

# Section G: Writing Need Indicators and Recommending Data Sources

---

Step 2: Explore What Is		
Activity	Recommended Tasks	Highly Recommended
Write Need Indicators and recommend data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAC identifies Need Indicators (present needs as differences between what is and what should be)</li> <li>• Each Need Indicator explicitly connects to one of the prioritized Concern Statements</li> <li>• Potential data sources are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create iterations of refinement of Need Indicators in light of additional criteria</li> <li>• Create multiple Need Indicators for each Concern Statement</li> <li>• Gather community input beyond NAC</li> </ul>

After the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) has developed Concern Statements, it is recommended that Need Indicators be developed for each Concern Statement. For the sake of this discussion, a "Need" is described as the gap between "what is" and "what should be."

A "Need Indicator" is a measure that can be used to verify that a particular gap/discrepancy exists for migrant children and sets a parameter to specify the severity of that gap.

We recommend that you complete the table in *Appendix G.1 Linking Concerns, Needs, and Data Table* as you work through the information in this section, which will help connect the Concern Statements, Need Indicators, and suggested sources of data. The completed table will be the foundation of the Data Collection Plan for the CNA.

## G.1 Convening the NAC and Alternatives for a Participatory Process

Developing Need Indicators may be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending on your time and resources. In all cases, we recommend that this be an activity that includes input from stakeholders, such as the NAC, Data Work Group, or key stakeholders who may be interviewed on an individual basis. Developing Need Indicators and recommending data sources could be accomplished in a face-to-face meeting, or it may be delegated to a work group that completes the task electronically.

*Appendix G.2 Sample Agenda Second NAC Meeting* is a suggested format for a NAC meeting that will guide the development of Need Indicators. This agenda can be customized for use by your NAC or for a smaller work group.

Considerations for Small States: If you are a small state, you may want to consider the following options to accommodate limited time, resources, and capacity:

- Convene a small work group to develop the Need Indicators (this same work group may continue with the development of the Data Collection Plan and may meet face-to-face or electronically)
- Complete the table in Appendix G.1 *Convening the NAC and Alternatives for a Participatory Process* on your own with the input from key stakeholders solicited through phone interviews or email
- Develop Need Indicators and identify sources of data working closely with the SEA data manager or an external consultant hired to assist with developing the CNA; then, request feedback from one of two key stakeholders

## **G.2 Developing Need Indicators**

A good transition from a discussion of Concern Statements to developing Need Indicators is to ask the NAC the following question:

How can we measure whether the perceived need around a particular concern actually exists?

Then, ask the committee the following question, as an example:

If we are concerned that migrant kindergarteners are entering school lacking literacy skills, what sources of information will we accept to determine whether this is a real need?

Responses might include:

- State kindergarten screening assessment scores
- Parent survey feedback
- Teacher observations
- Data from a standardized literacy screening tool for kindergarten students

This discussion will reinforce the importance of data to support the existence of the concerns listed in the Concern Statements and will lead to defining indicators that will demonstrate that the need exists.

Once the evidence base has been discussed, the next step is to write Need Indicators. You may want to begin the discussion of Need Indicators with an overview of their characteristics.

Need Indicators are:

- Gap-based: Need Indicators are designed to reveal the gap between where migrant students are now and where we would like them to be.
- Evidence-based: Need Indicators are based on evidence that demonstrates there is a means of verifying that a concern exists.
- Valid: Need Indicators reveal a logical relationship and connection to the Concern Statements.
- Useful: Need Indicators are useful in identifying needs.
- Assessable/measurable: Need Indicators are statements that describe needs that can be assessed or measured.
- Clear: Need Indicators provide clear intent with definitions.
- Specific: Need Indicators designate time, type, tool category, who, etc.

Expect to write several iterations of the Need Indicators, with increasing specificity for the time, type, and details required. For example, note the development of a Need Indicator for the following Concern Statement:

Concern Statement: We are concerned that migrant high school students are not accruing credits in the core content areas in order for them to graduate on time.

The need implied in the Concern Statement is the gap between the goal to graduate on time and when migrant students graduate. The Need Indicator is a way to measure the gap. Each Concern Statement is likely to have more than one Need Indicator, although this example features only one Need Indicator.

