



FY20 Foster Care Transportation Plan

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Turner County

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Alan D. Smith

6/15/2019

Superintendent Signature

Date

Alan D. Smith

Print Name of Superintendent

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The Georgia Department of Education (Department) is required to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E)). In coordination with state and tribal child welfare agencies, the Department must ensure that its LEAs implement the Title I educational stability requirements for children in foster care, including ensuring that:

- A child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in that child's best interest;
- If it is not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin, the child is immediately enrolled in the new school even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; and,
- That the new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records. (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i)-(iii)). In fulfilling this role, the SEA should coordinate with the state or tribal child welfare agency to develop and disseminate uniform guidelines for implementing the Title I educational stability provisions. Developing uniform statewide policies and procedures for ensuring educational stability for children in foster care, as many States have already done under the Fostering Connections Act, will facilitate successful implementation at the local level. This is particularly important given the shared agency responsibility for educational stability under Title I and the Fostering Connections Act, and because a single LEA or local child welfare agency will likely have to collaborate with multiple partner agencies in implementing these provisions.

Additionally, the SEA must conduct regular monitoring and oversight to guarantee appropriate implementation of these provisions at the local level. (See 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.331(d), 200.328(a); 34 C.F.R. § 76.770).

On the state level, the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), which houses the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) periodically sends a list of children in foster care that are flagged in the Department's student information system for information sharing and reporting purposes; however, on the local level, LEAs will be notified directly by foster parents, Court Appointed Special Advocate, DFCS case workers or Education Support Monitors (ESM), within the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation (EPAC) unit of DFCS. Once identified, LEAs must implement its plan to ensure educational stability for children in care. For the best interest of the children in care, LEAs should follow all mandated regulations under FERPA and keep the status of these children confidential.

As a result, the Department is requiring all LEAs, including virtual schools and charter schools that function as an LEA, to complete a Foster Care Transportation Plan. The plan should be completed in addition to the development and implementation of written transportation procedures and the identification of a Foster Care Point of Contact. Please complete this plan and return it by:

Wednesday, July 31, 2019

Instructions for submission:

- After the LEA superintendent signs the assurances, scan the entire document as a PDF and save it as the "FY20 Foster Care Transportation Plan".
- Upload the signed PDF version of the document to the CLIP online portal via the Consolidated Application for FY20.

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NOTE: In order to answer the questions below, refer to the [Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care](#).

I. Foster Care Transportation Plan: PLANNING

A. The LEA's role is to have a transportation plan in place for children in foster care to their school of origin. Describe your plan to:

1. Coordinate transportation with the local child welfare agency.
2. Implement steps to be taken if additional costs are incurred.
3. Execute the local dispute resolution process.

Include the roles of key players (e.g. LEA Foster Care Point of Contact, LEA Superintendent, LEA Federal Program Director, EPAC Unit Education Support Monitor, Case Worker, Court Appointed Special Advocate, Juvenile Court representative, etc.) *Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.*

Turner County will coordinate transportation issues with the local child welfare agency along with key players such as the (Case managers (CM), Education Support Monitor (ESM-DFCS POC), Homeless Liaison (LEA-HL POC), Foster Parents (FP), Court Appointed Special advocates (CASA), LEA Transportation Director (LEA TD) regarding foster children entering and exiting care; changing placements; enrollment and withdrawal; and making best interest determinations. The team will develop a transportation plan that meets the needs of the individual Foster child. "No cost plans" will be explored first.

The CM, ESM, HL, FP, CASA, and the LEA TD will implement the following steps:

1. LEA will pick up the child at the nearest bus stop or at foster home and transport to school of origin or to the transportation hub.
2. LEA will pick up child at agreed upon point if child is placed at neighboring county.
3. DFACS will arrange for payment to foster parent for transportation further than 25 miles.

