ESEA: Title I, Part A
2019-2020 Annual Report
Foster Care Education Program

Table of Contents

Grants Unit Program Staff
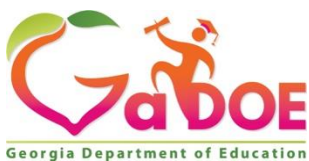
Georgia Department of Education
Title I, Part A (Foster Care Education Program) – Federal Programs Division Grants Unit Eric McGhee, Program Manager Melanie Barner, Grants Program Consultant

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.

During the 2019-2020 school year, Georgia's governor issued an executive order to close schools on March 16, 2020 due to a global pandemic (COVID-19). LEAs continued providing instruction to students through distance learning for the remainder of the school year. The GaDOE continued to provide technical assistance for LEAs during the school closures through FAQs, updates, webinars, and online professional development courses included guidance on COVID-19 responses, CARES Act funding, distance learning strategies and FY21 ESSA funds.

> During the 2019-2020 school year, Georgia's governor issued an executive order to close schools on March 16, 2020 due to a global pandemic.

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).

	2019-2020 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	44	13.6%
2	Atkinson County	Too few	-
3	Atlanta Public Schools	321	14.3%
4	Bacon County	Too few	-
5	Baker County	Too few	-
6	Baldwin County	73	15.1%
7	Banks County	37	5.4%
8	Barrow County	101	11.9%
9	Bartow County	145	9.0%
10	Ben Hill County	43	14.0 %
11	Berrien County	44	13.3%
12	Bibb County	389	24.9%
13	Bleckley County	Too few	-
14	Brantley County	58	8.6%
15	Bremen City	18	0%
16	Brooks County	24	12.5%
17	Bryan County	23	4.3%
18	Buford City	Too few	-
19	Bulloch County	97	15.5%
20	Burke County	87	8.0%
21	Butts County	34	25.5%
22	Calhoun City	34	8.8%
23	Calhoun County	Too few	-
24	Camden County	104	12.5%
25	Candler County	19	21.1%
26	Carroll County	166	7.8%
27	Carrollton City	24	12.5%
28	Cartersville City	46	19.6%
29	Catoosa County	132	6.8%
30	Charlton County	33	12.1%
31	Chatham County	317	13.9%
32	Chattahoochee County	Too few	-
33	Chattooga County	38	2.5%
34	Cherokee County	376	15.4%
35	Chickamauga City	Too few	-
36	Clarke County	148	9.5%
37	Clay County	Too few	-

	2019-2020 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**
38	Clayton County	497	13%
39	Clinch County	Too few	-
40	Cobb County	591	12.5%
41	Coffee County	115	5.2%
42	Colquitt County	50	12%
43	Columbia County	147	3.4%
44	Commerce City	20	5.0%
45	Cook County	26	19.2%
46	Coweta County	164	17.1%
47	Crawford County	16	12.5%
48	Crisp County	47	12.8%
49	Dade County	30	0%
50	Dalton City	47	16.7%
51	Dawson County	35	5.7%
52	Decatur City	Too few	-
53	Decatur County	55	7.3%
54	DeKalb County	937	25.2%
55	Dodge County	31	6.5%
56	Dooly County	Too few	-
57	Dougherty County	229	9.6%
58	Douglas County	290	19.0%
59	Dublin City	18	16.7%
60	Early County	Too few	-
61	Echols County	Too few	-
62	Effingham County	51	11.8%
63	Elbert County	Too few	-
64	Emanuel County	60	5.0%
65	Evans County	Too few	-
66	Fannin County	41	14.6%
67	Fayette County	63	11.1%
68	Floyd County	83	20.5%
69	Forsyth County	115	7.0%
70	Franklin County	44	4.5%
71	Fulton County	430	12.8%
72	Gainesville City	65	7.7%
73	Gilmer County	52	3.8%
74	Glascock County	Too few	-

