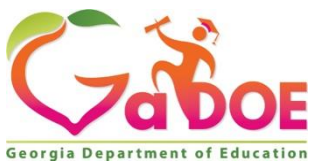


ESEA: Title I, Part A

2020-2021 Annual Report

Foster Care Education Program



Federal Programs Division
Grants Unit
March 2022

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Grants Unit Program Staff

Georgia Department of Education

Title I, Part A (Foster Care Education Program) – Federal Programs Division Grants Unit

Eric McGhee, Grants Program Manager
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Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement



The Georgia Department of Education's strategic plan emphasizes transforming the agency into one that provides meaningful support to schools and districts. The agency has developed a common, continuous improvement framework to ensure that these efforts are aligned across all agency divisions, departments, and programs.

The Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement framework focuses on the systems and structures (the "what") that must be in place for sustained improvement in student outcomes. It also utilizes a problem-solving model (the "how") to provide a clear process for identifying improvement needs, planning for improvement, and implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the improvement efforts.

Grant Implementation Overview

In Georgia, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) sets policy, develops guidance and provides training and technical assistance for Georgia LEAs. GaDOE is required to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E)). The Grants Unit provides leadership, guidance, technical assistance, and resources to local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure youth in foster care meet the state's challenging academic content and student achievement standards. Training is coordinated at a state level and delivered through (a) an annual federal programs conference, (b) collaborative federal program regional sessions and webinars, and direct foster care trainings. The GaDOE publishes an annual LEA Title I, Part A, Foster Care Education Handbook and maintains a public website.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), addresses the need for enhanced educational stability for students in foster care. Children and youth in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable student population groups across the United States. Despite facing challenges, youth who have experienced the foster care system demonstrate extraordinary courage and resilience amid adversity. In an effort to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care, the Georgia's system of continuous improvement framework serves

Despite facing challenges, youth who have experienced the foster care system demonstrate extraordinary courage and resilience amid adversity

as a perfect representation on how the Grants Unit extends technical support to LEAs, stakeholders, and practitioners that directly serve children and youth in the child welfare system.

The foster care provisions of Title I, Part A (Foster Care) of the ESEA emphasize the importance of collaboration and joint decision-making between child welfare agencies and educational agencies. While these provisions do not create new requirements for child welfare agencies, they mirror and enhance similar provisions in the Fostering Connections Act. LEAs may use Title I, Part A funding to support students in foster care, even if these students attend non-Title I schools in the LEA. LEAs may create a custom set-aside for supplemental academic support.

In addition to state and local funds that may be available for providing transportation, certain federal funds (e.g., Title I, Part A) may be available to cover additional transportation costs to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin. An LEA must collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation will be provided to assist in maintaining youth in care within their schools of origin, when in their best interest, will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care (the transportation procedures). Coordination among multiple LEAs and child welfare

agencies may be necessary. An LEA must ensure that a child in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin receives such transportation for the duration of the time the child is in foster care. (ESEA section 1112(c)(5)(B)). When a child exits foster care, the LEA should continue to prioritize the child's educational stability, consider each child's best interest on a case-by-case basis, and, when possible, make every effort to continue to ensure transportation is provided through the end of the school year, if needed, when remaining in the school of origin would be in the child's best interest.

The LEA foster care point of contact is a mandatory participant in the development of the LEA's comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) and the LEA's District Improvement Plan (DIP).

The LEA foster care point of contact is essential to the LEA Foster Care Education program. It is important that the LEA foster care points of contact have some knowledge and experience in dealing with federal programs, social worker responsibilities, and counseling responsibilities. It is important that the LEA foster care points of contact have knowledge of the LEA, understands the community, has effective communication skills, and has a commitment to the children and youth in foster care. The LEA foster care point of

contact is a mandatory participant in the development of the LEA's comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) and the LEA's District Improvement Plan (DIP).

Among other duties, the LEA foster care points of contact must ensure that (a) with the assistance of LEA personnel, implement procedures to ensure foster care children and youth receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, (b) ensure LEA school counselors assist and advise foster care children and youth to improve college preparation and readiness, and (c) inform high school foster care youth regarding their independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Grants Unit provided timely technical assistance to LEAs as necessary to ensure LEA compliance with state and federal laws and guidance. In addition to technical assistance sessions, the Grants Unit provided professional learning opportunities via individual LEA trainings, regional trainings, and state conferences.

