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Final Report:

Florida Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Prepared for

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SUMMARY OF COMPLETED TASKS

ESCORT:

- ✓ developed a CNA management plan and helped form a CNA Management Team;
- ✓ trained migrant staff (both state and local) to understand the CNA process through presentations and consultations;
- ✓ assisted in the formation of the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC);
- ✓ facilitated three meetings of the Management Team;
- ✓ facilitated three meetings of the NAC;
- ✓ facilitated three meetings of experts in the migrant-related goal areas of reading, math, graduation, and school-readiness (as requested by the state, ESCORT provided group facilitators who were experts in the goal areas);
- ✓ provided meeting and travel support and logistics for all CNA-related events;
- ✓ developed a data-gathering plan and constructed survey instruments;
- ✓ distributed, gathered, analyzed and synthesized the data;
- ✓ provided a summary of evidence-based solutions to “close the achievement gaps” with research citations, implementation challenges, and a question guide for state and local administrators;
- ✓ supplied an action plan for implementation;
- ✓ provided a detailed report on the data gathering and analysis;
- ✓ provided an evaluation framework for the solutions, which, when instituted, will guide local programs to provide the annual data needed to document the level of program implementation;
- ✓ facilitated a CNA Management Team meeting to review the “expert groups” proposed solutions, help align solutions with current Florida education initiatives (e.g., Just Read, Florida!) and consider evaluation frameworks;
- ✓ wrote the final report; and
- ✓ met with the comprehensive state plan writers to assist with the transition from CNA to the Service Delivery Plan (SDP).

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES

From late May of 2003 to September 2005, ESCORT facilitated the following meetings related to CNA activities:

- **(May 8–9, 2003) CNA Management Team**—*Introduced the CNA process, detailed the management framework and nominated Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) members; decided that it would be best to meet before each NAC meeting.*
- **(August 27, 2003) CNA Management Team**—*The management team met in order to review logistical concerns, meeting activities and facilitation duties.*
- **(August 28, 2003) Needs Assessment Committee I (NAC I)**—*Introduced the CNA process to the committee and identified core areas of concern for migrant students. Developed the charge for Work Group I.*
- **(October 29–30, 2003) Work Group I**—*Experts in the areas of reading, math, graduation and school-readiness met and wrote needs indicators and also identified data sources to measure the outcomes of the proposed solutions and interventions.*
- **(January 8, 2004) Data Team Meeting**—*Met with the FL DOE, Information and Accountability Services regarding the accessing of data elements for migrant students required for establishing the parameters of need.*
- **(February 25, 2004) CNA Management Team**—*Decided how to best implement the CNA process for Florida. The model promoted by the USED Office of Migrant Education offered some general guidance about the needs assessment process, but it needed to be adapted for Florida’s purposes. This group of Florida stakeholders represented more than 200 years of migrant service experience.*

Represented were:

- Fifteen counties with migrant education programs:

Collier	Dade	Escambia
Hillsborough	Immokalee	Indian River
Lake	Manatee	Orange
Palm Beach	Pasco	Putnam
St. Lucie	Wakulla	Walton

- **(February 26, 2004) Needs Assessment Committee II**—*Reviewed Work Group (experts) need indicators and suggested data sources, prioritized need indicators, conducted large group discussion on areas of concern, and finalized data collection plan.*
- **(March–June 2004) Phase II Data Collection**—*Collected data on the various need indicators suggested by the work group and the full NAC. Designed and selected student and parent surveys and data collection instruments to use with sample local school districts. Distributed instruments, gathered data and input, analyzed results, and reported using need statement forms. Presented all findings to the full Needs Assessment Committee and at Work Group II.*
- **(June 15, 2004) CNA Management Team**—*Reviewed raw data tables, discussed analysis methods, reviewed analyzed results. Prepared for NAC III activities including small group reviewing of data and prioritizing need statements.*
- **(June 16, 2004) Needs Assessment Committee III**—*Reviewed and discussed all data collected in Phase II. Reviewed and prioritized needs statements. Developed the charge for Work Group II.*
- **(September 8–9, 2004) Work Group II**—*Considered solutions for need statements (achievement and activities gaps for migrant students). Detailed implementation challenges, resource and training needs.*
- **(September 21, 2004) Conference Update**—*Updated the local programs on proposed solutions and received input on implementation challenges.*
- **(March 3, 2005) Reading Sub-Group Meeting**—*Florida has ongoing initiatives in reading. This meeting focused on detailing the migrant literacy needs and solutions so they could later be aligned with “Just Read, Florida!” and other Florida reading initiatives.*
- **(April 27, 2005) Work Group III**—*Drafted the question guide for each solution section and completed the bibliography of research cited.*
- **(June 5, 2005) CNA Management Team**—*Reviewed finalized solutions, questions guides, and the research cited for each goal area. The state expressed full endorsement for the action plan and asked for time at the next day’s meeting to express their support.*
- **(June 6, 2005) Needs Assessment Committee IV**—*This was the final meeting of the NAC during which the group considered and prioritized specific solutions in the four goal areas.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida has the third largest population of migrant children in the United States. The majority of the migrant students are of Hispanic origin and many enter school with limited proficiency in English and significant gaps in their schooling. There are 35 district and two regional migrant education programs throughout the state that offer a variety of educational and supportive services to ensure that these highly mobile at-risk students are receiving the support they require to succeed in school. As mandated by the Office of Migrant Education, Florida is targeting its 840 “Priority for Service” (PFS) students (out of the state enrollment of 55,000) with the intensive services they need to avert school failure. Over the course of the comprehensive needs assessment process, the data revealed a number of interesting trends:

- 30 percent of migrant students in Florida enroll late in school each fall
- 57 percent of migrant parents surveyed attend parent teacher conferences and open houses at their children’s school (that’s 15 to 25 percent less than non-migrant parents)
- Only 52 percent of secondary students surveyed indicate that they feel safe at school (which means that about half of our migrant children *do not* feel safe in school)
- Migrant children score about 25 percent lower than non-migrant children in FCAT reading and math tests
- Migrant preschoolers score about 20 percent lower on their preschool readiness tests than non-migrant children

Each state is required to complete a **comprehensive needs assessment** (CNA) which identifies the “*special educational needs of migratory children*” and provides “*...measurable program goals and outcomes.*” (NCLB - Title I Part C Sec. 1306)

From May 2003 to June 2005, the Florida Department of Education’s Migrant Education Program conducted a comprehensive needs assessment involving more than 30 key stakeholders. These committee members represented groups including the state education department, local schools, migrant parents, community agencies, universities, and other groups providing service to the migrant community.

Major findings include:

- **Migrant students have significant gaps when compared to their non-migrant peers in reading, math, graduation, and school-readiness.**

This was not as much a discovery as a confirmation. Committee members “knew” migrant students were lagging behind “average” students, but through the gathering and analysis of data, the existence and extent of these gaps has been verified.

- **An increased number of highly qualified education professionals need to be employed in or contribute to migrant program areas such as: planning, programming, and training of migrant staff.**

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between the quality of the instructor/instruction and student success. There are administrators, teachers, tutors, recruiters, and advocates working in migrant education programs, but very few certified content area educators. Specifically, solutions called for increased participation of reading and math experts, graduation or drop-out prevention specialists, and preschool professionals. The needs assessment team also identified a need to offer high quality, sustained and intensive staff development.

- **Migrant parents do not participate in school activities as frequently as parents in general.**

The research says that parent participation in their children's education contributes to their success in school. The data showed that Florida's migrant parents lag behind in levels and rates of school participation when compared to the parents of non-migrant students.

- **Migrant preschool children are not as prepared for kindergarten as their non-migrant peers.**

There are several causes for this (too few migrant children in preschool programs, rural isolation, lack of transportation, home languages other than English, and immigration status). The bottom line is that migrant children are significantly underperforming when compared with their non-migrant peers on indicators of school readiness.

- **Migrant student data, both demographic and achievement, is difficult to collect and in many databases can not be disaggregated.**

The comprehensive needs assessment process forced state and local programs to look closely at their database systems. The committee found that migrant status is not a required field when collecting state health data. The state does not effectively monitor English Language Learners' English proficiency levels (only data indicating whether a student is/is not LEP can be easily found). There is a fundamental need for better

coordination between the various data collection units (e.g., student information is in one database and achievement data in another). Data needs to be more accessible if migrant staff is going to be expected to analyze it, identify trends, use it to make decisions, and monitor the effectiveness of programming in improving student and family outcomes.

➤ **Migrant educators need to learn specific ways in which gathering and analyzing data can strengthen decision-making and ongoing evaluation of their programs.**

Many of the committee members and those they worked with at the district, school, and program levels are accustomed to *reporting* data, but not *using* it to make informed decisions about programming, addressing individual student needs, or evaluating the impact of the services they provide.

Though many CNA committee members were initially skeptical, almost everyone involved in the comprehensive needs assessment process came away with a better, more concrete understanding of the current status of Florida migrant students and their families. They recognize what specific challenges the program faces in order to become more “data-driven” and, most importantly, the level of effort and types of reforms it will take to implement the research and evidence-based solutions that were identified. The CNA process in Florida has been both innovative and inclusive. The results should help the state to devise a solid comprehensive state plan that will lead to improved migrant student outcomes through the implementation of research-based solutions and increased use of data to improve the targeting and effectiveness of programming and evaluation.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Florida Department of Education Migrant Education Program contracted with ESCORT to facilitate its *NCLB*-mandated comprehensive needs assessment.

In order to comply with Title I - Part C Sec. 1306 (Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Service Delivery Plan) of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* Florida must complete the needs assessment process in order to: “...*identify and address the special needs of migratory children...*” and provide “...*specific measurable program goals and outcomes...*” for inclusion in the migrant service delivery plan.

