



## Ensuring Educational Stability for Students in Foster Care

June 23, 2020

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It is important to address the educational needs of all students, paying close attention to vulnerable student groups such as children in foster care and the impact the pandemic has had on students.

For educational stability, many children in foster care rely on services received in schools, including early intervention services, access to transportation, food, and health care, and connection to peers and trusted adults. The pandemic may have caused additional educational barriers for our students in foster care.

Now more than ever, it is vital that districts and schools think of ways to continue the communication between the school and the child welfare agency (CWA).

### Where can a district foster care liaison obtain an updated list of students in foster care within the district?

- Districts can run reports from the Infinite Campus (District Edition) student information system. Foster care records are published to District Edition from State Edition based on data provided by Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
- The QA Foster report produces aggregated foster care data and the supporting student level detail for quality assurance review. (Path: KDE State Reporting/KDE Reports/QA Foster.
- The [Foster Care Data Standard](#) provides state-specific information and Infinite Campus provides [instructions about using the Foster Care Tab](#), such as creating a new foster care record and printing a foster care summary report.

### Where can I find a list of districts' foster care liaisons?

- Each local school district has a foster care liaison. To find the foster care liaison in a district, visit KDE's [Foster Care webpage](#) and click on [Local Education Agency Points of Contact](#) on the right side of the page. LEA foster care liaison contact information also is located on the [Open House website](#).
- If the foster care liaison role is blank or incorrect, the update must be made in Person Role Manager via [KDE web applications](#). To add a foster care liaison, the role status must be set to "active" and a role start date entered. Please also ensure an email address is entered on the demographic screen. If a change occurs with personnel, the information also should be updated via [KDE web applications](#) | Person Role Manager. For additional technical questions and support, please email [Windy Newton](#).
- Local foster care liaisons should work closely with their local child welfare agency to stay up-to-date on students entering foster care and/or experiencing placement changes. So, keeping local foster care liaison contact information current is of critical importance.

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## Providing Transportation for Students in Foster Care

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1111(g)(1)(E) provides for ensuring the educational stability of children in foster care. ESSA Section 1112(c)(5)(B) describes the requirement to collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to develop clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain children in foster care within their school of origin, if in the student's best interest, will be provided, arranged and funded for the duration of time in foster care.
- As districts work with their local child welfare agencies to develop written processes tailored specifically to each LEA's unique needs, several topics should be discussed and documented:
  - Transportation options that could be provided where no additional costs would be incurred;
  - How additional transportation costs will be addressed;
  - How disputes over transportation will be handled; however, the district must ensure that the child remains in his or her school of origin, which may include providing or arranging transportation, if necessary, while disputes over costs are pending resolution; and
  - Other potential issues that may arise, such as:
    - Timeliness of implementation;
    - Duration and changes in transportation needs;
    - School activities beyond classes;
    - Coordination when other school districts are involved; and
    - Preschool students within the district.

Excerpted from the Ohio Department of Education's [\*Making A Transportation Plan: Implementing ESSA Transportation Requirements to Ensure School Stability.\*](#)

## What are some options for transportation of children in foster care?

- Children whose foster home is in the attendance zone for the school of origin will ordinarily not create excess cost, since the child will be able to ride on an existing route without creating additional costs. For children whose foster home is outside the attendance zone for the school of origin, there are several ways in which implementation could be accomplished, for example:
  - Option 1: If the child who is transported to the school of origin lives beyond the school of origin's attendance zone, yet adjacent, the child can be added to a current school bus route that serves their school of origin. The district will need to determine the extra time needed at the beginning of the bus route in the morning and the end of the bus route in the afternoon per day for the driver to transport the child and contract with the bus driver for the extra time necessary to

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serve the child. Along with driver pay, the excess cost should include any mileage associated with the lengthier bus route.

- Option 2: If the child lives beyond the school of origin's attendance zone and would need to cross several boundaries in order to attend, the district may offer the foster parent or legal guardian reimbursement mileage for the transportation of the child to and from school. [Click here for standard IRS mileage reimbursement rates](#). The excess cost includes any mileage paid to the foster parent or legal guardian. Please refer to [Foster Care Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.
- Once the transportation procedures are collaboratively established and documented, it is essential that the foster care liaison work with the local child welfare agency to make transportation arrangements. This collaboration ensures that children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin promptly receive such transportation in a cost-effective manner (ESSA Section 1112(c)(5)(B)(i)).

### Resources

- [Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care](#) answers frequently asked questions for districts and schools.

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