Key Foster Care Provisions

To identify who your LEA foster care point of contact, please click [here](#).

Collaboration

It is critical and required by ESSA that LEAs coordinate with the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) on the implementation of state and federal laws to collectively support students in foster care. To identify who your regional education support monitor, please click [here](#).

Immediate Enrollment and Records Transfer

If a determination is made that remaining in the school of origin is not in a child's best interest, the student must be immediately enrolled in their new school. Enrollment must not be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not been provided.

Best Interest Determinations (BIDs)

Foster care should not be utilized as a tool for school choice. However, children placed in foster care should remain in their school of origin, unless a determination has been made that it is not in the child's best interest.

Transportation

All LEAs are required to develop and implement a plan on how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of a child's time in foster care.

The Benefits of Data Driven Work

Data is one of the most influential and effective ways to implement initiatives that support educational programming for vulnerable student populations. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires all LEAs to submit information to determine the extent to which foster care children and youth have access to a free, appropriate, public education under Title I, Part A of ESSA. All data reported must be based on actual student enrollment. Estimated numbers are not acceptable. For all students in foster care, LEAs must maintain disaggregated data regarding

- Information on the performance on the other academic indicator under subsection (c)(4)(B)(ii) for public elementary schools and secondary schools that are not high schools, used by the State in the state accountability system; and
- High school graduation rates, including four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates and, at the State's discretion, extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates.

Title I, Part A requires that LEAs disaggregate students in foster care as a subgroup in their student information system (SIS). The local SIS uploads to the Department's Data Collection office. This disaggregated subgroup must be a part of the SEA and LEA report card. Additionally, students in foster care is a disaggregated group in the LEA's comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) that informs the LEA's District Improvement Plan.

*****According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the privacy and integrity of all students must be protected. Therefore, LEAs who have less than 15 identified youth in care will be labeled "Too few" (34 CFR Part 99).**

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
1	Appling County	37	0%
2	Atkinson County	Too few	-
3	Atlanta Public Schools	200	2.0%
4	Bacon County	17	0%
5	Baker County	Too few	-
6	Baldwin County	58	3.4%
7	Banks County	30	0%
8	Barrow County	105	10.5%
9	Bartow County	136	9.6%
10	Ben Hill County	44	6.8 %
11	Berrien County	37	10.8%
12	Bibb County	345	9.6%
13	Bleckley County	Too few	-
14	Brantley County	48	8.3%
15	Bremen City	19	5.3%
16	Brooks County	23	8.7%
17	Bryan County	25	8.0%
18	Buford City	Too few	-
19	Bulloch County	99	19.2%
20	Burke County	69	5.8%
21	Butts County	30	20.0%
22	Calhoun City	34	2.9%
23	Calhoun County	Too few	-
24	Camden County	76	9.2%
25	Candler County	21	4.8%
26	Carroll County	165	5.5%
27	Carrollton City	40	12.5%
28	Cartersville City	42	0%
29	Catoosa County	102	2.0%
30	Charlton County	17	0%
31	Chatham County	295	0%
32	Chattahoochee County	Too few	-
33	Chattooga County	38	7.9%
34	Cherokee County	393	9.7%
35	Chickamauga City	Too few	-
36	Clarke County	124	0%

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
37	Clay County	Too few	-
38	Clayton County	401	0.2%
39	Clinch County	17	0%
40	Cobb County	477	5.5%
41	Coffee County	115	7.0%
42	Colquitt County	42	9.5%
43	Columbia County	128	7.0%
44	Commerce City	Too few	-
45	Cook County	25	8.0%
46	Coweta County	142	5.6%
47	Crawford County	Too few	-
48	Crisp County	57	12.3%
49	Dade County	28	7.1%
50	Dalton City	37	5.4%
51	Dawson County	36	5.6%
52	Decatur City	Too few	-
53	Decatur County	39	5.1%
54	DeKalb County	721	1.5%
55	Dodge County	31	0%
56	Dooly County	Too few	-
57	Dougherty County	204	1.0%
58	Douglas County	227	5.7%
59	Dublin City	Too few	-
60	Early County	Too few	-
61	Echols County	Too few	-
62	Effingham County	50	14.0%
63	Elbert County	Too few	-
64	Emanuel County	39	7.7%
65	Evans County	17	17.6%
66	Fannin County	35	5.7%
67	Fayette County	86	14.0%
68	Floyd County	71	7.0%
69	Forsyth County	123	4.9%
70	Franklin County	49	12.2%
71	Fulton County	378	2.9%
72	Gainesville City	58	6.9%