Following the USED Office of Migrant Education (OME) guidance, Florida convened a representative group of migrant educators and other stakeholders who provide services to the migrant community and charged them to:

- identify the needs of migrant children and families;
- find ways to measure those needs;
- collect needed data;
- consider research-based solutions to meet those needs; and
- write a plan of action.

ESCORT conducted presentations on the recommended CNA model to state and local staff, provided technical assistance in the development of a management plan, facilitated and provided all logistical support for the meetings, and compiled the CNA report.

The process resulted in the identification of (1) the *special needs* of the state’s migrant children and (2) a set of *measurable goals and outcomes* that will provide a framework for the Service Delivery Plan. The completion of these two documents will assure that Florida is in compliance with the Title I, Part C *NCLB* requirements for the CNA and the comprehensive state plan.

PROCESS

The process for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment recommended by OME is based on the book *Planning and Conducting Needs Assessments* by Dr. Belle Ruth Witkin and Dr. James W. Altschuld. Their work is based on a three phase model.

Phase I—Exploring “What Is” – Investigate what is known about the needs of migrant children; determine the focus and scope of the needs assessment; gain commitment by all stakeholders in the assessment, including the use of the findings for program planning and implementation. During Phase I, a Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) is established, representing a variety of service providers and stakeholders for migrant children in the state. In addition, four “Work Groups” representing the focus areas of: reading, math, school readiness, and graduation are established. Experts in these various areas are invited to participate in the CNA process in order to ensure that at every stage there are representatives who will provide informed advice and identify helpful resources.

Phase II—Gather and Analyze Data—Document the status, or “what is,” of the concerns and issues regarding migrant children; compare the status with the projections or comparisons of “what should be” and determine the magnitude of their needs and causes. The major outcome from this phase is a set of measurable need statements in tentative order of priority.

Phase III—Make Decisions—Bridge from analysis to action—using the needs assessment findings, select possible research or evidence-based solutions. As emphasized in the model being piloted by OME, a needs assessment is not

complete unless plans are made to use the information in a practical manner to improve and track progress of migrant student outcomes.

Having identified the needs of the migrant children and families, the Florida Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) collected data to validate those needs, proposed research-based solutions, and wrote an action plan with specific steps required to implement the identified solutions.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

MANAGEMENT TEAM

From the start of the comprehensive needs assessment process, there was enthusiasm expressed by the state migrant staff and other team members. In keeping with the model, the Management Team nominees and the Needs Assessment Committee members represented a broad range and diversity of backgrounds and experience. They expressed confidence in this data-driven process, and more importantly, communicated a readiness to consider new and innovative programming options. It has been a very open and accepting process, allowing for brainstorming and honest exploration with a continuous emphasis on the use of scientifically-based research and data-driven decision-making.

The Management Team has provided a guiding hand and oversight throughout and they took the time to modify the CNA model, to make it “Florida’s own.” Their in-depth understanding of the education initiatives and the nuances of how local school districts and migrant programs operate has kept the process “real.”

In order to proceed, specific questions had to be addressed:

- Should Florida adopt OME’s CNA model exactly?
- Who should sit on the Needs Assessment Committee?
- How many meetings will be required?
- Will there be a need for subcommittees to address data gathering and analysis or the goal areas?
- How much data is enough?
- How should input from migrant parents and students be gathered?
- How will recommended solutions complement existing Florida education state and local initiatives?

It took almost 2 days to flush out the management plan. The team modified the CNA model to meet the state’s particular needs, set meeting dates, and nominated members for the NAC, Data Team and Work Groups. They also detailed the goals and objectives for each meeting and discussed the collection of existing migrant-related data. *(See appendix Tab 1 for agenda, minutes, and related documents)*

NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

More than 30 of Florida's key stakeholders in the migrant service community made a commitment to participate on the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC). This group of Florida stakeholders represented more than 200 years of migrant service experience.

Represented were:

Fifteen counties with migrant education programs;

Collier	Dade	Escambia
Hillsborough	Immokalee	Indian River
Lake	Manatee	Orange
Palm Beach	Pasco	Putnam
St. Lucie	Wakulla	Walton

- Florida Department of Education;
- migrant parents;
- Redland Christian Migrant Association;
- MIS 2000 migrant record keeping system and local school district data personnel;
- non-migrant school district administrators and teachers;
- migrant recruiters;
- HEP and CAMP administrators;
- health providers and a medical doctor;
- university professors; and
- technical assistance providers in reading, math, and ELL.

The initial NAC meeting brought together a group of migrant educators and other individuals from the migrant service community to learn the CNA process and to begin to identify the needs of migrant children. For the purposes of this CNA model, the term "need" represents the **gap** between the measurable performance and/or status of migrant children or families and that of a carefully selected comparison group. For example, if 42 percent of Florida's **migrant** preschoolers were offered a preschool program and 62 percent of **all** Florida preschoolers were offered the same programming, the gap between the two groups would be 20 percent. It could be said that Florida *needs* to increase its offering of preschool programming to its migrant children by 20 percent. In this way, the migrant program can choose solutions that will help to "close the gap" and track progress over time.