	2019-2020 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**
75	Glynn County	180	11.1%
76	Gordon County	123	1.6%
77	Grady County	53	7.5%
78	Greene County	20	10.0%
79	Griffin-Spalding County	807	11.8%
80	Gwinnett County	58	15.5%
81	Habersham County	190	0.0%
82	Hall County	52	11.6%
83	Hancock County	27	29.6%
84	Haralson County	65	1.5%
85	Harris County	82	24.4%
86	Hart County	29	10.3%
87	Heard County	24	8.3%
88	Henry County	375	10.9%
89	Houston County	156	8.3%
90	Irwin County	32	3.1%
91	Jackson County	59	8.5%
92	Jasper County	48	8.3%
93	Jeff Davis County	41	4.9%
94	Jefferson City	Too few	-
95	Jefferson County	27	14.8%
96	Jenkins County	Too few	-
97	Johnson County	Too few	-
98	Jones County	87	6.9%
99	Lamar County	53	15.1%
100	Lanier County	20	5.0%
101	Laurens County	59	22.0%
102	Lee County	45	6.7%
103	Liberty County	114	7.9%
104	Lincoln County	Too few	-
105	Long County	70	7.1%
106	Lowndes County	117	14.5%
107	Lumpkin County	56	1.8%
108	Macon County	Too few	-
109	Madison County	28	10.7%
110	Marietta City	58	10.3%
111	Marion County	Too few	-

	2019-2020 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
112	McDuffie County	32	28.1%
113	McIntosh County	16	0%
114	Meriwether County	17	5.9%
115	Miller County	16	6.3%
116	Mitchell County	43	0%
117	Monroe County	36	11.1%
118	Montgomery County	Too few	-
119	Morgan County	25	4.0%
120	Murray County	81	8.6%
121	Muscogee County	492	25.2%
122	Newton County	301	22.3%
123	Oconee County	34	0
124	Oglethorpe County	Too few	-
125	Paulding County	195	15.9%
126	Peach County	51	19.6%
127	Pelham City	Too few	-
128	Pickens County	85	3.5%
129	Pierce County	45	0
130	Pike County	24	20.8%
131	Polk County	171	26.9%
132	Pulaski County	Too few	-
133	Putnam County	22	18.2%
134	Quitman County	Too few	-
135	Rabun County	30	0%
136	Randolph County	Too few	-
137	Richmond County	408	18.1%
138	Rockdale County	194	22.2%
139	Rome City	61	16.4%
140	Schley County	15	0%
141	Screven County	80	10.0%
142	Seminole County	Too few	-
143	Social Circle City	26	0%
144	Stephens County	36	2.8%
145	Stewart County	Too few	-
146	Sumter County	86	11.6%
147	Talbot County	Too few	-
148	Taliaferro County	Too few	-

	2019-2020 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
149	Tattnall County	27	11.1%
150	Taylor County	127	1.6%
151	Telfair County	Too few	-
152	Terrell County	30	6.7%
153	Thomas County	46	4.3%
154	Thomaston-Upson County	34	20.6%
155	Thomasville City	54	20.4%
156	Tift County	57	17.5%
157	Toombs County	20	5.0%
158	Towns County	Too few	-
159	Treutlen County	Too few	-
160	Trion City	81	0%
161	Troup County	37	8.6%
162	Turner County	Too few	-
163	Twiggs County	57	0%
164	Union County	34	0%
165	Valdosta City	104	22.1%
166	Vidalia City	19	15.8%
167	Walker County	130	7.7%
168	Walton County	129	12.4%
169	Ware County	84	15.5%
170	Warren County	Too few	-
171	Washington County	34	11.8%
172	Wayne County	41	7.3%
173	Webster County	Too few	-
174	Wheeler County	Too few	-
175	White County	39	5.1%
176	Whitfield County	122	21.3%
177	Wilcox County	Too few	-
178	Wilkes County	Too few	-
179	Wilkinson County	Too few	-
180	Worth County	52	23.1%
	STATE CHARTER SCHOOL LEAS		
1	Academy of Classical Education (ACE)	Too few	-

