Designating Foster Care Points of Contact

The Importance of Building Points of Contact

Students in foster care often face academic and social/emotional/behavioral challenges beyond those experienced by their non-foster care peers. When students can connect with a caring adult, are attending school regularly, and have the supports they need, they are more likely to be successful in school and in life. **RCW 28A.320.148** requires each public school to identify a point of contact for students in foster care. Establishing a building point of contact will support coordination of resources and facilitate compliance with state and federal laws related to students in foster care.

Here are some important notes about this new law:

- Each K–12 public school in the state must establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school.
- These points of contact must be appointed by the principal, in consultation with the district foster care liaison, and are responsible for coordinating services and resources for students in foster care.
- The district foster care liaison is responsible for training building points of contact.

Why do we need building points of contact?

- To identify and support students in foster care.
- To help ensure that district liaisons can carry out their required duties.
- To help school-level staff understand student needs and rights.

Consider these qualities and ideas when designating building points of contact:

- Representation matters
- Racial equity and support for students of color
- Support for LGBTQ+ students
- Lived experiences
- Meaningful relationships with students, families, and staff
- Passion for the work
- Community connections
- Current workload capacity

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Work with your district leadership to be intentional about who is serving as the building point of contact.

- What duties will they be responsible for?
- How do these duties fit with their current position?
- Is there funding that can be used to support this extra work?
- Pay attention to collective bargaining agreements.
- Consider selecting someone in the role of counselor, social worker, family outreach or engagement coordinators, or another supportive role.
- Districts should NOT designate School Resource Officers (SROs) or truancy officers. Research has found that the presence of law enforcement or SROs disproportionately criminalizes certain vulnerable student populations, including students of color and students with disabilities, and that inappropriate reliance on school-based law enforcement can actually promote distrust in schools.



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For more information, please see: Best Practices for Building Points of Contact, Program Structure Considerations for foster care services on the OSPI Foster Care State and Federal Requirements webpage. For questions, please email fostercare@k12.wa.us.

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