

Are we there yet?

Where are we?



Updates on transporting students in foster care
and students experiencing homelessness

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1

Goals

- Highlight
 - ESSA for Foster Care
 - Virginia Updates
 - Key EHCY requirements and ESSA changes
 - Who is considered homeless
 - School of origin redefined

2

Importance of Educational Stability

- ▶ When children change foster care placements, they often change schools, negatively impacting their education.
 - ▶ Unscheduled school change/one year: 75% v. 40% for peers
- ▶ One fewer placement change/year *almost twice as likely to graduate* from high school before leaving care.
- ▶ Keeping child in the same school:
 - Provides continuity in education
 - Maintains important relationships at school
 - Provides stability during traumatic time
 - Improves educational and life outcomes
- High mobility impacts non-mobile students, too.

Fostering Connections Act (2008) & Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)



**EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)
OF 2015
TITLE I, PART A**

Rolling Implementation
December 10, 2016
2017-18 School Year

ESSA

- Education has a parallel mandate
- FC in Title I, Part A (Lynn Sodot, PAA director)
- Jo Ann Burkholder, Director of Student Services is official contact
 - Vivian Stith-Williams and Patricia Popp – VDOE implementation team
 - Renee Garnett and Bethany Robinson – VDSS implementation team

ESSA (continued)

- December 10, 2016
 - Local Title I plans must describe collaboration with LDSS to provide transportation
 - “Awaiting foster care” removed from McKinney-Vento
- 2017-18 School Year
 - report achievement data and on-time graduation rate for students in foster care

Title I, Part A Amendments: Foster Care Summary

- Creates new Title I, Part A assurances that will provide ALL children in foster care with McKinney-Vento-like rights and protections.
- LEAs are not required to provide school of origin transportation, if there are additional costs, UNLESS they are reimbursed by the child welfare agency or agree to provide it.*

*In Virginia, IEP specialized transportation is LEA responsibility.

8

Title I Part A Amendments: Foster Care – State Title I Plans

State Title I Plans must describe the steps the SEA will take to ensure collaboration with the State child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care, including assurances that:

1. Foster youth remain in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest.
2. When a determination is made that it is not in the best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child must be immediately enrolled in a new school.

9

Title I, Part A Amendments: Foster Care-- Local Title I Plans

Local Title I plans must contain an assurance that the LEA will collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to:

- Designate a point of contact if the corresponding child welfare agencies notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designated a point of contact for the LEA.

10

Liaisons

School Division Foster Care Liaisons

- Point person for communication with LDSS
- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/foster_care_students/fostering_connection_liaisons.pdf

Local Departments of Social Services Educational Stability Liaisons

- Oversight role
- Direct work/ communication remains with the case worker
- <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fc/index.cgi>

Title I, Part A Amendments: Foster Care-- Local Title I Plans

- Within one year of enactment, develop and implement procedures for how transportation to maintain foster youth in their schools of origin, when in their best interest, will be provided, arranged and funded, which must:
 1. Ensure that foster youth who need transportation to the school of origin promptly receive it in a cost-effective manner, and in accordance with the child welfare agency's authority to use child welfare funding available under section 475(4)(A) of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to provide transportation.

12

Title I, Part A Amendments: Foster Care-- Local Title I Plans

2. Ensure that if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs will provide it IF:
 - They are reimbursed by the child welfare agency;
 - The LEA agrees to pay the costs; or
 - The LEA and the child welfare agency agree to share the costs.

13

Virginia Process

- LDSS caseworker determines a new fc placement is needed. (If time, obtain info from school about success)
- LDSS caseworker makes placement and notifies division foster care liaison

14

New ESSA Step

- When foster care liaison receives notice
 - Share current school and new residence address with school of origin transportation designee to identify possible ways school division could assist with transportation to maintain current school placement.
- LDSS caseworker and FC liaison follow Best Interest Determination (BID) Process

BID DECISION:

Maintain Current School Placement

Transportation to Maintain School

Who is responsible?

- **The LDSS** is responsible for transportation (with school division assist, if agreement is reached) UNLESS
 - ❖ The student has an IEP *with specialized transportation* in the IEP,* making the school division is responsible

*IEP for a private placement assumes transportation is included – best practice: write it in the IEP

Regular School Transportation

- For general education students and for students with disabilities who use regular school transportation, LDSS shall arrange for transportation and payment of transportation expenses.
- Reasonable costs are legitimate maintenance expense:
 - Title IV-E for eligible children
 - CSA State Pool Funds for non-Title IV-E eligible children
- Providers reimbursed state mileage rate with proof of miles driven
 - Foster parents
 - Friends, relatives and neighbors of child or foster parent
 - Employees of child placing agencies and residential programs
- Other transportation:
 - Local school bus* (reimburse with signed agreement/contract)
 - Bus fare or similar reasonable public transportation at established rate.
 - *See division cost per mile spreadsheet

Specialized Transportation

- For students with an IEP that requires “specialized” transportation to current school, such costs are paid by the school division responsible for FAPE for student to remain in current school.
- Includes individualized provisions, noted in the IEP, that are needed because of the student’s disability and necessary to guarantee access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program

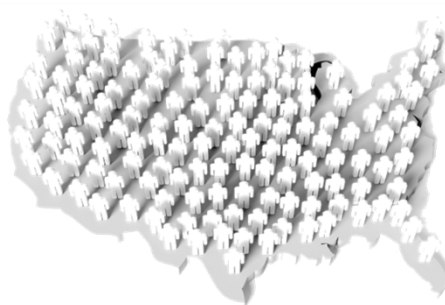
Title IX, Part A
Every Student Succeeds Act
Effective October 1, 2016

See Webinar online:

<http://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/professionaldev/ESSATransition/index.php>

Liaisons

- Appoint a local homeless education liaison in every school division
- For Virginia liaisons, visit:
www.wm.edu/hope



21

WHO IS HOMELESS?

- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- ESSA, Title IX, Part A
- Same definition referenced in
 - IDEA 2004
 - Child Nutrition Act
 - Head Start Act
 - Higher Education Act
 - Child Care Development Block Grant Act



22

Defining homelessness

An individual who lacks a ***fixed, regular, and adequate*** nighttime residence...

23

Fixed, Regular, and Adequate



- **Fixed:** Stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- **Regular:** Used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis (*e.g. nightly*)
- **Adequate:** Sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?

24



McKinney-Vento EHCY Requirements

25

The child's classroom may be the only place where the child can experience quiet, interact with children his/her age, and experience success...

*School is the most **normal** activity that most children experience collectively...For homeless children it is much more than a learning environment. It is a place of safety, personal space, friendships, and support.*

Oakley & King, 2000

26

EHCY Requirements



- Proactive outreach to identify students
- Maintain student enrollment in the *school of origin* when feasible and in the student's best interest
 - Includes transportation
 - Even across school division lines
- OR
- Enroll students *immediately* in local school

**Identify, enroll, and
keep the student enrolled!**

27

School Stability

- Applies when students lose housing during the year or during the summer.
- As long as the student is homeless
- For the remainder of the school year in which permanent housing is obtained

28

School of Origin

- School attended when permanently housed or school in which last enrolled, including a preschool.
- The designated receiving school at the next grade level for feeder school patterns, when the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin.

29

School Stability (cont.)

In determining best interest, the LEA shall:

- Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest.
 - Unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
- Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety.
- Give priority to the parent's/guardian's request.
- Give priority to the youth's request (in the case of an unaccompanied youth).

30

School Stability (cont.)

If the LEA determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent, guardian or youth, the LEA must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal.

31

Transportation – Key Provisions

1. LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at a parent's or guardian's request (or at the liaison's request for unaccompanied youth).
 - If staying in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin.
 - If crossing LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.

32

Transportation (continued)

2. LEAs also must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.
3. LEAs must eliminate barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of students experiencing homelessness (including transportation barriers).

33

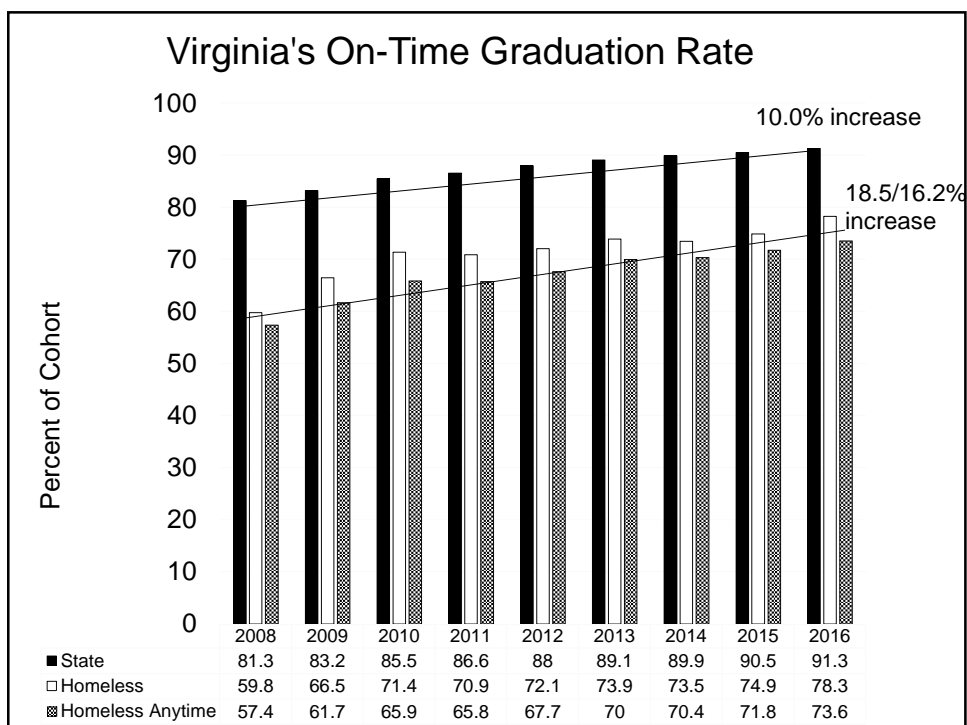
Title IA Reservation

- Funds may be used:
- For homeless children and youth attending any school in the LEA.
 - For services not ordinarily provided to other students.
 - To fund the McKinney-Vento liaison.
 - To provide transportation to the school of origin.
 - For educationally related support services, including preK.

34

How???

- Close collaboration between transportation and liaison
- Regional transportation agreements
- Coordinate with local housing authorities
- Train bus drivers
- Plan routes considering shelters/transitional housing/motels (first on-last off)
- Re-route buses
- Special education transportation
- Magnet school, alternative ed. bus routes
- Urban – bus tickets
- Gas cards or vouchers for parents transporting short term
- Transportation contract



Helpful Homeless Education Web Sites

- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
 - <http://naehcy.org>
- National Center for Homeless Education
 - <http://nche.ed.gov>
- Project HOPE-Virginia
 - <http://www.wm.edu/hope>
- SchoolHouse Connection
 - <http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org>



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