

Hallsville R-IV School District

Transportation Guidance for Students in Foster Care

April 3, 2018

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.

Transportation Plan and Local Agreement (April 2018)

Participant in Plan Development	Name of Participant
Title I Director/Coordinator	David John Downs, Federal Programs
LEA Foster Care Liaison	David John Downs, Federal Programs
McKinney-Vento Liaison	David John Downs, Federal Programs
Representative from the school district's transportation department	Matthew Cooley, Director of Transportation
Children's Division Representative	Michelle Oberlag
School of Residency Representative	N/A
Special Education Director	Angela Maseman, Special Services Director

Hasllville Schools Transportation Plan for Students Placed in Foster Care

*Family Support Team Meeting (FST)

*Best Interest Determination (BID)

*School of Origin (SOO)

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, school of origin (SOO). If the new residence is not in the same school zone, the foster care liaison 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 designee.
 - 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 designee 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 designee, 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 designee 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. Hallsville Schools has additional options that could be accessed, such as using a district vehicle.
6. Hallsville Schools may identify alternatives not provided by the school district that the Children's Division could access or that Hallsville Schools 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 Hallsville Schools can offer an existing means of transportation at no additional cost, Children's Division will not be charged.

If Hallsville Schools 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.

Local Agreement:

Hallsville Schools and Children's Division agree that if additional expenses are necessary, then transportation costs should be equitably shared between all impacted LEAs and Children's Division: 2 LEAs = 33%/33%/33% ; 1 LEA = 50%/50%

Best Interest Determination for
Foster Care School Placement Form

Determination Page

Child's Name: _____

DOB: _____ MOSIS #: _____

School/District of Current Attendance: _____

Grade Placement: _____ Date of BID Meeting: _____

Determination:

- ☐ The student shall remain in the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement. Name of School/District: _____
- ☐ Based on the best interest determination, a change in school placement is needed. The student will be enrolled in the school of current residence.

Name of School/District: _____

Note: If a change in educational placement is needed, enrollment should take place immediately at the new school, even if health and educational records are not provided.

Was the child or youth informed of the benefits in inviting a significant person to attend the meeting? Yes No

If the person was identified, who did the child invite? _____

What school does the child prefer? Why? _____

Best Interest Determination for Foster Care School Placement Form

Signature Page

The following individuals participated in determining the school placement that is in the student's best interest:

Participants	Printed name Title and/or relationship with child	Signature, if essential person (**should sign)	Agree with determination? (circle)
Child or youth in care**			Yes No
CD service worker or supervisor**			Yes No
Current (if not CD) custodian**			Yes No
LEA representative from child's school at time of placement** (school of origin)			Yes No
IEP team for special education purposes, if applicable**			Yes No
Birth parent(s) or prior custodian(s)			
The child's guardian ad litem			
Other significant person(s) the child or youth wishes to attend (**if attending)			
Juvenile Officer			
LEA representative from school of residency			
Psychologist or Physician			
Other _____			

Best Interest Determination for Foster Care School Placement Form

The student remains in the school of origin unless the answers to the following questions suggest a change of placement is in the child's best interest.

1. What is the child's permanency goal and plan?

2. What is the expected date for achieving the permanency plan?

3. How many schools has the child attended? How many schools has the child attended this year? How have the school transfers affected the child emotionally, socially, academically, and physically?

4. What are the safety considerations related to school placement?

5. Which school does the student prefer? Why? How was this information obtained?

6. How does the child feel about any upcoming moves?

7. Which school do the birth parents or prior custodians, as appropriate, and the child's current placement provider prefer? Why?
8. What school(s) do the child's siblings attend?
9. How is the child performing academically?
10. Does the child have a current IEP or 504 Plan?
11. If the student has a current IEP, is specialized transportation identified as a related service?
12. Does the child participate in other specialized instruction? (e.g. gifted program, career and technical program)
13. What are the child's academic/career goals? Does one school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the students that the other school does not have?
14. Describe the child's ties to his or her current school, including significant relationships and involvement in extracurricular activities.

15. Would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities, proceed to the next grade or graduate on time? If so, how?
16. Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture, such as after testing, after an event that is significant to the child or at the end of the school year?
17. How would the length of the commute to school impact the child?

Attach any supporting documentation used in making this determination of best interest. The following is a checklist of sample documents that may be considered. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

- ☐ Report Cards
- ☐ Progress Reports
- ☐ Achievement data (test scores)
- ☐ Attendance data
- ☐ IEP or 504 Plan
- ☐ Emails or correspondence from individuals consulted
- ☐ Disciplinary Referrals
- ☐ Health reports/records