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
73	Gilmer County	37	0%
74	Glascock County	Too few	-
75	Glynn County	186	14.0%
76	Gordon County	91	5.5%
77	Grady County	54	3.7%
78	Greene County	Too few	-
79	Griffin-Spalding County	69	8.7%
80	Gwinnett County	734	8.2%
81	Habersham County	50	2.0%
82	Hall County	160	5.0%
83	Hancock County	21	0%
84	Haralson County	34	2.9%
85	Harris County	82	24.4%
86	Hart County	27	11.1%
87	Heard County	24	4.2%
88	Henry County	296	2.4%
89	Houston County	145	8.3%
90	Irwin County	Too few	-
91	Jackson County	50	0%
92	Jasper County	33	15.2%
93	Jeff Davis County	28	7.1%
94	Jefferson City	23	8.7%
95	Jefferson County	40	0%
96	Jenkins County	Too few	-
97	Johnson County	Too few	-
98	Jones County	80	3.8%
99	Lamar County	37	2.7%
100	Lanier County	33	12.1%
101	Laurens County	54	9.3%
102	Lee County	41	9.8%
103	Liberty County	92	1.1%
104	Lincoln County	Too few	-
105	Long County	65	4.6%
106	Lowndes County	123	20.3%
107	Lumpkin County	49	18.4%
108	Macon County	Too few	-

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
109	Madison County	24	20.8%
110	Marietta City	35	5.7%
111	Marion County	Too few	-
112	McDuffie County	17	11.8%
113	McIntosh County	19	5.3%
114	Meriwether County	Too few	-
115	Miller County	Too few	-
116	Mitchell County	33	0%
117	Monroe County	36	5.6%
118	Montgomery County	Too few	-
119	Morgan County	Too few	-
120	Murray County	82	3.7%
121	Muscogee County	436	12.4%
122	Newton County	199	5.5%
123	Oconee County	26	0%
124	Oglethorpe County	18	5.6%
125	Paulding County	176	11.4%
126	Peach County	47	8.5%
127	Pelham City	Too few	-
128	Pickens County	53	1.9%
129	Pierce County	49	4.1%
130	Pike County	25	0%
131	Polk County	163	27.0%
132	Pulaski County	Too few	-
133	Putnam County	22	0%
134	Quitman County	Too few	-
135	Rabun County	37	5.4%
136	Randolph County	Too few	-
137	Richmond County	337	9.5%
138	Rockdale County	143	7.0%
139	Rome City	40	32.5%
140	Schley County	18	0%
141	Screven County	72	13.9%
142	Seminole County	Too few	-
143	Social Circle City	Too few	-
144	Stephens County	31	6.5%

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
145	Stewart County	Too few	-
146	Sumter County	73	0%
147	Talbot County	Too few	-
148	Taliaferro County	Too few	-
149	Tattnall County	21	9.5%
150	Taylor County	88	3.4%
151	Telfair County	Too few	-
152	Terrell County	17	0%
153	Thomas County	39	2.6%
154	Thomaston-Upson County	28	7.1%
155	Thomasville City	56	23.2%
156	Tift County	60	13.3%
157	Toombs County	Too few	-
158	Towns County	Too few	-
159	Treutlen County	Too few	-
160	Trion City	Too few	-
161	Troup County	73	6.8%
162	Turner County	27	0%
163	Twiggs County	Too few	-
164	Union County	26	0%
165	Valdosta City	111	7.2%
166	Vidalia City	23	0%
167	Walker County	114	11.4%
168	Walton County	127	11.0%
169	Ware County	68	7.4%
170	Warren County	Too few	-
171	Washington County	22	9.1%
172	Wayne County	23	0%
173	Webster County	Too few	-
174	Wheeler County	Too few	-
175	White County	36	11.1%
176	Whitfield County	124	21.8%
177	Wilcox County	Too few	-
178	Wilkes County	Too few	-
179	Wilkinson County	Too few	-
180	Worth County	38	7.9%

