



Oklahoma Union Public Schools Foster Care Plan

Overview

Under the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Title I educational stability provisions take effect on December 10, 2016. By such date, each school district shall have a Foster Care Plan developed and disseminated to all stakeholders.

In Section 1111(c)(5) of ESSA, the school district must collaborate with the Child Welfare Agency and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies (CWA) to implement the Title I educational stability provisions. Therefore, each school district shall develop a clear, written Foster Care Plan. As such, the Foster Care Plan for Oklahoma Union Public School District shall be as follows

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Identification

The DHS point-of-contact (POC) will identify children in foster care by contacting the OKUPS POC. The OKUPS POC is identified as the elementary school counselor- currently Mrs. Megan Robbins.

Mrs. Robbins can be reached at mrobbins@okunion.k12.ok.us or 918-255-6550 ext. 1124.

POC Responsibilities: The POC will work in the best interest of the child to ensure that all educational requirements are being met.

The POC will work closely with the CWA to:

- Coordinate with the corresponding child welfare agency POC to implement Title I provisions;
- Lead the development of a process for making the best interest determination;
- Document the best interest determination;
- Facilitate the transfer of records and immediate enrollment;
- Facilitate data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols;
- Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures;
- Manage best interest determinations and transportation cost disputes;
- Ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school; and
- Provide professional development and training to school staff on the Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care, as needed.

Decision-making process.

A committee will meet to determine if the school of origin is not in the best interest of each foster care child and the appropriate placement of the child. The committee will consist of the site administrator or representative, the LEA's POC, and a member of the CWA. In emergency circumstances the CWA has the authority to make an immediate decision regarding the school placement, and then consult with the LEA and revisit the best interest determination of the child.

In the event of a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the CWA will be considered the final decision maker in making the best interest determination. The CWA is uniquely positioned to assess vital non-educational factors such as safety, sibling placements, the child's permanency goal, and other components of the case plan. The CWA also has the authority, capacity, and responsibility to collaborate with and gain information from multiple parties including parents, children, schools and the court in making these decisions.

Transportation

Transportation for children in foster care will be provided by the foster family, DHS, or OKUPS utilizing the most cost effective means to do so (475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act)).

If the child's school of origin is an OKUPS school and the child is placed in a foster home outside of OKUPS boundaries, the district POC will work with DHS and/or the foster family to determine if the school of origin remains the school of best interest for the child. This determination will primarily take the following into consideration:

- The wishes of the child;
- The wishes of the foster family (according to state law);
- The wishes of DHS;
- The distance and time required for travel;
- The safety of the child;
- Any applicable services available at the school of residence vs. the school of origin.

Additional costs for transportation (whether in-district or out-of-district) will be financed through one of the following methods as provided for under the ESSA and federal regulation (ESEA 1112(c)(5)(B)):

- DHS agrees to reimburse OKUPS for any additional cost;
- OKUPS agrees to pay for the additional cost;
- OKUPS and DHS agree to share the additional cost.

Additional costs are calculated by the district Transportation Office and take into account the availability of district transportation, the distance of the child's residence from the nearest applicable bus stop, and any related fuel and staffing costs necessary in order to provide transportation.

The time required in order for the district to arrange transportation varies depending upon a number of factors such as current demand, availability of staff and/or vehicles, and location of student. For this reason, if transportation is requested the foster family or DHS arrange for temporary transportation of the child(ren) for at least one week; however, the average time required is usually less than this.

Reasonable Distance

While OKUPS believes that the school of best interest for a child is most often their school of origin, this is not always the case. Sometimes, the commute time and/or distance is so great that transporting the child would have a negative impact on the child's social and/or academic life. For this reason, OKUPS provides the following general guidance on what the district considers to be a reasonable commute distance and time.

- Commute distance: 40 miles.
- Commute time (one way): 60 minutes (accounting for traffic)

Disputes

It is recognized that both OKUPS and DHS will act with the best interests of children in mind; however, since both parties are approaching this issue from different perspectives, disputes will naturally sometimes occur. In the event of a dispute regarding the transportation of a child in foster care the following will be followed:

- The district will provide transportation until such time as the dispute is resolved (ESEA 1112(c)(5)(B)(i));

Documentation:

Foster care parents, social workers or other legal guardians will be allowed to immediately enroll children in foster care in the school district without having the necessary paperwork (birth certificates, shot records, academic records, special education records, etc.) This is to help aid the student with a smooth transition into the district. The receiving school district will contact the school district of origin for the records and make adaptations as needed. After enrollment, the following guardianship or legal custody documents shall be provided for verification by the foster family or CWA:

- Power of attorney
- Affidavit
- Court Order

Oklahoma Union School district will share education records with the CWA that are allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other state privacy laws. This allows educational agencies to disclose without parental consent educational records, including IDEA, of students in foster care to the CWA.

Collaborative Structure:

The POC will meet with the site administrator, school counselor, classroom teacher, and foster parent as needed to discuss the progress of the child in foster care and will document the results of meetings. All decisions will be made utilizing a collaborative team approach to determine what will be in the best interest of the child.

The district policy regarding McKinney-Vento disputes will be followed (Policy 4004(IV)(C)). This plan was created collaboratively through consultations between LEA and Department of Human Services personnel:

LEA Representative

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Date

OKDHS Representative

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Best Interest Determination Evaluation

Child's Name: _____

Birthday: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Current District: _____ Current Site: _____

Student will remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates a change of school placement is in the child's best interest (check all that apply.)

	School of Origin (A)	Receiving School (B)	Other Previous School Attended (C)
<p>Which school will better meet the relational needs of the child?</p> <p>Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Siblings<input type="radio"/> Relationships with peers<input type="radio"/> Relationships with staff <p>Describe the relationship connections at current school:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>List strategies for maintaining important connections should other best interest determination be made:</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p>Which school will better meet the individual academic needs and challenges of the child? Select all that apply:</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IEP ○ 504 Plan ○ Gifted Program ○ Career Tech ○ EL Services 			
<p>Which school will better meet the social/emotional needs and challenges of the child?</p> <p>Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social ○ Emotional ○ Safety 			
<p>Which school will better meet the unique needs and interests of the child? Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extracurricular Activities ○ Sports ○ Other <p>Student will describe the areas of desired school involvement:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Which school will best meet the permanency goal and likelihood of reunification with parents or siblings?</p>			
<p>Which school is more appropriate for the child's age and length of travel?</p> <p>Explain: _____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p>Describe the child's transfer history.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p>Which school does the student prefer to attend?</p> <p>Explain: _____</p>			

Which school does the caregiver or current placement provider recommends the student attend? Explain: _____			
Identify strategies for successful transition to new school and/or support in current school: _____ _____ _____			
<div>Supporting Documentation</div> <div>Attach any supporting documentation used to determine best interest of child:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report Cards ○ Progress Reports ○ Achievement Data (test scores) ○ Attendance Data ○ IEP or Section 504 Plans ○ Other: _____ <div>Determination</div>			

Based on the information provided and considering the best interest of the child, the team has determined the following school is the most appropriate educational placement for the child: _____

Team Members:

LEA representative: _____

Printed name

Signature

CWA representative: _____

Printed name

Signature

Education Decision Maker _____

Printed name

Signature

Other: _____

Printed name

Signature