



FY20 Foster Care Transportation Plan

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Whitfield County Schools

Superintendent Name Dr. Judy Gilreath

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Physical Address (if different from above) 1306 South Thornton Avenue

City Dalton **Zip** 30720

Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) Name Chris Parker **POC Email** chris.parker@wcsga.net
T. Hogan-Simmons tracie.hogan@wcsga.net

POC Mailing Address Whitfield County Schools Student Services Center
201 East Tyler Street

City Dalton **Zip** 30721

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Superintendent Signature

5/2/2019

Date

Judy Gilreath

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			
<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>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.) <i>Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.</i></p> <p>Point of Contact/Director of Student Services: Chris Parker</p> <p>Liasion to DFCS/WCS Lead Social Worker: Tracie Hogan-Simmons</p> <p>Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Judy Gilreath</p> <p>EPAC: Marilyn Peters (404) 803-8196 or marilyn.peters@dhs.ga.gov</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning: Karey Williams</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent of Operations: Mike Ewton</p> <p>Director of Transportation: Rick Holsomback</p> <p>Director of Title I: Scott W Houston</p>			
<p>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? <i>Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.</i></p> <p>DFCS and the Whitfield County School System (WCS) have a long standing relationship of collaboration. DFCS and WCS will continue to work to provide educational stability of students. DFCS agrees to allow WCS up to three school days to adjust bus routes if necessary.</p>			
<p>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. <i>Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.</i></p> <p>As lead social worker for WCS, Tracie Hogan-Simmons consistently communicates and collaborates with our local DFCS. Tracie will continue to be the direct line for communication with DFCS, while keeping student services (Chris Parker) informed. While keeping Student Services informed, Tracie Hogan-Simmons will communicate with the WCS transportation department if changes to transportation are necessary.</p>			
II. Foster Care Transportation Plan: GUIDING QUESTIONS			
<p>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:</p>			
	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		



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3. The LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost of such transportation.	Yes
<p>Describe the agreement the LEA has made with the local child welfare agency regarding transportation costs. <i>Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.</i></p> <p>DFCS and WCS will continue to collaborate to ensure the educational stability of our students in foster care. The agreement is that DFCS will allow WCS three days to make any needed adjustments to routes. DFCS will work directly with foster parents in regards to transportation issues. DFCS and WCS will collaborate and communicate in a timely manner regarding foster students.</p>	
B. All LEAs must meet the requirement to provide transportation for children who are in foster care to their schools of origin (<i>Similar to the McKinney-Vento requirement for students experiencing homelessness</i>). Does your LEA currently provide transportation services? If no, describe your plan to meet this mandate.	Yes
<p><i>Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.</i></p>	



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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.

Whitfield County School System
LEA Name

Judy Gilreath
Printed Name of Superintendent


Signature of Superintendent
(Please sign in blue ink only)


Title Director of Federal Programs

5/2/19
Date