	2019-2020 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**
2	Atlanta Heights Charter School	Too few	-
3	Baconton Community Charter School	Too few	-
4	Brookhaven Innovation Academy	Too few	-
5	Cherokee Charter Academy	Too few	-
6	Cirrus Charter Academy	Too few	-
7	Coastal Plains Education Charter HS	Too few	-
8	Coweta Charter Academy	Too few	-
9	Dubois Integrity Academy	0	0%
10	Ethos Classical	0	0%
11	Foothills Charter High School	27	0%
12	Fulton Leadership Academy	Too few	-
13	Genesis Academy for Boys	0	0%
14	Genesis Academy for Girls	0	0%
15	Georgia Connections Academy	Too few	-
16	Georgia Cyber Academy	36	0%
17	Georgia School for Innovation and Classics	Too few	-
18	International Academy of Smyrna	Too few	-
19	International Charter Academy of GA	0	0%
20	International Charter School of Atlanta	0	0%
21	Ivy Preparatory Academy, Inc	Too few	-
22	Liberty Tech Charter Academy	0	0%
23	Mountain Education Charter HS	35	5.7%
24	Odyssey School	0	0%
25	Pataula Charter Academy	Too few	-
26	Resurgence Hall	0	0%

|	LEA Name	Child Count	Foster Care OSS Percentages
2019-2020 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.			
27	School for Arts-Infused Learning (SAIL)	0	0%
28	Scintilla Charter Academy	Too few	-
29	SLAM Academy	0	0%
30	Spring Creek Charter Academy	Too few	-
31	SWGA S.T.E.M. Charter Academy	Too few	-
32	Statesboro STEAM Academy	0	0%
33	Utopian Academy for the Arts	0	0%
	SPECIAL LEAS		
1	Dept. of Corrections	-	-
2	Dept. of Juvenile Justice	21	0%
3	State Schools	8	12.5%
	Total		
		11,075	**State Foster Care OSS Percentage (17.1%)**

Foster Care Graduation Rates
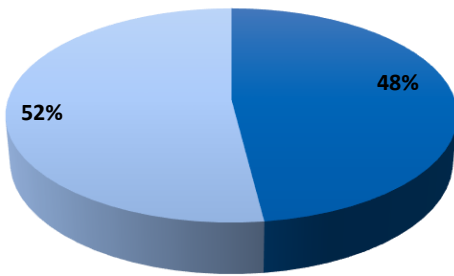
Georgia Department of Education

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.

SY 2017-2018	SY 2018-2019	SY 2019-2020
37.2%	38.5%	Forthcoming
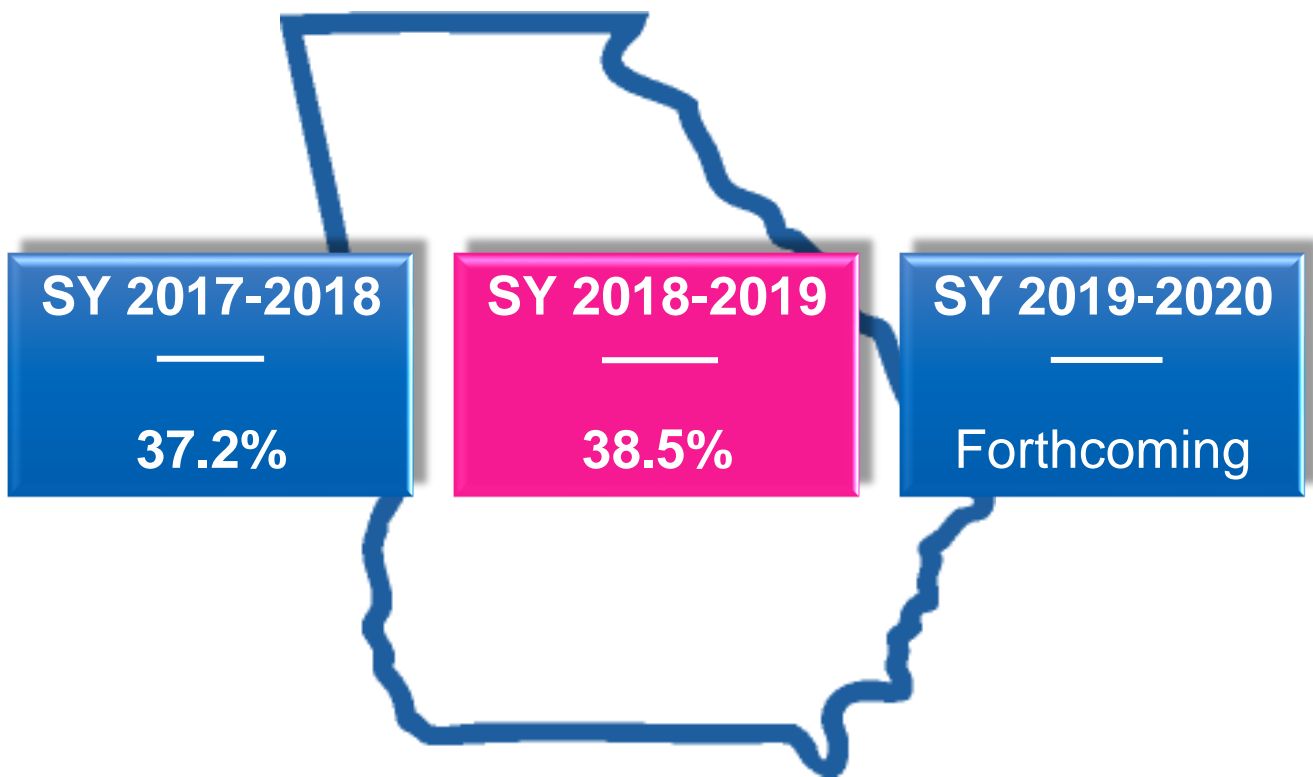
Note*: The graduation rates are derived from the GaDOE Data Collections Division through Technology Services.*