The group reviewed the CNA process and discussed a number of activities in order to arrive at consensus concerning general areas of concern to migrant students and families. These areas would guide the Work Groups. (*See appendix Tab 2 for agenda and meeting minutes.*)

Seven Areas of Concern

The following are examples of specific concern statements generated during the initial Needs Assessment Committee meeting. The Florida concern statements are placed under the headings of the Seven Areas of Concern that were identified during the pilot CNA process. They provided a helpful starting point for the development of need indicators and need statements.

Educational Continuity and Instructional Time

We are concerned that migrant students miss too many days of school due to factors such as mobility and economic demands, which puts the students in danger of failure and ultimately dropping out.

School Engagement

We are concerned that migrant students have to deal with many social and emotional factors that impact and/or inhibit their learning.

English Language Development

We are concerned that migrant students' reading development is impeded by their lack of proficiency in English and the lack of continuity of instruction.

Educational Support in the Home

We are concerned that migrant parents feel unwelcome in schools due to cultural, social, and linguistic barriers.

We are concerned that migrant children do not have parents with adequate literacy in their native language.

We are concerned that migrant families do not promote reading in the home.

Health

We are concerned that the unique characteristics of the migrant farm workers' lifestyle place their children at high risk of developing medical and dental problems.

We are concerned that migrant students are not receiving immunizations in a timely manner.

Access to Services

We are concerned that migrant children do not have consistent access to programs for 0-5 year olds.

We are concerned that migrant students are not enrolled in available programs because they enter school late (after the programs are full) and the local schools do not take ownership or responsibility for granting them equal access and providing needed services.

The second meeting of the NAC focused primarily on the reports from the Work Groups (reading, math, graduation, and school readiness). Each group reviewed their particular

request for data, including the specifics of the need indicators and the proposed data sources. Some requests were strictly quantitative (the reading group wanted FCAT scores), which would be fairly easy to obtain. Others' requests were more qualitative in nature (the graduation group was concerned about the migrant students "sense of belonging" so they requested the percentage of migrant students involved in extra-curricular activities). It fell to the NAC to prioritize these requests and finalize the data collection plan. The completion of this plan would signify the close of Phase I. *(See appendix Tab 5 for details of the prioritized data requests and data collection plan.)*

The third NAC meeting provided an opportunity to review the data collected and analyzed by the Data Team. The group had to wrestle with many questions:

- Did the data reflect the "real" situation of the students and families in the migrant program?
- Did the Data Team choose appropriate comparison groups?
- Would the data help the Work Groups, and ultimately the NAC, to choose the right research-based solutions?
- Would programs be able to replicate the data gathering on an annual basis to show program improvement and effectiveness?

The NAC had to sort and prioritize the need statements. The committee also advised the Work Groups on the task of selecting research-based solutions. Prioritizing the need statements was especially difficult. It was the first time that the group realized that this process could result in significant program change.

(See appendix Tab 6 for the agenda, factor and data source list, copies of the presentations, data elements list, and prioritized factors.)

After the meeting, the NAC requested that an update on CNA preliminary data collection be shared with the local program coordinators and their staff. A section of that update memo follows:

- 30 percent of migrant students in Florida enroll late in school each fall
- 57 percent of migrant parents surveyed attend parent teacher conferences and open houses at their children's school
- 52 percent of secondary students surveyed indicate that they feel safe at school (which means that about half of our migrant children *do not* feel safe in school)
- Migrant children score about 25 percent lower than non-migrant children in FCAT reading and math tests
- Migrant preschoolers score about 20 percent lower on their preschool readiness tests than non-migrant children

The committee received positive feedback from coordinators regarding the sharing and focus of the data.

(A complete copy of the update memo can be found in appendix Tab 8.)

At the final NAC meeting, the state director of migrant education thanked the group for their tireless efforts over the 2 years they participated in the CNA process. She said that the state is looking forward to the realization of the proposed solutions and that the state will provide as much guidance and as many resources as possible to facilitate their implementation. She also is looking forward to the creation of the service delivery plan, and anticipated a need for the continuing assistance of many individuals in attendance.

The four Work Groups presented their findings, research, and recommendations. The moderators used PowerPoint presentations and provided handouts that highlighted the need statements for each area, the findings, and the group's recommendations. After each Work Group presentation, small group discussions were conducted to review what implementation concerns the participants may have, what technical assistance may be needed, and how these solutions may be implemented in a service delivery plan.

Some of the feedback offered by the small groups helped the Work Group members to sharpen the focus of their solutions. Their practical insights and "real world" considerations will make the implementation of the various solutions more feasible. The following are examples of small group feedback:

- Focus on vocabulary development for Pre-K will help with both kindergarten readiness and dropout prevention;
- Job description needed for parent educator ASAP so it can be included in project applications;
- It would help immensely if the state would facilitate and create collaborative working relationships with other agencies/providers;
- Explicit state support of recommendations will make implementation easier at the local level; and
- Increased focus on math instruction and outcomes is unfamiliar territory for many migrant education programs and staff. This may make reform efforts in this area more challenging initially.

