

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Title I Migrant Education Coordination Program****AGENCY:** Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice of proposed priority for fiscal year 1996.

SUMMARY: Under the authority of section 1308(a) of Part C of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, the Secretary proposes an absolute priority for Fiscal Year 1996. Under the proposed priority, the Secretary would support projects that use electronic technologies to strengthen the academic achievement of migrant students who move between school districts.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before October 4, 1996.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning this proposed priority should be addressed to Kristin Gilbert, Office of Migrant Education, U.S. Department of Education, room 4100 Portals Building, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-6140. Comments may also be sent by e-mail to kristin-gilbert@ed.gov or by FAX at (202) 260-1357.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kristin Gilbert, Office of Migrant Education, U.S. Department of Education, 4100 Portals Building, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-6140. Telephone: (202)260-1357. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains a proposed absolute priority for applications that propose to use innovative technologies to improve teaching and learning for migrant students who move from one school district to another. Electronic technologies include, but are not limited to, digital audio, video and imaging, hypertext and hypermedia, video-conferencing, speech processing, the Internet, and World Wide Web sites. These technologies must be used in such a way as to enable teachers to draw on newly accessible resources to engage migrant students in enriched active learning environments, while at the same time promoting continuity in the education programs of migrant students as they move within and between States.

The MEP is authorized in Title I, Part C, of the ESEA. Under this program, the Secretary makes grants to SEAs to help

ensure that migrant children have the opportunity to meet the same challenging State content and student performance standards that all children are expected to meet. Migrant children may be served from birth through age 21, or through high school graduation, whichever comes first. A range of services are provided through the MEP, including those that address educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of children to do well in school and prepare them to make successful transitions to postsecondary education or employment.

Section 1308 of the ESEA authorizes the Secretary to reserve a portion of each year's MEP appropriation and, in consultation with the States, make grants for programs to improve the coordination of services to migrant students when they move within and between States.

While under 1308(a) of ESEA any public or private nonprofit entity is eligible to apply, the Secretary will specifically invite the following entities to submit applications: State educational agencies (SEAs) that administer Migrant Education Programs (MEP); local educational agencies (LEAs) that have a high percentage or high number of migrant students; and non-profit community-based organizations that work with migrant families. In order to help ensure coordination between school districts, applicants would need to apply as part of a consortium made up of at least two entities described in the preceding sentence. The consortium must also include entities such as businesses, academic content experts or software designers to help ensure broad community and technical support.

The Secretary expects that approximately \$3 million will be available under the MEP for this competition. Grants will range from \$200,000 to \$600,000 per year and may be funded for up to 5 years.

In February 1995, the Office of Migrant Education (OME) sponsored a forum for all State Directors of Migrant Education to showcase and discuss how electronic technologies are being used in the migrant program. At the February meeting and in subsequent communications, State Directors expressed support for using funds reserved by the Secretary for interstate coordination activities to fund the development and innovative use of technology within the migrant community, particularly for those students and their families who

experience educational disruption as a result of repeated moves.

Many State Directors and other educators of migrant youth are actively incorporating electronic technologies into the designs of programs that provide services to migrant youth. For example,

- The Summer Migrant Access Resources through Technology project (Project SMART), initiated by the Texas Education Agency in 1992, uses television to offer instructional continuity when migrant students move within Texas and to other States. Approximately 20 States participate in this program.

- The Migrant Instructional Network for Telecommunications Project, initiated in 1994 by the Kern County, California Superintendent of Schools, develops and produces live interactive instructional broadcasts for migrant students, teachers, and parents. Students interact via satellite with instructors in a distant studio, and programs are broadcasted using a bilingual format.

These examples illustrate a few innovative ways that technologies are being employed in migrant communities to improve teaching and learning. They can inform subsequent efforts to successfully utilize technologies in programs that build educational continuity for highly mobile students.

The Secretary believes that technology, if applied thoughtfully, can be the catalyst that reinforces and extends migrant students' learning opportunities, motivation, and achievement. Technology can remove the barriers of time and place for migrant students moving across the country, and provide affordable access to high-quality learning. Technology may stimulate creative ways to construct rich, cohesive education programs that counter the adverse impact of frequent moves on the education of migrant students. Technology may help to forge stronger ties between home and school, particularly when "home" is not found in a single geographic locale, but in many.

This proposed priority is intended to stimulate creative thinking about how to integrate technology more effectively to provide high-quality education that meets the special needs of the migrant community. The competition is intended to encourage change by helping communities of educators, parents, industry partners and others to work together to utilize technologies to improve the learning opportunities and the curriculum available to migrant students. It is intended to stimulate new

partnerships between educators and software developers, telecommunications firms and hardware manufacturers, entertainment producers, and others who are in the process of creating exciting new possibilities for extending learning communities beyond the traditional classroom boundaries.

Goals 2000: Education America Act

The Goals 2000: Education America Act (Goals 2000) focuses the Nation's education reform efforts on the eight National Education Goals and provides a framework for meeting them. Goals 2000 promotes new partnerships to strengthen schools and expand the Department's capacities for helping communities to exchange ideas and obtain information needed to achieve these Goals.

