

POLICY AND PROGRAM STUDIES SERVICE REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Title I Migrant Education Program Trends Summary Report: 1998-2001

BACKGROUND

States use Migrant Education Program (MEP) funds to ensure that migrant children are provided with appropriate services that address the special needs caused by the effects of continual educational disruption. MEP services are usually delivered by schools, districts, and/or other public or private organizations and can be instructional (reading, mathematics, other language arts, etc.) or supporting (social work, health, dental, etc.).

Recognizing the educational needs of the children of migratory agricultural workers, MEP was first authorized in 1966 to provide supplemental instruction and other support services for migrant children. The program currently operates under Title I, Part C, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended in 2001, and provides formula grants to states. Eligible participants are defined as those children of migratory workers who have, within the last 36 months, moved across school district boundaries in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agriculture or fishing.

This report summarizes the participation information provided by state education agencies (SEAs) on the MEP for the 2000-01 school year and reports on trends from 1998-99 through 2000-01.¹ The report is organized into two sections: (1) an overall descriptive summary of Title I MEP participation and staffing; and (2) individual state profiles.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Eligible Students.** Between 1998-99 and 2000-01, the MEP-eligible population (based on the 12-month count) grew by 9 percent, from 783,867 to 854,872 children. California, Texas and Florida account for over half (52 percent) of the migrant student population. The child counts reported for funding purposes are unduplicated within states. However, the national numbers include duplicated counts across states because a child may reside in more than one state during the reporting year.
- **Participating Students.** During the regular term, the states reported serving 622,271 students, or 73 percent of eligible students. For the summer term, states reported serving 373,656 students, or 44 percent of eligible students. The total number of migrant students participants participating in either the regular or summer programs was 737,684 students, or 86 percent of eligible students. From 1998-99 to 2000-01, participation in

¹ The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are treated as states for the purpose of this analysis.

the summer term program grew at a faster rate (20 percent) than participation in the regular term program (13 percent).

- **Demographic Characteristics of MEP Participants.** The vast majority of migrant students in the MEP are Hispanic (89 percent) and one-third (31 percent) have limited English proficiency (LEP). The number of LEP participants has risen over the last three years, growing from 22 percent of MEP participants in 1998-99 to 31 percent in 2000-01.
- **Participation by Grade.** MEP services are concentrated at the elementary grade level. In regular term programs, for example, 43 percent of MEP participants were served in elementary grades (1-6), 30 percent in secondary grades (7-12), 19 percent in preschool programs, and the remaining 8 percent in ungraded or out-of-school programs. The distribution of regular term students across grade spans has been fairly constant over the years.
- **Participation by Type of Service and Subject Area.** A greater proportion of migrant students receive instructional services through the MEP in the summer term program than in the regular school term program. Summer term participants were more likely than regular term participants to receive instruction in reading (58 percent vs. 29 percent), math (38 percent vs. 18 percent), and English as a second language (20 percent vs. 14 percent). Regular term participants were more likely to receive social work, outreach, and advocacy services (55 percent, compared with 44 percent of summer term participants).
- **Staffing.** The summer program is staffed at a substantially higher level relative to the regular term program (13,758 FTEs versus 8,623 FTEs), with a greater proportion of staff allocated to instructional positions (69 percent versus 52 percent, respectively). The summer program also places greater emphasis on the use of teachers (38 percent of total FTEs, compared with 22 percent in the regular term), while the regular term program relies more heavily on teacher aides (58 percent of instructional staff, compared with 45 percent in the summer term). From 1998-99 to 2000-01, MEP-funded staffing levels increased at a greater rate in the regular term program (an FTE increase of 22 percent) than in the summer term program (7 percent).
- **Number of MEP Projects.** The states operated 12,048 Title I MEP projects across the nation in 2000-01, a 2 percent decrease from the number of projects operated in 1998-99. Of these projects, 55 percent operated in the regular school term only, 13 percent operated only in the summer, and 32 percent operated as multi-term projects. Almost one-third (29 percent) of the regular-term-only projects were extended-time project sites.

This report is available online at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/ed_for_disadvantaged.html.