Need Indicator:

- First iteration: Percent of migrant high school students who have **appropriate credits** in the core content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies).
- Second iteration: Percent of migrant students **who have completed two years of high school** and have **two graduation-required credits** in each of the core content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies).
- Third iteration: Percent of migrant students who **enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> grade in fall 2010 (if current year is 2012)** and **have two graduation-required credits** in **each of the four core content areas** (language arts, math, science, and social studies).

The following criteria will assist with evaluating the quality of a Need Indicator:

The Need Indicator:

- Is linked to a specific Concern Statement

- Provides a measurement for the need, that is, the gap between what is and what is required
- Defines a specific group for which the need exists
- Identifies a time frame in which the measurement of the indicator (data collection) will take place
- Indicates a type of data that would be appropriate (number, percentage)
- Includes details for what will be measured

Note that inevitably, some of the Concern Statements will not be able to be validated with data. The discussion of Need Indicators should be able to identify these concerns, and they may be either altered into a statement for which a Need Indicator may be developed or may be eliminated from the process. Make sure to document why any of the concerns were not viable so that you can speak knowledgeably about these if asked.

You may wish to utilize *Appendix G.3* which is an activity worksheet to guide you, or the NAC in developing strong Need Indicators. *Appendix G.4 Sample Concern Statements, Need Indicators, and Data Sources* is another example of connecting Concern Statements, Need Indicators, and data sources.

### **G.3 Recommending Data Sources**

Once a Need Indicator has been developed, the next task is to recommend data sources. It is important to consider what data already exists. Utilizing existing data to its fullest potential will save time and resources for actually collecting data. We recommend that you work with the data manager in your state education agency (SEA) or the state migrant student database to determine what data exists and how it may be provided to you in a way to address the Need Indicators you and the NAC have developed.

To identify data sources, you could ask the NAC or other data experts with whom you work:

- Where could you get the data needed to create this indicator?
  - Does the data already exist?
  - If not, what data source should we consider collecting?

When discussing these questions, we suggest that you or the committee set aside for the moment any inclinations to assume that the data cannot be collected. Focus on where or how you could obtain the information.

Table G.1 provides an example of the linkage between Concern Statements and Need Indicators, and possible sources of data.

Table G.1 Linking Concerns, Needs, and Data

Concern Statement	Need Indicator	Source of Data
<p>We are concerned that migrant children enter kindergarten lacking emergent literacy skills.</p> <p><u>Gap:</u> Literacy skills migrant children have upon entering kindergarten and literacy skills all other children in our state have upon entering kindergarten</p>	<p>Percentage of kindergarteners who pass readiness screening in literacy skills</p>	<p><u>Existing Data:</u> State assessment scores in kindergarten screening</p> <p><u>Data Needed:</u></p>
<p>We are concerned that migrant students may not have sufficient self-esteem to take challenging academic courses.</p> <p><u>Gap:</u> Level of self-esteem that migrant students have in selecting academic courses and level of self-esteem that a sample of students who take AP courses have in selecting academic courses.</p>	<p>Percentage of migrant students who report that lack of self-esteem inhibits them taking higher level courses</p>	<p><u>Existing Data:</u></p> <p><u>Data Needed:</u> Migrant student survey Comparison group of students who take challenging academic courses and their level of self-esteem</p>
<p>We are concerned that migrant families do not understand graduation requirements.</p> <p><u>Gap:</u> The knowledge needed of graduation requirements and the knowledge that migrant families have of graduation requirements</p>	<p>Percentage of migrant parents who report a lack of understanding about graduation requirements</p>	<p><u>Existing Data:</u></p> <p><u>Data Needed:</u> Migrant parent survey</p>
<p>We are concerned that migrant secondary students, particularly PFS students, do not graduate on time due to failure in the core requirement of Algebra I.</p>	<p>Number and percentage of migrant students and PFS students who take Algebra I during their freshman or sophomore year and their passing rates.</p>	<p><u>Existing Data:</u> Migrant student transcripts, PFS student transcripts, and state assessment data</p>

Concern Statement	Need Indicator	Source of Data
Gap: Migrant student (and PFS) failure rate in Algebra I and failure rate of all other students in Algebra I		<u>Data Needed:</u>

#### G.4 Comparison Groups for Need Indicators

When you are comparing migrant students to other groups of students, carefully selected comparison groups are critical. Comparison groups may vary depending on the data used and the questions asked. The issues in determining comparison groups are often difficult and expert advice is frequently needed.

