

April 23, 2013

# Migrant Education Program

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LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance  
Hon. Susan Bonilla, Chair





## Overview of Migrant Education Program (MEP)

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- ☑ **Program Funded by Federal Funds.** California received approximately \$135 million in 2012-13. Funding level estimated to drop to about \$128 million in 2013-14.
  
- ☑ **Provides Supplemental Education Services to Children of Migrant Workers.** Services include supplemental instruction during the regular school year and summer, as well as health-related, parent involvement, and staff development activities.
  
- ☑ **Students Qualify for MEP Services if Parents Have Made “Qualifying Move” Within Past Three Years.** Eligibility based on family moving for temporary or seasonal employment in the agricultural, dairy, lumber, or fishing industries.
  - California has about 160,000 migrant students ages 3 to 21. Counts have declined notably in recent years. Vast majority are Latino and have limited proficiency in English.



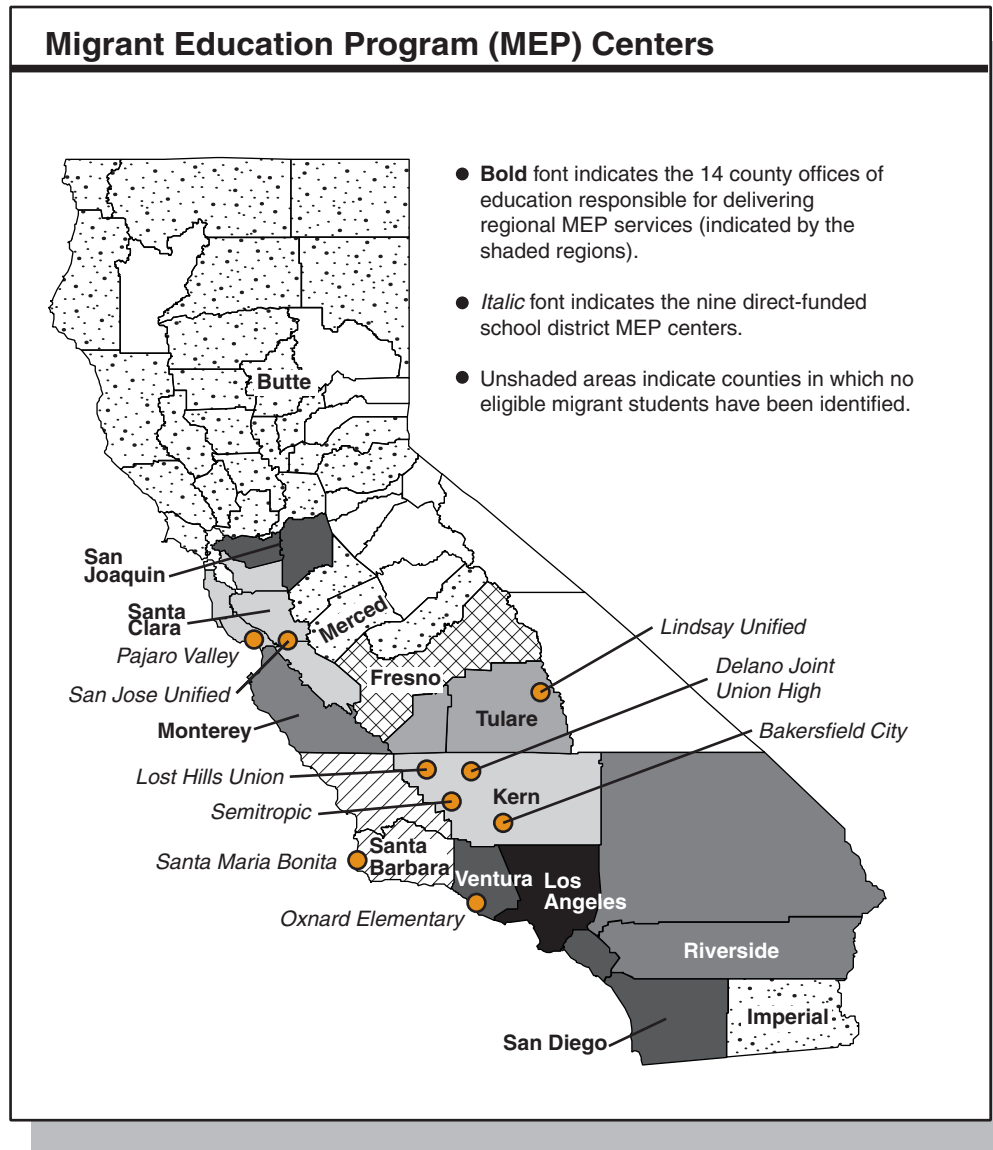
## California Implements Program Through Regional Model

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- ☑ ***State Distributes Funding to 23 MEP Centers.*** Of these centers, 14 are county offices of education (COEs) and nine are individual school districts.
  - Some COE-based centers retain all funds and provide all MEP services for the region's migrant students, whereas others pass some funding through to local school districts, typically for providing direct student services.
  
- ☑ ***State's MEP Centers Vary Significantly in Size.*** The selection of MEP centers has not been strategic, but rather has evolved over time based on requests to the California Department of Education (CDE) from individual COEs and districts.

# California Implements Program Through Regional Model

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## LAO Has Recommended Legislature Restructure MEP Funding and Service Model

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- ☑ **LAO Undertook Comprehensive Review of MEP in February 2006.** Report entitled *Improving Services for Migrant Students*. In the report, we raise major concerns with the existing MEP model and recommend restructuring.
  
- ☑ **Concerns With Regional Funding Model.** We have two major concerns with the existing MEP model.
  - Disconnect between who is funded and who is accountable.
  - Lack of coordination between MEP services and other programs.
  
- ☑ **Recommend Shifting to District-Based Model.** We recommend allocating:
  - 70 percent of state grant directly to school districts. Districts with smaller groups of migrant students could be required to form consortia to access funding and coordinate services.
  - 15 percent of funding to COE regional centers. Certain services (such as student recruitment and professional development) would be more cost-effective if delivered at the regional level. Expand beyond 14 current COEs to incorporate other areas of the state that contain significant migrant populations.
  - 15 percent for statewide initiatives (including statewide migrant information database).



## Federal Concerns With State's MEP Led To Recent Audit Report

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***Federal Reviews Have Raised Notable Concerns About State's Implementation of MEP.*** Concerns were noted in five key areas.

- Failure to approve state service delivery plan.
- Errors in migrant student eligibility determinations.
- Inconsistent calculation of and notably high reporting of administrative costs.
- Numerous issues related to state parent advisory council.
- Problems with a particular school district.



***Legislature Directed California State Auditor to Conduct Independent Review of MEP.*** The *2012-13 Budget Act* provided \$600,000 for the Auditor to review and recommend improvements in the following areas.

- The organization and implementation of MEP services at the state and local levels.
- Expenditures, fiscal practices, and fiscal oversight within CDE and a sample of MEP regions.
- Policies and activities relating to the state parent advisory council.
- The extent to which concerns raised by federal reviews remain unaddressed.



***Budget Act Also Funded Additional MEP Support Position Within CDE.*** The 2012-13 budget provided \$130,000 for one limited-term position to help CDE address issues with the MEP.