School of Origin

The school of origin is defined as the school in which a student is enrolled at the time of a placement change or upon entry into foster care. Students in foster care have the right to remain in their school of origin unless it is determined that doing so is not in their best interest for the duration of their time in foster care. The chart below outlines the benefits of remaining in the school of origin compared to the potential risks associated with changing schools.

Staying in School of Origin: Benefits	Changing Schools: Potential Risks
Academic continuity • Student remains aligned with current curriculum pacing • No interruption to coursework, grading periods, or graduation plans	**Learning disruption** • Curriculum misalignment may cause gaps or repetition • Credits may not transfer smoothly, risking delayed graduation
Higher academic outcomes • Research shows school stability improves attendance, grades, and graduation rates for foster youth	**Lower academic performance** • Foster youth who change schools frequently are at a greater risk of falling behind academically • Loss of academic progress
Established relationships with school staff • Educators already understand the student's learning needs, strengths, and triggers	**Loss of trusted adults** • Student must rebuild trust, relationships, and re-explain their needs, which can take months
Continuity of special services • Special education, 504 plans, counseling, MTSS, and behavioral supports continue without delay	**Delays in services** • Evaluations, IEP transfers and updates take time and services could be disrupted
Peer connections and sense of belonging • Maintain friendships, clubs, sports, and extracurricular involvement	**Social isolation** • Student may struggle to form new peer relationships and feel disconnected
Improved attendance • Familiar transportation routes and school expectations support consistent attendance	**Attendance challenges** • New transportation, schedules, not liking new school, or confusion can lead to absences
Behavioral stability • Predictable environment helps regulate behavior and emotional responses	**Behavioral regression** • Stress from transition may result in acting out or withdrawal
Less cumulative trauma • School remains a consistent anchor and safe place amid placement changes	**Compounding trauma** • Another major loss adds to the instability already experienced • Transition can occur before the student fully understands

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