

Mid-Term Moves and High School Credit Accrual

Eliminating a Major Educational Barrier for Migrant Youth

Local schools can readily overcome *the major educational barrier* migrant students face in graduating from high school. What is the barrier? Lack of credit for schoolwork successfully completed before and after a mid-term move or extended absence from school.

What are your local school's traditional policies and practices? When do those practices fail to meet unique needs of children of migrant families? Specifically, what accommodations to traditional practices are suggested to overcome this educational barrier?

Are these your school's traditional practices for mid-term moves?

- Family notifies main office of sending school they are moving out of the district.
- Student receives Withdrawal Form to take to classes.
- Each teacher fills in Exit Grade and signs off on the Withdrawal Form.
- Student takes completed Withdrawal Form to counselor.
- Family moves.
- Receiving school requests and obtains student's transcripts from sending school, along with Withdrawal Form
- Counselor places student in closest possible classes, and provides each teacher with the Exit Grade from the comparable partially completed course
- Student completes each course and receives full credit on the transcript

Has your school encountered any of these challenges in serving children of migrant families?

- **The sending school:**
 - ✓ Family moves without formally withdrawing children from school
 - ✓ Issuance of transcripts is delayed as leverage to recover unpaid fines and district property
 - ✓ Family will leave the district for several weeks but expects to return before the grading period ends. Education will be disrupted.
 - ✓ Receives no request for records in remainder of that grading period. If Exit Grades were recorded on a Withdrawal Form, they convert to Incompletes. Incompletes then convert to F's.
- **The receiving school:**
 - ✓ Learns the children were not immediately re-enrolled in school following the family move. Teachers are reluctant to recommend credit be issued for the grading period due to the extended absence.
 - ✓ Student enrolls days or weeks into the grading period, not having been in school elsewhere that term.
 - ✓ With its transcript, a sending school provides a Withdrawal Form, but the Exit Grades were only valid during the grading cycle in which they were issued.
 - ✓ Is unsure which of your culminating project requirements the high school student has already met. Doesn't receive the student's in-progress portfolio required as part of the culminating project.

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- **Either the sending or the receiving school:**
 - ✓ The student is absent many consecutive days within the grading period to earn income for the family, or care for children so parents can work, due to illness, etc.

Suggested Accommodations to Traditional Practices for Your School's Consideration

When yours is the sending school:

- ✓ When a migrant student has been absent from all classes for five days without excuse, check with other schools in the district to see if siblings have also been absent. If so, assume the family has moved.
- ✓ Ask the district's Migrant Home Visitor or family liaison to visit the family's residence and confirm they have moved.
- ✓ If the high school student was enrolled in one or more PASS courses, notify your PASS Contact Person that the student has moved out of the district. The PASS Contact Person should immediately drop the student using Form C so a transcript will be issued and forwarded to your Registrar.
- ✓ Prepare a Withdrawal Form (sample attached). Have each of the student's teachers record the grade the student was earning as of the last date attended ("Exit Grade"). A grade of No Credit is preferable to a Failing grade.
- ✓ Calculate partial credit earned on the basis of seat hours. Record the partial credit with the Exit Grade on the transcript for each class. Include any credit earned for the in progress PASS course(s).
- ✓ Have the Migrant Records Clerk update the Migrant Student Information System, backdating withdrawal to the last date each child was in school. Younger children may have remained in school while older children helped parents pack the family's belongings in preparation for the move.
- ✓ Retain the Withdrawal Form with Exit Grades as documentation for the partial grades recorded on the transcript.
- ✓ Forward a copy of the transcript to your district's Migrant Records Clerk so the partial credit earned can be recorded in the MSIS database for access by other schools.
- ✓ Either waive any school fees owed by the family, or contact your district's Homeless Act Liaison and apply for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds to pay the family's fees owed to the district so transcripts can be released to the next school attended.
- ✓ If the high school student was completing a portfolio that is now in the district's possession, prepare a copy to retain for safekeeping. Forward the original portfolio with transcripts to the next school attended.

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When yours is the receiving school:

- ✓ Request and receive transcript documenting full and partial credit earned (including PASS courses). If no partial credit was issued for partially completed work, request a Withdrawal Form documenting Exit Grades.
- ✓ High school student? Call previous counselor. Request the student's original portfolio. Learn steps the student had completed in the culminating project. Keep the student informed.
- ✓ Either check the student's health and academic records in the Migrant Student Information System database using your own unique password (see www.msdr.org) or ask your Migrant Records Clerk to give you information on this student's previous completed and unresolved coursework, including PASS.
- ✓ Place the student in classes. Whenever possibly, build upon partially completed credits toward satisfaction of graduation requirements.
- ✓ Combine partial credit and unresolved coursework from the MSIS database or a withdrawal form to satisfy a graduation requirements.
- ✓ If the student partially completed a PASS course before leaving the previous school, and needs full credit in that subject, encourage your PASS Contact Person to call SEMY (888-727-7123 tollfree) and help the student resume work in PASS.

Whether yours is the sending or the receiving school, educate the family!

- ✓ Discuss with them the importance of formally withdrawing their children from school before moving again.
- ✓ When the family cannot withdraw the children from school before moving, encourage them to leave school equipment and supplies with a neighbor and call the school to say where they can be recovered.
- ✓ Explain school absence and discipline policies.
- ✓ Review the student's credits toward graduation, and graduation requirements.
- ✓ Help the family develop a written plan for each secondary school student's high school graduation and the year beyond.

We hope these suggestions have encouraged your school's innovation in making reasonable accommodations to traditional mid-term exit and entry practices. With your help, every migrant children served in your schools has a better chance to earn a high school diploma and achieving their full potential.

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