Foster Care Education Demographics
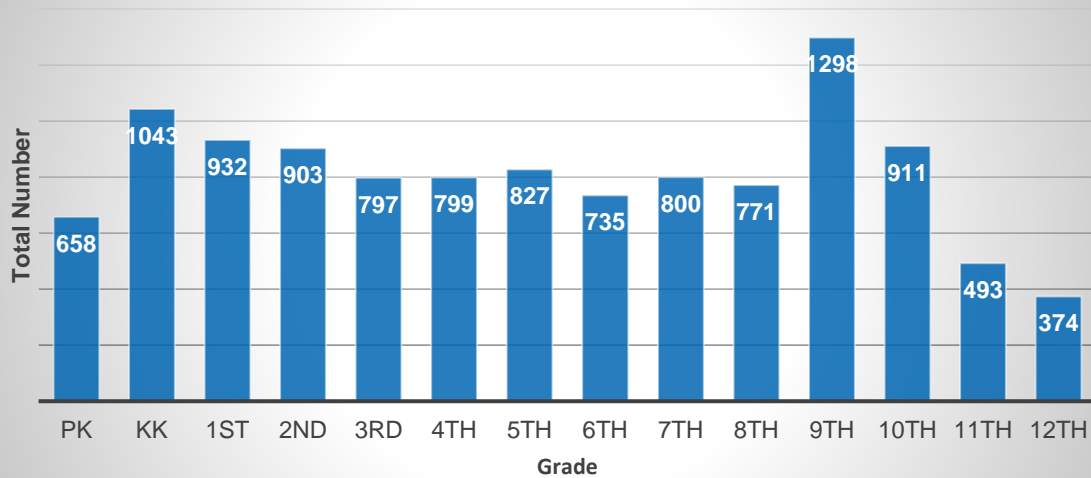
Gender

- Female 48%
- Male 52%
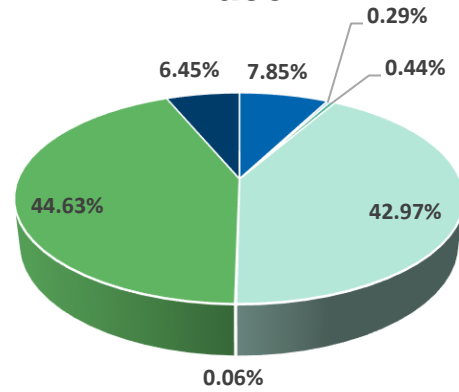
Race

- 7.85% Hispanic
- 0.29% American Indian (0.29%)
- 0.44% Asian (0.44%)
- 42.97% Black
- 0.06% Pacific Islander (0.06%)
- 44.63% White
- 6.45% Two or More Races

Students in Foster Care

Grade	Total Number
PK	658
KK	1043
1ST	932
2ND	903
3RD	797
4TH	799
5TH	827
6TH	735
7TH	800
8TH	771
9TH	1298
10TH	911
11TH	493
12TH	374