(A complete copy of the minutes can be found in the appendix Tab 11.)

WORK GROUPS

In order to ensure that scientifically-based research was used throughout the process, the NAC formed four subcommittees (Work Groups) to address the *NCLB* goal areas of reading, math, graduation, and school readiness. Each Work Group consisted of (at a minimum) a facilitator with expertise in the goal area, a university professor, a district or state person with related administrative duties, and a local migrant staff person. This balance ensured that the latest research and strategies were considered when identifying the service and achievement "gaps." The participation of MEP staff ensured that the group was grounded in the reality of the supplementary nature of the migrant program.

The Work Groups are subcommittees of the needs assessment committee (NAC) and were charged with detailing the proposed "needs" identified by the NAC at their first meeting. The NAC was asked, "What are the most important needs of migrant children and families?" To further clarify, the Work Groups were asked, "What are the most

important needs for migrant children in reading, math, graduation and school readiness? This served to focus the process more specifically on the national goals of migrant education.

Two other important functions of the Work Group meetings were to discuss (1) “How would you measure those needs?” and (2) “What are potential data sources?” These discussions helped ensure that the needs assessment process would be data-driven and measurable.

These Work Groups met three times. Initially they met to identify academic and support service concerns in each goal area. For each concern, the groups were required to find a measurable need indicator and data source. Then the group selected a comparison group so a “gap” could be identified between the migrant student population and a comparison group (e.g., 30 percent of all migrant children scored proficient in their fourth grade reading assessment; 60 percent of all the state’s children scored proficient on the same test; therefore, a gap of 30 percent exists between the migrant students and all students).

At the second meeting, the Work Groups considered the data that was collected and analyzed regarding the need indicators and proposed research-based solutions in order to “close the gaps.” All four Work Groups voiced the concern that closing the achievement gap of migrant students would be a considerable task. The groups then looked at individual, discrete sets of data and reviewed the research that would guide their choice of solutions. The reading group looked at raising reading scores, the math group focused on math scores, and so on. It did not take long for the groups to realize that more of the same or simply tweaking the existing programming was not going to do the job. This brought about a lengthy discussion concerning the supplementary nature of the migrant programming presently provided and whether it could lead to improved migrant student achievement by itself.

The reading Work Group held a special meeting to align the migrant literacy solutions with state-sponsored reading initiatives. The state migrant administration wanted to ensure that the proposed migrant programming would supplement the “Just Read, Florida!” initiative and the Reading First program.

At that meeting the group:

- revisited the relevant reading research, especially that pertaining to English Language Learners;
- drafted a “literacy solutions implementation plan;”
- developed an assessment instrument for migrant staff to determine their current capabilities for administering and teaching literacy; and
- developed a detailed literacy action plan.

This process led to a careful articulation of how the proposed solutions would comply with current reading initiatives. It also provided a format for the other Work Groups to follow.

The third and final Work Group meeting was held to flush out the solutions. This included the drafting of a question guide for the implementation of each solution and the bibliography of research cited. The facilitators of the four Work Groups (reading, math, school readiness, and graduation) met to detail the proposed evidence-based solutions. The solutions, as originally drafted, are broad brush strokes, giving the general idea of what might be done but with little detail. In order to make the solutions more concrete, the facilitators expanded the information in the “strategy” and “action” columns and added a new section named “Question Guide.” This section was written with the local administrator in mind. It provides a thorough set of questions designed to lead the person in charge of implementation at the local level through a logical set of considerations and actions regarding local/district capacity to enact reforms. Below is an example from the Reading Group:

STRATEGY	ACTION	QUESTION GUIDE
<p>Strategic, Content-Based Tutoring</p> <p>“Strategic” means that the tutor does ongoing assessment to determine need, to plan appropriate instruction, and to monitor progress.</p> <p>“Content-based” means that the tutor uses grade level content in a way that is understandable to ALL students while at the same time promoting language development for the ELL students.</p>	<p>Involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis to determine student need - Content objective(s) - Language objectives - Progress monitoring assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What academic data do we currently collect on our migrant students? 2. Do we have available the following assessment data: screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome. 3. Does our migrant staff collaborate with mainstream teachers to collect and analyze data? 4. Do we currently provide tutoring to our migrant students? 5. If so, is the tutoring strategic and content-based (see definitions under strategy column)? 6. If so, do we analyze student data on a regular basis to determine need and direction of interventions? 7. Does our tutoring feature language and content instructional objectives? 8. Does our tutoring take into consideration the cultural characteristics of migrant families? Do we capitalize on their “funds of knowledge”? This refers to the hidden home and community resources/assets of our students. 9. Do we use this information to enrich our tutoring sessions? 10. Do we have a standard protocol for planning our tutoring sessions? 11. Do our tutors and mainstream teachers meet on a regular basis to plan and review data and instructional plans? 12. Do we have academic goals aligned to the Florida learning standards? 13. Do we have assessment protocols in place to measure student progress in meeting the identified academic goals?

