

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Welcome

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Day 1

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Every Student Succeeds Act Overview

Agenda

Activity

History

Why ESSA implementation

Basic Overview

Activity Guide

Every Student Succeeds Act History

- ESSA

- (2015) Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- (2016) Changes related to students in foster care
- Measure accountability & student performance
- Shared responsibility of SEA, LEA & child welfare organizations
- Foster care education requirements should mirror each other:
 - Federal child welfare law
 - Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoptions Act
 - Texas Education Code



ESSA, Fostering Connections and Texas Law

EDUCATIONAL RIGHT FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE	ESSA	FOSTERING CONNECTIONS ACT	TEXAS LAW
Right to remain enrolled in same school upon entering foster care	✓	✓	✓
Right to remain enrolled in same school while in foster care	✓	✓	✓
Right to remain enrolled in the same school after exiting foster care			✓
Right to remain enrolled in the same school until completing the highest grade offered at the school			✓
When it is not in the child's best interest to remain enrolled in the same school, immediate enrollment in a new school	✓	✓	✓ (3 days under Texas law, but 2 days under DFPS policy and contract)
Enrollment in a school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required	✓		✓
Prompt records transfer when school move occurs	✓	✓	✓ (10 working days)

ESSA, Fostering Connections & The Law

EDUCATIONAL RIGHT FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE	ESSA	FOSTERING CONNECTIONS ACT	TEXAS LAW
Designated points of contact for cross-agency collaboration to support school stability for students *Child Welfare Agency (CWA)	✓ (If the CWA notifies the LEA in writing, then the LEA will notify the CWA of their POC).		✓ (LEA Foster Care Liaisons already identified in AskTED)
Clear, written school transportation procedures	✓		
Assurance that each foster care placement will consider current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled		✓	
State educational agencies (SEAs) to calculate graduation and dropout rates and include students in foster care on the Federal State Report Card submitted to USDE	✓		✓ (Texas law requires students in foster care to be captured in PEIMS, which is necessary to fulfill ESSA data reporting requirements.)

ESSA: Basic Overview

EDUCATIONAL STABILITY PROVISIONS IN ESSA - BASIC OVERVIEW

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN	The school in which the student was enrolled upon entry into foster care or any subsequent placement change.
EDUCATION BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION	The decision-making process that determines what school setting is best for the child. ESSA requires educators and child welfare systems to work together and collaboratively determine which school setting is in the child's best interest, whenever possible.
STREAMLINED TRANSITIONS	The process for ensuring a student seamlessly transitions from one school to another, in the event of a school move (<i>see Chapter 11: The School Experience, on page 117</i>).
DESIGNATED POINTS OF CONTACT (POC)	A person who has been appointed by TEA, the LEA, or DFPS to coordinate the educational needs of students in foster care.
TRANSPORTATION	LEAs and DFPS must work together to ensure that a child promptly receives transportation to their school of origin when a determination is made that remaining in the school is in the child's best interest.
DISPUTE RESOLUTION	A process between education and child welfare systems to resolve disputes concerning education best interest decisions or transportation planning for a student in foster care to continue attending the school of origin.
DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING	ESSA requires disaggregated data on students in foster care, including academic achievement, dropout, and graduation information. ¹⁰⁰ Previous reauthorizations, including No Child Left Behind, did not require this information to be collected, disaggregated, and reported by TEA.

ESSA Activity

Locate persons
(up to 4 people) at
another table and
discuss:

What is your district
doing to ensure ESSA
implementation?

What are your
policies and
procedures for ESSA
implementation?

Share what has
worked and not
worked with your
ESSA implementation.

Questions



Agenda

Overview Requirements

- ESSA
- Title I- Part A

Resources Available

- TASB document: Student Welfare Student Support Services (FFC Regulation)
- TASB document: Individual Transportation Planning Template (Exhibit B)
- USDE Non-Regulatory Guidance
- Foster Care Guide Reference (Chapter 8)

Panel: Best practices from LEAs & DFPS Education Specialist

Q&A Session

Frequent Scenarios: Building an Understanding



ESSA and Transportation Planning

- Procedures will also ensure that if there are **additional costs*** incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs will provide it if:
 - The LEA is 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

20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B)(ii)

**Additional costs incurred should reflect the difference between what an LEA otherwise would spend to transport a student to his/her assigned school and the cost of transporting a child in foster care to their school of origin (USDE/HHS Non-Regulatory Guidance, p. 7-8).*

ESSA & LEA Title I Plans

- LEA Title I plans must contain assurances that LEAs will collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to:
 - Develop and implement clear written procedures for how transportation will be **provided, arranged** and **funded** to maintain students in foster care in their schools of origin, when in their best interest, for the duration of their time in foster care.

20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B)

- Procedures will ensure that students in foster care needing transportation to schools of origin will **promptly receive** transportation in a **cost-effective** manner and in accordance with section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. §675(4)(A)

20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B)(i)

LEA Transportation Procedure

Foster Care Student Identification

Procedure 2023-2024



Foster Parent/Guardian

- Fill out Student Annual Update Survey (Foster Care Survey)

PEIMS Data Specialist

- Review the Annual Update Survey
- If Foster Parent/Guardian answers yes to Question #1 or Question #2, the Campus PEIMS Data Specialist request Form 2085 from the Foster Parent/Guardian
- The Campus PEIMS Data Specialist will review Form 2085 from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and code the foster care student in PEIMS as foster care
- In the absence of Form 2085, the PEIMS Data Specialist will notify the Campus Foster Care Champion or the Social Services Specialist (assigned to the campus)

Campus Foster Care Champion or Social Services Specialist

- The Campus Foster Care Champion or Social Services Specialist will contact the Foster Parent/Guardian to request Form 2085 (If the Foster Parent/Guardian did not provide Form 2085 to the PEIMS Data Specialist)
- The Campus Foster Care Champion or Social Services Specialist will complete the Foster Care Enrollment & Withdrawal Checklist
- If the foster care student needs transportation, the Campus Foster Care Champion or Social Services Specialist will complete the Bus Transportation Request Form
- The Campus Foster Care Champion or Social Services Specialist will contact the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Caseworker and Foster Care Parent/Guardian to provide their contact information and conduct a needs assessment
- Ensure that students in foster care receive school nutrition and meal programs without further application
- The Campus Foster Care Champion will fill out the google doc shared by the District Foster Care Champion and update the documentation in their foster care binder

District Foster Care Champion

- Provide ongoing training and support to the PEIMS Data Specialists, Campus Foster Care Champions, and Social Services Specialists
- Audit Foster Care binders semi-annually
- Review google doc and submit monthly foster care report to Principals, Campus Foster Care Champions, PEIMS Data Specialists, Social Services Specialists, and Director of Student Nutrition Services
- Collaborate with Region 6A-Harris County DFPS Education Specialist to keep updated on the Foster Care & Student Success - Education Laws and Guidance

What are your district's protocols for transportation for students in foster care?

- Completing a Bus Transportation Request Form to inform our transportation department about the need for
 - (a.) Regular Transportation or
 - (b.) Special Education Transportation; once we have verified that the foster care student is not within the walk zone.
- The transportation form will be completed by the Registrar/PEIMS Data Specialist/Counselor and sent to the transportation department.
- A copy of the form will be provided to the foster care parent and emailed to the District Foster Care Champion.

Do you have written transportation plans for students in foster care?

- Yes. We utilize a Google document to track our students in foster care. Along with the foster care transportation form.

What best practices are you willing to share for transportation for students in foster care?

- Include all systems of care when working with students in foster care who need transportation.
- Each person/agency involved plays a critical role in ensuring the academic, social, and emotional success of students in foster care by working collaboratively to ensure foster care students are transported to school based on their individual needs for transportation services.

Pause to Process



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Transportation Resources



Resources Overview

TASB Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation)

TASB Student Welfare, Student Support Services (Exhibit B)

USDE Non-Regulatory Guidance

Foster Care Guide

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 1

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	FFC (REGULATION)
Transportation of Students in Foster Care	The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) addresses additional protections for students in foster care and establishes a system of joint responsibility for school districts, the state education agency, and the state and local child welfare agencies to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care. [See TEA's Foster Care & Student Success website at http://tea.texas.gov/FosterCareStudent-Success/resources/ for resources, including a detailed Q&A document, and the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services' <i>Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care</i> at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/edhhsfostercarenonregulatorguide.pdf.] ESSA requires each Texas school district to collaborate with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop and implement clear, written procedures for how transportation to maintain a student in foster care in his or her school of origin (unless it is not in the student's best interest) will be provided, arranged, and funded. The procedures must ensure that the transportation will be provided promptly, in a cost-effective manner, in accordance with federal child welfare Title IV-E funding requirements [section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675(4)(A))], and ensure that if there are any additional costs incurred in providing transportation to maintain the student in his or her school of origin, the District will provide the transportation if: • The child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the District for the additional costs; • The District agrees to pay the additional costs; or • The child welfare agency and District agency split the additional costs. By December 10, 2016, and annually thereafter as directed by TEA, the District must provide an assurance to TEA in the District's Title I Plan and eGrants application that the district has transportation procedures meeting the above requirements.
Definitions Additional Costs	"Additional costs" reflect the difference between what the District would spend to transport a student to the assigned school and the cost of transporting a student in foster care to his or her school of origin. Title I, Part A funds may be used to pay for additional transportation costs in Title I districts.
School of Origin	The school of origin is the school in which a student is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care or a change in placement. A student in foster care is entitled to remain enrolled in his or her school of origin unless it is determined not to be in the student's best interest to stay at that school. Texas law allows a student in
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Transportation of Students in Foster Care

- Addresses additional protections for students in foster care
- Establishes a system of joint responsibility for school districts, state education agencies, and state & local child welfare agencies to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care.