2020-2021 Foster Data

Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
	STATE CHARTER SCHOOL LEAS		
1	Academy of Classical Education (ACE)	Too few	-
2	Atlanta Heights Charter School	Too few	-
3	Atlanta Unbound Academy	0	0%
4	Baconton Community Charter School	Too few	-
5	Brookhaven Innovation Academy	Too few	-
6	Cherokee Charter Academy	Too few	-
7	Cirrus Charter Academy	Too few	-
8	Coastal Plains Education Charter HS	26	3.8%
9	Coweta Charter Academy	Too few	-
10	D.E.L.T.A. STEM Academy	0	0%
11	Dubois Integrity Academy	0	0%
12	Ethos Classical	0	0%
13	Foothills Charter High School	29	0%
14	Fulton Leadership Academy	0	0%
15	Furlow Charter School	Too few	-
16	Genesis Academy for Boys	Too few	-
17	Genesis Academy for Girls	0	0%
18	Georgia Connections Academy	Too few	-
19	Georgia Cyber Academy	40	0%
20	Georgia Fugees Academy Charter School	0	0%
21	Georgia School for Innovation and Classics	Too few	-
22	Harriet Tubman School of Science and Technology	0	0%
23	International Academy of Smyrna	0	0%

2020-2021 Foster Data

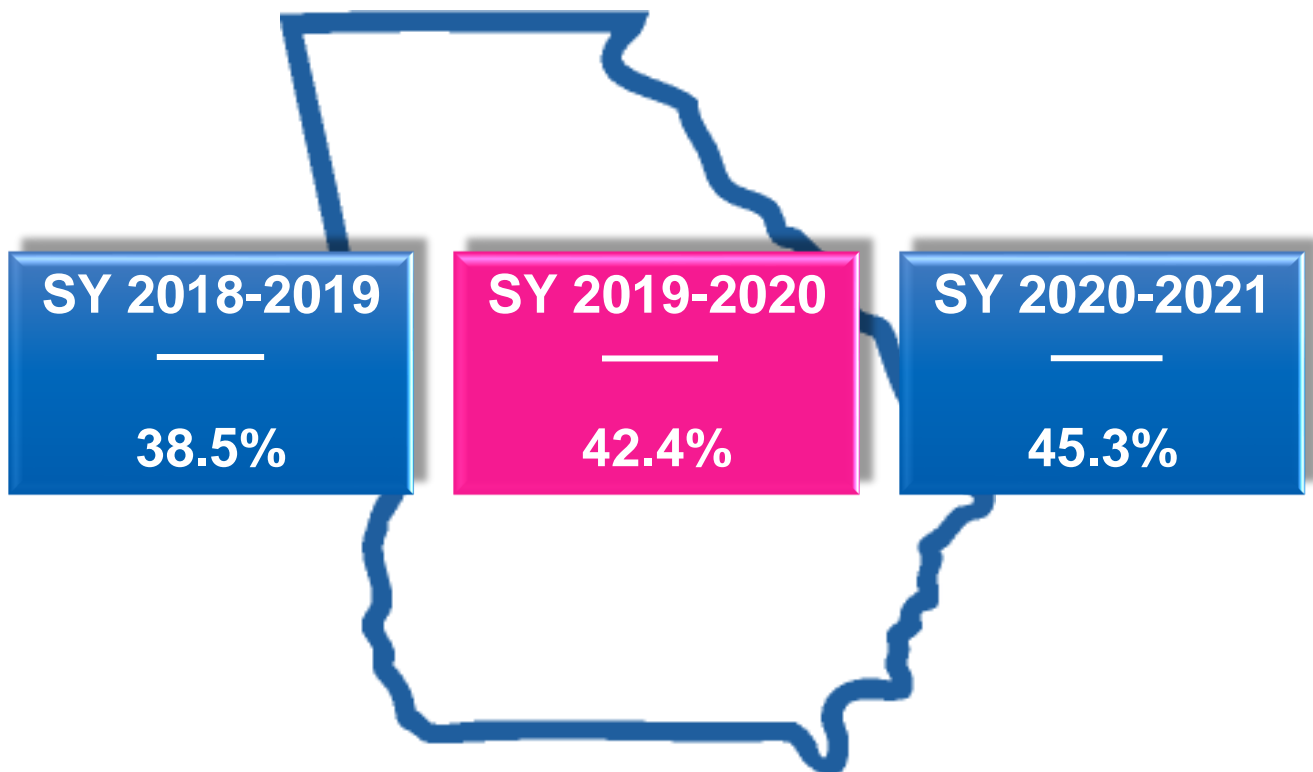
Due to student mobility, students may have attended and may have been suspended in more than one school district. For this reason, the sum of system totals should not be expected to match the overall state totals.