These tables present a clearer picture of the steps in the process that must take place in order to fully implement the improvement strategies.

(The complete set of tables can be found in the “Solutions and Actions” section below.)

(Detailed solutions, coupled with a framework for evaluation are presented in the Needs Assessment Committee IV section, Tab 11.)

(See appendix Tab 3 for agenda, minutes, copies of meeting presentations, lists of identified needs, needs indicators, and data-sources.)

(See appendix Tab 7 for agenda, minutes, copies of meeting presentations.)

DATA TEAM

ESCORT subcontracted with Research Triangle International (RTI) to oversee the data collection and analysis. Along with a representative from RTI and ESCORT, the team sought advice from the FL DOE Education, Information and Accountability Services. Their staff assisted the team in obtaining information on attendance and other indicators. They also helped the team to navigate the FL DOE website for pertinent data.

The Data Team:

- refined need indicators developed by the NAC and Work Groups;
- drafted a data collection plan for NAC consideration;
- constructed parent and student surveys along with data collection instruments for district MEPs;
- distributed and collected the surveys and data sheets, analyzed the data; and
- conducted presentations on the data to the full NAC and Work Group II.

The Data Team's job was to organize the requests for data made by the NAC and the Work Groups, and then present a draft data collection plan to the NAC so that the requests could be prioritized. Many of the data elements appeared to be available in the state database (e.g., reading and math scores, attendance, etc).

The team found that some of the state data was not coded by migrant status (you could not sort out the migrant children). Also, Florida achievement scores are housed in a separate database and the State health databases are coded by ethnic group (white, Hispanic, etc.) but not by migrant status. This meant that source data such as immunization records would have to be gathered by sampling the local districts.

Lastly, with respect to the data the state would be willing and able to provide, the state could not meet the CNA timeline (the original request was made in February 2004 and the state data was received in August 2004). Once again, this meant the data team would have to sample districts for data for both NAC and Work Group consideration.

The data team sampled 10 small, four medium, and two large migrant programs/districts. The programs were chosen, not only for their size but their geographical location and their ethnic and racial make-up.

There were three data collection instruments:

- the district data sheet;
- the parent survey; and
- the student survey.

The district data sheet requested basic program information. This included parent involvement, and FCAT scores in reading and math (aggregated so no individual student could be identified). The parent survey was available in English and Spanish and asked respondents about: contact with the school, how often they read to/with their children, and the availability of reading materials in the home. The student survey was used to

gather information on: student participation in extracurricular activities, level of encouragement to do well in school by various school personnel, and perceived expectations by the students' teachers.

The requests for information were distributed and gathered electronically then gathered and analyzed. The data team was *extremely* pleased with the response rate—more than 500 student surveys were completed—especially considering the limited timeframe close to the end of the school year.

The Work Groups requested further data for comparison groups, which is currently under review. Additionally, the teams will meet to develop and review the annualized evaluation measures to ensure that they measure the impact of proposed solutions.

(See appendix Tab 5 for a list of the districts that participated in data collection, the district data sheet, parent and student surveys, sample data tables, and final need statements.)

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

What distinguishes this CNA model is its insistence on identifying solutions. Florida took the time and effort to gather and analyze data (most of which was gathered at the district and program level thanks to the efforts of migrant staff) so that the specific needs of migrant children and families could be identified. These needs were quantified and expressed in need statements as “gaps.” Experts then identified research and evidence-based solutions and presented those solutions to the Needs Assessment Committee for their feedback and consent. The research behind these solutions indicates that, if implemented with a high degree of fidelity, the migrant education program can make steady progress toward closing the gaps.

The complete Work Group reports can be found in the appendix, Tab 10. The following is a summary of the solutions, by goal area:

Math Work Group

The Math Work Group addressed gaps in the FCAT math scores in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades.

Table
2003 FCAT MATH SCORES
(Percentage proficient)

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>MIGRANT</u>	<u>ALL STUDENTS</u>	<u>GAP</u>
4	31	54	23
8	30	56	26
10	36	60	24

The table above shows the FCAT math scores of those who reached the “proficient” levels (Levels 3, 4, and 5 are considered proficient). In the three grades measured, migrant students are approximately 25 percent behind “all” students taking these tests.

The Math Work Group was asked to provide solutions to help close these gaps. These solutions were organized around the following categories:

- Teacher Quality
- Quality Curriculum
- Assessment
- Staffing
- Alternative Approaches to Learning

Recommendations

- 1. Provide Mathematics Coach for Teachers of Migrant Students**
 - Hire certified math coach trained in current research-based coaching model(s) (See job description.)
- 2. Provide In-service and Pre-service Training in Mathematics Instruction**
 - Inform pre-service and in-service teachers of availability of instructional support materials.
 - Provide professional development in how to implement culturally relevant problem-solving opportunities.
 - Provide pre-service and in-service training on how to work with migrant students, including an overview of the unique needs and challenges that migrant students face.
- 3. Alternative Approaches to Learning**
 - Provide extended learning opportunities such as after-school programs and Saturday programs.
 - Establish smaller learning communities in high schools.

