

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Healthy Students' Monitoring Report on
the Alabama Department of Education's
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

Scope of Review:

On January 12, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) monitored the Alabama Department of Education (ADE), state educational agency (SEA) administration of the Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento).

Previous Monitoring:

ED monitored the ADE EHCY program during the week of September 8-12, 2008. The report is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/index.html>

Current Monitoring:

In its review of the EHCY program, the ED team examined the ADE:

- Procedures and guidance for the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students;
- Technical assistance provided to LEAs with and without subgrants;
- The McKinney-Vento EHCY State Plan; and
- LEA applications for subgrants and local evaluations for projects in Mobile and Montgomery LEAs

The ED team also interviewed the McKinney-Vento EHCY State coordinator to confirm information obtained at the local site and to discuss administration of the program. The ED team conducted interviews with local liaisons from Mobile and Montgomery LEAs as well as local liaisons from Baldwin County and Geneva City Public Schools, both non-subgrantee LEAs.

Based on its review, ED has the following observations, commendations and recommendation:

Emerging Practices:

OSHS considers emerging practices to be operational activities or initiatives that contribute to successful outcomes or enhance agency performance capabilities. Emerging practices are those that have been successfully implemented and demonstrate the potential for replication by other agencies.

Typically, emerging practices have not been evaluated as rigorously as "promising," "effective," "evidence-based," or "best" practices but still offer ideas that work in specific situations. As a result of its monitoring activities, OSHS identified the following emerging practices for ADE EHCY program subgrantees:

- Mobile County Public Schools (Mobile LEA) and Montgomery County Public Schools (Montgomery LEA) offer a range of program options for homeless and highly mobile high school students to graduate. In Mobile LEA (local education agency), these options include a virtual school that also has classes in a building and an evening school for students who have to work or care for children during the day. Mobile LEA also puts an emphasis on keeping high school seniors who are homeless or have experienced homelessness in their schools of origin and checks on them regularly to ensure they are on track to graduate. Montgomery LEA also provides similar services for high school seniors.
- Mobile LEA homeless education staff have proactively participated and collaborated with their Continuum of Care (CoC) and Homeless Management Information System funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop a coordinated entry system for HUD-eligible families, children and youth experiencing homelessness. The local liaison and other Mobile LEA staff have leadership roles in the CoC. As a result of this effort, and daily contact with these housing organizations, eligible families with students in the Mobile LEA are on a well-managed waiting list and receiving rapid rehousing, shelter, or other HUD-funded homeless assistance when it is available. Federally-funded Mobile LEA support services for homeless children and youth are better coordinated with housing services.

Indicator 1.1: Monitoring and evaluation of LEAs with and without subgrants

Recommendation 1.1.1

Observation: Many ADE staff and the local liaisons interviewed were not aware of all the EHCY data that are submitted to ED at the LEA level and the low percentages of homeless students who are proficient in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school. As a result, they are less able to set annual and long-term goals and plan improvements in program performance that lead to improved educational outcomes for individual students or groups of students who are homeless or experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation: ADE should provide technical assistance to its subgrantees on creating measurable goals that include baseline performance measures and annual milestones to improve performance of their programs and for individual homeless students. ADE should ensure that subgrantees are aware of LEA data reported by SEAs to ED via the ED*Facts* Reporting System. These data include graduate and dropout numbers for homeless students and proficiency in math, reading, and science, grades 3-8 and high school, at the LEA and school levels.

One approach ADE may consider is to ask subgrantees for an annual program evaluation that accounts for any change in performance of the previous two year's EHCY program performance data at the LEA and school levels for one or more performance measures.

**Table1. Summary of Monitoring Results for the Title VII-B
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

| Indicator Number | Description | Status | Page |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Indicator 1.1 | The SEA conducts monitoring and evaluation of LEAs with and without subgrants, sufficient to ensure compliance with McKinney-Vento program requirements. | Met Requirements 1 Recommendation | 2 |
| Indicator 2.1 | The SEA implements procedures to address the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students through coordinating and collaborating with other program offices and State agencies. | Met Requirements | N/A |
| Indicator 2.2 | The SEA provides, or provides for, technical assistance to LEAs to ensure appropriate implementation of the statute. | Met Requirements | N/A |
| Indicator 3.1 | The SEA ensures that LEA subgrant plans for services to eligible homeless students meet all requirements. | Met Requirements | N/A |
| Indicator 3.2 | The SEA complies with the statutory and other regulatory requirements governing the reservation of funds for State-level coordination activities. | Met Requirements | N/A |
| Indicator 3.3 | The SEA has a system for ensuring the prompt resolution of disputes. | Met Requirements | N/A |