



**Hackberry Elementary School District #3  
Cedar Hills School**

**Transportation Plan for Students in Foster Care**

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Hackberry Elementary School District #3  
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Local Educational Agency (LEA): Hackberry Elementary School District #3 (HESD)

- **LEA Foster Care Point of Contact:** Christina Ramirez, McKinney-Vento Liaison
- **Transportation Office Contact:** Samuel Dell, Facilities/Transportation/Business Manager

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, school districts and child welfare agencies must work together to establish and implement clearly documented procedures for transportation. These procedures ensure that children in foster care can remain in their School of Origin (SOO) when it is determined to be in their best interest, with transportation provided, arranged, and funded accordingly throughout their time in care.

Under ESSA, transportation procedures for children in foster care must ensure the following:

- Foster children requiring transportation to their SOO receive timely and cost-effective services, in alignment with section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act.
- If additional transportation costs arise, the Local Education Agency (LEA) will cover them through one of the following arrangements:
  1. The local child welfare agency reimburses the LEA for the expenses.
  2. The LEA assumes full financial responsibility.
  3. The LEA and local child welfare agency establish a cost-sharing agreement.  
(Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 1112(c)(5)(B))

## **Foster Care Transportation Processes:**

### **During the Best Interest Determination (BID) Process**

HESD will promptly arrange, fund, and provide interim transportation for children in foster care while collaborating with the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) to establish a long-term transportation plan. During this interim period, students in foster care will be transported in the same manner as their peers within the district, ensuring no delays while logistics are finalized.

If a foster child is already receiving transportation through another LEA program, such as provisions outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) funded through the IDEA Act (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) the student shall continue receiving transportation through that designed program. Should a bus route require adjustments to accommodate the child's needs, the LEA POC will coordinate with the transportation department during the BID process to identify the most suitable route.

When a student is placed in foster care or relocates while in foster care, the local Children's Welfare Division worker must notify the LEA Foster Care POC at the student's current school of residence, known as the SOO. If the student's new residence falls outside the school zone, the LEA Foster Care POC of the new school should be informed and invited to participate in a BID meeting to assess the most appropriate school placement.

1. Upon receiving an invitation to the BID meeting, HESD's Foster Care POC verifies the student's SOO. If HESD is the SOO, its POC notifies the transportation department.
  - A. The POC provides the student's name, current school, new residence address, and information regarding any IEP or Section 504 plan that includes specialized transportation to HESD's Transportation Coordinator.
  - B. The HESD transportation department explores potential transportation solutions (see available options below) if the BID results in a decision for the student to remain enrolled at their current school.
  - C. These transportation options are shared with the LEA POC for inclusion in the BID file and discussion during the BID meeting.
2. During the BID meeting, the CWD worker, LEA POC, and other key stakeholders collaborate to exchange relevant information. A collective approach is crucial in determining the best educational placement for the child.

### **After the BID Meeting – Placement in School of Origin (SOO)**

If transportation to the SOO is necessary to ensure school stability for children in foster care, HESD, in collaboration with the CWA, will provide and fund the required transportation throughout the child's time in foster care. Once the BID process is completed, students will utilize an existing bus route within the SOO whenever possible. If transportation falls outside HESD's jurisdiction or designated transportation zone, HESD will coordinate with the CWA to share the associated costs.

1. If the BID decision determines that the student should remain in their SOO, the LEA POC will complete the HESD's Transportation Plan form at the conclusion of the BID meeting, with input from the Children's Welfare Division worker and the child's appointed guardian. This document will outline how transportation will be arranged, funded, and provided.
2. HESD will promptly facilitate interim transportation while collaborating with the CWA to establish a long-term transportation plan.
3. A copy of the finalized HESD Transportation Plan will be shared with the child's case manager, guardian, SOO administrator, and HESD's transportation department, as needed.

