

FY23 Foster Care Transportation Plan

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Jefferson City Schools

Superintendent Name Dr. Donna McMullan

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City Jefferson **Zip** 30549

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Superintendent Signature

6/27/2022

Date

Dr. Donna McMullan

Print Name of Superintendent

FY23 Foster Care Transportation Plan

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) 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 GaDOE 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 GaDOE's student information system for information sharing and reporting purposes. On the local level, LEAs are now able to retrieve a list of children in foster care to better identify and provide services. LEAs are to continue collaborating with their local child welfare agencies and may periodically receive information directly from foster parents, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), 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 GaDOE 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.

Instructions for submission:

- After the LEA superintendent signs the assurances, scan the entire document as a PDF and save it as the "FY23 Foster Care Transportation Plan".
- Upload the signed PDF version of the document to the CLIP online portal via the Consolidated Application for FY23.



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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.*

Coordination will occur between the case manager/DFCS Point of Contact, LEA Foster Care Point of Contact, and the Federal Programs Director for foster children entering and exiting care, changing placement, enrollment/withdrawal, and making best interest determinations. When transportation is an issue, parties will collaborate to develop a plan to meet the needs of the child and may include:

1. Foster parent transports child to school of origin (within 25 miles round trip).
2. Foster parent transports child to nearest school transportation pick up location.
3. LEA picks up child at agreed upon point at county line, if placed in neighboring county.
4. LEA will follow existing plan for transporting children with disabilities when the foster child is disabled.
5. LEA picks up child at nearest bus stop or foster home and transports to school of origin.

Disputes will be resolved by the LEA Federal Programs Director/Student Services Director/and DFCS Custody County Director or designee.

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 DFCS will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to the educational stability of the children in foster care. These steps will be used to reach an agreement on how to pay for additional costs:

1. JCS will assume responsibility for costs incurred as the result of the re-routing of school buses; DFCS will assume responsibility for costs associated with reimbursing foster parents for travel or costs of contracting with local transportation companies.
2. Initial planning will occur at the lowest level between the LEA and DFCS. Disputes will be submitted to the LEA Federal Programs Director/Student Services Director/POC and DFCS Custody County Director or designee for resolution.
3. Final determination of how to pay for additional costs will be made by LEA Student Services.
4. Daily attendance will not be impacted by transportation disputes between LEA and DFCS. JCS will provide or arrange for transportation to and from child's school or origin during the dispute resolution.

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.*



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Jefferson City Schools has designated a Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) that works alongside the Director of Federal Programs. The POC is responsible for developing procedures and will ensure they are appropriate and reasonable. The POC/Director of Federal Programs will consult and coordinate with other federal program staff, including special education and McKinney-Vento staff, the transportation director, as well as LEA leadership, including the superintendent and school board. Some of the roles and responsibilities of the POC will also include: Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency (DFCS) POC on the implementation of the Title I provisions; Leading the development of a process for making the best interest determination; Documenting the best interest determination; Facilitating the transfer of records and immediate enrollment; Facilitating data sharing with the child welfare agencies consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols; PL; attendance.

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.	No		
2. The LEA agrees to pay for the cost of such transportation.	No		
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 costs are unavoidable, LEA and DFCS will share transportation costs. DFCS will assume financial responsibility for extra costs such as contracting with transportation or paying foster parents to transport farther than 25 miles. The LEA will assume financial responsibility for costs associated with re-routing LEA transportation. "No Cost Plans" will be explored first and may include the following:

1. Foster parent transports child to nearest school transportation pickup location
2. Case workers or foster parents provide transportation (within 25 miles round trip)
3. LEA will follow existing plan for transporting children with disabilities when the foster child is disabled.

Cost effective means of transportation available in the community that are appropriate for children in foster care of various ages include the following: Existing public school bus routes; Contracted private transportation providers (DFCS).

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.

LEA and DFCS will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to the educational stability of the children in foster care. These steps will be used to reach an agreement on how to pay for additional costs:

1. As outlined in Section A, the LEA will assume financial responsibility for costs incurred as the result of the re-routing school buses in Jefferson City while DFCS will assume financial responsibility for costs



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associated with the reimbursing foster parents for travel or the cost of contracting with local transportation companies.

2. Initial transportation planning will begin at the lowest level between parties named in Section A. Disputes will be forwarded to the LEA Federal Programs Director and DFCS Custody County Director for resolution.

3. Final determination of how to pay for additional transportation costs will be made by the Federal Programs Director and Finance Director.

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 with 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.

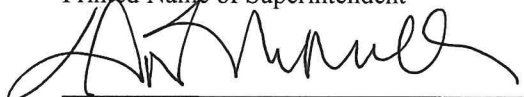
I am authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of the applicant. My signature certifies that all information included in the application is accurate. I understand that all information submitted is subject to verification.

JEFFERSON CITY

LEA Name

DR. DONNA McMULLAN

Printed Name of Superintendent



Signature of Superintendent

(Please sign in blue ink only)

Superintendent

Title

6/27/22

Date