Graduation Work Group

The Graduation Work Group was asked to suggest specific strategies and programs to help close gaps in late enrollment and/or early withdrawal; students with GPAs of below 2.0; and students who are retained.

A student survey was administered to 536 migrant students in grades 9 - 12 in a select number of districts. The findings are presented in Table I.

Table I
Migrant Student Survey Results
(Percentages)

<u>QUESTIONS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
What extracurricular activities do you participate in at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports• Clubs• Do not participate in extracurricular activities	28 24 48
Do your teachers encourage you to participate in extracurricular activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	49 51
Do you feel safe at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	52 48
Do your teachers expect you to graduate from high school? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	84 16
Do your teachers expect you to go to college? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	57 43

The Graduation Work Group was asked to identify specific models, programming, adjustments, and staffing solutions to help close these gaps.

Recommendations

1. Hire a Migrant Advocate to help migrant students access services and programs to foster continuity of education

The Migrant Advocate is responsible for collaborating with school personnel and community agencies to facilitate the following:

- Provide alternative programs for earning credits, clock hour and assignment make-up (tutorial, computer-assisted, correspondence courses, distance learning, summer institutes, etc.).
- Facilitate interstate/intrastate coordination activities (credit accrual, scheduling, testing, etc.)
- Monitor enrollment and withdrawal patterns by school staff, MEP, parents, and students.

2. Provide migrant students with services and programs that will increase grade point averages (GPAs), decrease retention and engage parents in their children’s education

- Educate parents about specific ways they can contribute to their children’s success in school (e.g., parent/teacher conferences, graduation requirements, homework, etc.).
- Promote participation by students and parents in transition programs or services (between schools, school levels, districts, states, countries).
- Provide staff development for school personnel regarding the migrant lifestyle, cultural heritage, and home environment.

School Readiness Work Group

The School Readiness Work Group addressed gaps between migrant and non-migrant children as shown by the 2002–2003 SRUSS (School Readiness Uniform Screening System). The group also considered parental involvement and the number of migrant students enrolling late and/or withdrawing early from school. Early interventions and family education have proven effective for increasing a student’s success in school.

Table I
SRUSS

	<u>MIGRANT</u>	<u>NON-MIGRANT</u>	<u>GAP</u>
PERCENTAGE READY NOW	57	74	17

Table I shows that there is a 17 percent gap between migrant and non-migrant students who have acquired the school readiness skills measured on the SRUSS.

Table II
School Reports

	<u>MIGRANT</u>	<u>NON-MIGRANT</u>	<u>GAP</u>
Percentage of parents involved in school activities / meetings	69	81	12

Table II illustrates the gap between the number of migrant and non-migrant students' parents who participate in school functions.

The School Readiness committee was asked to provide research-based solutions for closing the achievement gap.

Recommendations

1. Hire an Early Childhood Parent Educator

- The Early Childhood Parent Educator will be a certified staff member trained in early childhood development and language/literacy development.
- The Parent Educator would be responsible for teaching parents and migrant staff how to bolster the language, literacy, and cognitive development of the children.
- The Parent Educator would also be responsible for data analysis in order to prioritize families' needs and manage case loads.

2. Host Summer School for 3–4 year olds

- Summer school should focus on language and literacy development.
- Summer school should provide children with background-building experiences so they can later experience success in school.
- Certified staff members and coordinator are needed.

3. Conduct Family Educational Experiences

- Family educational experiences will be run by a certified staff member specifically trained in early childhood development.
- Migrant staff member will be responsible for organizing and implementing family education field trips/experiences with extension at-home activities

designed to increase language and literacy learning and cognitive development.

- Migrant staff member will coordinate with LEAs to ensure that children and families are building the background knowledge needed to succeed in the school setting (i.e., coordinate a visit to the school for families to familiarize them with the school setting, routine, and kindergarten standards).

*Background knowledge (schema) aids in the application of new knowledge and the ability to make connections. It affects student learning greatly. (Anderson, Piaget)

4. Provide Strategic, Content-Based Outreach Services

- The Outreach Service Provider will be a certified staff member trained in early childhood development and language/ literacy learning.
- The Provider will work with children in their homes on a regular basis on content and language objectives specifically designed for that child based on a series of diagnostic assessments.

Reading Work Group

The Reading Work Group addressed gaps in the FCAT reading scores in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades.

Table I
FCAT READING SCORES
(Percentage proficient)

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>MIGRANT</u>	<u>ALL STUDENTS</u>	<u>GAP</u>
4	31	60	29
8	19	49	30
10	9	36	27

Table I shows the FCAT reading scores of those who reached the “proficient” levels (Levels 3, 4, and 5 are considered proficient). In the three grades measured, migrant students are about 30 percent behind “all” students taking these tests.