This proposed priority and these proposed selection criteria would address the National Education Goals that all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, and that by the year 2000 the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. The proposed priority and selection criteria would further the objectives of these Goals by focusing available funds on projects that will provide students, while they migrate between school districts, a richer learning environment and continuity of education through the use of innovative technologies.

The Secretary will announce the final priority in a notice in the Federal Register. The final priority will be determined by responses to this notice and available funds. Funding of particular projects depends on the availability of funds, the nature of the final priority and the quality of the applications received. The publication of this proposed priority and proposed selection criteria does not preclude the Secretary from proposing additional priorities and selection criteria, nor does it limit the Secretary to funding only this priority, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does *not* solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition will be published in the Federal Register concurrent with or following publication of the final PRIORITY.

Priority: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary proposes to fund under this competition only applications that meet this priority:

Technology Applications for Teaching and Learning in the Migrant Community

Under this priority, an eligible entity would compete for a grant, on behalf of a consortium, to cover the costs of developing, adapting or expanding existing and new applications of technology to improve the coordination of teaching and learning for migrant students who move within and between States. Consortium efforts should be carefully designed to encourage—wherever possible—the ongoing involvement of educators and parents, business and civic leaders, community organizations and others committed to providing enhanced educational opportunity for highly mobile migrant students.

Partners in a consortium would be expected to make monetary or in-kind contributions for equipment, technical support, and/or any other costs that may be associated with the project. Funds awarded through these grants would augment those investments by supporting, for example, the development of new curriculum content, professional development, or the evaluation of educational effectiveness.

In addition to the contributions of its consortium partners, applicants are encouraged to consider a range of other sources of technical or financial support. Possibilities include programs administered by the Department, such as: the Goals 2000: Educate America Act; Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; the Eisenhower Professional Development program; Bilingual Education programs; School-to-Work Opportunities; the Star Schools program; the Challenge Grants for Technology in Education; the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services technology programs; the recently created Regional Technology Consortia; the regional Educational Laboratories; and the Migrant Education Program itself.

Additional sources of support might also include Foundation grants, philanthropic contributions, and services provided through grants or contracts from other government agencies. For example, the U.S. Department of Commerce has provided grants to help develop the telecommunications and information infrastructure. The National Science Foundation (NSF) conducts several programs to support the use of technology in mathematics and science education. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) supports programs to improve the use of

space science data in the classroom. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing funding to support "Communities of Learners" in public housing. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is interested in carefully conceived demonstrations of new technologies in Head Start and pre-school settings. Some of these programs may be able to contribute to or enhance interstate or intrastate coordination projects that apply technology to teaching and learning for migrant students.

Application Contents

Objectives: Applicants would be required to show how they would use innovative technologies to achieve the following objectives: (a) to promote greater continuity of instruction when migrant students move within or between States; and (b) to help migrant students achieve to high academic standards.

Required Elements: At a minimum, each project would have to provide the following—

1. Adequate access to technology for all participating migrant students and staff (including their families, when appropriate);
2. Sufficient time and opportunity for teachers (and other educational support staff) to learn to use technology and to incorporate it into their own curricular goals;
3. Easily accessible technical support, such as on-site assistance; and
4. An evaluation of the project that includes a strategy for disseminating a successful project to other migrant programs.

Selection Criteria

The Secretary would use two criteria to select applications for funding: significance and feasibility; i.e., is it important, and can it be done?

Significance would be determined by the extent to which the project: 1. Offers a creative vision for using technology to help migrant students who move within or between States learn challenging academic content and to improve the coordination of their teaching and learning when they move.

2. Is likely to achieve far-reaching impact through results, products, or benefits that can be readily achieved, exported or adapted to other migrant communities or to settings of other mobile populations.

3. Will enhance interstate or intrastate coordination of teaching and learning (that takes into consideration the cultural and language characteristics of the migrant population) by integrating

acquired technologies into the curriculum.

4. Will ensure ongoing, intensive professional development for teachers (and other personnel) working with the migrant population to further the learning of migrant students through the use of technology in the classroom, library, home, or other learning environment.

5. Is designed to serve highly mobile migrant populations that are likely to benefit the most from educational technology applications.

6. Is designed to create new learning communities, and expanded markets for high-quality educational technology applications and services for migrant and other similar populations.

Feasibility would be determined by the extent to which—

1. The project will ensure successful, effective, and efficient uses of technologies for interstate and intrastate coordination of teaching and learning for migrant students and staff that will be sustainable beyond the period of the grant;

2. The members of the consortium or other appropriate entities will contribute substantial financial or other resources or both to achieve the goals of the project; and

3. The applicant is capable of carrying out the project, as evidenced by the extent to which the project is likely to meet the needs that have been identified; the quality of the project design, including objectives, approaches, evaluation plan, and dissemination plan; the adequacy of resources, including money, personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies; the qualifications of key personnel who would conduct the project; and the applicant's prior experience relevant to the objectives of the project.