Definitions

- Additional Costs
- School of Origin

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 2

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	FFC (REGULATION)
	foster care to remain at the school of origin through the highest grade level offered by that school, even if the student exits foster care.
Best-Interest Determination	DFPS makes the final decision regarding whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in the school of origin. District staff may be asked to provide information on the "educational best interest" of the student to support education decision-making based on what is best for the student academically, including social and emotional development. [See FFC(EXHIBIT) for educational best-interest factors.] The federal <i>Non-Regulatory Guidance</i> provides a list of factors that should be considered in determining the student's educational best interest. Transportation costs or funding cannot be considered as a factor in making the best-interest determination.
District Foster Care Liaison	The District foster care liaison is a District employee who facilitates the enrollment in or transfer to a public school of a student in the District who is in the conservatorship of the state. The District's foster care liaison is considered the designated point of contact for collaboration with DFPS on transportation procedures. The District has designated the following staff person as the District foster care liaison in the TEAAskTED system: Name: _____ Position: _____ E-mail: _____ Address: _____ Phone number: _____
Foster Care	Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parent or guardian and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, homes of relatives and kin, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child-care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.
Child Welfare Agency	In Texas, the DFPS is the relevant child welfare agency for collaboration on transportation procedures. Child Protective Services (CPS) is the division of DFPS that works with districts on issues related to students in foster care.
Child Welfare Contact	A district receiving Title I, Part A funds must collaborate with the DFPS-designated contact, including efforts to develop transportation procedures, if DFPS notifies a district, in writing, that the agency has designated an employee to serve as a point of contact
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Definitions continued:

- Best Interest Determination
- District Foster Care Liaison
- Foster Care
- Child Welfare Agency
- Child Welfare Contact

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 3

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC (REGULATION)

	for the district. CPS regional education specialists and CPS service program administrators will serve as the points of contact in each region. Contact information for these individuals is located on the DFPS, CPS webpage at https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/State_Care/education.asp and http://tea.texas.gov/Foster-CareStudentSuccess/resources/ .
Title IV-E Funds	The Social Security Act allows federal child welfare Title IV-E funds to be used for food, clothing, shelter, and reasonable travel for the student in foster care to remain in the school in which the student is enrolled at the time of placement. These funds are part of the caregiver reimbursement rates for children placed in a foster home; however, children in foster care who are placed with a relative or kin may not be eligible for Title IV-E funds. Because there is currently not a mechanism for direct reimbursement or distribution to school districts of Title IV-E funds, districts are encouraged to consider other funding mechanisms for additional transportation costs to the school of origin.
General Transportation Procedures	To ensure that transportation is provided promptly when it is determined that a student in foster care will remain in the school of origin, the District has developed the following transportation procedures. These procedures provide a mechanism for providing transportation in the event of a dispute between the District and DFPS over the payment of any additional costs incurred in providing transportation, and they will guide the development of an individual transportation plan for a student needing transportation to his or her school of origin. The District must ensure transportation is provided to the school of origin while any disputes regarding additional costs are resolved. In developing these procedures, the District has taken the following steps to involve the DFPS child welfare contact and the CPS regional director: <i>(List all outreach efforts to DFPS. To fulfill ESSA assurance requirements, TEA recommends that the District document all outreach and internal and external planning with DFPS on the development of transportation procedures.)</i> The following District staff were involved in the development of these procedures: <i>(Adjust to reflect District participants, which may include the Title I director, the foster care liaison, the transportation director, the McKinney-Vento homeless liaison, the special education director, other relevant federal programs staff, and anyone needed for final approval.)</i>
Funding Strategies	The District and DFPS have identified the following funding options that may be implemented if additional costs to transport a student in foster care to the school of origin are determined, including when there is a dispute over the payment of those additional costs:

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Definitions continued:

■ Title IV-E Funds

General Transportation Procedures

- To ensure that transportation is provided promptly when it is determined that a student in foster care will remain in the school of origin
- Guides the development of an individual transportation plan for a student needing transportation to his or her school of origin.
- Funding Strategies

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 4

General Transportation Procedures continued

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC (REGULATION)

[Adjust the items below to include those agreed upon by the District and DFPS. Consider any cost-sharing strategies that the District has used successfully with neighboring districts in transporting students who are homeless to and from their school of origin or any other programs where transportation costs are shared.]

- Cost sharing between the District and DFPS through use of a specific transportation strategy in which each party is responsible for a segment of the transportation;
- Offset of costs by DFPS, such as using Title IV-E funds paid to a foster parent or caregiver for transportation;
- Cost sharing between the school district of attendance and the school district where the student is living;
- Use of the District's Title I funds;
- Use of Medicaid reimbursements if an individualized education program (IEP) for a student receiving special education services will include transportation as a related service;
- Use of any available grant funds; and
- *[Other].*

Transportation Strategies

The following transportation strategies may be considered in achieving transportation to a student's school of origin:

[Adjust the items below to include those agreed upon by the District and DFPS. Consider any strategies that have been used successfully to transport students who are homeless to and from their school of origin and effective practices currently used to share transportation costs with neighboring districts, community partners, or others.]

- Arranging transportation by the foster parent or caregiver to the school of origin or to a bus stop on a route to the school of origin, such as when the foster parent lives within a certain distance from the school of origin;
- Arranging transportation by a relative or another adult approved by DFPS with whom the student has a relationship and whose existing commute aligns with the student's transportation need to the school of origin or a bus stop on a route to the school of origin;
- Maximizing the existing District transportation system by exploring ways the student can be transported to an existing bus stop that serves the school of origin (options to transport the

- Transportation Strategies that may be considered in achieving transportation to a student's school of origin.
- Consider any strategies that have been used successfully to transport students who are homeless to and from their school of origin and effective practices currently used to share transportation costs with neighboring districts, community partners, or others.

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 5

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC (REGULATION)

student to an existing bus stop could occur through use of public transportation with a bus pass or transportation voucher, or transportation by the foster parent or caregiver, a relative, or another adult approved by DFPS with whom the student has a relationship);

- Using existing intradistrict transportation options that allow students to be transported within the District, such as routes for students who are homeless, students attending magnet programs, or students receiving special education services (this option may require the addition of a bus stop on an existing route or that an existing route be rerouted to accommodate the transportation needs);
- Coordinating with the district in which the student is living to provide transportation to District boundaries or an existing bus stop within the District;
- Evaluating whether an IEP for a student receiving special education services will include transportation to the student's special education program at the school of origin as a related service;
- Contracting with a private transportation company, such as a taxi service, for the student's transportation needs;
- Using public transportation with a bus pass or transportation voucher;
- Adding a District transportation route; or
- [Other].

Individual Transportation Plan

Unless DFPS determines that it is not in the best interest of a student in foster care to remain in the school of origin, the District foster care liaison will take steps to promptly collaborate with relevant DFPS staff, including the DFPS child welfare contact, on how transportation to the school of origin will be provided, arranged, and funded.

When possible, and to allow for adequate consideration of the student's needs, individual transportation planning will begin in advance of placement changes and will occur in coordination with the consultation on the student's educational best interest. [See FFC(EXHIBIT) for educational best-interest factors.]

The District foster care liaison will convene a meeting to establish an individualized transportation plan for the student. The liaison will attempt to include the student's DFPS education decision-maker and others who may be involved in education decision-making for

General Transportation Procedures continued

- Individual Transportation Plan
- The District foster care liaison will convene a meeting to establish an individualized transportation plan for the student.
- District foster care liaison will take steps to promptly collaborate with relevant DFPS staff, including the DFPS child welfare contact.

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 6

STUDENT WELFARE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	FFC (REGULATION)
	the student, such as the student's caseworker, foster parent or caregiver, and the court-appointed special advocate (CASA). The District foster care liaison may also involve other District staff, as appropriate. The liaison will involve the District transportation director if the individual transportation plan will involve adjustments to existing bus routes. If necessary, the District foster care liaison will identify a short-term transportation strategy that may be used until the final transportation plan is completed so that the student can remain at the school of origin without interruption. In evaluating transportation options to the school of origin, participants will prioritize student safety, cost effectiveness, reliability, and time and distance of the commute.
Determining Additional Costs	To identify whether additional costs will be incurred in an individual transportation plan to transport the student to the school of origin, the foster care liaison will consult with the District transportation director to calculate the cost of transporting the student to the school that the student would otherwise attend, which will be used as a comparison. In accordance with the federal <i>Non-Regulatory Guidance</i>, if the District is able to provide transportation through an established bus route, there are no additional costs. If the District will reroute buses or provide transportation through a private vehicle or transportation company, the District may consider as additional costs the cost of rerouting buses or the difference between the special transportation costs and the usual transportation costs.
Individual Transportation Plan Elements	The individual transportation plan may include: • A daily transportation strategy; • One or more backup transportation strategies; • Transportation strategies to allow participation in after-school and extracurricular activities; • A description of the funding strategy that will be used if additional costs to transport the student to the school of origin are identified; • Identification of who is responsible for each aspect of the transportation strategy; • Designation of an adult to accompany younger students, if necessary, such as when public transportation is used; • For transportation strategies with multiple segments, sign off procedures to ensure that the student safely and successfully completes each segment;
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General Transportation Procedures continued

- Determining Additional Costs
- Individual Transportation Plan Elements

TASB: Student Welfare, Student Support Services (FFC Regulation) - Page 7

Individual Transportation Plan Elements

The individual transportation plan may include:

- A daily transportation strategy;
- One or more backup transportation strategies;
- Transportation strategies to allow participation in after-school and extracurricular activities;
- A description of the funding strategy that will be used if additional costs to transport the student to the school of origin are identified;
- Identification of who is responsible for each aspect of the transportation strategy;
- Designation of an adult to accompany younger students, if necessary, such as when public transportation is used;
- For transportation strategies with multiple segments, sign off procedures to ensure that the student safely and successfully completes each segment;
- A communication protocol between the District and DFPS when transportation for a student is no longer needed; and
- A regular review process for adjusting transportation strategies when circumstances change.

The final individual transportation plan will require a signature by the foster care liaison and a District official who has authority to approve any additional expenditures. The DFPS education decision-maker and the foster parent or caregiver, if different from the education decision-maker, will also be asked to sign the plan.

General Transportation Procedures continued

- Individual Transportation Plan Elements
- The final individual transportation plan will require a signature by the foster care liaison and a District official who has the authority to approve any additional expenditures.

Exhibit B – Individual Transportation Planning Template for Students in Foster Care

STUDENT WELFARE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC
(EXHIBIT)

**Exhibit B—Individual Transportation Plan Template
for Student in Foster Care**

Note: For additional guidance, see the Texas Education Agency's [Foster Care and Student Success website](#)¹ and the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services' [Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care](#).²

Based on the determination that it is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin, this plan addresses how transportation to the school of origin will be provided, arranged, and funded. The goal of this plan is to allow the student to remain in the school of origin without interruption.

In developing this transportation plan, participants evaluated student safety, cost effectiveness, reliability, and time and distance of the commute. Efforts were made to avoid or mitigate any additional costs.

Student Information

Student's name: _____

Student's grade level: _____

Student's foster parent or caregiver: _____

Student's school of origin: _____

Address at which student is currently living: _____

School that the student would attend based on current address: _____

Participants in Plan Development

The following District personnel were involved in the development of this plan:
[List the names and positions as appropriate.]

