



FY25 Foster Care Transportation Plan

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Thomas County

Superintendent Name Dr. Lisa Williams

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City Thomasville **Zip** 31792

Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) Name Cara Hankinson **POC Email** cahankinson@tcjackets.net

POC Mailing Address 200 N. Pinetree Blvd.

City Thomasville **Zip** 31792

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Superintendent Signature

3/29/2024

Date



Print Name of Superintendent

FY25 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. Please complete this plan and return it by:

Friday, June 30, 2024

Instructions for submission:

- After the LEA superintendent signs the assurances, scan the entire document as a PDF and save it as the "FY25 Foster Care Transportation Plan".
- Upload the signed PDF version of the document to the CLIP online portal via the Consolidated Application for FY25.

FY25 Foster Care Transportation Plan

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>If the Best Interest Determination decision is that the student will remain in the current school, the foster care point of contact will coordinate with the appropriate child welfare worker and the LEA transportation department to arrange transportation to the school of origin. School of origin transportation will be provided through the end of the current school year</p> <p>Thomas County School System will consider the following options to provide School of Origin (SOO) transportation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use an existing bus route . 2. Use Specialized transportation offered to other students. 3. Use of transportation not owned directly by, or supported by, the school system. <p>If SOO transportation is needed to The Renaissance Center, and the student is not covered under IDEA, then modes of transportation not owned by, or directly supported by, the school system will be utilized. If the student is going to, or coming from, another LEA, arrangements shall be made with the other LEA to transfer the child.</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>Thomas County Schools will provide SOO transportation within the guidelines of this policy until the completion of the Best Interest Determination or until any conflict is resolved.</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>Some of the roles and responsibilities of the Thomas County LEA, POC may include:</p> <p>Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency POC on the implementation of the provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

FY25 Foster Care Transportation Plan

- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures
- Managing best interest determinations and transportation costs disputes
- Ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school
- Providing professional development and training to school staff on the Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care, as needed.

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.	Yes		
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.	No		

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

If additional costs are incurred by Thomas County School System for using a school bus to provide SOO transportation, the school system will charge the local child welfare agency the school system's usual and customary mileage and driver fees. If SOO transportation is provided by the foster parent, mileage reimbursement will be provided to the foster parent at \$0.67 per mile (should the GSA announce rate revisions in any capacity during FY25 the revised mileage rates will be honored). For mileage reimbursement the local child welfare agency will be billed for the exact cost of the reimbursement. For any other additional costs the local child welfare agency will be billed usual and customary charges. Any cost sharing arrangement reached between Thomas County School System and the local child welfare agency may lessen any charges billed to the local child welfare agency.

<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.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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Please limit the response to 1,000 characters.

LEA currently provides transportation services.

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.

Thomas County School District
LEA Name

Lisa Williams
Printed Name of Superintendent

Superintendent
Title

Lisa Williams
Signature of Superintendent
(Please sign in blue ink only)

3/25/2024
Date