

**Memorandum of Understanding – Every Student Succeeds Act
Transportation Claiming Under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on _____, 20____ by and between the following parties in relation to the administration of school of origin transportation costs under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to maximize Federal Financial Participation from the Federal Government through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (Title IV-E):

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS);

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE);

Department of Children and Families (DCF); and

_____(Enter name)
**Commonwealth City/Town/Regional School District or Local Education
Agency**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Children and Families and the City or Town or Regional School District of [] by and through [] (legal name and address of the Local Education Agency, hereinafter, the LEA), hereby agree to the following terms and conditions as they relate to reporting costs and receiving Title IV-E allowable federal reimbursement for said costs as they relate to transporting children eligible under Title IV-E foster care to and from their foster placement and their School of Origin, effective for dates of service on or after April 1, 2019.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, DCF is the single state agency designated to submit claims to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) for the purposes of obtaining Title IV-E cost reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, the LEA desires to participate in the Title IV-E Claiming of Transportation Expenditures for Children in Foster Care (hereinafter, the “Program”) under the terms and conditions set forth in this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU);

WHEREAS, the scope of services and providers payable under the Program is defined by this MOU; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual obligations contained in this MOU, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. DEFINITIONS

The following terms that appear capitalized throughout this MOU shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Administration of Children and Families (ACF) – The agency responsible for the oversight and administration of services pertaining to children, youth, and families nationwide, as established under the authority of Section 6 of the Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1953.

Certification of Qualified Expenditures or Certification of Qualifying Expenditures – For purposes of this agreement, an expenditure for Transportation that is certified, or attested to, by a contributing public agency or designated authority at a public agency that is eligible for reimbursement under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Department of Children and Families (DCF) – The constituent agency within EOHHS providing services to children 0 through 22 years old who are at risk or have been victims of abuse or neglect, as well as their families, established under M.G.L. c. 18B, § 1.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) – The constituent agency within the Executive Office of Education responsible for the provision of a public education system of a sufficient quality to extend to all children, established under M.G.L. c. 69, § 1.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Federal Law passed in December 2015 governing United States K-12 public education policy (Public Law 114-95).

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) – The executive secretariat of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established under M.G.L. c. 6A, § 2 that oversees DCF.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – A written statement, developed and approved in accordance with federal special education law in a form established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, that identifies a student's special education needs and describes the services a school district shall provide to meet those needs.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – See definition for Local Government Entity.

Local Government Entity – Pursuant to MGL c. 44, § 70 and for purposes of this MOU, a city or town, that by vote of its town meeting, town council or city council with the approval of the selectmen, town manager or mayor, authorizes the LEA to enter into this MOU and that is responsible, or assumes responsibility, either directly or indirectly through an agency or other political subdivision, for the non-federal share of the Program expenditures. Local Governmental Entity is also referred to as Local Educational Authority (LEA) in this MOU.

Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) – a state-funded grant program run by DESE intended to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation by permitting students in Boston and Springfield to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, § 12A.

Reporting Tool – The mechanism, designed and agreed upon by EOHHS, DESE, and DCF, by which the LEA will report on costs associated with the Program and attest to the accuracy of said costs.

School of Origin – The school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. Pursuant to Elementary and Secondary Education Act, § 1111 (g)(1)(E)(i)), DESE and the LEAs must ensure that a child in foster care enrolls or remains in his or her school of origin unless a determination is made that it is not in the child’s best interest.

State Fiscal Year – The 12-month period commencing July 1 and ending June 30 and designated by the calendar year in which the fiscal year ends (e.g., State Fiscal Year 2019 starts on July 1, 2018 and ends June 30, 2019).

Title IV-E – an amendment to the Social Security Act that allows states to claim federal reimbursement for the costs of administering foster, adoptive, and guardianship services based on specific eligibility criteria.

Title IV-E Allowable Transportation Claiming Activities – The process through which an LEA requests payment based on Title IV-E-allowable actual incurred costs related to Administrative Activities. Administrative Activities Claiming is further described in Section 2.3 of this MOU.

Title IV-E Claiming of Transportation Expenditures for Children in Foster Care Program – The program through which Local Government Entities participate in administrative activities claiming of Title IV-E allowable expenditures of transportation for children in foster care.

