

Using Distance Learning for Migratory Children

Families migrating for economic need and agricultural work traditionally start arriving in Minnesota in early spring and remain in our state through late November. Thus, migratory students may be enrolling in local districts or charter schools any time between now and the end of the school year. This document is meant to provide clarity regarding expectations for districts and charter schools when using distance learning to support migratory children. It is intended for use by all staff providing and/or coordinating academic and support services to migratory children and their families. Please refer to the [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#) and [distance teaching and learning implementation guidance](#) for general distance-learning guidance.

Migrant Education Programming and Equity

It is important to remember that providing service to students identified as migratory children is a matter of equity. There are a number of state and federal laws that clarify the legal and ethical responsibility for districts and charter schools to address the unique educational needs of migratory children and ensure they are not penalized due to their high mobility. They have the right to receive access to meeting the same challenging content academic standards all students are expected to meet. The purposes of the Migrant Education Program (MEP) include to help students overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, and various health-related issues. In the distance-learning setting, it is important to consider how districts and charter schools can continue to be aware of the challenges as well as put in place strategies to ensure these purposes are addressed.

Providing Service to Students Identified as Migratory Children

“Schools have critical responsibilities for the education of these students, and are also critical partners in the community-wide response to addressing the unique vulnerabilities of these students.” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

Districts and charter schools should be aware that migratory children may have gaps in their education due to their high mobility. It is crucial that staff coordinate with students’ home-base schools to ensure students receive all services for which they are eligible (e.g., English language development, special education, or gifted/talented) and are able to complete the required credits for their home-base districts.

Migrancy and Homelessness

The majority of migratory children also meet the criteria of homelessness due to their high mobility. Districts and charter schools must ensure students have access to technology and environments that support full

participation in the learning. Connecting families to resources in their new community is both challenging and even more critical during this period of social isolation. See the [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#) for more direction and resources on supporting students experiencing homelessness.

Migrancy and English Learners

“By law, students who are identified to receive English language development services must be provided supports that allow them access to academic content” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

About a quarter of Minnesota’s migratory children are identified as English learners (ELs). All mainstream teachers must clearly identify how they are providing supports in their distance learning instruction for students identified EL. Expectations for student work should be differentiated based on proficiency level, grade level and personal differences (e.g., background knowledge, home language literacy, interest, Individualized Learning Program [IEP] status, gifted and talented status, etc.). See the [Using Distance Learning for English Learner Programming document](#) on the [COVID-19 Updates](#) webpage.

Student Contact Expectations

“Immediate considerations for [migratory students] include access to a reliable internet connection” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

Given migratory families’ mobile lifestyles, it is possible that many migratory students do not have access to reliable internet service, even if provided by the district or municipal government. They may be sharing one device across all members of a household. Access may be intermittent and may be prone to disconnection. Access to laptops, iPads and phones may vary from family to family. It is recommended that teachers provide options for students that can be accessed by a variety of devices and include deadline flexibility with clear instruction on steps needed to successfully meet the deadlines. Ensure that support is provided to troubleshoot technological challenges and alternate options for completion are made available.

“Distance Learning defined: Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s)” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

Districts and charter schools should have clear expectations for student contact with licensed teachers in all areas of instruction (i.e., mainstream content, English language development (ELD), special education, gifted and talented, world language, and specialists [e.g., music, art, physical education, etc.]) as they would in the school building. This student contact time (one-on-one or in a small group) should be used for conferring, providing feedback, setting individual learning goals, and/or checking on progress.

“It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning. It is critical to provide this learning in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students.” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

As stated above, it is especially important with migratory children that there are alternate modes of communication and instruction, including paper and phone, which will be accessible to students with limited or

no access to internet service. The [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#) provides examples for how to do that.

Secondary Programming Considerations

At the secondary level (grades 7-12), it is critical that districts and charter schools take action to ensure students meet their needs for credit accrual toward graduation. For the last two years, Minnesota's summer migrant education program has partnered with [Northern Star Online](#) (NSO), a public school partnership supporting virtual learning through district 287, to provide online courses to some of our migratory students in our state.

During distance learning, NSO will continue to serve migratory students who enroll during the school year as well as the summer MEP. Since requirements in other states differ, it is necessary to communicate with the student's home-base district to determine appropriate placement. Since the majority of the migratory students in Minnesota migrate from Texas, it is important to be aware that Texas graduation requirements are different from Minnesota's and placing students in courses that will be transferable to Texas is critical since they will be returning to their home-base schools. This becomes a challenge as other states are on different schedules regarding the social-distancing timeline. Therefore, district staff need to rely on information entered by home-base districts into MSIX for course placement for secondary students. In addition, Minnesota districts and charters should be reporting enrollment and withdrawal dates, grades, transcripts, and other data elements to [Linda Fournier](#) at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council in a timely manner (e.g., as students complete credits). For assistance in placement or student records of migratory students from Texas school districts contact [Lidibette Guzman](#).