District foster care liaison: _____

Title I director: _____

Transportation director: _____

McKinney-Vento homeless liaison: _____

Special education director: _____

Principal at school of origin: _____

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- To guide education and child welfare parties in the transportation planning, whenever transportation is needed.
- Recommend utilizing for all transportation planning arrangements
- Helps to clarify needs and expectations.
- 5 Planning Sections
- 4-page tool/resource
- Located on TEA and TASB's websites.

Exhibit B – Individual Transportation Plan Template for Students in Foster Care

Additional Costs of Transportation

- Additional costs description
- Estimate of transportation costs to the assigned school
- Estimate of providing transportation under plan
- Assessment if there are ‘additional’ transportation costs.
- Describe how additional costs will be funded and what funding sources are available.

Note: Additional costs reflect the difference between what the District would spend to transport a student to the assigned school and the cost of transporting a student in foster care to his or her school of origin. In accordance with the federal *Non-Regulatory Guidance*, if the District is able to provide transportation through an established bus route, there are no additional costs. If the District will reroute buses or provide transportation through a private vehicle or transportation company, the District may consider as additional costs the cost of rerouting buses or the difference between the special transportation costs and the usual transportation costs.

Additional Costs of Transportation

As a comparison for determining whether additional costs will be incurred in transporting the student to the school of origin, the cost of transporting the student to the school that the student would otherwise attend is estimated to be: _____.

The cost estimate of providing transportation under this plan is estimated to be: _____.

Thus, the cost of providing daily transportation for the student to the school of origin under this plan (*does/does not*) require additional costs. These additional costs will be funded in the following manner:

[Describe how the additional costs will be funded and what funding sources are available.]

Exhibit B – Individual Transportation Plan Template for Students in Foster Care

Transportation

[For each situation below, describe details of the transportation method. Identify which individuals are responsible for each segment of the commute, including whether an adult will be needed to accompany younger students on any segments; sign-off procedures to ensure that the student successfully completes each segment; and the like.]

Until the daily transportation method can be fully implemented, immediate transportation to the school of origin will be provided in the following manner:

Daily transportation to the school of origin will be provided in the following manner:

If it is known in advance that the daily transportation method will not be available, transportation will be provided in the following manner:

Should the daily transportation method not be available based on an unanticipated event, the following steps will be initiated to ensure that the student is able to get to school on time:

[Describe the steps that should be taken, by whom, and by what time.]

The student participates in after-school activities on the following days that require adjustments to the daily transportation method:

[Describe the days and times of after-school activities.]

Transportation

- Plan for the short term, while route being established.
- Daily transportation plan
- Alternate option, if not available
- How to plan for unanticipated events
- Steps for ensuring student is able to get to school on time.
- After school activities

Exhibit B – Individual Transportation Plan Template for Students in Foster Care

Review and Termination

This plan will be reviewed when any circumstances have changed that affect implementation of the plan and at the beginning of each semester.

Upon the student's exit from foster care, the student can remain in the school of origin until they complete the highest grade level offered at the school. The _____
(title and name of the responsible DFPS staff) will notify the District foster care liaison so that this transportation plan may be reviewed.

Foster care liaison's signature: _____

Date: _____

Superintendent's signature: _____

Date: _____

(Or signature of other District official who has authority to approve any additional expenditures required by this plan.)

DFPS education decision-maker's signature: _____

Date: _____

Foster parent or caregiver's signature (if different from the education decision-maker): _____

Date: _____

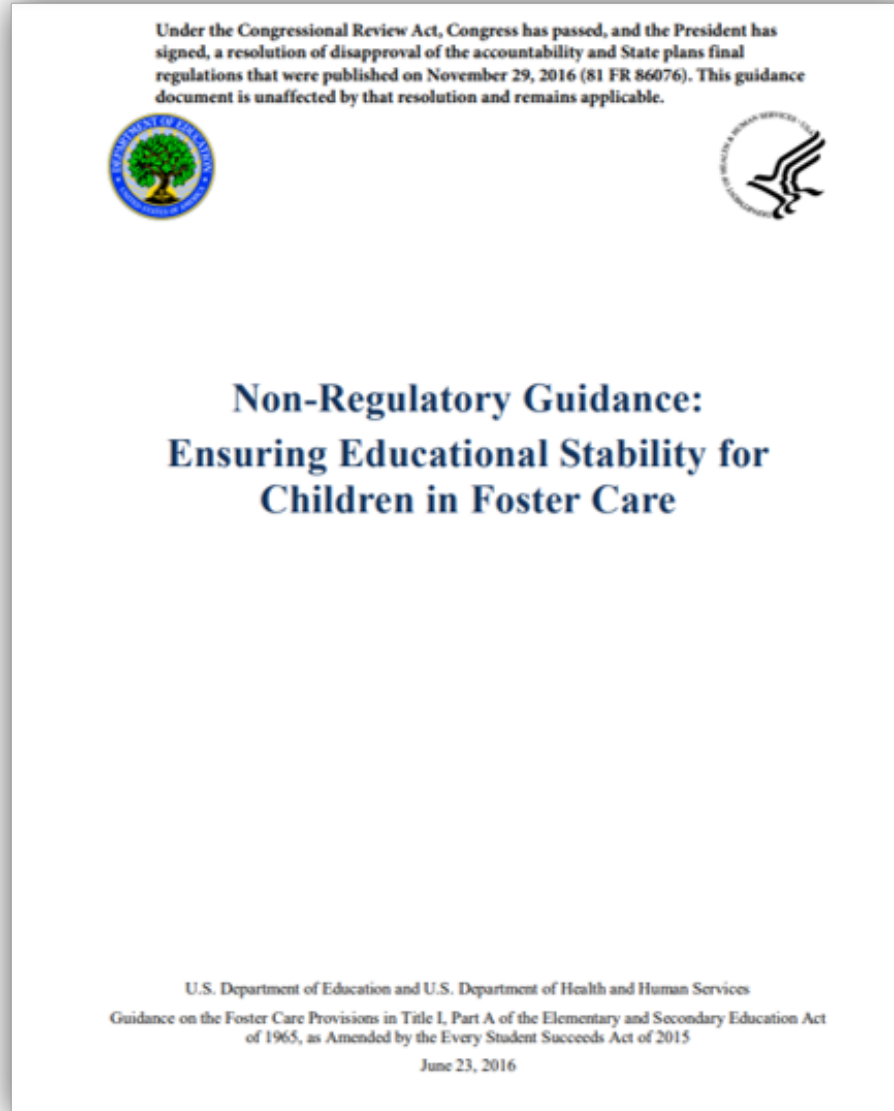
¹ Texas Education Agency's Foster Care and Student Success website: <http://tea.texas.gov/Foster-CareStudentSuccess/>

² Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/edhhsfostercarenonregulatorguide.pdf>

Review and Termination

- Review of plan when circumstances change, at the beginning of each semester.
- Signatures from FC Liaison; Superintendent/District Official; DFPS Education-Decision-Maker; Foster parent or caregiver.

USDE Non-Regulatory Guidance – Foster Care



- Transportation questions (numbers 21-32)
- <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/edhhsfostercarenonregulatorguide.pdf>

Foster Care Guide – Resource Reference

- Who is responsible for coordinating & funding transportation of students in foster care to their school of origin?



Under ESSA, LEAs & DFPS are responsible to coordinate & promptly ensure that students receive transportation to their school of origin, when needed.



LEAs receiving Title I funds are required to develop & implement clear written procedures in coordination with DFPS, when determining how transportation to the school of origin will be provided, arranged & funded.



Procedures must ensure that transportation will be provided promptly & in a cost-effective manner.

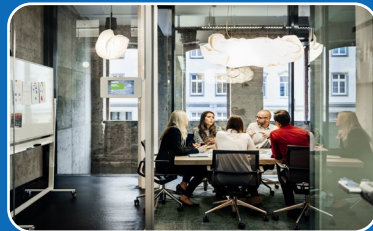
- If there are any additional costs for transporting a student to the school of origin, the LEA must provide transportation if:
 - DFPS agrees to reimburse the LEA for the additional transportation cost,
 - The LEA agrees to pay for the additional transportation, or
 - The LEA & DFPS agree to share the additional transportation cost.

Foster Care Transportation - Continued

- Who is responsible for coordinating & funding transportation of students in foster care to their school of origin?



LEAs should review their transportation plans and procedures annually with DFPS.



In some instances, LEAs may coordinate with other LEAs across neighboring school and district attendance zones.

Transportation Panel Questions



Tell us about how foster care transportation works in your LEA/DFPS?



What are your districts' protocols for transportation for students in foster care? Do you have any policies in place to support this? What about at DFPS?



What are some tips for LEA FC Liaisons and working with the transportation department? What are tips from a DFPS perspective in partnering with the school on transportation coordination?



What are some of the barriers/and or challenges that impact transportation planning? What about for DFPS?



What best practices are you willing to share regarding transportation to support students in foster care?

Questions



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Designated Points of Contact