Title IV-E Eligibility – children in foster care that meet the federal eligibility requirements outlined in the Social Security Act for foster care maintenance payments claimed on their behalf.

Title IV-E Federal Financial Participation (Title IV-E FFP) – The amount of the federal share that may be available based on the Certification of Qualifying Expenditures of an LEA for administrative activities related to the provision of transportation services to IV-E eligible foster care children to their School of Origin provided pursuant to this MOU.

Section 2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Subject to (a) the City/Town/Regional School District, hereinafter, Local Education Agency’s (LEA) voluntary compliance, as determined by EOHHS, with all submission and other requirements established by EOHHS, DESE, and DCF, hereto referred to as “the Commonwealth”; (b) all other state approvals; (c) federal approval of all necessary payment and funding methods and payment limits; and (d) the availability of Title IV-E

FFP, the Commonwealth will pay the LEA an amount equal to the final Title IV-E FFP amount received by the Commonwealth for the allowable Certification of Qualifying Expenditures of the LEA for that state fiscal year, less any contingency fees and other administrative costs.

2. The LEA shall submit to the DESE a cost report and Certification of Qualifying Expenditures on a form designated by the Commonwealth and completed in accordance with the Commonwealth's instructions and signed by an officer who is an authorized signatory of the unit of government providing the non-federal share of Title IV-E allowable transportation expenditures associated with transporting children to/from his/her School of Origin.
3. Said certification shall provide that the LEA's reported expenditures are allowable costs for children in foster care who are covered under ESSA and exclude the following costs:
 - a. Any Individualized Education Program (IEP) transportation costs incurred for a child who is enrolled in MassHealth where transportation services are required under the IEP;
 - b. Any costs for children and youth considered homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act's, 42 USC 11434(a)(2);
 - c. Participate in METCO as set forth in M.G.L. c. 76, § 12A; or
 - d. Any other federally funded form of transportation services.
4. The LEA shall comply with all Title IV-E transportation administrative and billing requirements set forth in this MOU or incorporated by reference and applicable laws, regulations or subregulatory guidance regarding these requirements.
5. The LEA must repay to the Commonwealth any amounts resulting from any overpayment, erroneous reporting, administrative fine, or otherwise, in accordance with this MOU, DESE's rules and regulations, and all other applicable state and federal laws.
6. In the event that a review by the Commonwealth, ACF, or any other state and federal oversight entity reveals that the LEA's claim resulted in a duplicate payment under one or more state or federal programs or that LEA did not follow the requirements in accordance with the terms specified herein or applicable state or federal laws for any fiscal year the Commonwealth retains the right to recover payments from the LEA for that fiscal year(s).
7. At any point during the MOU, if the Commonwealth, in its sole judgment, identifies any deficiency in the LEA's performance under the MOU, the Commonwealth may require the LEA to develop a corrective action plan to correct such deficiency. The corrective action plan must, at a minimum:
 - a. identify each deficiency and its corresponding cause;
 - b. describe corrective measures to be taken to address each deficiency and its cause;
 - c. provide a time frame for completion of each corrective measure;

- d. describe the target outcome or goal of each corrective measure (i.e., how the action taken will be deemed successful);
- e. describe the documentation to be submitted to the Commonwealth as evidence of success with respect to each corrective measure; and
- f. identify the person responsible for each corrective measure, and any other information specified by the Commonwealth.

The LEA shall submit any such corrective action plan to the Commonwealth and shall implement such corrective action plan only as approved or modified by the Commonwealth. Under such corrective action plan, the Commonwealth may require the LEA to (1) alter the manner or method in which the LEA performs any MOU responsibilities, and (2) implement any other action that the Commonwealth may deem appropriate.

The LEA's failure to implement any corrective action plan may, in the sole discretion of the Commonwealth, be considered breach of the MOU, subject to any and all agreement remedies including, but not limited to, termination of the MOU.

