



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 17, 2017

Dear Foster Youth Services Program Coordinators:

FOSTER YOUTH TRANSPORTATION PLANS

This notice is intended to provide some clarity for anyone who may be confused or have read misleading media accounts of the foster youth transportation plans required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

First, it is great to be part of a team that shares the same goal we have at the California Department of Education: assisting foster youth in our state in any way we can. Foster youth are among the most vulnerable members of our student population and it is fitting that districts and schools are receiving extra money under the Local Control Funding Formula to educate these students.

ESSA mandates that local educational agencies and child welfare agencies collaborate to ensure students in foster care remain in the same schools with necessary transportation when their living placements change, can immediately enroll in new schools when that is in their best interest, and that the enrolling school districts immediately notify the prior schools to transfer all school records.

As you know, many parts of ESSA are scheduled to start in the future. California is developing a state plan that it will present to the federal government in September. All states were given this option because the delay in passing federal regulations made it necessary to provide states with the extra time they need to develop an effective, comprehensive plan.

One element of ESSA was effective on December 10, 2016. That is the day districts were required to have a plan for the provision of foster youth to remain in their school of origin. This assures students they can remain in the same school even if their foster home placement changes during the school year. Although this requirement applies to school districts, ESSA does not specifically identify county offices in this requirement.

Despite this, we recommend that you utilize your partnerships with child welfare and education partners to assist your districts with these required transportation plans. Since ESSA requires collaboration with Child Welfare in the development of the plans and the inclusion of a dispute resolution processes, county offices of education can and should take a role in the collaborative discussions necessary to ensure all of the elements of the plan are in place.

We encourage you to continue to assist your districts in the development of these required transportation plans identified in ESSA in order to ensure our youth have the supports necessary to help improve their educational outcomes.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Lisa Guillen, Education Programs Consultant, Coordinated School Health and Safety Office, by phone at 916-327-5930 or by e-mail at lguillen@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tom Herman, Administrator
Coordinated School Health and Safety Office