



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 12, 2017

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and High School Principals:

EDUCATIONAL STABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

I am writing today to ensure that all local educational agencies (LEAs) are aware of their obligations to develop, document, and ensure consistent implementation of policies regarding identification of foster youths, LEA Point of Contact (POC), and transportation to school of origin for students in foster care, which became effective on December 10, 2016.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), contains key protections to promote the educational stability and success of students in foster care. These protections help ensure that students experience minimal disruptions in their education, avoid gaps in school attendance, and receive the opportunities and support that they need to succeed.

The ESSA represents an important opportunity—and responsibility—for California to continue to strengthen and build upon its existing structures, plans, and policies to support this vulnerable student population. These policies should be developed in close collaboration with the local child welfare agency. We encourage school districts to work with their county office of education's (COE) Foster Youth Services Coordinating (FYSC) Program. County offices of education represent a corresponding county agency that can facilitate regional collaboration between child welfare departments and the school districts in each respective county.

Many LEAs have already indicated that they met the foster youth ESSA assurances in their Consolidated Application for the 2017–18 school year and have already identified a POC in accordance with state law. The California Department of Education (CDE) continues to encourage school districts to document their plans to meet these obligations in their Local Control and Accountability Plans, as they are key to meeting the needs of the foster youth target population.

The CDE recognizes that transportation can be a complex issue involving multiple agencies and will make every effort to share best practices and examples of transportation policies and practices being developed throughout the state. School

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districts are encouraged to work with their FYSC Program to access local resources related to ESSA.

The Frequently Asked Questions on the CDE Foster Youth Education Rights Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/fosteryouthedrights.asp> may be helpful in answering questions regarding transportation to school of origin for students in foster care. For more information regarding ESSA and the educational stability requirements for students in foster care, please visit the CDE ESSA Update #6 letter (released on January 18, 2017) at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/es/letter18jan17.asp>.

If you have any further questions, including who your POC is for child welfare agencies, please contact Jackie Wong, Statewide Foster Youth Services Coordinator, by phone at 916-327-5930 or by e-mail at fosteryouth@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

TT:jw
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