B. What steps should an LEA and local child welfare agency take to ensure that transportation is provided immediately, even if they face difficulty reaching agreement on how to pay for additional transportation costs? *Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.*

LEA and DFACS will adhere to the following:

1. As outlined in Section A, it is pre-determined that the LEA will assume financial responsibility for costs incurred as the result of re-routing of school buses while DFCS will assume financial responsibility for costs associated with reimbursing foster parents for travel as stipulated in their agreement with the foster parent.
2. Initial transportation planning will occur at the lowest levels between CM, ESM, DFCS POC, HL (LEA POC), and LEA TD. Foster Parents and CASA will be included as appropriate. Disputes will be addressed by the LEA Federal Programs Director and the DFCS Custody County Director.
3. Final determination of how to fund additional transportation costs will be made by the LEA.
4. Daily attendance will not be impacted. The LEA will provide for or arrange transportation to and from the child's school of origin during the dispute process.

C. The LEA must designate a Foster Care Point of Contact that coordinates with the local child welfare agency. Describe the point of contact's role and responsibilities. *Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.*

The LEA Homeless Liaison will serve as the local point of contact and will coordinate transportation issues in conjunction with the local DFCS. The LEA HL will assume responsibility for streamlining

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communication and collaboration with DFCS Case Managers and the Education Support Monitor. Collaboration will ensure the smooth implementation of provisions outlined in ESSA to include: best interest determinations; appropriate and timely transportation plans for those children placed out of the zone of their school of origin; and, immediate enrollment and records transfer. In addition, the LEA HL will facilitate training for LEA staff with regards to the unique challenges of children in foster care; ensure monitoring of attendance and progress of foster children enrolled in LEA; and, ensure effective and confidential data collection and sharing.

II. Foster Care Transportation Plan: GUIDING QUESTIONS

A. If a child is placed within the LEA's school attendance area and projected transportation cost are negligible, transportation should be immediately provided without supplemental assistance from the local child welfare agency. If there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin, the LEA will provide transportation to the school of origin if:

	YES	NO	N/A
1. The local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the LEA for the cost of such transportation.	N/A		
2. The LEA agrees to pay for the cost of such transportation.	N/A		
3. The LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost of such transportation.	Yes		

Describe the agreement the LEA has made with the local child welfare agency regarding transportation costs. *Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.*

In the event that additional transportation are unavoidable, the LEA and DFCS will meet to discuss sharing transportation costs. It will be the responsibility of the LEA HL to facilitate the meeting. The LEA has outlined a plan that states DFCS shall assume financial responsibility for extraordinary costs such as contracting with transportation companies or paying foster parents to transport farther than 25 miles. The LEA will assume financial responsibility for costs associated with re-routing the LEA transportation.

B. All LEAs must meet the requirement to provide transportation for children who are in foster care to their schools of origin (*Similar to the McKinney-Vento requirement for students experiencing homelessness*). Does your LEA currently provide transportation services? If no, describe your plan to meet this mandate.

Yes

Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.

ASSURANCES

By checking the box beside each statement and by affixing my signature to these Assurances, I certify that I have read each and agree to be held accountable for the content of each of the following statements:

- The LEA will collaborate with state or local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain children in foster care in their school of origin when in their best interest will be provided, arranged and funded for the duration of time in foster care.
- The LEA ensures that children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin promptly receive such transportation in a cost-effective manner.
- The LEA ensures that children in foster care remain in the school of origin while any disputes regarding transportation costs are being resolved.
- The LEA will collaborate with State or local child welfare agency to provide transportation if a child is placed in foster care placement across district, county, or State lines.
- In accordance to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Fostering Connections Act, the LEA will continue to provide transportation to children that exited foster care for the remainder of the school year, if it is in the best interest of the student.

I am authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of the applicant. My signature certifies that all information included in the application is accurate. I understand that all information submitted is subject to verification.

Turner County School System

LEA Name

Alan D. Smith

Printed Name of Superintendent

Superintendent (Interim)

Title

Alan D. Smith

Signature of Superintendent

(Please sign in blue ink only)

6/15/19

Date