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Transportation Procedures for Students in Foster Care
Under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) requires that school districts and child welfare agencies collaborate to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded to maintain children in foster care in their school of origin, when it's in the child's best interest, during the time students are in foster care.

Under ESSA, transportation procedures for children in foster care must ensure that:

- Children in foster care needing transportation to their schools of origin will promptly receive that transportation in a cost effective manner and in accordance with section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act; and
- If there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, the LEA will provide such transportation if (1) the local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the LEA for the cost of such transportation; (2) the LEA agrees to pay for the cost; or (3) the LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost. (ESEA 1112(c)(5)(B)).

Since children may be placed in foster care placements across district, county, or State lines, coordination among multiple LEAs and child welfare agencies may be necessary.

Development of the local plan included the following participants:

Title/Role of Participate in Plan Development	**Name of Participant**
Title I Director/Coordinator	
LEA Foster Care Liaison	
McKinney-Vento Liaison	
Representative from the school districts transportation department	
Children's Division Representative	
School of Residency Representative	
Special Education Director	

Richards R-V School District

Transportation Plan for Students Placed in Foster Care

Sequence:

1. When a student is placed in foster care or changes residence while in foster care, the local Children's Division worker must notify the LEAs Foster Care Liaison of the current school attending, which is the school of origin (SOO). If the new residence is not in the same school zone, the foster care liaison, at the school of residency, should be notified and invited to participate the FST meeting to determine what's in the best interest for the child(ren).
2. Upon receipt of the invitation to participate in the FST meeting to determine best interest, the foster care liaison notifies the school of origin transportation department.
    a. The foster care liaison should provide the student's name, current school, new residence address, and whether the student has an IEP or 504 plan with specialized transportation.
    b. The school of origin transportation department identifies potential ways that the child could be transported (see list of options below) if the BID results in a decision to maintain the current school enrollment. The information is given to the foster care liaison to include in the BID file.
3. The Children's Division worker, foster care liaison, and other essential members of BID share their information. A collaborative effort is essential in making best interest determination for child.
4. If the BID decision is that the student remains in their current school, school of origin, the foster care liaison notifies the transportation department, who then assists the Children's Division worker in arranging transportation to and from school.

Options:

Multiple factors will be considered and addressed in the BID, when determining transportation options for foster care students, including: safety for the student and other students being transported; student age; length of commute; and distance. Information from the school of origin transportation department about these factors will be provided so that the BID will be comprehensive and will include consideration of cost-effective measures:

The following options will be considered to provide SOO transportation:

1. An existing bus route can be used.
2. An existing bus route can be modified slightly to accommodate the new address.
3. Specialized transportation offered to other students can be accessed, such as:
    a. Special education

    b. Alternative education
    c. Magnet school
    d. McKinney-Vento transportation
4. Existing specialized transportation can be modified slightly to accommodate the new address.
5. Richards R-V School District has additional options that could be accessed, such as using a district car.
6. Richards R-V School District may identify alternatives not provided by the school district that the Children's Division could access or that School District Name would be willing to assist in accessing (this could be facilitating the arrangement or providing the transportation and being reimbursed). Examples include: cabs or other contracted transport
7. The Children's Division worker also should explore options outside of those provided by the school district, such as reimbursing the foster parents for transportation costs, or including transport in contracts with licensed residential treatment facilities.

Funding:

If the student has an IEP that includes provisions for specialized transportation, transportation must be provided by the school district responsible for the student's Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

If Richards R-V School District can offer an existing means of transportation at no additional cost, Children's Division will not be charged.

If Richards R-V School District can provide transportation but will need to modify a route or create a new option, the SOO transportation designee will calculate the cost to be paid according to the local agreement. This calculation is not required until the BID has been completed and the decision to maintain the current school enrollment is made. The Children's Division should explore whether Title IV-E funds can be used to cover the cost. The school district's Title I, Part A funds may be used to assist with transportation costs.

Maximizing all possible funding sources will help ensure that transportation costs for children in foster care do not become unduly burdensome on any one agency.

*Family Support Team Meeting (FST)

*Best Interest Determination (BID)

*School of Origin (SOO)