
Marion County Public Schools Foster Care Transportation Agreement

Transportation Plan to Ensure School Stability for Students in Foster Care

Parties to the Agreement:

Local Education Agency (LEA) Marion County Public Schools

Local Child Welfare Agency (CWA): Department for Community Based Services (DCBS)

- ESSA Point of Contact: Angie Akers angie.akers@marion.kyschools.us 270-692-3721
- Marion County Schools Superintendent: Chris Brady chris.brady@marion.kyschools.us 270-692-3721
- Transportation Office Contact: Mike Abell Michael.abell@marion.kyschools.us 270-692-4150
- Other: Rebecca Emmons Rebecca.emmons@marion.kyschools.us 270-692-3721
- Child Welfare Agency Director: Courtney Hilbert 270-692-3135/859-336-9395

Identification of Students in Foster Care: The CWA will notify the LEA when a child is attending or is to be enrolled at the LEA and is placed in foster care or changes a living placement in foster care as follows:

--The CWA will notify the LEA building principal, by way of phone or email, immediately of identifying a student(s) in foster care.

--The CWA meets in-person or virtually with LEA with a BID (Best Interest Determination) issue involving a student. Individuals that will be invited to the BID meeting will be the student, family case manager, and any other identified meaningful people in the student's life. Student-centered determining factors considered during the BID meeting will be as follows:

- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers.
- Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety.
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs.
- History of school transfers and how they have impacted the child.
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage.
- Whether the child is a student with a disability under the IDEA who is receiving special education and related services or a student with a disability under Section 504 who is receiving special education or related aids and services and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin.
- Whether the child is an EL and is receiving language services, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin, consistent with Title VI and the EEOA.

--The LEA will meet with CWA to determine placement and transportation at the conclusion of the meeting.

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--The LEA and CWA will create a plan from the BID meeting in writing.

--Copies will be provided for CWA, care provider, and affected school.

Request to Participate in Best Interest Determination: The CWA will notify the LEA building principal immediately upon learning that a student attending the LEA has been placed in care or will be moved to a new home placement that is located outside the LEA district and a best interest decision must be made.

Notice of Final Best Interest Decision: When it is determined that it is in a student's best interest to remain in his/her school of origin after changing foster care placement to a residence outside the Marion County Public Schools district, the CWA must notify the LEA building principal of the final decisions. This notice triggers the need for the parties to collaborate under the agreement terms and procedures to establish the most cost-effective transportation procedures available for the student.

Duration of Transportation

1. Transportation will be provided for the duration of the child's time in foster care as long as it continues to be in the child's best interest.
2. If a child exits foster care before the end of a school year, the transportation arrangement will be revisited for any modifications.

Preschool Students within the LEA

Transportation needs of preschool students within the LEA will be addressed as follows: Early Childhood Education students attending a publicly funded early childhood program are also eligible to receive transportation to the school of origin when it is in their best interest to remain in the school of origin.

How Transportation Will Be Provided, Arranged, and Funded

In addition to ESSA and Fostering Connections, the following state law and/or policy provides guidance on addressing transportation in our jurisdiction:

--KRS 199.802 – Consideration of best interest of child in placing child within same or different school district – Transportation to be provided as needed – Timely record and information sharing – Confidentiality of information.

General

1. Transportation Already Addressed through Other Means: Transportation is already addressed through other laws/requirements (i.e., part of child's IEP). The LEA will assess whether the child is entitled to transportation services under another entitlement, or as a related service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The LEA will provide transportation funded by the LEA if the student is eligible under IDEA.
2. Interim transportation should be addressed to ensure no delays for the student in foster care while transportation is being worked out between the parties. The LEA will have five (5) days to put transportation in place. During those five (5) days, the CWA will provide transportation during the interim.

No- or Low-Cost Options

1. Marion County Public Schools will examine existing transportation options available for the student, including incorporating the student into an existing bus route, modifying an existing bus route or use of other district transportation. Transportation will be provided and funded by the LEA if this type of solution is available. Available transportation options include bus and/or district vehicle.

“Additional Costs”

When other options are exhausted, and transportation will require “additional cost,” Marion County Public Schools and DCBS will collaborate to:

1. The parties will assess whether the child's transportation expenses may be covered by other state, local

and federal funds. General funds and Title 1 monies will be used by the district to cover any excess costs of transportation.

2. If the student is eligible for Title IV-E funds, the CWA will seek reimbursement for the allowable portion of those transportation costs.
3. The CWA will assess whether resources are available for foster parents to provide transportation with mileage reimbursement or to a stop on a LEA existing route
4. The parties will explore any other options available.

If remaining costs cannot be addressed above or through other cost-effective solutions, one of the following options must be implemented:

- Child welfare agency agrees to pay additional costs.
- LEA agrees to pay additional costs.
- The CWA and LEA will share the additional costs in the following way. (Consider sharing based on distance or time, or splitting the costs evenly unless parties can agree to another cost-sharing arrangement.)

Resolving Disputes

1. If the LEA and CWA cannot resolve a dispute about transportation costs, the following mechanism will be used and these steps will be taken to ensure prompt School of Origin transportation.
 - The LEA will notify the Superintendent and CWA to provide the details of the dispute.
 - The LEA will schedule a meeting between the Superintendent and regional CWA. The conference call will occur by phone, zoom, or in-person meeting within five (5) days of receiving notice.
 - If the dispute is not resolved within five (5) days, the CWA will report the dispute to the state DCBS education liaison.
2. While a dispute is pending, the LEA must ensure transportation is provided or arranged for the child.

Other Considerations

The LEA will contact the LEA of the neighboring school district if BID resolution involves an additional school district to resolve the BID dispute.

These transportation procedures were agreed to on the following date: _____

Authorized Signature for [Local Education Agency] _____
Angie Akers /Director of Pupil Personnel

Authorized Signature for [Local Education Agency] _____
Chris Brady/Superintendent

Authorized Signature for [Child Welfare Agency] Courtney Hilbert _____
Courtney Hilbert/Marion and Washington County Family Services Office Supervisor