



## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022 NAVIGATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER



### How COVID-19 Magnified Inequities for Florida's Migrant Students

'We Had To Work Twice As Hard'

**Enrollment** and attendance dropped as students faced a digital divide and took on jobs. Yet some rose to higher educational heights than ever before.

Janine Zeitlin, USA TODAY Network-Florida  
Published Jun 2021 Updated Dec 2021.

[Read Article Here](#)

## Reflections from the IMEC Chair, Carmen Medina (PA)



### Greetings and Happy New Year!

**It** seems that since March of 2020 we started our conversations with “Before COVID” or “During COVID”. It is going on two years since COVID-19 has been impacting our lives and, in some cases, creating chaos in the field of education, health and home environments.

For those of us in Migrant Education COVID turned into a reality as the families we serve continued to work in the agricultural fields, dairies, food and seafood processing plants. This brought about a high percentage of COVID cases to migrant/farmworker families across this country. It not only affected them but many who served them through the migrant education program were affected as well. Our migrant families and staff struggled and continue to struggle during this pandemic, but as resilient as they are known to be, everyone has risen to the top.

The last 20 months made us rethink how best to identify and recruit families without jeopardizing anyone's health. It made us think about the social/emotional well being of staff, families and students. It also made us look at how instruction would be provided to migrant students virtually and how to advise students during this pandemic! We also needed to connect families with appropriate health and social services, which meant implementing a good coordinating plan with other providers.

There is much I could say about these issues but what I do want to say is that the migrant staff in all our states was great in stepping up to the plate! We looked for innovative ways to recruit families and made sure school systems were providing the technological resources to migrant students needed to succeed. Because of being isolated and lack of contact with friends, migrant students face a difficult road back to normalcy. We listened to students, MEP staff and parents since our last face-to-face meeting in South Carolina in January of 2020 in order to understand how best to assist.

As a collaborative group of states IMEC provided sessions on social/emotional well being, important information on the health of migrant families and an opportunity for IMEC MEP directors to network virtually. IMEC also was represented as a member of a National Health Collaborative on the Re-opening of Schools Safely during COVID. We were instrumental in trying to stabilize funding as a result of COVID for states by working with Congress on the passage of HR 8472.

While the road has been bumpy for MEP staff, they have done everything possible to smooth the road for the families and children we serve. I think each and everyone of us should feel proud of our accomplishments and continue to be innovative in our approaches to meeting the intent of Title 1, Part C. This is a risky time in our lives, which could affect our health and mental well being. Yet, no one in the MEP has allowed obstacles get in the way of giving our best effort for positive results. I have found that MEP staff are resilient when providing the Harvest of Hope to migrant students and their families.

I am proud to serve as your Chair and to work with a committed Board of Directors supported by a strong membership. I am

looking forward to seeing everyone in person by taking every safety precautions very soon and looking forward to our conversations starting with “After COVID”!

Please stay healthy and safe!

## Message from Francisco Garcia, Executive Director



**While** another year of COVID has gone by, it looks like we still have more challenges ahead for 2022! I guess we move on with lessons learned while making adjustments on how best to meet the needs of migrant students and their families. One thing that doesn't change is your commitment and resiliency I commend each and everyone of you for supporting each other during these trails and tribulations and thank you for your support of IMEC. I also what to thank IMEC's Board of Directors for their leadership these past two years. Together much can be accomplished so together we will move forward and face our challenges with a positive outlook in 2022!

## Congratulations to Nancy M. Wiehe



**Thirty** years ago I began what was and still is a wonderful adventure!

Along the way I have met so many wonderful people committed to one thing. Making sure migrant students are counted and cared for.

I applaud the determination and effort everyone has demonstrated during my time at IMEC. I look forward to seeing all of the great things I know this organization will accomplish in the upcoming years.

## Q&A with Doug Boline (KS)

**Due to COVID the past two years states had to rethink on how to provide services under the MEP. How did it impact the Kansas MEP?**

- Just like everyone else, we've had to rely on virtual means



of communication, since in many cases, face to face is not an option. Our advocates and recruiters have become adept at utilizing technology, and sharing techniques to provide services.

### Have you been able to access ESSER funds and use them to provide services to migrant students?

- I do not have access to what has been set aside at the state level, but have made our projects aware of how much money their districts are receiving, and that they should be part of the 20% set aside for ESSER III. I also have the “luxury” of reviewing the plans submitted by districts for use of funds, so can steer them in that direction.

### Has COVID made your job as a director more difficult?

- The most difficult part of my job is dealing with the cut in funds due to declining numbers, COVID has just made it worse. I have a great team that is innovative and thinks on their feet to make sure services are delivered and we are recruiting everyone we can.

### Where do you see the future of education given that more virtual learning has evolved?

- Our legislature has placed limits on virtual learning that are hindering this evolution. In my personal opinion, it could be a beneficial option for some students.

### What advise do you have for your colleagues during these trying times?

- Keep smiling, it can only get better.

## IMEC's Strategic Plan Update

**The** current IMEC Strategic Plan was adopted in January, 2019 and implemented for the 2019 – 2021 year (3-year plan). With the plan expiring at the end of this year (2021) the IMEC Board has given their approval to extend the plan for 3 more years starting at the January, 2022 meeting. The board felt that the four Priority Focus Areas and the Goal Statements in each area are still applicable to what the IMEC Council is currently working and moving forward on. The Priority Focus Areas are: Relevance; Sustainability; Advocacy; and Organizational Effectiveness. For a full copy of the current IMEC Strategic Plan please go to the following link: <http://bit.ly/2BZhgT>

## IMEC 2022 Symposium

### SAVE THE DATE:

**IMEC** will be hosting their 4th Symposium on **September 13-15, 2022** at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Clearwater, Florida. The previous symposiums have been well attended and

much information was shared and gathered at this meeting. More information will be provided at subsequent IMEC meetings and through the IMEC website. The 2019 IMEC Symposium, “Moving Forward by Working Together”, looked at how all levels (local, state, national) can work together in a coordinated effort to advance support services for migrant students and their families moving forward. For copies of the presentations, videos, and the Proceedings Report from this symposium, go to the IMEC website under “Archives” to access these files. Archives ([imec-migrated.org](http://imec-migrated.org)).

## Future Meetings

### June 15-17, 2022

IMEC Meeting  
The Inn at 500 Capitol  
500 South Capitol Street  
Boise, Idaho

### September 13-15, 2022

IMEC Meeting and National Symposium  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
301 s. Gulfview Blvd.  
Clearwater, Florida

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