

Students in Foster Care

Child welfare education liaison

At least one district staff member shall be designated to serve as the child welfare education liaison. In lieu of designating a district employee, the district may contract with an individual or request that the district's Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) designate a BOCES employee to serve as the district's child welfare education liaison. By August 15 of each year, the district shall report the name and contact information of the district's child welfare education liaison to the Colorado Department of Education.

The child welfare education liaison shall be responsible for working with child placement agencies, county departments of human services, and the state department of human services to facilitate the prompt and appropriate placement, transfer, and enrollment of students in foster care.

The district's child welfare education liaison is also designated to receive notice of a student who is transitioning to public school from a state-licensed day treatment facility, facility school or hospital providing inpatient acute care or psychiatric services and who has been determined by that facility, facility school, hospital, or a court to be a risk to himself or herself or the community within the 12 months prior to the proposed transfer to a public school. Under certain circumstances, the child welfare education liaison may receive an invitation to participate in the development of a transition plan for such student.

Enrollment determinations

In making enrollment determinations, the child welfare education liaison shall assist appropriate county department of human services representatives in making "best interest of the child" education decisions, particularly the determination of whether or not it is in the best interest of the student in foster care to remain in his/her school of origin or to enroll in a new school.

Transfer of education records

If a student in foster care transfers to another school, the sending district shall transfer the student's education information and records to the receiving school as soon as possible but not to exceed five school days after receiving a transfer request.

The sending district may release the student's education information and records to an employee of the county department of human services for the sole purpose of transferring the education information and records to the student's new school. Such release shall be in accordance with applicable state and federal law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

If the request for a records transfer involves a student who is receiving special education services pursuant to an individualized education plan, the sending district shall notify its special education director of the records request.

The sending district shall not delay the transfer of education information and records of a student in foster care for any reason, including but not limited to the existence of any unpaid fines or fees.

Enrollment in a new school

If it is determined that it is not in the student's best interests to remain in his/her school of origin and unless otherwise permitted by state law to deny enrollment, the district or new school shall immediately enroll a student in foster care in the new school, regardless of whether:

- the district or school has received the student's education records or certificate of immunization;
- the student can comply with any requirements pertaining to the use of school uniforms or other clothing restrictions; or
- the student can comply with any other pre-enrollment restrictions or requirements imposed by the district or new school.

If the district or new school enrolls a student in foster care without receiving the student's certificate of immunization, the district or school shall notify the applicable county department of human services that, unless the district or school receives the student's certificate of immunization or a written authorization for administration of immunizations within 14 days after the student enrolls, the student in foster care shall be suspended until such time as the district or school receives the certificate of immunization or authorization.

Transfer of credits

When a student in foster care transfers from one school to another school, the sending school shall certify to the receiving school or district the coursework that the student fully or partially completed while enrolled. The receiving school or district shall accept the student's certified coursework as if it had been completed at the receiving school.

The receiving school or district shall apply all of the student's certified coursework toward completion of the student's requirements for grade level promotion at the receiving school or for graduation from the receiving school if the student is enrolled in 12th grade. The receiving school or district may award elective credit for any portion of the student's certified coursework that is not aligned with the curriculum of the receiving school or district.

Transportation

When the district is notified that a student in foster care needs, or may need, transportation to a district school, the child welfare education liaison will take steps to establish an individualized plan that addresses how transportation to maintain the student in his/her school of origin will be arranged, provided and funded for the duration of time that the student in foster care is attending his/her school of origin.

In establishing such a plan, the child welfare education liaison and other district staff shall follow any existing transportation procedures, systems-level plan or agreement that the district, acting in collaboration with one or more relevant departments of human services, has adopted or otherwise expressly agreed to implement for the cost-effective transportation of the student.

NOTE: SB22-008 requires school district child welfare education liaisons to provide students in out-of-home placements with information and assistance about tuition waivers for Colorado public institutions of higher education for qualifying students.

Adopted: June 18, 2019

Revised: November 15 2022