Selection Procedures

The Secretary would consider only applications that establish the likelihood that the proposed projects will meet the objectives and include the required elements that are described within the section, "application contents." The Secretary proposes to evaluate applications using unweighted selection criteria. In determining whether applicants have met these criteria, the Secretary believes that the use of unweighted criteria is most appropriate because they will allow the reviewers maximum flexibility to apply their professional judgments in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in individual applications. Therefore, the Secretary proposes not to apply the selection procedures in EDGAR, 34 CFR 75.217, which require

a rank order to be established based on weighted selection criteria.

In accordance with 34 CFR 75.109(b), an applicant is permitted to make changes to an application on or before the deadline date for submission of applications. Also, in accordance with 34 CFR 75.231 the Secretary may request an applicant to submit additional information after the application has been selected for funding. Given the technical nature of the proposals, the Secretary expects that it might be necessary to obtain clarifications and additional information from applicants during the selection process. Therefore, for the purpose of this grant competition, the Secretary proposes also to permit an applicant to submit additional information in response to a request from the Secretary, during the application selection process, before applicants have been selected for funding.

The Secretary proposes to use the following selection procedures for the fiscal year 1996 competition:

In applying the selection criteria, the first peer review panel or panels of experts would analyze each application in terms of the two selection criteria: significance and feasibility. A reviewer would assign to each application two separate qualitative ratings based on the extent to which the application has met each of the two criteria, taking into consideration whether the application has met the required elements. The two ratings (which are of equal importance) taken together would yield a composite rating, representing each reviewer's total rating of each application. These reviewer ratings for each application would then be combined across the reviewers in a panel to yield an overall rating for each application. Each panel would also identify inconsistencies, points in need of clarification, and other concerns, if any, pertaining to each application.

The Secretary would then assign each application to one of three or four groups based on the panel's composite rating of each applicant. Starting with the highest quality group and moving down to the lowest, the Secretary would then identify the groups of applications of sufficiently high quality to be considered for funding. For applications in the group of sufficiently high quality applications, the Secretary might request an applicant to submit additional information or materials to address the concerns and questions, if any, identified by the peer review panels. These requests would be strictly limited to clarifications of a conceptual or technical nature, and would not be

meant to fill major gaps in information that reviewers identify in applications.

Depending upon the number of proposals received, a second panel might be convened to reevaluate each application identified by the first panel as being of sufficiently high quality, taking into account any additional information or materials, to determine the extent to which each application addresses the selection criteria. The Secretary would then reassign each reevaluated application to one of the several quality groups.

In the final stage of the selection process, the Secretary would select for funding those applications of highest quality, based on the results of the second review panel and only if the Secretary is satisfied that it is of high quality with regard to both significance and feasibility. If in this final stage, the Secretary determines that the highest quality group or groups include more applications than can be funded, panelists may be asked to differentiate further between the applications on the basis of quality. Awards may be continued in subsequent years, subject to the availability of appropriations and subject to the quality of the emerging designs.

The Secretary might modify the two-tiered procedures, depending upon the number of applications received.

Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

Invitation to Comment: Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding this proposed priority.

All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Room 4100 Portals, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C., between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

This proposed priority and these proposed selection criteria contain information collection requirements. As required by the Paperwork Reduction

Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507(d)), the Department of Education has submitted a copy of this notice to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for its review.

Collection of Information: Title I Migrant Education Coordination Program.

SEAs that administer the MEP, LEAs that have a high percentage or high number of migrant students, and non-profit community-based organizations that work with migrant families are eligible to apply for grants under this priority as part of a consortium that also includes entities such as businesses, academic content experts, or software designers. The information to be collected includes a description of each proposed project, including specific information on the access to technology for participating migrant students and their families; the professional development that teachers and other educational support staff will receive in the use of technologies; accessible technical support and on-site assistance; and project evaluation including a dissemination strategy. The Department will use the information to select, on the basis on project significance and feasibility, the highest-quality applications.

All information is to be collected and reported once, as part of the application for assistance. Annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection

of information is estimated to average 80 hours for each response for 45 respondents, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Thus, the total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection is estimated to be 3600 hours.

Organizations and individuals desiring to submit comments on the information collection requirements should direct them to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20503; Attention: Desk Officer for the U.S. Department of Education. Interested persons are also invited to comment on the implications for public reporting in connection with the use of the selection criteria proposed under this notice.

The Department considers comments by the public on these collections of information in—

- Evaluating whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluating the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information,

including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- Enhancing the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimizing the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

OMB is required to make a decision concerning the collections of information contained in these proposed regulations between 30 and 60 days after publication of this document in the Federal Register. Therefore, a comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication. This does not affect the deadline for the public to comment to the Department on the proposed regulations.

Applicable Program Regulations 34 CFR 200.49.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6391(a).

Dated: August 13, 1996.

Gerald N. Tirozzi

Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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