Agenda

Overview

Designated
Points of Contact

- LEA POC

DFPS Education
Specialist

ESSA Document

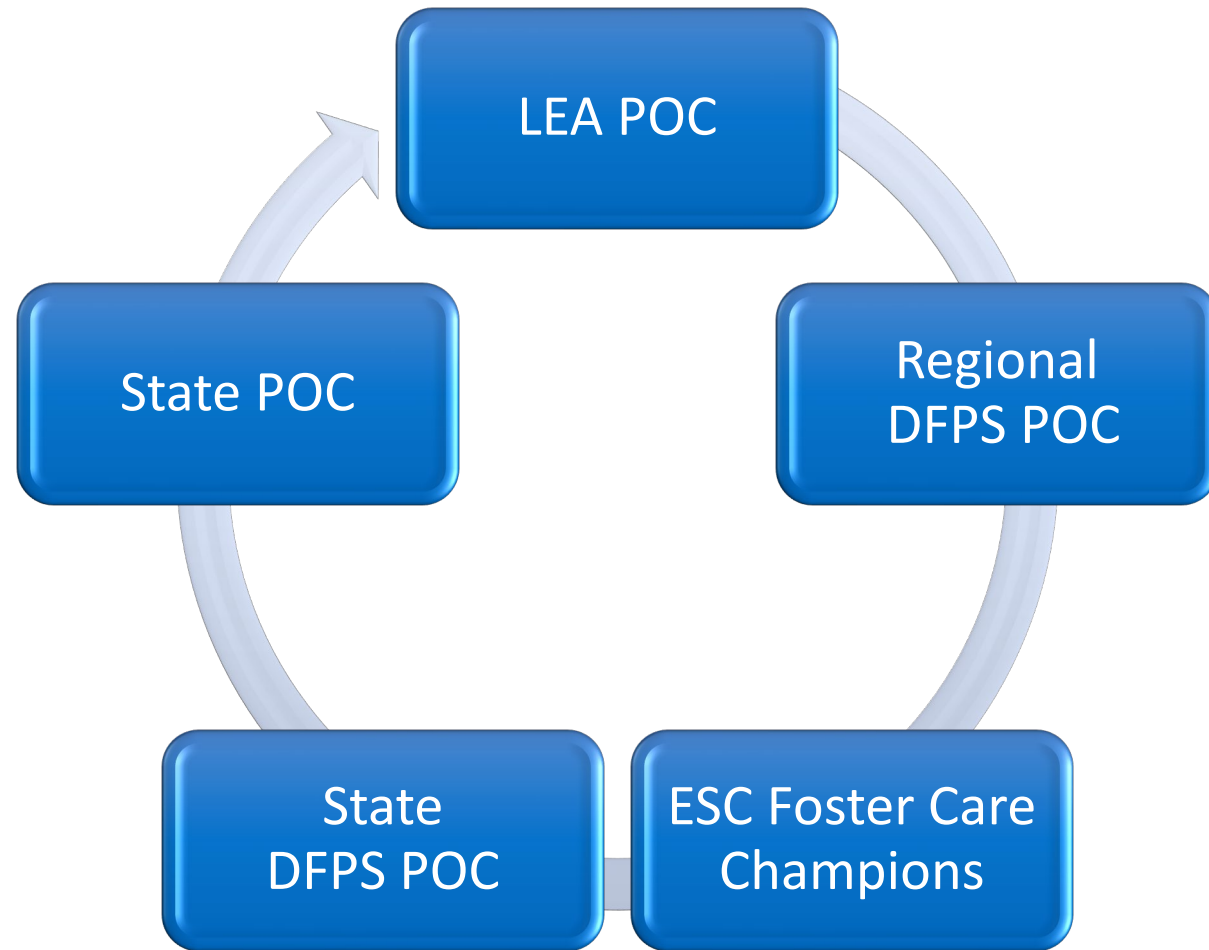
Community
Breakout

ESSA

Federal law requires Local Education Agency (LEAs) to designate an ESSA Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) to coordinate with the local child welfare agency concerning immediate enrollment, education best interest, transportation, collaboration and other ESSA requirements that support school stability for students in foster care.

State law states that each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall appoint at least one employee to act as a liaison to facilitate the enrollment in or transfer to a public school of a child in the district who is in the conservatorship of the state.

Points of Contact (POC)



Designated Points of Contact

TEA has a designated ESSA Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) to support ESSA Foster Care requirements.

This POC is separate from the McKinney-Vento POC.

The DFPS Education Specialist in DFPS State Office serves as the state POC.

DFPS Education Specialist coordinates with TEA Foster Care POC as well as DFPS regional education specialists.

Local Education Agencies Points of Contact

- LEA Foster Care (POC) is responsible for building capacity and infrastructure within their district to support students in foster care and ensure LEAs fulfill both state and federal educational requirements.
- Certain education professionals at the LEA may be a natural fit considering their job responsibilities:
 - Authority to champion or lead multi-departmental efforts
 - Work with mobile students or special populations
 - Serve as a high-level administrator
 - Directors and leaders in student support services
 - Counselor administrators

Database for State Foster Care Point of Contact

Highly Mobile and At-Risk (HMAR) Programs | TEA's AskTED Database System 

Introduction

AskTED is an online directory of Texas school information, including charter schools. The directory is primarily used by people seeking contact information for schools, districts, and education service centers. AskTED is a real-time database that is updated regularly by Texas LEAs.

To that end, Texas School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools are required to have both Homeless and Foster Care Liaisons as individual designated roles for all LEAs. The information must be maintained and stored in AskTED. It is important for LEAs to keep this information regularly updated, so that McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Liaison information is publicly available, and these points of contacts are available to support students and remove barriers related to school transitions and mobility.

Submitting or Updating Liaison Information

Each LEA needs to ensure the contact information for their designated liaison is current and up to date throughout the school year. When information needs to be updated (e.g., change of designated staff, phone number, or email address), these changes need to be submitted to the AskTED database.

- For school districts, changes and/or submissions will be completed to TEA through each school district's AskTED administrator.
- For charter schools, AskTED updates are to be emailed directly to the Charter School Division at TEA at CharterSchools@tea.state.tx.us. More information can be found here for [Charter Schools](#).

Steps to Search for Liaison Information

There are two (2) ways to access AskTED.

- Go to [TEA Webpage](#) → Select AskTED from Popular Applications in the dark blue menu at the top.



- Navigate directly to [AskTED Webpage](#).

When on AskTED homepage, users can use the drop-down menus at the top of the page to access the Texas Education Directory Customized Reports and Data Files. Under the 'Search by' menu, you will find searches for School, District, County, Region, and Texas.

Updated September 2024 1

- TEA, [AskTED Directory](#). You can view and download district and charter school foster care liaison contact information in AskTED. Information is available by district, region, and county.
- TEA, [Guidance on Locating Foster Care Liaison Information in AskTED](#).

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Education Service Center Foster Care Champions



Education Service Center Foster Care Champions

ESC Region	Name	Email
Region 1	Manual Salinas	Mansalinas@esc1.net
Region 2	Veronica Benavides-Gonzales	Veronica.benavides-gonzales@esc2.us
Region 3	Kaitlin Sulak	Ksulak@esc3.net
Region 4	LaShonda Evans Twiana Collier	Lashonda.evans@esc4.net Twiana.collier@esc4.net
Region 5	Brenda Thompson	Brendat@esc5.net
Region 6	Albert H. Archuleta	Aarchuleta@esc6.net
Region 7	Tara Evers	Tevers@esc7.net
Region 8	Nikki Jones	Njones@reg8.net
Region 9	Taniqua Blakely	Taniqua.blakely@esc9.net
Region 10	Anne Caldwell	Anne.caldwell@region10.org
Region 11	Lesley Cathey	Lcathey@esc11.net
Region 12	Amberly Walker	Awalker@esc12.net
Region 13	Jerretta Jimmerson Davenport Cheryl Myers	Jerretta.jimmersondavenport@esc13.txed.net Cheryl.myers@esc13.txed.net
Region 14	Tina Haywood	Thaywood@esc14.net
Region 15	Lesley Casarez	Lesley.casarez@esc15.net
Region 16	Lawana Pulliam	Lawana.pulliam@esc16.net
Region 17	Anna Phillips Scotta Knight	Aphillips@esc17.net Sknight@esc17.net
Region 18	Sharla Gersbach	Sharla.gersbach@esc18.net
Region 19	Kimberly Guerrero Jacquelyn Ross	Koguerrero@esc19.net Jrosas@esc19.net
Region 20	Lisa Ranallo	Lisa.ranallo@esc20.net

DFPS Education Specialist

Roles of the Education Specialist:

- Communicate and advocate for educational needs
- Focus on ensuring academic records are tracked
- Participate in Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) conferences
- Create better educational outcomes for youth in foster care
- Trainings/Consortiums

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

DFPS State & Regional Points of Contact

Region	Specialist	Phone Number
1	Pauline Taylor	(806) 786-4961
2	Terri Powdrill	(325) 340-2873
3E	Jorge Sanchez	(512) 460-8730
3W	Blythe Ortega	(817) 781-0217
4	Kathy Thurman	(903) 440-3339
5	Keri Louviere	(409) 221-1589
6A Harris County only	Felicia Bennett Chambers	(832) 454-5874
6B All other counties	Jennifer Heimbach	(936) 524-0693
7	Tammy Lee	(512) 581-8132
8	Makada Ward	(210) 213-3524
9/10	Haleigh Flores	(325) 262-0527
11	Mitzi Puentes	(956) 257-6255
12 (State Office)	Felicia Penn	(737) 249-8357

DFPS State Point of Contact

- Felicia Penn, MSW, MA Ed/AET
- felicia.penn@dfps.texas.gov



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

State Education Point of Contact

- Dr. LaTrenda Watson
- fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Designated Points of Contact for Students in Foster Care Form

DFPS Guidance POC

Education and Child Welfare Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Designated Points of Contact for Students in Foster Care

ESSA requires designated points of contact for child welfare and education agencies to support school stability for students in foster care (i.e., education best-interest, transportation coordination).

Every year, the local child welfare agency must notify the local education agency (LEA) of their child welfare point of contact. After this notification is received, the LEA is required to inform the local child welfare agency of their designated point of contact in writing. The Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) Educational Specialist serves as the Child Welfare Point of Contact for ESSA purposes. Similarly, the LEA Point of Contact for ESSA, in most instances, is the LEA Foster Care Liaison. The chart below maps an annual communication process and timeline for when Points of Contact notifications occur.

Additional information about the Education and Child Welfare ESSA Points of Contact can be found in the [Foster Care & Student Success Guide, Chapter 8.](#)

DFPS Education Specialist Communication to LEAs

AUGUST:

DFPS Education Specialist sends email to the LEA Foster Care Liaison contact identified in AskTED (includes both districts and open-enrollment charter schools).

7-10 DAYS:

Upon receipt, the LEA responds to the DFPS Education Specialist with the name of the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact (who in most instances is the LEA Foster Care Liaison).

1 WEEK FOLLOW-UP:

If no response from the LEA after 10 days, DFPS resends the introduction email to the LEA Foster Care Liaison. If communication is not received back from the LEA, DFPS may contact the LEA Administration/Superintendent's Office, to receive the necessary contact information of the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact.

EXPECTATIONS:

DFPS Education Specialists will communicate via email to the LEA annually and identify themselves as the point of contact, provide their contact information to the Foster Care Liaison as a resource for any questions or concerns involving students in foster care. It is the expectations that the LEA will respond promptly with the corresponding LEA ESSA Foster Care Point of Contact information. DFPS Education Specialists should be the first point of contact to resolve any issues related to students in foster care.



**LEA Foster Care Point of Contact
Communication to DFPS Education Specialist**

AUGUST:

Receives an email from DFPS Education Specialist identifying themselves as the point of contact for questions related to students in foster care.

7-10 DAYS:

Responds to the DFPS Education Specialist with the name of the ESSA Point of Contact for their LEA. (In instances, where the LEA has designated individual campus contacts for Foster Care, also include this information in the LEA's correspondence communication with DFPS).

