

Assembly Bill 337

Enhancing Educational Outcomes Through School Stability for Foster Youth Assemblymember Quirk-Silva

SUMMARY

Children and youth removed from their home as a result of abuse or neglect and placed in foster care are eligible to remain in their school to promote school stability and improve educational outcomes. These “school of origin rights” include funding reimbursement to the caregiver for transporting a child to school as part of the foster care maintenance payment once they are approved as a resource family. Children and youth placed with emergency caregivers (usually relatives) prior to approval as a resource family must wait many months before they begin to receive funding to transport the child to their school of origin.

ISSUE

Caregivers are entitled to reimbursement for providing transportation to a child’s school of origin once they are approved as a resource family. However, transportation funding does not begin until the caregiver is approved through the resource family approval (RFA) process. This means children and youth placed with emergency caregivers (usually relatives) prior to RFA must wait many months before they begin to receive funding to transport the child to their school of origin. RFA currently takes an average of 120 days to complete –nearly a three-quarters of a school year. Without financial support to cover the cost of transportation, it is often untenable for families to transport a child to their school of origin.

Without immediate access to transportation reimbursement, children often end up changing schools when they change placements; preventing them from exercising their right to remain in their school of origin, disrupting community connections, and further compounding their trauma.

Students in the California foster care system have the poorest outcomes of any subgroup (51% of foster youth graduate high school compared to the 84% state average), due in part to the fact that youth in care change schools an average of eight times while in care, losing four to six months of educational progress with each move. Studies also consistently show that school stability is critical for academic achievement and social/emotional wellbeing.

THIS BILL

AB 337 will enhance educational outcomes and promote school and placement stability by ensuring that foster children who qualify for education transportation reimbursement receive that support at the time of placement, even if the emergency caregiver has not yet completed resource family approval.

In addition, AB 337 requires that all caregivers, including emergency caregivers with placement prior to completing RFA, receive notification of their right to receive funding for the costs of transporting a child in foster care to their school of origin. The bill requires this notification to caregivers at the time of placement or within three business days after identifying the school in which the child or nonminor dependent is enrolled.

SUPPORT

- Alliance for Children’s Rights (**Co-sponsor**)
- California Youth Connection (**Co-sponsor**)

CONTACT

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