Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

FY26 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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POC Mailing Address 345 Storey Lane

City Jefferson **Zip** 30549

POC Telephone 706-367-2880 **POC Fax** 706-367-2291

Superintendent Signature

6/17/25
Date

Donna R. McMullan
Print Name of Superintendent

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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, 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 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, 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:

Monday, June 30, 2025

Instructions for submission:

- After the LEA superintendent signs the assurances, scan the entire document as a PDF and save it as the "FY26 Foster Care Transportation Plan".
- Upload the signed PDF version of the document to the CLIP online portal via the Consolidated Application for FY26.

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***NOTE**: In order to answer the questions below, refer to the Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability and Success for Students 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.*

Real time coordination will occur between case managers, education support monitor, Homeless Liasion, Foster Parents, and Court Appointed Special Advocates, regarding foster children entering and exiting care; changing placements; enrollment and withdrawal; and making best interest determinations. When transportation is an issue, those parties will collaborate to develop a transportation plan that meets the needs to the individual child. "No cost plants" will be explored first and may include the following:

1. Foster parent transports child to school of orgin (within 25 miles round trip);

2. Foster parent transports child to nearest school transportation pick up location; or

3. LEA will follow the exiting plan for transporting children with disabilities when the foster child is disabled.

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. As outlined previously, the LEA will assume financial responsibility for costs incurred as the result of the re-routing of school buses in Jefferson City Schools while DFCS will assume financial responsibility for costs associated with reimburing foster parents for travel or the cost of contracting with local transportation companies.

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

3. Final determination of how to pay for additional transportation costs will be made by the LEA Transportation Director.

4. Daily attendance will not be impacted by transportation disputes. LEA will provide or arrange for adequate

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 LEA Foster Care POC will serve as the liaison that coordinates with local DFCS. This individual will assume responsibility for streamlined communication and collaboration with DFCS Case Managers and Education Support Monitor (DFCS POC) Such collaboration will ensure the smooth implementation of provisions outlined in ESSA to include: thoughtful Best Interest Determinations; appropoiate 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 POC 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.	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.*

If transportation costs are unavoidable, LEA and DFCS will share costs. DFCS will assume responsibility for costs such as contracting with transporation companies or paying foster parents to transport farther than 25 miles. The LEA will assume responsibility for costs associated with re-routing LEA transportation within the boundaries of Jefferson City. Options:

1. LEA will reroute transportation to pick child up at nearest bus stop or at foster home (as determined by Transportation Department) within Jefferson City and transport directly to school of orgin or to "Transportation Hub";

2. LEA will reroute transportation to pick child up at agreed-upon point at county line in the event that child is placed in a neighboring county;

3. DFCS will arrange for payment to foster parent for transportation farther than 25 miles round trip; or DFCS will utilize existing contract with companies to provide transportation to school of orgin or to an agreed point at the county line.

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.

Jefferson City Schools
LEA Name

Donna R. McMullan — Printed Name of Superintendent

Superintendent — Title

Signature of Superintendent
(Please sign in blue ink only)

6/17/25 — Date