In addition to comparing data for migrant students to data for all students in the state, the committee will need to consider such alternatives as:

- **All** non-migrant students
- Non-migrant students who have achieved proficiency against state standards
- Non-migrant students who have characteristics similar to migrant students,
- PFS students
- Non-migrant students from different socio-economic status groups

The NAC may also want to plan comparisons between migrant students who demonstrate proficiency against state standards and those who do not. Examining differences between successful migrant students and those who are struggling academically may be an additional comparison. What are the differences between these groups? Do these differences offer ideas to assist all migrant students in achieving academic success? Are there PFS students who meet state standards and how do they compare to other groups?

The NAC should be able to explicitly state the reasons for selecting the comparison group that is used.

#### G.5 Prioritizing Need Indicators

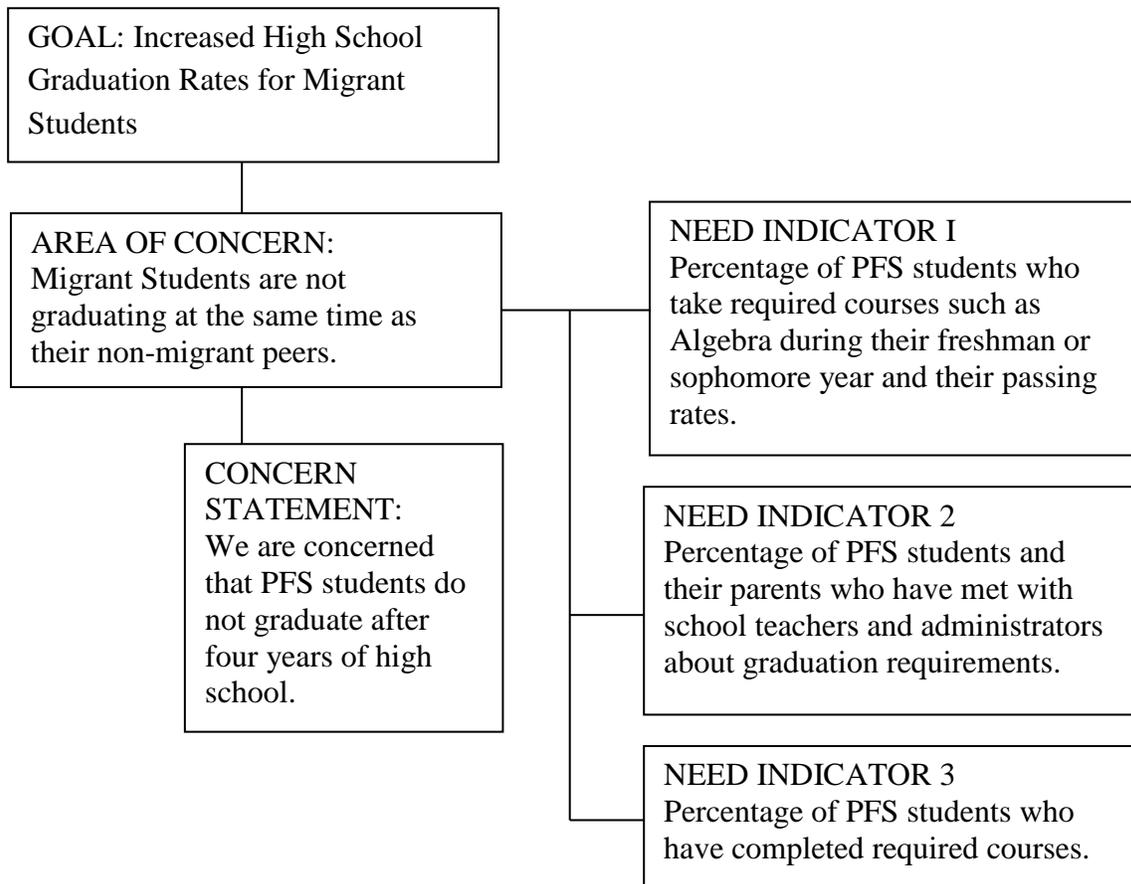
It is important to gather as many recommendations for Need Indicators and data sources as possible. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that you will be able to collect data on all the Need Indicators. Therefore, you will need to narrow the focus of the data collection for the CNA. This may be a task for which you solicit recommendations from the NAC, or you may wish to appoint a work group to do this.