	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
24	International Charter Academy of GA	0	0%
25	International Charter School of Atlanta	0	0%
26	Ivy Preparatory Academy, Inc	Too few	-
27	Liberty Tech Charter Academy	0	0%
28	Mountain Education Charter HS	38	0%
29	Odyssey School	0	0%
30	Pataula Charter Academy	Too few	-
31	Resurgence Hall	0	0%
32	School for Arts-Infused Learning (SAIL)	0	0%
33	Scintilla Charter Academy	Too few	-
34	SLAM Academy	0	0%
35	Spring Creek Charter Academy	Too few	-
36	SWG A S.T.E.M. Charter Academy	Too few	-
37	Statesboro STEAM Academy	0	0%
38	Utopian Academy for the Arts	Too few	-
39	Yi Hwang Academy of Language Excellence	Too few	-
SPECIAL LEAS			
1	Dept. of Corrections	-	-
2	Dept. of Juvenile Justice	Too few	-
3	State Schools	Too few	-
Total			
		9725	State Foster Care OSS Percentage (8.7%)

Source: FY21 GaDOE Student Information System (SIS)

Foster Care Graduation Rates

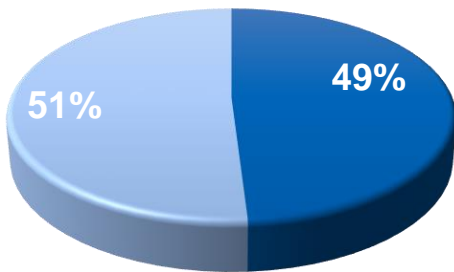
Foster students are retained three times the rate of the general student population. National research shows that children in foster are at a higher risk of dropping out of school. As policy, practices, and advocacy develops throughout the state of Georgia, solid partnerships between LEAs and child welfare agencies will assist in improving positive outcomes for students in foster care.



Source: FY21 GaDOE Student Information System (SIS)