1 WEEK FOLLOW-UP:

If DFPS does not hear back from the LEA Foster Care Liaison, they will re-send the information and follow-up within 10 days. If they still do not hear back, they may contact the LEA Administration/Superintendent's office to request this information.

EXPECTATIONS:

LEAs are required to ensure that the Foster Care Liaison in AskTED is up to date annually. This should occur prior to August for the upcoming school year. DFPS will utilize the Foster Care Liaison contact information in AskTED to notify the LEA of the ESSA Child Welfare Point of Contact (i.e. DFPS Education Specialist). LEAs are to respond promptly, in writing, to the DFPS Education Specialist with the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact and utilize the DFPS Education Specialist for any questions or concerns related to students in foster care throughout the school year.



DFPS Introduction Letter



Commissioner
Stephanie Muth

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Greetings, District Foster Care Liaisons

We are embarking on the start of the 2023-2024 school year. I would like to take the time to reach out and introduce myself. My name is XXXXX XXXX and I am an Education Specialist with The Department of Family and Protective Services (Child Protective Services). Each DFPS/CPS region across the state has an education specialist who oversees the educational needs of the youth in foster care within their legal jurisdictions. I cover DFPS Region XX which includes XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Counties.

My role as the Regional Education Specialist is to serve as an advocate, liaison, and a resource between local school districts and DFPS staff. My goal is to provide the best educational outcomes for children in DFPS custody. Additionally, I am the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) to support ESSA Foster Care requirements. I will provide support and facilitate collaborative planning between DFPS and local education agencies. I am here to assist in any education related issues concerning students in the foster care system.

Please, feel free to contact me, at any time. I look forward to working with you this school year. If I have reached the wrong person for the district's assigned foster care liaison, feel free to direct me in the right direction.

Sincerely,
XXXXX XXXXXX
DFPS Region XX Education Specialist
Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXX
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

LEA Guidance POC

Education and Child Welfare Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Designated Points of Contact for Students in Foster Care

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Communication to DFPS Education Specialist**

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7-10 DAYS:

Responds to the DFPS Education Specialist with the name of the ESSA Point of Contact for their LEA. (In instances, where the LEA has designated individual campus contacts for Foster Care, also include this information in the LEA's correspondence communication with DFPS).

1 WEEK FOLLOW-UP:

If DFPS does not hear back from the LEA Foster Care Liaison, they will re-send the information and follow-up within 10 days. If they still do not hear back, they may contact the LEA Administration/Superintendent's office to request this information.

EXPECTATIONS:

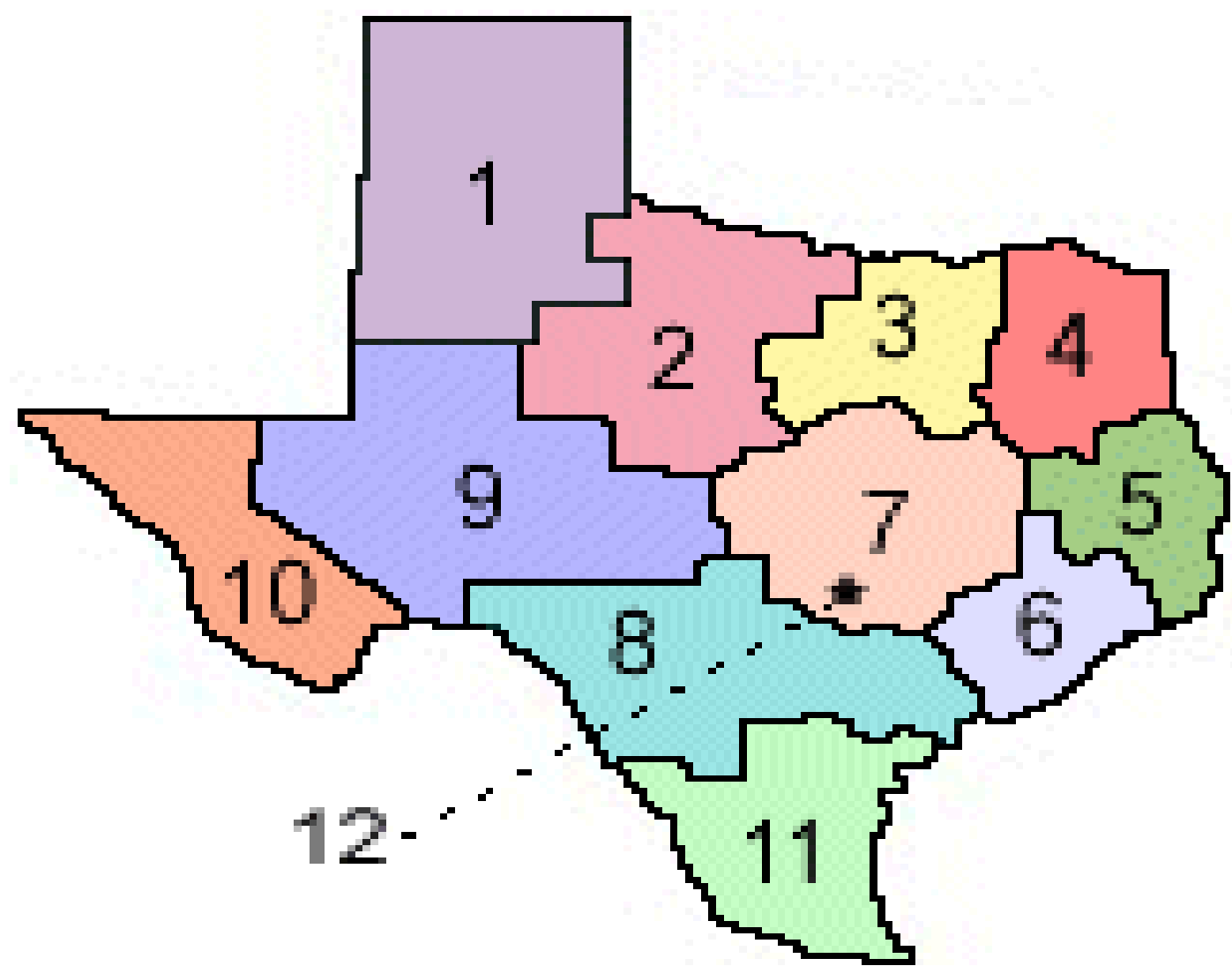
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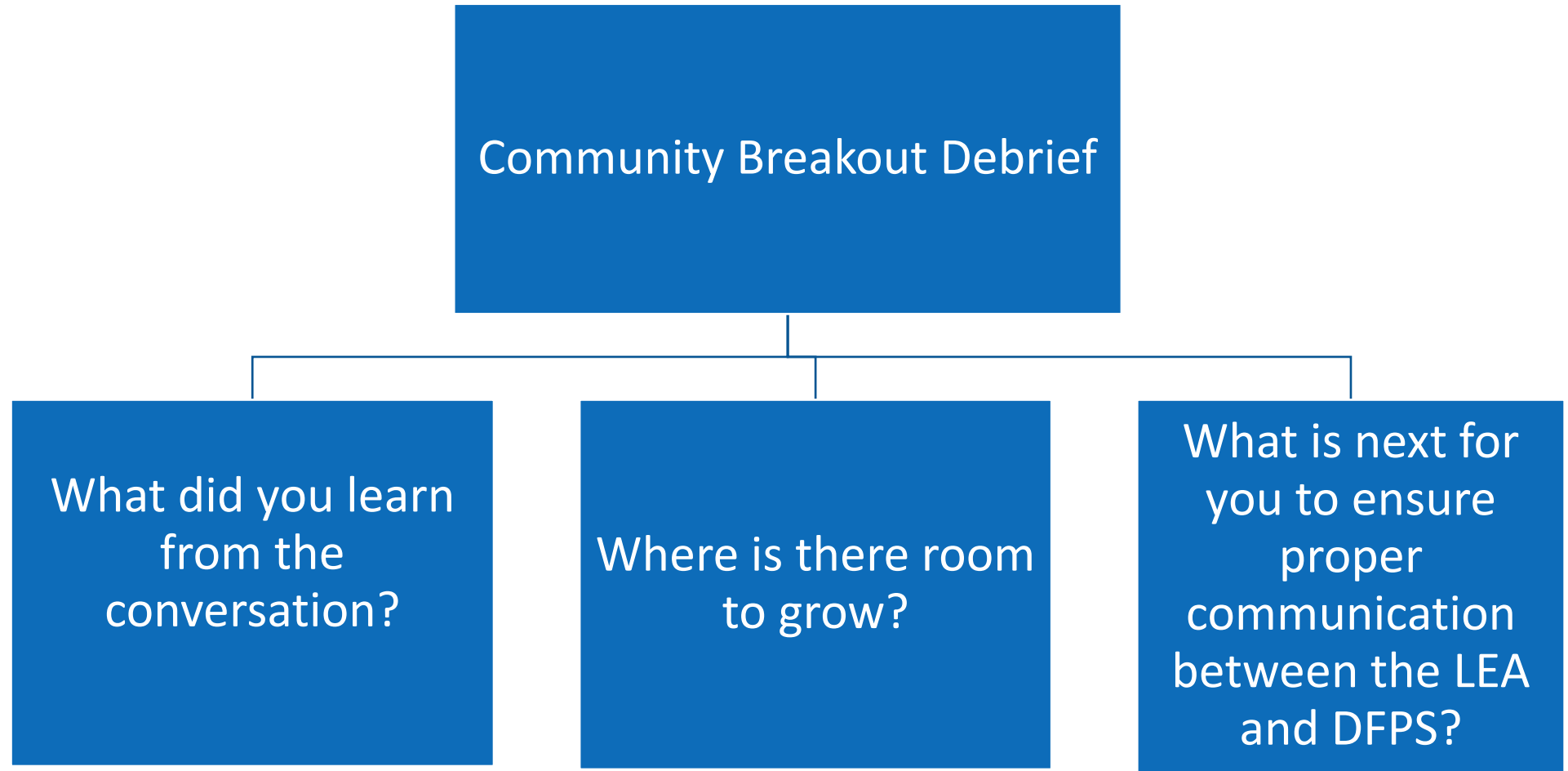
Community Breakout

- Breakout by DFPS Education Specialist County
 - Area within the room
 - Utilize the map
 - Get to know each other (brief introduction)
 - Name & Title in district or community
 - Ask an Education Specialist
- Ed Specialist lead discussion: (processes & suggestions)
 - What is working?
 - What is not working?
 - What are your district's needs?