- 8. Any costs incurred by the Commonwealth to administer the LEA's participation in the ESSA transportation claiming program, including contingency fees payable to the Commonwealth contractors, if necessary, will be offset against amounts of federal revenue payable to the LEA under an ongoing MOU or withheld in a special payment arrangement in the case of MOU termination.
- 9. The LEA shall immediately disclose to the Commonwealth any non-compliance by the LEA with any provision of this MOU, or any state or federal law or regulation governing this MOU.
- 10. In the event that the Commonwealth receives written notification of a deferral or disallowance of Title IV-E FFP claimed on behalf of the LEA's services through the Certification of Qualifying Expenditures, receives written notification of an audit finding requiring the return of any such Title IV-E FFP, or otherwise reasonably determines that any such Title IV-E FFP will be deferred or disallowed if claimed, the Commonwealth shall so notify the LEA. At any time after the Commonwealth's receipt of such notice or other information, it may require the LEA to remit to the Commonwealth the amount of payment(s) under review, pending final disposition of such review. The Commonwealth shall specify such amount in a written remittance notice to the LEA and, within 30 days of the date of such remittance notice, the LEA shall repay to the Commonwealth an amount equal to the amount specified. In the absence of such a remittance notice, the LEA may, on its own initiative remit such amount to the Commonwealth. In the event the LEA for any reason retains payment amounts subject to deferral, disallowance, or audit findings as described herein, the LEA shall be liable for such amounts plus any interest assessed by the federal government on the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth shall provide to the LEA written notification of the amount of any federal interest assessed on

payment amounts retained by the LEA. In the event that the final disposition of the deferral, disallowance, or audit described herein requires the Commonwealth to return an amount previously paid by the LEA to the Commonwealth under these provisions, no such payment due to the LEA shall constitute a late payment or otherwise obligate the Commonwealth to pay to the LEA any interest on such payment. Any remittance pursuant to the provisions of the paragraph shall be in accordance with all applicable state law.

11. The LEA must maintain records that are accurate and sufficiently detailed to substantiate the legal, financial, and statistical information reported on the Certification of Qualifying Expenditure form. These records must demonstrate the necessity, reasonableness, and relationship of the costs (e.g., personnel, supplies, and services) to the provision of services and must be furnished upon request to the Commonwealth or its designees, or to any other federal and state officials and agencies authorized by law to inspect such information or their designees, including the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Comptroller General of the United States, the Administration for Children and Families, the Governor of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Secretary of Administration and Finance, the Massachusetts State Auditor, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. These records include, but are not limited to, all relevant transportation payments, service dates related to transportation payments, and child count. The LEA must maintain documentation supporting the transportation costs: (1) associated with transporting children eligible under Title IV-E in foster care, including their names and dates of services provided; and (2) that the costs are associated with transporting these children to/from their School of Origin; and (3) that the costs are not excluded pursuant to Section 2.3 of this MOU. The LEA is required to maintain cost report work papers for a minimum period of seven years beyond the last quarter that a child's transportation costs are included on a claim or until the completion of any audit, whichever is longer, following the end of each cost reporting period.
12. The LEA and any of their business associates/subcontractors shall comply with the terms, conditions, and obligations relating to data privacy, security, and management of personal and other confidential information applicable to the LEA under this MOU, as well as any other laws, regulations and other legal obligations regarding the privacy and security of such information to which the LEA is subject.
13. The Terms and Conditions set forth in this MOU may be terminated by any party upon written notice to the other at the address set forth below. Notice shall be sent to:

Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Office of Federal Finance and Revenue
1 Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Local Education Agency Name

Local Education Agency Address

Local Education Agency Address

Attn: _____
Local Education Agency Contact

14. The Terms and Conditions may be amended at any time in writing, signed by all parties.
15. The Terms and Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
16. No provision of the Terms and Conditions is or shall be construed as being for the benefit of, or enforceable by, any third party.
17. Rights and obligations, which by their nature should survive or which these Terms and Conditions expressly states will survive, will remain in full force and effect following termination or expiration of this MOU. Notwithstanding the generality of the foregoing, the rights and duties under paragraph 12 survive the termination or expiration of this MOU.

Signed by the respective duly authorized representatives of the parties hereto.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE
OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

By: _____
EOHHS Authorized Signatory

Name: _____(Print)

Date: _____

By: _____
DESE Authorized Signatory

Name: _____(Print)

Date: _____

By: _____
DCF Authorized Signatory

Name: _____(Print)

Date: _____

_____(Name)

Local Education Agency Authorized Signatory

By: _____
Local Education Agency Authorized Signatory

Date: _____

Name: _____(Print)

Position: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____