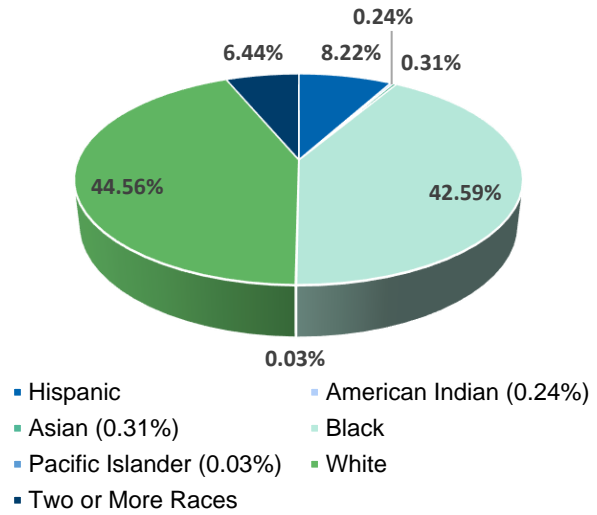
Foster Care Education Demographics

Gender

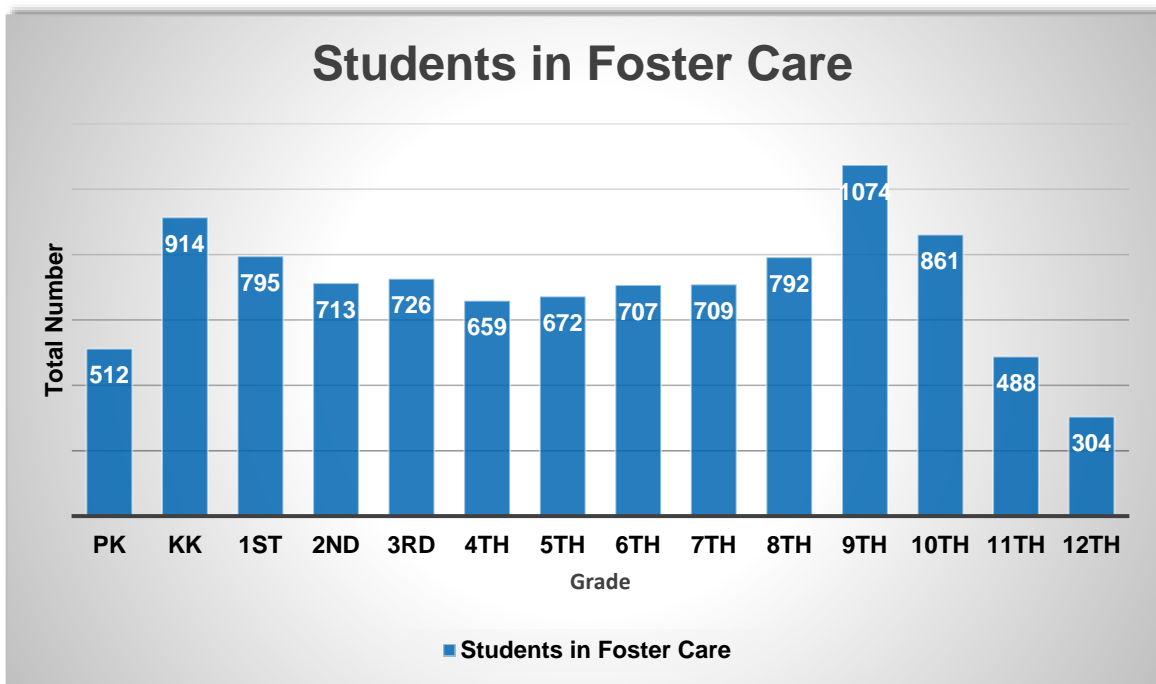


■ Female ■ Male

Race



Source: FY21 GaDOE Student Information System (SIS)

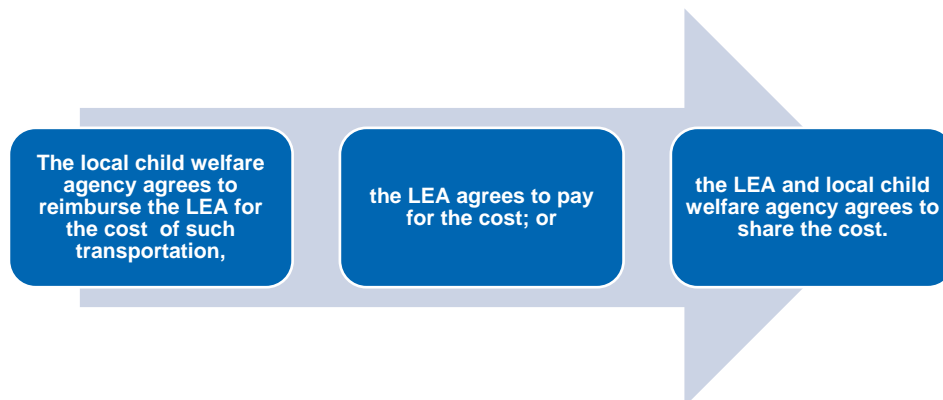


Source: FY21 GaDOE Student Information System (SIS)

LEA Transportation Plan

Source: FY21 Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)

