

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Healthy Students' Monitoring Report on
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

Scope of Review:

During May 8-15, 2018, a review team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) monitored the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED's) administration of the Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) and the reservation for homeless children under section 1113(c)(3)(A) of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA).

Previous Monitoring:

ED reviewed DEED's EHCY program during the week of May 4-7, 2009. The report is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/map/ak.html>

Current Review:

This review was a pilot to test new document review and interview protocols with expanded indicators involving new data analysis of homeless student performance at the local educational agency (LEA) and school level, including of homeless students served by the Title I set-aside and enrolled in Title I schools. New instruments for this pilot review included an LEA data dashboard of key measures converted to percentages of homeless students identified, served, or attaining outcomes such as grade level proficiency; shaded maps of the percentages of homeless students by LEA for these key measures; and an achievement gap analysis between homeless and all students and other economically disadvantaged students by school. Furthermore, new data submitted to ED on chronic absenteeism counts and adjusted cohort graduation rates for homeless students for school year (SY) 2016-17 were analyzed and discussed with local liaisons and the State Coordinator.

In addition, in its review of the EHCY program, ED examined DEED's:

- procedures and guidance for the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students;
- self-assessment instrument and supporting documentation;
- technical assistance provided to LEAs with and without subgrants;
- EHCY section of the consolidated State Plan; and
- LEA subgrant applications from Anchorage school district (ASD) and Matanuska-Susitna borough school district (MSBSD). Additionally, ED interviewed liaisons and staff from ASD, MSBSD, as well as Sitka school district, and North Slope borough school district, both non-subgrantee school districts.

ED staff also interviewed the EHCY State Coordinator to confirm information obtained at the local site and discuss administration of the program, including the pilot analysis mentioned above of LEA and school level data submitted by the State to ED.

Based on their review, ED has the following observations, commendations of emerging practices, and recommendations:

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 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 practice in Alaska:

- The ASD Child in Transition program is a primary source of referral for early intervention and dropout prevention services to identify young people and families who are, or who are at risk of being, homeless. The State of Alaska Divisions of Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health and the Office of Children's Services administer programs that provide family counseling, remediation, and reunification. ASD, the United Way of Anchorage, public benefit agencies, and childcare facilities are points of early intervention to address the rising number of youth entering foster care, entering the juvenile justice system, and experiencing homelessness.

Indicator 1.2: The State educational agency (SEA) assesses the data quality and annual performance of homeless students in LEAs with and without subgrants.

Recommendation 1.2.1

Observation: DEED staff recognized that they do not systematically use their annual State and LEA level data to improve statewide homeless student program performance and outcomes.

Recommendation: ED recommends that DEED create annual work plans with baseline measure(s), annual goal(s), and action step(s) using LEA data on risk factors in order to improve statewide homeless student program performance and outcomes. For example, DEED staff can analyze data for all LEAs in the State to see if there are patterns of potential under identification of homeless children and youth by LEA, including unaccompanied homeless youth, that may overlap with patterns of potential underserving of these students through EHCY subgrants and Title I, Part A set-asides across the State. As another example, DEED staff can analyze the data for significant achievement gaps between homeless and other students in terms of grade-level proficiency in reading and math, chronic absenteeism, or in on-time and extended-year graduation rates. DEED can

then target and customize its monitoring and technical assistance to specific LEAs or groups of LEAs in a region or for which a certain risk factor for students experiencing homelessness is high.

Indicator 2.2: The SEA provides, or provides for, professional development and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure appropriate implementation of the statute.

Recommendation 2.2.1

Observation: DEED staff recognized that they do not track the training of local liaisons new to the position to ensure that they are aware of the LEA requirements to identify and serve students experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation: ED recommends that DEED, at least once annually, check whether new liaisons have participated in a live training offered through DEED or other sources, such as ED's technical assistance provider, the National Center for Homeless Education. This information can then be used to develop regionally targeted or customized trainings.

Indicator 3.1: The SEA ensures that LEA subgrant plans for services to eligible homeless students meet all requirements.

Recommendation 3.1.1

Observation: ED observed that DEED's subgrant programs did not include program level outcome measures for an annual cohort of homeless students identified by those LEAs.

Recommendation: ED recommends that DEED provide technical assistance to its subgrantees on creating goals (measurable to the maximum extent appropriate) that include baseline performance measures and annual milestones toward multi-year outcome goals. Subgrantees may not be fully aware of all LEA data reported by SEAs to ED via the EDFacts Reporting System nor did any subgrantees interviewed report using them. These data have included for many years 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. In addition, States have reported to ED chronic absenteeism and graduation rates at the school level from SY 2016-17. There are new opportunities to correlate achievement gaps, chronic absenteeism, and graduation rates for homeless students at the school level.

One approach that DEED could consider is asking subgrantees for an annual program evaluation that accounts for any change in performance of the previous two years of EHCY program performance data at the LEA and school levels. Longitudinal tracking of performance provides information at the program level on whether program improvements are moving outcomes in the desired direction.

**Table 2. 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 of LEAs with and without subgrants, sufficient to ensure compliance with McKinney-Vento program requirements.	Met Requirements	N/A
Indicator 1.2	The SEA assesses the data quality and annual performance of homeless students in LEAs with and without subgrants.	Met Requirements 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, professional development and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure appropriate implementation of the statute.	Met Requirements Recommendation	3
Indicator 3.1	The SEA ensures that LEA subgrant plans for services to eligible homeless students meet all requirements.	Met Requirements Recommendation	3
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 ensures that the LEA complies with providing comparable Title I, Part A services to homeless students attending non-Title I and Title I schools.	Met Requirements	N/A