Liaisons and Advocacy

Each district or charter school is expected to designate a migrant liaison to advocate for the needs of migratory children and their families. The district must post the contact information for its migrant liaison on the [MDE-ORG Contact Lists](#) webpage. The liaison's main responsibilities are to support identification of families through awareness of the [federal definition of a migratory child](#) and to be connected with resources to support migratory families. Support for identification may come in two forms: 1) recognizing families that have made a move for economic necessity *and* to seek qualifying agricultural work and submitting a [recruitment request](#) through [Tri-Valley Opportunity Council \(TVOC\) online](#), or 2) if a district's migrant liaison has been funded and trained by TVOC to do recruiting, the liaison may continue to do recruiting and complete Certificates of Eligibility (COEs) by phone. *Please note: only trained and certified liaisons may determine eligibility.* For questions regarding training and certification contact [Claudia Mladek](#).

Face-to-face recruitment is not an option during distance learning. If the liaison is not able to complete a COE by phone, please submit a [recruitment request form](#) when there is a potentially eligible migratory family, and TVOC will assign a recruiter to complete the COE with the family. Staff identifying and recruiting migratory families are now allowed to accept COEs without parental signature. Thus, anyone certified to determine eligibility for the Minnesota Migrant Education Program will be allowed to submit a COE without a parent or guardian's signature. Completed COEs without a parent/guardian signature should include a comment regarding COVID-19 and be submitted for approval as soon as possible. Remember that a Certificate of Eligibility is a legal document that

verifies migrant eligibility. The COE **must always** include an SEA signature, but can be considered valid without a parent/guardian signature while under social distancing orders. When determining eligibility for services, the COE should be accepted as approved if there is indication that the lack of a parent/guardian signature is due to COVID-19. As stated in the section on [providing service](#), the liaison is essential in the role of coordinating with students' home-base schools to ensure students receive all services for which they are eligible and are able to complete the required credits for their home-base districts. Districts and charter schools may also use the **Minnesota Migrant Hotline at 1-800-890-4850**. For more information, please visit the [Tri-Valley Opportunity Council website](#).

Liaisons should also stay in touch with the status and accessibility of local resources that could support migratory families. They should make sure they know which services the district will use to provide interpretation and should advocate on behalf of migratory families to ensure provision of translated documents on paper and online, and that information is shared in an accessible format for families (e.g., website, text, social media, etc.).

In addition, districts are asked to keep TVOC updated on the status of enrollment procedures and learning options in the district. TVOC will help families as they come into the state during these unprecedented times, and the more information TVOC has, the more equitable the information will be for families. To contact TVOC, using the contact information at the bottom of the [TVOC Migrant Education Program website](#) (Le Center location).

Secure Reports

The Migrant Identified Student Report shows districts and charter schools which students have been identified as migratory by Tri-Valley Opportunity Council. The identified official with authority (IOWA) can designate a staff member to have access to the information in this report to ensure continuity of services for migratory students who often have interrupted education.

Ensuring Appropriate Services

To support interstate and intrastate communication, the district or charter school's migrant liaison or other designated staff member (e.g., the identified official with authority [IOWA]) needs access to the national [Migrant Student Information Exchange \(MSIX\)](#). Access can be provided by contacting [Linda Fournier](#) at [Tri-Valley Opportunity Council](#). This national database is where student information is kept to ensure that when a qualifying move takes place, student information is available for the enrolling district and to ensure continuity of services. Districts with access to MSIX should complete a [Move Notice](#) for students as they are moving in and out of districts. Districts are also required to provide migratory student [information](#) (Minimum Data Elements) for each migrant student to Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. for entry into the Minnesota migrant data system, MIS2000, which uploads into MSIX nightly. Districts and charter schools should also ensure migrant students get enrolled in school and have access to and receive services which they are eligible for (i.e. free meals, Migrant Seasonal Head Start and Early Head Start).

Communicating with Students and Families

“Immediate considerations for [migratory students] include communication with families that may not speak English as a primary language” (March 27, 2020 [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#))

Districts and charter schools should be proactive in communicating specifically with multilingual communities. It is not sufficient to send out a generic email or robo-call without following up to ensure families received the message, and it was understood. In addition, districts and charter schools must send out information to families in their preferred language(s) and have clear outreach strategies that include connecting with multilingual/multicultural families and community organizations through bilingual staff, community elders, and planned calling trees. Schedule communication in advance that is respectful of the migratory family’s lifestyle, work hours and availability, meal times, child bedtimes and so on. Refer to the [Minnesota distance learning planning document](#) for more information about communication.

Frequently Asked Questions

May districts and charter schools cancel EL [or other] services during distance learning?

