

## Foster Care Plan

### Overview

McCord Public Schools will work in collaboration with parents, guardians, concerned adults, students, and the local Department of Human Services (DHS), Child Welfare Office to ensure equitable access to a child in foster care's school of origin as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Children in foster care will always be allowed to enroll in their school of origin or school of residence as required under both federal and state law.

### Identification

The DHS point-of-contact (POC) will identify children in foster care, who are in need of transportation assistance, by contacting the McCord Public Schools Point of Contact. The point of contact is identified as the Superintendent.

### Transportation

Transportation for children in foster care will be provided by the foster family, DHS, or McCord Public School utilizing the most cost effective means to do so (475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act)). If the child's school of origin is a McCord Public School District student and the child is placed in a foster home outside of McCord boundaries, the district POC will work with DHS and/or the foster family to determine if the school of origin remains the school of best interest for the child. This determination will primarily take the following into consideration:

- The wishes of the child;
- The wishes of the foster family (according to state law);
- The wishes of DHS;
- The distance and time required for travel;
- The safety of the child;
- Any applicable services available at the school of residence vs. the school of origin.

Additional costs for transportation (whether in-district or out-of-district) will be financed through one of the following methods as provided/or under the ESSA and federal regulation (ESEA 1112(c)(5)(B)):

- DHS agrees to reimburse GPS for any additional cost;
- GPS agrees to pay for the additional cost;
- GPS and DHS agree to share the additional cost.

Additional costs are calculated by the district Transportation Office and take into account the availability of district transportation, the distance of the child's residence from the nearest applicable bus stop, and any related fuel and staffing costs necessary to in order to provide transportation. The time required in order for the district to arrange transportation varies depending upon a number of factors such as current demand, availability of staff and/or vehicles, and location of student. For this reason, if

transportation is requested the foster family or DHS arrange for temporary transportation of the child(ren) for at least one week; however, the average time required is usually less than this.

#### Reasonable Distance

While McCord Public School District believes that the school of best interest for a child is most often their school of origin, this is not always the case. Sometimes, the commute time and/or distance is so great that transporting the child would have a negative impact on the child's social and/or academic life. For this reason, McCord Public School District provides the following general guidance on what the district considers to be a reasonable commute distance and time.

- Commute distance: 20 miles.
- Commute time (one way): 30 minutes (accounting for traffic)

#### Disputes

It is recognized that both McCord Public School District and DHS will act with the best interests of children in mind; however, since both parties are approaching this issue from different perspectives, disputes will naturally sometimes occur. In the event of a dispute regarding the transportation of a child in foster care the following will be followed: The district will provide transportation until such time as the dispute is resolved (ESEA 1 I 12(c)(5)(B)(i));

The district policy regarding McKinney-Vento disputes will be followed (DAAC).