DFPS Education Specialist



Community Breakout Debrief



Summary

Understand why communication is important between the LEA and DFPS education specialists.

The importance of LEA reporting the Point of Contact every year to AskTED.

Building a communication standard between the LEA POC and DFPS Education Specialist.

Everyone review Chapters 4,5 & 8 of the Foster Care & Student Success Guide.

Comments & Questions



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Summit Survey



https://tea.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VJDi1xfpklpA0e

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Thank you!

Questions:

fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Day 2:
September 27, 2024

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Best Interest Determination & School of Origin

Agenda

Understanding
the Foster Care
Process

Documents

Best Interest
Determination

TASB

Emergency &
Planned
Withdrawal

School of
Origin

Document

Scenarios

Activity

Summary

Foster Care Facts

- **STUDENTS COME INTO FOSTER CARE THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN AND MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED CHAOTIC, ABUSIVE, OR NEGLECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS.**

Some concerns may include prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol, witnessing domestic violence involving one or more of the student's parents or caregivers, or exposure to other abusive behavior.

- **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE OTHER STUDENTS.**

The school day can provide a sense of normalcy and be an escape from challenges students are facing in their personal and home life.

- **MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY AND SENSITIVITY IS VERY IMPORTANT.**

Students in foster care do not want to be stigmatized as “foster children” and often do not want their schools to know. Students communicate that this label has negative connotations and can feel embarrassing and shameful. Maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity is highly important. School staff must balance privacy with the need to share information to better support a student's education.

School After School

- **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE ARE OFTEN HIGHLY MOBILE.**

Due to a variety of external circumstances, students may have to relocate to new homes and communities. A student may experience several residential or school moves while in care. Residential changes and school moves may happen quickly and leave students unable to say “goodbye” to their current school, supportive adults, and peers. If school withdrawal procedures are not followed, there may be additional challenges with school transitions.

- **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE HAVE EXPERIENCED TREMENDOUS LOSS.**

Students are often separated from siblings, family members, friends, pets, and personal belongings. Loss of important education, social, cultural, and family connections are common and compound the trauma experienced. Celebratory seasonal events such as school holiday festivities and related classroom activities or assignments may inadvertently reignite feelings of loss and trigger grief for students in out-of-home care.

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Education Best Interest Determination

Every Student Succeeds Act, 2016

- When a student enters foster care or changes foster care placements, an LEA must collaborate with the appropriate Child Welfare Agency to ensure that the student remains in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that attending that school would not be in the best interest of the student.
- Federal and state laws require the student in foster care to remain in the school of origin unless it is not in the student's best interest to remain.
- Ideally the decision regarding what school is in the child's best interest will include **collaboration** between child welfare and education.

The non-regulatory guidance provided jointly by U.S. Department of ED and HHS lists several factors that should be considered in determining the child's educational best-interest.

- Preferences of the child and education decision maker(s);
- The safety of the child in the school, in relationship to the child's parent;
- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- The availability and quality of services in the school to meet the child's educational and emotional needs
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage.

Best Interest Decisions

Collaboration
between LEA &
DFPS

School of Origin

Foster Care
Liaisons

Factors related
to determination

Information from
educators about
the student

**2024 FOSTER
CARE
SUMMIT**

Education Best Interest Decision-Making & Coordination Form

Education Best Interest Decision-Making

Purpose: To outline a clearly defined process and protocol for how education and child welfare partners are to work together to make education best interest decisions, as required by the Every Student Success Act (ESSA). The following chart describes a variety of child welfare scenarios, details regarding who and when the school will be contacted, what type of information will be collected, and clarifies timelines for follow-up, and related information sharing to support collaborative educational best-interest decisions.

Result: That education and child welfare partners will have an increased understanding and road map for how to work together to support education-best interest decisions, resulting in more informed education-decisions; greater school stability; improved school transitions, when school moves occur; ultimately, creating better educational outcomes for students in foster care.

DFPS Information – Emergency School Withdrawal





Education Best Interest Decision-Making and Coordination

PURPOSE: To outline a clearly defined process and protocol for how education and child welfare partners are to work together to make education best interest decisions, as required by the Every Student Success Act (ESSA). The following chart describes a variety of child welfare scenarios, details regarding who and when the school will be contacted, what type of information will be collected and clarifies timelines for follow-up, and related information sharing to support collaborative educational best-interest decisions.

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SCENARIO: EMERGENCY SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL

CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXAMPLES:
 The student quickly moves from one residential location to another in these circumstances. The student is in immediate/ crisis situations that require swift action.
Examples include:

- Initial entry into foster care
- Immediate placement change (e.g., the student needs to live somewhere else due to court orders or safety concerns)
- Psychiatric hospital admission
- Arrest or juvenile detention

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED?
 DFPS Form 2085 or 2085E and/or Court Order.
 The caseworker or student's caregiver will notify the foster care liaison to expedite the collection of information and records to support a smooth transition to the new school.

WHAT INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS WILL BE COLLECTED BY THE SCHOOL AND PROVIDED TO DFPS/SSCC?

- TASB Exhibit A Student in Foster Care Education Best-Interest Factors
- Special education services or special accommodations (e.g., IEP or 504), such as transportation
- Information on the student's positive connections and school community supports
- Extra-curricular activities/interests
- Any other services, tutoring, general transportation arrangements
- Special endorsements

* All relevant information will be helpful to the student and DFPS to reduce trauma, identify services and support needed, and ensure education continuity.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION?

- As soon as possible
- Within 10 business day turn around

Recommendation:

- Day 1-3: foster care liaison (or other school designee) reaches out and begins gathering information
- Day 5-10, or sooner: foster care liaison (or other school designee) synthesizes information and follows up with DFPS caseworker and the student's caregiver

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
 Education Best Interest Decision will already have been made. However, schools can provide information to expedite enrollment, support streamlined transitions, and gather information to support the student.

WHO WILL CONTACT THE SCHOOL?
 Agency staff (e.g., DFPS/SSCC* caseworker or education specialist) or student's new caregiver will contact the previous school attended, by phone.

WHEN WILL CONTACT OCCUR?
 Immediately after student's placement changes. In emergency instances, the placement change most likely will have already occurred.

Foster care is a term used to describe when a child is placed outside the home with a relative, kinship, foster home, or residential placement.

KEY:

DFPS LED

LEA LED

*Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is appointed the managing conservator if a court decides it is unsafe for a child to remain in the home. In regions with Community-Based Care, a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) performs the duties required of DFPS. DFPS works with the SSCC to ensure educational needs are met.

- Circumstances & Examples
- Who will contact the school?
- When will contact occur?
- What documentation is needed?

Education Information – Emergency School Withdrawal





Education Best Interest Decision-Making and Coordination

PURPOSE: To outline a clearly defined process and protocol for how education and child welfare partners are to work together to make education best interest decisions, as required by the Every Student Success Act (ESSA). The following chart describes a variety of child welfare scenarios, details regarding who and when the school will be contacted, what type of information will be collected and clarifies timelines for follow-up, and related information sharing to support collaborative educational best-interest decisions.

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Examples include:

- Initial entry into foster care
- Immediate placement change (e.g., the student needs to live somewhere else due to court orders or safety concerns)
- Psychiatric hospital admission
- Arrest or juvenile detention

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED?

DFPS Form 2085 or 2085E and/or Court Order.

The caseworker or student's caregiver will notify the [foster care liaison](#) to expedite the collection of information and records to support a smooth transition to the new school.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION?

- As soon as possible
- Within 10 business day turn around

Recommendation:

- Day 1-3: foster care liaison (or other school designee) reaches out and begins gathering information
- Day 5-10, or sooner: foster care liaison (or other school designee) synthesizes information and follows up with DFPS caseworker and the student's caregiver

WHAT INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS WILL BE COLLECTED BY THE SCHOOL AND PROVIDED TO DFPS/SSCC?

- TASB [Exhibit A](#) Student in Foster Care Education Best-Interest Factors
- Special education services or special accommodations (e.g., IEP or 504), such as transportation
- Information on the student's positive connections and school community supports
- Extra-curricular activities/interests
- Any other services, tutoring, general transportation arrangements
- Special endorsements

* All relevant information will be helpful to the student and DFPS to reduce trauma, identify services and support needed, and ensure education continuity.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Education Best Interest Decision will already have been made. However, schools can provide information to expedite enrollment, support streamlined transitions, and gather information to support the student.

Foster care is a term used to describe when a child is placed outside the home with a relative, kinship, foster home, or residential placement.

WHO WILL CONTACT THE SCHOOL?

Agency staff (e.g., DFPS/SSCC* caseworker or education specialist) or student's new caregiver will contact the previous school attended, by phone.

WHEN WILL CONTACT OCCUR?

Immediately after student's placement changes. In emergency instances, the placement change most likely will have already occurred.

*Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is appointed the managing conservator if a court decides it is unsafe for a child to remain in the home. In regions with Community-Based Care, a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) performs the duties required of DFPS. DFPS works with the SSCC to ensure educational needs are met.

KEY:

- DFPS LED
- LEA LED

- How much time does the school have to provide information?
- What information or documents will be collected by the school and provided to DFPS/SSCC?
- Additional Notes:

DFPS – Planned School Withdrawal



Education Best Interest Decision-Making and Coordination

SCENARIO: PLANNED SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL (DFPS OR CAREGIVER INITIATED)

CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXAMPLES:

Planned school withdrawals may happen in advance. There may be more time to plan but this is not always the case. Student should remain in their [school of origin](#) whenever possible. However, planned school withdrawals may happen in advance. There may be more time to plan but this is not always the case.

Planned Withdrawal (DFPS Initiated) examples:

- ◆ Student returning home
- ◆ Moving to a placement to be connected with siblings
- ◆ Moving to be with a kinship caregiver
- ◆ Placed in another state
- ◆ Caregiver and student move together to another location

Planned Withdrawal (Caregiver Initiated) examples:

- ◆ Caregiver no longer providing foster care (e.g., health issues)
- ◆ Caregiver requests a placement change
- ◆ Caregiver moves out of state and cannot take student with them

WHO WILL CONTACT THE SCHOOL?

Agency staff (e.g., DFPS/SSCC* caseworker or education specialist) or student's caregiver in some cases.

WHEN WILL CONTACT OCCUR?

Depending on the circumstances, before the student is withdrawn from their current school. Generally, about 7-10 business days before the placement change is to occur.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED?

The Court order and DFPS Form 2085 or 2085E.

The caseworker or student's caregiver will notify the [foster care liaison](#) to expedite the collection of information and records to support a smooth transition to the new school.