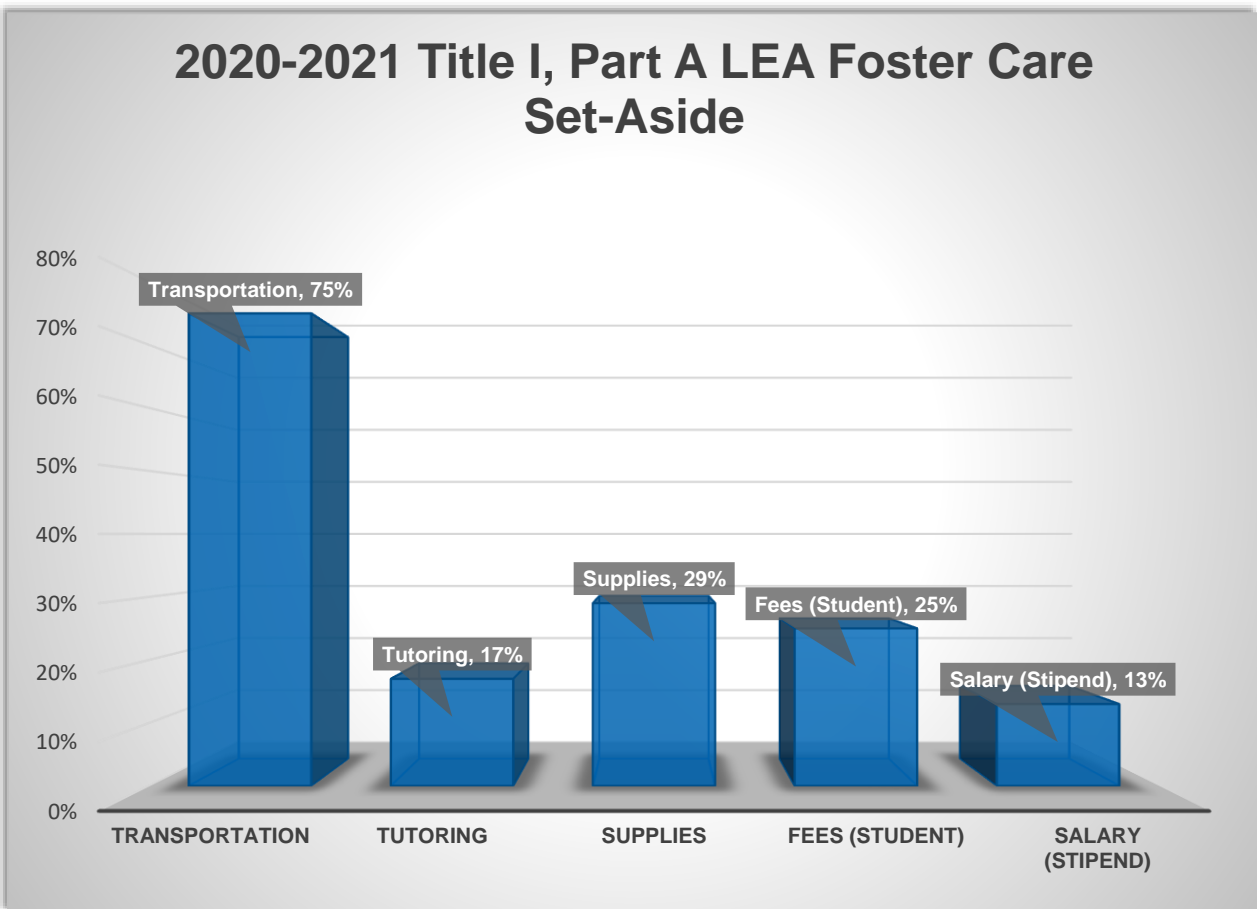
GaDOE requires all LEAs, including virtual schools and charter schools that function as an LEA, to complete a Foster Care Transportation Plan. The plan is completed in addition to the development and implementation of written transportation procedures and the identification of a foster care point of contact. An LEA must collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin, when in their best interest, will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care (the transportation procedures). These procedures must ensure that children in foster care needing transportation to their schools of origin will immediately receive transportation in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with section OCGA §20-2-133(b), OCGA §20-2-690.1 and 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act; and if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, the LEA will provide such transportation if the following transpires.



Transportation costs should not be considered when determining a child's best interest, which is consistent with the program instruction released by The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) after the passage of the Fostering Connections Act.

2020-2021 LEA Foster Care Set-Asides

The Title I, Part A Foster Care Education (FCE) requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) has no corresponding budget. However, LEAs have the option to create a custom set-aside for supplemental academic support to address the needs of students who have been identified in foster care. In FY21, **24 LEAs** elected to establish a unique foster care set-aside that concentrated on eliminating barriers that prevented educational stability. The data below highlights LEA prioritized needs that have been supported by budgeted funds and resulted in positive outcomes. The majority of set-aside funds were used for the purpose of providing transportation to maintain students within their schools of origin. The data also provided evidence that LEAs utilized their funds in more than one area; however, each area of focus assisted in minimizing interruption to a regular program of instruction.



