

## FY23 Foster Care Transportation Plan

**Local Educational Agency (LEA)** Marion County

**Superintendent Name** Jamie Penoncello

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**City** Buena Vista **Zip** 31803

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**POC Mailing Address** 1697 Pineville Road

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Superintendent Signature

6/15/2022

Date

Jamie L. Penoncello  
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.*

Marion County School District (MCSO) will coordinate with parties involved in transportation of foster care children to their school of origin will use the following guidelines:

1. The Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) for MCSO will collaborate with local child welfare agencies and the MCSO transportation department to ensure that children in foster care receive appropriate transportation services.
2. MCSO will incur full costs of transportation within the MCSO district lines for students in foster care to remain in their school of origin. If a student in foster care is placed outside of MCSO district lines, the local child welfare agency will cover the cost to transport the student to the district, where the MCSO will coordinate to provide the transportation within the district.
3. Foster Care POC and DFCS will work to determine the best interest of the student. In the event of costs dispute the MCSO Federal Program Director and DFCS Director will determine a final decision.

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.*

MCSO and DFCS will work cooperatively to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to the educational stability of children in foster care. To that end, the partners will follow the steps outlined below if they face difficulty in reaching an agreement on how to pay for additional transportation costs:

1. The Foster Care POC will collaborate with local child welfare agencies and the MCSO transportation Director to ensure that children in foster care receive immediate transportation to their school of origin.
2. In the event of a disagreement on how to pay for additional transportation costs, MCSO will incur the full cost of transportation until an agreement is reached.
3. School officials, Foster Care POC, the DFCS Director, and other state/local agencies will work together to determine shared cost of transportation. If the team is unable to agree, the MCSO Federal Program Director and the DFCS Director will discuss and determine a final decision.

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.*

The MCSO Homeless Liaison will serve as the Foster Care Point of Contact in coordination with the local DFCS. This individual will assume responsibility for streamlined communication and collaboration with DFCS Case Managers and Education Support Monitor. Such collaboration will ensure the smooth implementation of provisions outlined in ESSA to include: thoughtful best interest determinations; appropriate and timely transportation plans for those children placed out of the zone of their school of



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origin; and, immediate enrollment and records transfer. In addition, the MCSD POC will facilitate training for MCSD staff with regards to the unique challenges of children in foster; ensuring monitoring of attendance and progress of foster children enrolled in MCSD as well as ensuring 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.	N/A		
2. The LEA agrees to pay for the cost of such transportation.	N/A		
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, MCSD and DFCS will share transportation costs. If a student in foster care is placed outside of district lines, the local child welfare agency will cover the cost to transport the student to the district, where MCSD will coordinate to provide the transportation within the district. In the event of a disagreement on how to pay for additional transportation costs, MCSD will incur the full cost of transportation until an agreement is reached. The MCSD will assume financial responsibility for costs associated with rerouting MCSD transportation.

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 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.

Marion County  
LEA Name

Jamie L. Penoncelle  
Printed Name of Superintendent

Superintendent  
Title

Jamie L. Penoncelle  
Signature of Superintendent  
(Please sign in blue ink only)

6/20/22  
Date