WHAT INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS WILL BE COLLECTED BY THE SCHOOL AND PROVIDED TO DFPS/SSCC?

- ◆ TASB [Exhibit A](#) Student in Foster Care Education Best-Interest Factors
- ◆ Special education services or special accommodations (e.g., IEP or 504), such as transportation
- ◆ Information on the student's positive connections and school community support
- ◆ Extra-curricular activities/interests.
- ◆ Any other services, tutoring, general transportation arrangements
- ◆ Special endorsements

*All relevant information will be helpful to the child and DFPS to reduce trauma, identify services and support needed, and ensure educational continuity.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION?

- ◆ Maximum 10 business day turn around

Recommendation:

- ◆ Coordination should be as soon as change of placement is identified
- ◆ Day 1-3: Foster care liaison (or other school designee) reaches out and begins gathering information
- ◆ Day 5-10, or sooner: Foster care liaison (or other designee) synthesizes information and follows up with caseworker and the student's caregiver

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Information from the school will help to inform decision-making. The caregiver can inform the teacher of the child moving and when it will occur; if the teacher is aware of close connections that the student has that would be interested in having the student in their home, they can inform the caseworker.

KEY:

DFPS LED

LEA LED

*Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is appointed the managing conservator if a court decides it is unsafe for a child to remain in the home. In regions with Community-Based Care, a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) performs the duties required of DFPS. DFPS works with the SSCC to ensure educational needs are met.

- Circumstances & Examples
- Who will contact the school?
- When will contact occur?
- What documentation is needed?



Education – Planned School Withdrawal



Education Best Interest Decision-Making and Coordination

SCENARIO: PLANNED SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL (DFPS OR CAREGIVER INITIATED)

CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXAMPLES:

Planned school withdrawals may happen in advance. There may be more time to plan but this is not always the case. Student should remain in their [school of origin](#) whenever possible. However, planned school withdrawals may happen in advance. There may be more time to plan but this is not always the case.

Planned Withdrawal (DFPS Initiated) examples:

- ◆ Student returning home
- ◆ Moving to a placement to be connected with siblings
- ◆ Moving to be with a kinship caregiver
- ◆ Placed in another state
- ◆ Caregiver and student move together to another location

Planned Withdrawal (Caregiver Initiated) examples:

- ◆ Caregiver no longer providing foster care (e.g., health issues)
- ◆ Caregiver requests a placement change
- ◆ Caregiver moves out of state and cannot take student with them

WHO WILL CONTACT THE SCHOOL?

Agency staff (e.g., DFPS/SSCC* caseworker or education specialist) or student's caregiver in some cases.

WHEN WILL CONTACT OCCUR?

Depending on the circumstances, before the student is withdrawn from their current school. Generally, about 7-10 business days before the placement change is to occur.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED?

The Court order and DFPS Form 2085 or 2085E.

The caseworker or student's caregiver will notify the [foster care liaison](#) to expedite the collection of information and records to support a smooth transition to the new school.

WHAT INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS WILL BE COLLECTED BY THE SCHOOL AND PROVIDED TO DFPS/SSCC?

- ◆ TASB [Exhibit A](#) Student in Foster Care Education Best-Interest Factors
- ◆ Special education services or special accommodations (e.g., IEP or 504), such as transportation
- ◆ Information on the student's positive connections and school community support
- ◆ Extra-curricular activities/interests.
- ◆ Any other services, tutoring, general transportation arrangements
- ◆ Special endorsements

*All relevant information will be helpful to the child and DFPS to reduce trauma, identify services and support needed, and ensure educational continuity.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION?

- ◆ Maximum 10 business day turn around

Recommendation:

- ◆ Coordination should be as soon as change of placement is identified
- ◆ Day 1-3: Foster care liaison (or other school designee) reaches out and begins gathering information
- ◆ Day 5-10, or sooner: Foster care liaison (or other designee) synthesizes information and follows up with caseworker and the student's caregiver

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Information from the school will help to inform decision-making. The caregiver can inform the teacher of the child moving and when it will occur; if the teacher is aware of close connections that the student has that would be interested in having the student in their home, they can inform the caseworker.

KEY:	DFPS LED
	LEA LED

*Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is appointed the managing conservator if a court decides it is unsafe for a child to remain in the home. In regions with Community-Based Care, a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) performs the duties required of DFPS. DFPS works with the SSCC to ensure educational needs are met.

- How much time does the school have to provide information?
- What information or documents will be collected by the school and provided to DFPS/SSCC?
- Additional Notes:

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Forms

Texas Association of School Boards & Texas Education Agency

STUDENT WELFARE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC
(EXHIBIT)

Exhibit A—Student in Foster Care Educational Best-Interest Factors

A student in foster care may remain at his or her school of origin unless it is not in the child's best interest. "School of origin" is defined as the school that the student is attending at the time of the student's placement in foster care or during any subsequent change in placement. This form provides information that will help the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to determine whether it is in the best interest of a student in foster care to remain in the school of origin when there is an initial placement in foster care or a change in residential placement. DFPS should collaborate with the District to evaluate what is best for the student's education.

When the school becomes aware that a student is placed in foster care, this form should be completed by representatives from the student's school of origin who are knowledgeable about the student and are able to provide feedback on how changing schools would impact the student's academic, social, and emotional well-being; significant relationships that the student may have formed with staff and peers; and other factors. These individuals could include the student's teacher, counselor, coach, foster care liaison, or other meaningful person in the student's life. Each District representative should complete a separate form. The timeline for completion may vary based on individual circumstances, including the type of foster care placement and the nature of the emergency.

Completed forms should be provided to the District foster care liaison, who will share the form with the student's education decision-maker and caseworker and help facilitate further collaboration.

Student's name: _____

Student's grade level: _____

Student's school at time of placement in foster care/change of placement (*school of origin*): _____

School where the student resides, if known: _____

Name and title of person completing form: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Student Preferences

Has the student expressed any preferences regarding which school the student will attend? Please provide details.

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STUDENT WELFARE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC
(EXHIBIT)

Has the student expressed any feelings about safety or other relevant aspects regarding the environment at the school of origin? Please provide details.

Academic Factors

How is the student performing academically? Does the student receive academic intervention services, such as RTI (Response to Intervention)?

How has the student's academic performance changed since the student enrolled in the school of origin?

Does the student participate in any specialized instruction, such as a gifted and talented, ELL, or career and technical education (CTE) program? Please describe.

Are there appropriate or adequate services available at the school of origin to meet the student's educational, social, and emotional needs? Please describe.

In your opinion, how will remaining in the school of origin impact the student's academic performance?

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TASB/TEA Collaboration Best Interest Determination

STUDENT WELFARE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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Social/Emotional Factors

Describe any meaningful relationships the student has formed with District staff at the school of origin.

Describe any meaningful relationships the student has formed with other District students at the school of origin.

Describe the student's participation in any extracurricular or after-school activities.

Describe any other ties the student has to the school of origin (*siblings, mentorships, etc.*)

Describe the child's strengths and weaknesses. How does the school of origin support the child's unique needs and goals?

Are there additional factors that indicate a change of educational placement is or is not in the child's best interest?

Conclusions

In your opinion, how will remaining in the school of origin impact the student's social, emotional, or behavioral well-being?

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STUDENT WELFARE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

FFC
(EXHIBIT)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Foster care liaison contact information:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Name of DFPS point of contact: _____

Date completed forms provided to DFPS point of contact: _____

Notes: _____

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Questions



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

School of Origin

Agenda

Overview

School of Origin

Scenarios

Summary

Timelines

Reasons

School of Origin

- The school that the student attended before the conservatorship
- If a student moves while in foster care, the school the student attended before the residential placement change
- A student in foster care enrolled (or at the time of placement in foster care) in public school may remain enrolled in their school of origin, even when moved outside of the school of origin's attendance zone.

School of Origin Guidance

School of Origin Determinations for Students in Foster Care

A student is entitled to remain at their **school of origin** *unless* it is not in the student's best interest.



What is a school of origin?

- » The school where the student was enrolled **prior** to entering foster care* OR
- » The school where the student was enrolled **when** a student changes placement while in foster care.



What timelines apply?

- » State law entitles a student to continue to attend the school of origin until **graduation or completion of the highest grade offered at the school** unless it is not in the student's best interest.



Who determines best interest?

- » DFPS/SSCC** **collaborates** with the school district and the student to make the best interest determination. DFPS/SSCC are responsible for final school of origin decisions.
- » Factors may include safety; student preference; academic, social, and emotional needs; and distance to the school. For additional information on best interest determination, see the [Foster Care and Student Success Guide](#) and [TASB Policy](#).

Example Scenarios:

- ▶ **Example A:** Jerry attends School A. Jerry enters foster care and is placed in a foster home in the attendance area for School B. School A is Jerry's school of origin and he is entitled to continue to attend School A unless it is not in his best interest.
- ▶ **Example B:** Jenny attends School A. Jenny enters foster care and is placed in a kinship home in the attendance area for School B. It is determined that attending School A is not in Jenny's best interest. Jenny must be immediately enrolled in School B even if records cannot be produced immediately.
- ▶ **Example C:** During the school year, Dan is adopted and leaves foster care while attending School A. His adoptive parents move to the attendance area for School B. Dan is entitled to continue to attend School A until he attains the highest grade offered in the school even though he is no longer in foster care.
- ▶ **Example D:** Nina continues to attend School A after she enters foster care. Nina enrolls in School B when she returns to her parents, who later moved to the attendance area for School C. Under TEC § 25.001(g), Nina can attend School A or, under TEC § 25.001(g-1), Nina can attend School B. Nina can also attend School C because she resides in the school's attendance area.

For more information, see [TEA's Foster Care and Student Success Website](#)

Legal citations: 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c)(5), 42 U.S.C. § 675(1)(G); Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(g)-(g-1). For situations when a student in DFPS conservatorship may be considered homeless, see [Chapter 6 of the Foster Care and Student Success Guide](#).

*Foster care is a term used to describe when a child is placed outside the home with a relative, kinship, foster home, or residential placement.

**Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is appointed the managing conservator if a court decides it is unsafe for a child to remain in the home. In regions with Community-Based Care, a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) performs the duties of DFPS.



- What is a school of origin?
- Timelines
- Who determines the best interest?
- Scenarios



Scenarios Activity

- On each table, you will receive a scenario. As a table, select a notetaker and presenter for the table.
- Please discuss the scenario as a table. What would you do? What procedures would you follow? Are you utilizing ESSA requirements as you make your decisions?
- The reporter will provide a quick synopsis of the discussion and the conclusion of the table.