Source: FY21 GaDOE Consolidated Application Set-Aside Report

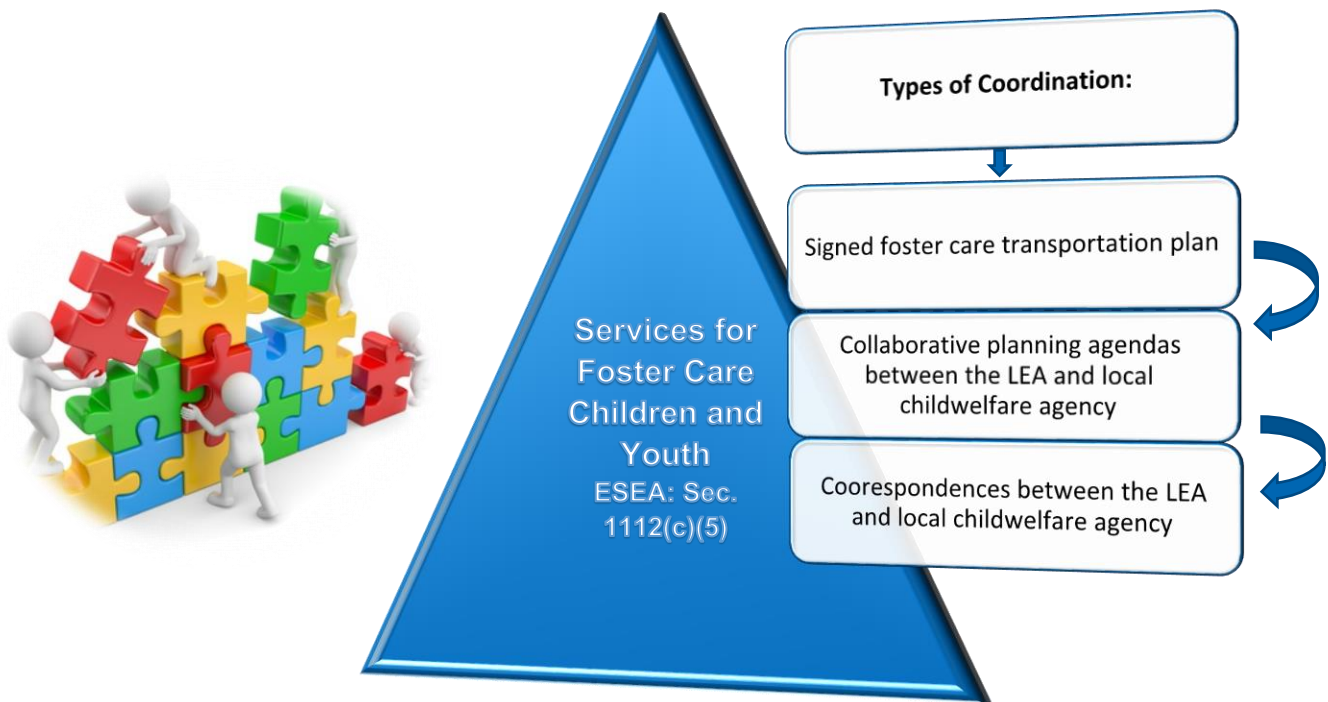
Custom Foster Care Education Set-Asides

LEA Name		FY21 Foster Care Set-Aside
1	Bulloch County	\$3,500
2	Carroll County	\$4,000
3	Cherokee County	\$300
4	Columbia County	\$557
5	Fayette County	\$1,000
6	Forsyth County	\$57,911
7	Fulton County	\$6,073
8	Gwinnett County	\$5,000
9	Habersham County	\$1,000
10	Harris County	\$5,000
11	Jackson County	\$250
12	Liberty County	\$2,004
13	Meriwether County	\$2,000
14	Paulding County	\$6,180
15	Peach County	\$500
16	Rabun County	\$3,000
17	Richmond County	\$1,000
18	Schley County	\$607
19	Treutlen County	\$998
20	Troup County	\$14,885
21	Whitfield County	\$1,500
22	International Academy of Smyrna	\$319
23	Ivy Preparatory Academy	\$200
24	Utopian Academy for the Arts Charter School	\$337
Total		\$118,121

Source: FY21 GaDOE Consolidated Application Set-Aside Report

Monitoring of Foster Care Education Program

GaDOE is responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the Title I, Part A, Foster Care Education program among LEAs. According to the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR 200.328), monitoring by the non-federal entity must cover each program, function, or activity. GaDOE monitors the foster care education program by ensuring LEAs are making collaborative efforts in connecting with DFCS. By doing so, LEAs and DFCS personnel are informed of best practices and resources that would assist in removing barriers for youth who are in foster care. The Grants Unit searches for documentation that captures the working relationship between both agencies. In determining which LEAs are to be monitored, the Division of Federal Programs conducts a risk assessment using a combination of elements defined by GaDOE. Due to a global pandemic, the FY20 monitoring cycle was interrupted because the Georgia Governor issued an executive order to close schools in March 2020. **In FY21 no LEAs were monitored.**



Title I, Part A (Foster Care) FY20 Monitoring Findings

Due to a global pandemic, the FY20 monitoring cycle was interrupted because the Georgia Governor issued an executive order to close schools in March 2020. There were 7 LEAs that received a finding due to not providing evidence of coordination or correspondence with the local child welfare agency regarding transportation services to foster care children and youth. GaDOE staff commonly find errors in internal controls and lack of supporting documentation that illustrate compliance with statute and applicable regulations.