One suggestion is to appoint a data work group at this point in the process that will prioritize the Need Indicators and then continue with developing the CNA data collection plan. We

recommend that you include the SEA data manager, Migrant Education Program evaluator, and other data experts in this work group.

One way to prioritize the Need Indicators is to view them as a part of the larger picture. Note the example in Figure G.1 that is a graphic illustration of viewing the MEP Goal, Area of Concern, Concern Statement, and Need Indicators. You will always want to make sure that Need Indicators ultimately relate to MEP Goals and Areas of Concern. Any Need Indicators that do not relate to an overall goal can be eliminated.

Figure G.1 Connecting Goals and Need Indicators



It is also important to review the Need Indicators from a standpoint of what is practical to accomplish for the CNA data collection process. Consider the following questions to help you winnow down the Need Indicators to a manageable set on which to collect data.

- Which Need Indicators are the most critical for providing the information needed for the CNA? (Can you prioritize them by the categories of Essential, Important, Good but Not Critical, Not Critical?)
- Are there Need Indicators that can be combined into one data collection effort? (For example, a survey of migrant parents might include several of the Need Indicators.)
- What resources (funds, experts, support staff, consultants, NAC committee members, Data Work Group members, etc) are available to assist with data collection?
- What access do you have to data (SEA, external agencies)?
- What is your time frame for collecting data?
- From what populations are data needed? What is the feasibility of collecting this data and their availability for data collection?

## G.6 Archiving Information for the CNA

You should archive the following information for consideration for inclusion in the written report for the CNA.

- NAC or work group meeting agendas
- Notes or proceedings from the NAC or work group meetings (or notes from stakeholder conference calls and email correspondence if face-to-face meetings do not occur)
- Completed table provided in Appendix G.1
- List of prioritized Need Indicators
- Justification for why some concerns or Need Indicators were eliminated

## G.7 Manager's Checklist and Reflection

Here are some key accomplishments *for Section G: Writing Need Indicators and Recommending Data Sources*. Take a moment to jot down your progress on the items below. Also, note any issues or challenges.

### Manager's Checklist

- Understand the definition and purpose of a Need Indicator
- In developing the Need Indicators for our particular concerns
  - Utilized the NAC
  - Established a Data Work Group
  - Connected concerns, needs, indicators, and data sources
  - Identified multiple possible data sources
  - Prioritized Need Indicators to make them appropriate for my state
- Have a manageable and comprehensive set of Need Indicators to guide the next step of gathering and analyzing data

## Reflection

1. What concerns were not viable when you attempted to identify Need Indicators?
2. What data already exists to review for the Need Indicators?
3. What data do you still need to evaluate the Need Indicators?
4. What data collection processes and instruments must be developed to determine how concerns can be confirmed, revised, or eliminated from the CNA at this time?

## G.8 Resources and Tools in Appendix G

Appendix G.1 Linking Concerns, Needs, and Data Table

Appendix G.2 Sample Agenda Second NAC Meeting

Appendix G.3 Activity for Developing Need Indicators and Identifying Data Sources

Appendix G.4 Sample from Concern Statement to Need Indicator Handout

Appendix G.1 Linking Concerns, Needs, and Data Table

Concern Statement and Gap	Need Indicator	Source of Data
<u>Concern Statement:</u>  <u>Gap:</u>		<u>Existing Data:</u>  <u>Data Needed:</u>
<u>Concern Statement:</u>  <u>Gap:</u>		<u>Existing Data:</u>  <u>Data Needed:</u>
<u>Concern Statement:</u>  <u>Gap:</u>		<u>Existing Data:</u>  <u>Data Needed:</u>
<u>Concern Statement:</u>  <u>Gap:</u>		<u>Existing Data:</u>  <u>Data Needed:</u>

**COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING II  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**March XX, 2012**

Meeting Purpose: To review Concern Statements, develop Need Indicators, and identify data sources.

9:00 Overview of meeting purpose and agenda; introduction of any team members who were not at the last meeting

9:15 Review of prioritized list of Concern Statements developed in Meeting I

Group Discussion: Ask committee members the following questions:

- Does the list of prioritized Concern Statements capture the most significant concerns related to the education of migrant children and youth?
- Are there any additional concerns we need to keep in mind or incorporate as we move forward?

9:30 Introduction to Need Indicators

Group Discussion: Have the group discuss the following question:

- How can we measure whether the perceived need around a particular concern actually exists?