Summary

- School of Origin is where the student was enrolled upon entry into foster care or any subsequent placement change.
- Education Best Interest decision-making meeting should happen to determine the school of origin.
- Utilize the Every Student Succeeds Act, Texas Education Code, and other relevant laws to meet foster care students' needs.

Questions



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Dispute Resolution

Agenda

Overview

Foster Care Guide

Scenario

Dispute Resolution document

Scenario

Summary

ESSA – Dispute Resolution

- A process between education and child welfare systems to resolve disputes concerning education best interest decisions or transportation planning for a student in foster care to continue attending the school of origin.
- Child welfare agencies, SEAs, and LEAs each bring valuable perspectives to the best interest determination. Recognizing this, both the Fostering Connections Act and Title I require coordination among agencies at the State and local level to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care.

Foster Care Guide Information

LEAs should partner with DFPS to resolve transportation challenges.

If school staff & the caseworker cannot resolve the issue, the dispute should be sent to the LEA foster care liaison, the DFPS regional education specialist, and the DFPS Program Administrator.

If the issue remains unresolved, the TEA Foster Care POC and DFPS education specialist at the state office must reach a resolution, in consultation with each respective agency's leadership.

Scenario

Bobby is 15 and attends Paint Rock High School. He has been court-ordered into foster care and placed in San Angelo. He wants to remain at Paint Rock High School, but his caregiver works in Bronte and cannot transport him. The two school districts have been unable to come to an agreement on which district will provide transportation and how transportation will be funded.

- What are the next steps?
- Is he able to remain at Paint Rock HS?
- Who do you think is responsible for transportation?
- What is the process you would follow to determine this?

Scenario

- What are additional considerations that you think are important?

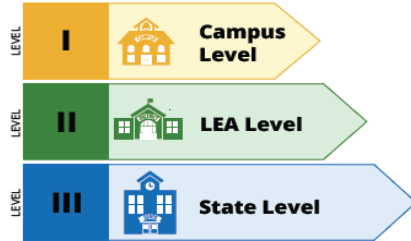
For example,

- Would it make a difference if he were in Special Education?
- Would it make a difference if he had only been in Paint Rock for a few months and moved between several school districts?

Dispute Resolution Document

HOW ARE ESSA FOSTER CARE DISPUTES RESOLVED?

Fostering Connections Act and the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) require coordination among agencies at the State and local level to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. The local education agency (LEA) and Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) should make every effort to reach an agreement regarding the appropriate school placement and transportation coordination of students in foster care. The dispute resolution process should be fair to all parties and reached in an expeditious manner. This chart provides guidance on disputes with students in foster care.



LEVEL I - Campus Level

- ▶ School staff, administrators and the caseworker attempt to resolve an ESSA related issue.
- ▶ LEA Foster Care Point of Contact should be informed of the dispute at the campus level.



Next steps if no resolution:

Recommend escalate to LEA level immediately or no later than 7 to 10 business days.



LEVEL II - LEA Level

The dispute should be sent to the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact, the DFPS Regional Education Specialist, and the DFPS Program Administrator.

- ▶ Seek guidance from your LEA regarding dispute resolution process.
- ▶ LEA Foster Care Point of Contact communicates, with DFPS Regional Education Specialist; or
- ▶ DFPS Regional Education Specialist contacts LEA Foster Care Point of Contact.



HOW ARE ESSA FOSTER CARE DISPUTES RESOLVED?

Local Coordinated Meeting:

- ▶ Request a coordinated meeting with the appropriate local child welfare and education staff – including but not limited to, the foster care liaison, transportation management, school administrators, the student's DFPS Regional Education Specialist, caseworker, caregiver or other assigned child welfare representative, and/or education decision maker.
- ▶ These parties will convene to discuss logistics and costs around transportation provisions, education decision making or other ESSA related concerns.
- ▶ Recommend contact no later than 7 to 10 business days once the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact and/or DFPS Regional Education Specialist is made aware.



Next steps if no resolution:

Recommended immediate escalation to State Level.



LEVEL III - State Level

If the issue still remains unresolved, the TEA Foster Care Point of Contact and DFPS Regional Education Specialist at State Office must reach a resolution, in consultation with each respective agency's leadership.

- ▶ LEA Foster Care Point of Contact sends the following information to TEA's Foster Care Point of Contact, fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov.
- ▶ DFPS Regional Education Specialist sends the following information to DFPS State Office Education Program Specialist/ ESSA point of contact.
 - ▷ A complete explanation of the basis of the dispute, with all pertinent facts.
 - ▷ The name and contact information of the people who have been addressing the dispute thus far on behalf of both the LEA and the local child welfare agency (job title, phone, email, and mailing address).
 - ▷ Details of how the agencies have attempted to resolve the dispute at the local level prior to appealing to the state.
- ▶ TEA Foster Care Point of Contact and DFPS State Office Education Program Specialist coordinate a review of the information and issue a resolution. Recommended resolution to be issued as soon as possible but, no later than 15 business days.



Campus Level



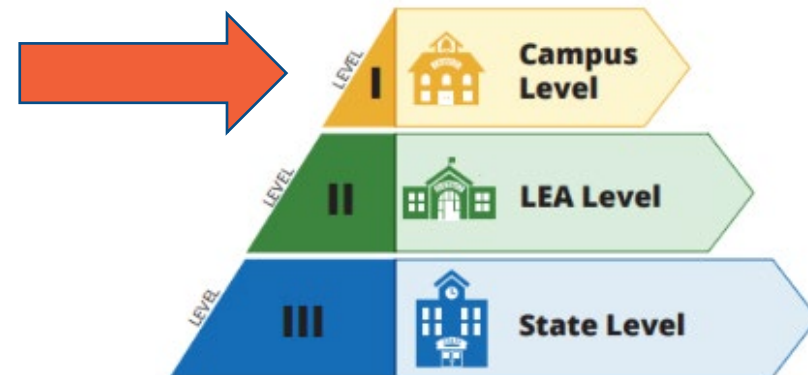
LEVEL I - Campus Level

- ▶ School staff, administrators and the caseworker attempt to resolve an ESSA related issue.
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Next steps if no resolution:

Recommend escalate to LEA level immediately or no later than 7 to 10 business days.



Local Education Agency Level



LEVEL II - LEA Level

The dispute should be sent to the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact, the DFPS Regional Education Specialist, and the DFPS Program Administrator.

- ▶ Seek guidance from your LEA regarding dispute resolution process.
- ▶ LEA Foster Care Point of Contact communicates, with DFPS Regional Education Specialist; or
- ▶ DFPS Regional Education Specialist contacts LEA Foster Care Point of Contact.

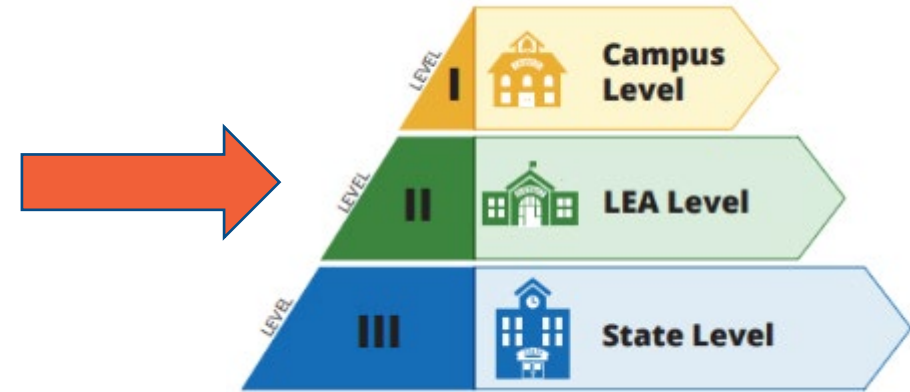
Local Coordinated Meeting:

- ▶ Request a coordinated meeting with the appropriate local child welfare and education staff – including but not limited to, the foster care liaison, transportation management, school administrators, the student's DFPS Regional Education Specialist, caseworker, caregiver or other assigned child welfare representative, and/or education decision maker.
- ▶ These parties will convene to discuss logistics and costs around transportation provisions, education decision making or other ESSA related concerns.
- ▶ Recommend contact no later than 7 to 10 business days once the LEA Foster Care Point of Contact and/or DFPS Regional Education Specialist is made aware.



Next steps if no resolution:

Recommended immediate escalation to State Level.



State Level



LEVEL III - State Level

If the issue still remains unresolved, the TEA Foster Care Point of Contact and DFPS Regional Education Specialist at State Office must reach a resolution, in consultation with each respective agency's leadership.

- ▶ LEA Foster Care Point of Contact sends the following information to TEA's Foster Care Point of Contact, fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov.
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 - ▷ A complete explanation of the basis of the dispute, with all pertinent facts.
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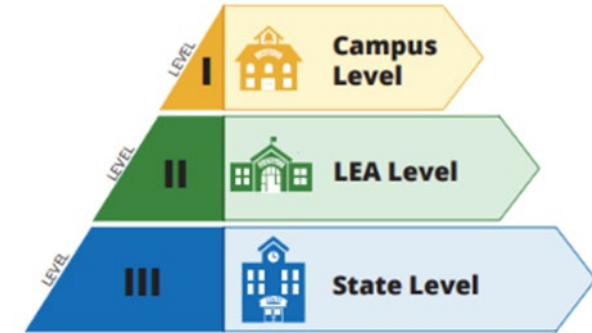
Scenario

Tony is a child who moved back to Texas from a placement in Florida. He completed the 5th grade at his placement while in Florida. Tony has moved into this placement 2 months before school is out for the summer. Since he completed the 5th grade he would enroll in 6th grade at Fort Worth Middle School. The school does not want to enroll him in 6th grade this late in the school year and would like to wait until the fall for 6th-grade enrollment. The school has all the documentation from Florida stating that he completed 5th grade and should be enrolling in 6th grade.

- What are the next steps?
- Who was contacted within the school?
- What process would you follow to determine what is best for the student?

Summary

- Follow the process for dispute resolution
- Exhaust all resources for resolution at the campus/LEA level
- Make sure you are in communication with the regional DFPS Education Specialist
- Ensure your campus administration is informed of this process
- Please have all information and documentation for when you are escalating the concern to the state-level.



Questions



2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Thank you for attending!

Questions:

Fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov

Summit Survey



https://tea.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VJDi1xfpkIpA0e

2024 FOSTER CARE SUMMIT

Thank you for attending!