■ Students in Foster Care

LEA Transportation Plan

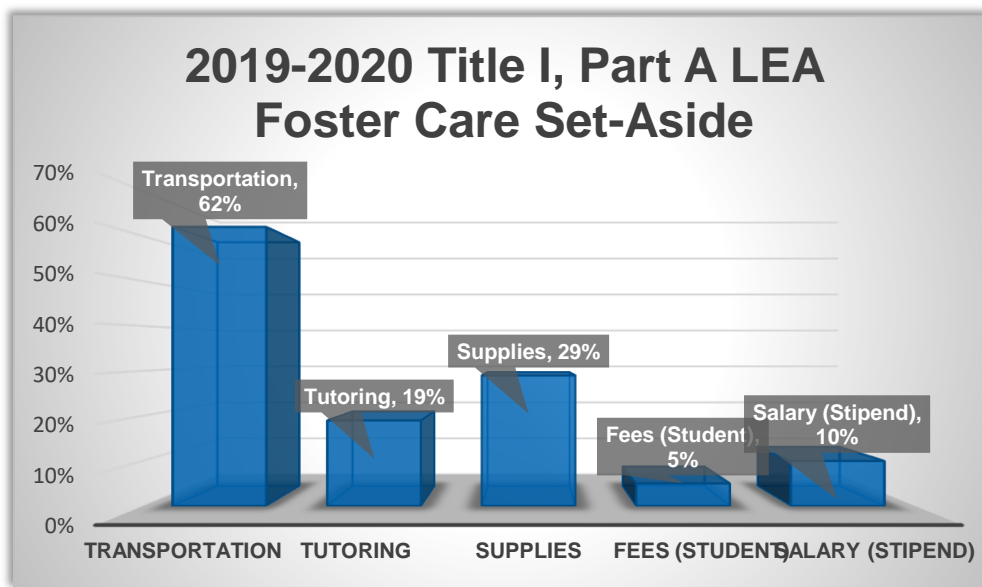*Source: FY20 Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)*

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.

The local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the LEA for the cost of such transportation,	the LEA agrees to pay for the cost; or	the LEA and local child welfare agency agrees to share the cost.

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.

2019-2020 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 FY20, **21 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.

2019-2020 Title I, Part A LEA Foster Care Set-Aside

- Transportation, 62%
- Tutoring, 19%
- Supplies, 29%
- Fees (Student), 5%
- Salary (Stipend), 10%

Custom Foster Care Education Set-Asides

	LEA Name	FY20 Foster Care Set-Aside
1	Bulloch County	$3,500
2	Carroll County	$5,000
3	Columbia County	$300
4	Fayette County	$800
5	Forsyth County	$62,911
6	Fulton County	$12,130
7	Gwinnett County	$5,000
8	Harris County	$8,700
9	Jackson County	$700
10	Laurens County	$5,246
11	Liberty County	$2,000
12	Meriwether County	$1,000
13	Paulding County	$15,000
14	Peach County	$590
15	Rabun County	$3,000
16	Richmond County	$1,000
17	Schley County	$500
18	Troup County	$13,875
19	Whitfield County	$2,200
20	Utopian Academy for the Arts Charter School	$100
21	International Academy of Smyrna	$100
	Total	**$143,652**

Monitoring of Foster Care Education Program

Generally, cross functional monitoring dates (CFM) may include onsite or desktop, however, in FY20 monitoring dates were adjusted to include only desktop after the governor issued an executive order to close schools due to the global pandemic. Immediately following the school closures, monitoring dates were suspended until the Fall of 2020, however, eight LEAs opted to continue with desk monitoring as scheduled. Of the 58 LEAs on the monitoring cycle for FY20, 24 of them were monitored in spring 2020. LEAs receiving findings as part of the cross-functional monitoring will complete corrective actions to ensure they have internal controls and protocols that ensure compliance with federal law, federal regulations (EDGAR), and federal and state guidance. Based on the GaDOE 4-year cross-functional monitoring cycle, any LEA that does not participate in CFM completes an annual self-monitoring review.

> Generally, CFM dates may include onsite or desktop; however, in FY20 monitoring dates were adjusted to include only desktop after the governor issued an executive order to close schools due to the global pandemic. Following the school closures, monitoring dates were suspended until the Fall of 2020.

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 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.

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.