### **Assurances of Prompt Access to Transportation**

HESD will transport students in foster care in the same manner as all other students within the district. Once the BID outcome has been finalized, transportation arrangements for the designated SOO will be made promptly. Interim transportation will be provided to prevent any delays while final transportation logistics are coordinated between all parties.

If a foster child is receiving transportation through another LEA program—such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) funded through the IDEA Act the student will continue receiving transportation through that designated program.

Our LEA is committed to ensuring that children in foster care receive transportation to their SOO for the duration of their foster care placement, in accordance with the ESEA Section 1112(c)(5)(B). If a child exits foster care, our LEA will continue prioritizing educational stability, assessing each case individually. When appropriate, we will make every effort to provide transportation through the end of the school year if remaining in the SOO aligns with the child's best interests.

The LEA POC will evaluate transportation costs when working with the CWA on reimbursement, if necessary. Agreed-upon transportation arrangements will take effect by the following school day, with implementation occurring within 48 hours based on logistical considerations.

### **Options Available Through the HESD Transportation Plan:**

During the BID meeting, various factors will be evaluated to determine appropriate transportation solutions for foster care students. These considerations include student safety, the well-being of other transported students, student age, commute length, and overall distance.

Available transportation options may include:

- Direct transport by the caregiver or another responsible adult to the school or a designated bus stop
- Carpool arrangements approved by the caregiver and CWA
- School-provided transportation via an existing bus route or alternative service
- Public transportation, if deemed appropriate based on the child's age and safety requirements
- Use of a Department of Child Safety (DCS) transportation vendor

Transportation methods may change as needed to accommodate individual student circumstances. These may include, but are not limited to, school-issued vans, public buses, CWA vehicles, mental health clinic vans, and taxis (used as a last resort when necessary). Cost effectiveness will be prioritized through collaboration between the LEA and the CWA to ensure a practical transportation solution.

### **Consideration of Cost-Effective Measures**

The HESD transportation department will provide detailed information to support a comprehensive BID decision, factoring in cost-effective approaches such as:

1. Utilizing an existing bus route.
2. Modifying an existing bus route.
3. Deploying HESD transportation vehicles (buses, vans, or cars) to facilitate access to a bus stop or SOO.
4. Offering transportation cost reimbursement for travel to the nearest school bus stop serving the SOO.
5. Continuing existing specialized transportation provided through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, with minor adjustments if the new residence is within 30 miles of the SOO.
6. Utilizing Kingman Area Regional Transit (KART) public transportation if deemed safe and effective for student travel to a HESD school or bus stop.
7. Exploring transportation options outside school district provisions, such as:
  - a. Private transportation arranged by CWA or foster guardians.
  - b. Transportation incorporated within contracts with licensed residential treatment facilities.

HESD's Transportation Plan emphasizes the use of no-cost or low-cost solutions whenever possible. The transportation department will make every effort to modify or implement low-cost options funded through Title set-aside funds.

In cases where transportation must exceed 30 miles without a viable stop, HESD and the CWA will collaboratively cover transportation expenses. If public transit is necessary, the LEA POC will provide federally funded bus vouchers to ensure the foster child has suitable transportation. In the event of a transportation cost dispute, HESD and the local CWA will equally share expenses (50/50) for transportation fees.

### **Duration of Transportation**

If transportation to SOO is required in order to maintain school stability for students in foster care, HESD, in collaboration with the local CWA, will ensure that said transportation will be provided for the duration of the child(ren)'s time in foster care.

### **Foster Care Transportation Plan Public Notice**

For the purpose of collaborating with the CWA, the State Education Agency (SEA), and all foster care education stakeholders, will the approved foster care transportation plan and the contact information for the foster care point of contact be made publicly available on the LEA website?

YES

These transportation procedures were instituted on the following date: June 10, 2025

Authorized Signature for Hackberry Elementary School District #3



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Christina Ramirez, Superintendent & Principal

For more information, please visit our website at: [www.hesd.net](http://www.hesd.net)

Arizona Department of Child Safety, Education

Who is responsible for transporting the child in care if the child remains enrolled in the school of origin?