Group Activity: Have pairs work together to complete the worksheet provided in Appendix G.4; discuss various responses according to criteria for strong Need Indicators

10:15 Break

10:30 Developing Need Indicators for Concern Statements

Group Activity: Divide the group into pairs or triads; provide each small group with a template with several Concern Statements listed; ask each group to complete the table by developing Need Indicators and completing the Sources of Data column (See *Appendix G.1.*)

(An efficient way to conduct this activity is to ask committee members to bring laptops to the meeting and provide the template with Concern Statements loaded on a flash drive for the group activity.)

11:30 Debrief the work of the small groups

Group Discussion: Project each of the completed tables on a screen for group review and record comments, suggestions for additional sources of data, recommendations for prioritizing the Need Indicators, etc.

12:30 Debrief the work of the day (what went well, what could have gone better); review next steps; adjourn

Meeting Outcome: Tables from small group work that depicts Concern Statements, Need Indicators, and sources of data (existing or to be developed)

### Appendix G.3 Activity for Developing Need Indicators and Identifying Data Sources

In the table below, you will see examples of Concern Statements, gaps that define the need, Need Indicators, and suggested data sources. Review this information, and utilize the criteria for strong Need Indicators and consideration for data sources to complete the information for the last Concern Statement provided.

#### Criteria for a Strong Need Indicator:

- Will provide evidence specific to the Concern Statement
- Provides a measurement for the need (the gap between what is and what is required)
- Defines a specific group for which the need exists
- Identifies a time frame in which the measurement of the indicator (data collection) will take place
- Indicates a type of data that would be appropriate (number, percentage)
- Include details for what will be measured

#### Considerations for Data Sources:

- Where could you get the data needed to create this indicator?
  - Does the data already exist?
  - If not, what data source should we consider?

Concern Statement	Need Indicator	Source of Data
We are concerned that migrant children enter kindergarten lacking emergent literacy skills.	Percentage of kindergarteners who pass readiness screening in literacy skills	<u>Existing Data:</u> State assessment scores in kindergarten screening
<u>Gap:</u> Literacy skills migrant children have upon entering kindergarten and literacy skills all other children in our state have upon entering kindergarten		<u>Data Needed:</u>
We are concerned that migrant students may not have sufficient self-esteem to take challenging academic courses.	Percentage of migrant students who report that lack of self-esteem inhibits them taking higher level courses	<u>Existing Data:</u>
<u>Gap:</u> Level of self-esteem that		

Concern Statement	Need Indicator	Source of Data
migrant students have in selecting academic courses and level of self-esteem that a sample of students who take AP courses have in selecting academic courses		<u>Data Needed:</u> Migrant student survey Comparison group of students who take challenging academic courses and their level of self-esteem
We are concerned that migrant families do not understand graduation requirements	Percentage of migrant parents who report a lack of understanding about graduation requirements	<u>Existing Data:</u>
<u>Gap:</u> The knowledge needed for graduation requirements and the knowledge that migrant families have of graduation requirements		<u>Data Needed:</u> Migrant parent survey
We are concerned that migrant secondary students, particularly PFS students, do not graduate on time due to failure in the core requirement of Algebra I.	Number and percentage of migrant students and PFS students who take Algebra I during their freshman or sophomore year and their passing rates.	<u>Existing Data:</u> Migrant student transcripts, PFS student transcripts, and state assessment data
<u>Gap:</u> Migrant student (and PFS) failure rate in Algebra I and failure rate of all other students in Algebra I		<u>Data Needed:</u>

## Exploring “What Is”

Ask the question, "Where could you get the data needed to create this indicator?"

GOAL: Graduation from High School

AREA OF CONCERN: School Engagement

CONCERN STATEMENTS:	NEED INDICATORS:	SOURCES OF DATA:
We are concerned that migrant children often do not perceive a connection with a caring adult in the school.	1. Percent of migrant children who perceive a connection with a caring adult	Survey of students
We are concerned that migrant children do not usually participate in academic interventions (summer or academic year).	2. Percent of migrant children who participate in the after-school migrant academic intervention program	Migrant education student database
We are concerned that migrant children usually do not participate in nonacademic school activities.	3. Percent of migrant children who participate in non-academic school activities (i.e., band, sports, clubs)	Survey of students; Forms completed by migrant staff at school

Note any important data sources that are not currently available, but are needed for future work.