



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 17, 2024
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Principals, School Nurses, All District Staff with Enrollment Responsibilities
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Mandatory Identification and Recruitment of Migrant Students

Accurate identification and recruitment of eligible migrant children, including securing pertinent information to document the basis of a child's eligibility, are cornerstones of the Migrant Education Program (MEP). Both processes are critical for the provision and implementation of educational programs that meet the unique needs of migrant students and their families for the following reasons:

- Children who are most in need of program services may often be those who are the most difficult to find;
- Due to mobility, migrant children may not fully benefit from school, and in some cases, would not attend school if they were not identified and recruited into the MEP; and
- Children cannot receive MEP services without a [National Certificate of Eligibility](#) (COE), which is an official record of eligibility determination for migrant students.

Migrant vs. Immigrant

It is important to note that immigrant does not necessarily mean migrant. MEP eligibility is based upon a National [Certificate of Eligibility](#) issued by the United States Department of Education (USED); LEAs are notified by the [New Jersey Department of Education's \(NJDOE\) Regional MEP grantee](#) of a migrant student's eligibility.

Migrant: As defined under [ESSA Section 1309 \(2\)](#), a migrant student is a student:

- Who is 21 years of age or younger; and
- Who is, or whose parent/guardian is, a migratory fisher, dairy worker, lumber, or agricultural worker; and
- Who in the preceding three years has moved from one school district to another in order for the worker to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work.

Immigrant: Under [Section 3201 of the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), the term "immigrant children and youth" refers to individuals who: (a) are aged 3 through 21; (b) were not born in any State; and (C) have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years.

Do not designate a student as migrant in NJSMART until you are notified of the students' eligibility by the [Regional Migrant Education Program](#). Upon notification from the region, an LEA then designates the student's migrant status in NJSMART.

Key Steps/Actions

In accordance with [ESSA Section 1304](#), the NJDOE is required to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of the MEP by providing educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records (including health information) when children transition between schools regardless of time of transfer. To assist in this process, local educational agencies (LEAs) must work cooperatively with their respective [Regional Migrant Education Program](#) (i.e., Essex Regional Educational Services Commission or Gloucester County Special Services School District) to:

- Accurately identify all eligible migrant children for the purposes of statewide standardized testing and federal reporting requirements; and
- Report all eligible migrant children in the NJDOE’s NJ SMART system database.

2023-2024 Regional Migrant Education Program Contacts:

Region	Coordinator	Email Contact
1. Bergen, Essex, Hunterdon, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, Warren	Pheobie Thomas, Essex Regional Educational Services Commission	p.thomas@eresc.com
2. Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Ocean, Salem	Kathleen Monti, Gloucester County Special Services School District	Kmonti@gcecnj.org

Contact Information

For questions related to the Migrant Education Program (MEP), please email migrated@doe.nj.gov.

- c: Members, State Board of Education
- NJDOE Staff
- Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
- Garden State Coalition of Schools
- NJ LEE Group