The Reading Work Group was asked to specify models, programming, adjustments, and staffing solutions to help close these gaps.

Recommendations

1. Transition to “Academic” Advocates

- Many migrant programs already have an advocate on staff. We recommend that the primary focus and responsibilities of the advocate shift to academics.
- The Academic Advocate would be responsible for coordinating and providing the professional development for migrant teachers/tutors.
- The Academic Advocate would be responsible for supporting the tutors/teachers in providing content-based strategic tutoring. (NOTE: “Strategic” means that the tutor does ongoing assessment to determine need, to plan appropriate instruction, and to monitor progress. “Content-based” means that the teacher uses grade-level content in a way that is understandable to all students.)
- The Academic Advocate should be a certified teacher with experience and knowledge in the teaching of reading.

2. Provide migrant students with strategic, content-based tutoring

- This process begins with assessment and data analysis to determine need. The migrant tutor needs to work collaboratively with the mainstream staff to access assessment information and to plan how to collect ongoing progress monitoring information.
- Tutors choose content and language-based goals that are aligned to the Florida learning standards. It is important to:
 - i. Choose a reasonable number of goals
 - ii. Choose goals that can be integrated across the content areas
 - iii. Rich in opportunities for access to children’s literature

3. Offer high quality, sustained, and intensive professional development

Getting serious about closing the achievement gaps will necessitate the “professionalization” of the state’s migrant teaching/tutoring staff. This will only be achieved by providing regular and ongoing professional development.

(The detailed strategy, action, and question guide tables that accompany each solution can be found in the appendix Tab 11.)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Florida has committed considerable resources and nearly 2 years of program and staff time to the CNA process. People who have participated in the CNA process are duly proud of their contributions to the honest and open exploration of migrant student and family needs.

They have:

- learned about a research-based model of needs assessment that can be applied in other settings with other programs;
- participated in a truly “comprehensive” needs assessment (comprehensive in the sense that it considered the entire program, started with the real, not the perceived needs of the clients and explored research-based solutions);
- discussed, debated, and finally agreed on the most critical needs of migrant children and families;
- found ways to measure those needs;
- gathered and analyzed data to support or refute those same needs;
- reviewed and prioritized the solutions;
- finalized the research-based solutions along with proposals for changes in the service delivery model;
- considered alternative service delivery models;
- drafted and finalized evaluation frameworks for selected solutions; and
- recommended and wrote the action plan, which includes solution implementation guidelines.

The CNA process has helped the state to clearly identify the needs of Florida’s migrant children and the evidence-based solutions required to address those needs. In addition, they have taken the first steps to ensuring that their programming is data-driven. Now it is time to operationalize the recommendations of the committee by producing a solid service delivery plan which will address:

1. **Performance Targets.** The plan must specify the performance targets that the State has adopted for all migrant children for: (1) reading; (2) math; (3) high school graduation; (4) the number of school dropouts; (5) school readiness (if adopted by the SEA); and (6) any other performance target that the State has identified for migrant children. (See 34 CFR 200.83(a)(1).)
2. **Needs Assessment.** The plan must include identification and an assessment of: (1) the unique educational needs of migrant children that result from the children’s migrant lifestyle; and (2) other needs of migrant students that must be met in order for them to participate effectively in school. (See 34 CFR 200.83(a)(2).)
3. **Measurable Program Outcomes.** The plan must include the measurable outcomes that the MEP will produce statewide through specific educational or educationally-related services. (See section 1306(a)(1)(D) of the statute.)

Measurable outcomes allow the MEP to determine whether and to what degree the program has met the special educational needs of migrant children that were identified through the comprehensive needs assessment. The measurable outcomes should also help achieve the State's performance targets.

4. **Service Delivery.** The plan must describe the SEA's strategies for achieving the performance targets and measurable objectives described above. The State's service delivery strategy must address: (1) the unique educational needs of migrant children that result from the children's migrant lifestyle, and (2) other needs of migrant students that must be met in order for them to participate effectively in school. (See 34 CFR 200.83(a)(3).)
5. **Evaluation.** The plan must describe how the State will evaluate whether and to what degree the program is effective in relation to the performance targets and measurable outcomes. (See 34 CFR 200.83(a)(4).)

Many of the building blocks of the service delivery plan are contained in the comprehensive needs assessment (performance targets, the assessment itself, measurable program outcomes, and a framework for evaluating implementation of the solutions). The state will need to:

- design an implementation plan;
- propose an assessment of staff readiness to implement the various solutions;
- write a professional development and training plan;
- identify resources, both personnel and materials, needed to implement the research-based action plan; and
- design an evaluation plan to monitor the effectiveness of program improvement initiatives.

NCLB supports the closing of the achievement gaps of Florida's neediest students. The Florida Migrant Education Program's comprehensive needs assessment process has been an important first step in promoting the implementation of researched-based, data-driven programming for the migrant children of the Sunshine State.