability to learn.

7 Access to Services

Newcomer status and home languages other than English and a lack of literacy often decrease access to educational and educationally-related services to which migrant children and their families are entitled. Since they are not viewed as members of the community because of their mobility, services become more difficult to obtain. The purposes identified by OME clearly indicate that states are not to penalize migratory students because of disparities in curriculum and graduation requirements. Students in Texas migrate within the state and outside of Texas. Some of the students may attend as many as four to five different schools before returning home. The migrant counselor or other appropriate staff member should be very aware of when students return and serve as the advocate for the students. The ultimate goal is to ensure the students do not repeat classes needlessly and are able to graduate with their cohort.