No. All instruction, including that for English learners, must continue to be provided during distance learning.

May districts still check out materials from the Midwest Migrant Education Resource Center (MMERC)?

Yes. Any teacher working with migratory students may continue to check out and receive MMERC resources. The policy of the lending library is that teachers serving migratory students can utilize resources with the entire class of which a migratory student is a part, ensuring that primary use is with the migratory students. Remember that, “...equipment purchased with MEP funds may be made available for other educational uses if it does not interfere with its use in the [summer] MEP project or significantly shorten the useful life of the equipment” (Non-Regulatory Guidance, Education of Migratory Children under Title I, Part C, March 2017). Resources can be checked out to the location of the teacher, if necessary, since the school may be closed for UPS deliveries. Staff at MMERC will be checking emails regularly but are working remotely. Orders should be requested by email, and we will ship out as needed.

Who can serve as an interpreter when communicating with families?

In distance and in face-to-face learning, only certified interpreters are appropriate for transmitting/discussing personal student information/data. Siblings and neighbors are not appropriate interpreters of personal student information as using them compromises the family’s and student’s civil right to privacy and does not ensure accuracy of information due to use of education terminology with which family members may not be familiar.

How do districts and charter schools support identification of migratory children?

At this time, recruiters are limited to recruiting by email and phone. If families enroll this spring and have made a qualifying move across district or state lines for economic need and agricultural work, staff and families are

still urged to make [recruitment requests on TVOC webpage](#). For more information about the MEP, visit the [MDE Migrant Education Program website](#).

Do districts and charter schools still need to report enrollment and withdrawal dates, grades and transcripts for migratory students to Tri-Valley Opportunity Council?

Yes. Submit all enrollment and withdrawal dates, grades and transcripts to [Linda Fournier](#) or call 952-232-1206.

Is the state still taking applications for access to MSIX?

Yes. Access [applications and instructions online](#).

Resources

MDE will continue to add resources as we receive them in a shareable format. Thank you to districts for sharing your distance learning documents for ELD and integrated EL instruction. If you have additional documents that would be useful to others, please send to [Noemí Treviño](#) and [Julie Chi](#).

[Midwest Migrant Education Resource Center](#)

[Identification and Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium \(IRRC\)](#)

[WIDA Teaching EL Online Resources](#)

[National Emergency Library](#) - Due to high mobility, books are in high demand in migratory families' temporary homes. With libraries closed, resources such as this may support literacy in the home.

[The Fordham Institute](#) - List of resources for learning from home during COVID-19 school closures

[Scholastic Learn at Home](#)

[Spanish Children's Stories](#) - Well-known children's stories translated into Spanish and spoken by a native Spanish speaker. Great for kids... and adults too! Read along in Spanish or English.

[ReadyRosie - Healthy at Home: A Toolkit for Supporting Families Impacted by COVID-19](#)

Spanish: [ReadyRosie - Sano en casa: Un conjunto de herramientas para apoyar a las familias afectadas por el COVID-19](#)

[PBS Learning Media - Pre-K to Grade 12 resources for emergency closings](#)

Spanish: [PBS Learning Media - Recursos de PreK-12 para Cierres de Emergencia](#) - MEP service providers could share with families via video connection (FaceTime, Skype, WhatsApp, etc.).

[Abriendo Puertas \(Opening Doors\) - Resource is fully bilingual](#) - Tackling COVID-19 Together: Resources to Support Families

[Learn to Earn Toolkit](#) - Free online resource for intermediate and advanced adult learners of English and basic skills. Resource for secondary migrant students and parents/guardians that are English language proficient.

[Kahn Academy](#)

[Smithsonian Learning Lab](#)

[Youngzine - News and more for the young](#)

[White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics](#)

For information about the laws enforced by the Wage and Hour Division (WHD) of the U.S. Department of Labor, which may heavily impact migratory families, call 866-4US-WAGE, or visit the [Department of Labor's WHD webpage](#).

[Community and School Resources - Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 page](#) includes [health care resources](#) telling how to access health insurance and low-cost clinics, downloadable posters, videos and materials on [hand hygiene](#) in multiple languages, and a [COVID-19 Anti-Discrimination flier](#), which shares a basic message that people should not discriminate against anyone due to fear of COVID-19. MDH wants to make sure Minnesotans of Asian descent and others do not experience discrimination or barriers to service/care. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights: Call 651-539-1133 to speak with an investigator. The entire process is free. Interpretation and translation services are available.

[Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#)

Conclusion

As you work to transfer instruction to distance learning, it is important to remember that MDE staff are available to support districts and charter schools. Thank you for your leadership for migratory children and families in Minnesota!

For specific questions about EL programming, please contact: mde.esea@state.mn.us.

Refer to the MDE [COVID-19 Updates](#) webpage for updated guidance.