

# Technical Assistance

## PRS Item 17 - Foster Care

### 17.1 LEA Foster Care Liaison and Building Point of Contact

**Ensure contact information located on OSPI Foster Care website is accurate for district's Foster Care Liaison, make changes as necessary, and submit screenshot as evidence. (ESEA Section 1112(5)(a) and RCW 28A.320.148)**

- A.** The information provided must match the OSPI [Foster Care Liaison database](#). Submit a screenshot as evidence.

If the information doesn't match, please update the contact information for your district by filling out this [form](#). Submit a screenshot of information as evidence.

- B. Ensure contact information located on OSPI Foster Care website is accurate for each school's Foster Care Building Points of Contact.**

The information provided must match the OSPI [Foster Care Building Points of Contact database](#). Submit a screenshot as evidence.

If the information doesn't match, please update the contact information for your district by filling out this [form](#). Submit a screenshot of information as evidence.

- C. Confirm the school district Foster Care Liaison has attended an OSPI Foster Care Education training for the current school year.**

Evidence could include a registration confirmation email or PdEnroller credit confirmation.

### 17.2 Collaboration with local Child Welfare Agency

[RCW 28A.225.360](#) requires school districts to collaborate with DCYF.

- A. Submit a signed copy of DCYF's Regional Education Agreement developed in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) or the**



**equivalent agreement approved by OSPI. *The Regional Education Agreement must be signed by both the LEA and DCYF.***

The Regional Education Agreement (REA) was written by both OSPI and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), and vetted by our respective Assistant Attorneys General and federal partners to ensure that it meets compliance requirements.

***What if I know we signed the Regional Education Agreement, but I just can't find it?***

Contact your region's [DCYF Ed Lead](#) or [richard.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:richard.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov) and ask for a copy. More information can be found on [DCYF's REA page](#).

***What if we have never signed a Regional Education Agreement or we're not sure if we have?***

Check the REA master list on [DCYF's REA page](#). If there is no agreement listed for your district, please complete steps 1—4 below.

1. Complete a "[Contractor Information Form](#)"
  - Please specify the name and contact information of the "authorized signer." **This person must have authority to sign district contracts.**
  - If the REA should be sent to someone other than the authorized signer, please include that person's name and contact information.
2. Sign, scan and email the Contractor Update Form to Rick Morgan at [richard.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:richard.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov).
3. **DCYF will generate an REA** and send it to the authorized signer/contact person.
4. Once all signatures are obtained (School District, DCYF Regional Administrator and DCYF Contracts and Procurement Office), DCYF will send you a copy. **This signed REA will meet the requirement for CPR Item 17.2.A.**

***What if we only have a few students in foster care and haven't had any communication with DCYF?***

The foster care provisions in ESSA put a great deal of emphasis on collaboration between school districts and child welfare to ensure educational stability and improved outcomes for children in foster care [ESEA Section 1112(c)(5)(B), ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(iii)]. In addition, state law RCW 74.13.560 requires collaboration between child welfare and school districts "to maximize the educational continuity and achievement for children in out-of-home care."

It's possible there are only a few students in foster care in your district and they're doing well. Even so, the district and DCYF still need to communicate. The district should be providing report cards, attendance notifications and other correspondence to child welfare on a regular basis. Please reach out to your region's [DCYF Education Lead](#), the designated contact for schools. You may want to set up a training for staff related to foster care or mandated reporting. DCYF is happy to provide that training. Here's an excerpt from the [U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance](#).

***"How can child welfare and educational agencies work collaboratively to raise awareness and improve staff capacity to meet the unique educational needs of children in foster care?"***

Children and youth in foster care are often exposed to a multitude of challenges throughout their childhood, including homelessness, domestic violence, abuse and neglect, chronic poverty, and other adverse childhood experiences. In addition, being separated from their families, even for a short time, is disruptive and potentially traumatizing, with damaging effects that may impact social and emotional development.

**LEAs should collaborate with child welfare and other relevant agencies to ensure that all school staff are sensitive to the complex needs of foster youth, are informed about the impact that trauma has on a child's ability to learn, and that the appropriate interventions and strategies are in place to support them to succeed in school.**

Agencies may consider opportunities to cross-train both child welfare agency and education staff on the importance of educational stability for children in foster care. Agencies may provide training to school staff including principals, teachers, school counselors, school social workers, and school enrollment personnel about the needs of children in foster care and background information about the child welfare system. Possible areas for training include understanding the importance of maintaining children in their schools of origin, understanding the process and factors involved in making a best interest determination, coordinating transportation plans, protecting student privacy, and maintaining accurate education records for children in foster care.

**B. Describe the LEA process and supply evidence for documenting and record keeping of Best Interest Determination Meetings.**

The LEA collaborates with the local child welfare agency to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin, when in their best interest. ESEA Section 1111 (g)(E)(i-iv); RCW 28A.225.360; RCW 28A.225.350; RCW 74.13.550; RCW 74.13.560; and RCW 74.13.631

Please describe the LEA process for documenting Best Interest Determination meetings and supply a sample form used for documentation. For example, the documented

placement decision form located here: [Best Practices: School District Placement Decision](#) or the meeting tracking database located here: [example-best-interest-determination-tracking-database.xlsx](#)

**C. Evidence the LEA has demonstrated immediate enrollment and efforts to obtain education records.**

The LEA collaborates with the local child welfare agency to ensure that children in foster care are immediately enrolled in school even if the student does not have the required documentation. The enrolling school will immediately contact the school last attended to obtain education records, and the sending school will immediately transfer those records. ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(iii), [RCW 28A.225.330\(7\)](#). The LEA shares relevant educational records with local child welfare agency as required by state and federal law. [RCW 28A.150.510](#) & ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(iii).

Please provide evidence such as immediate enrollment policies and practices for students in foster care, record request procedures, emails as evidence of immediate enrollment, or other records that are used to document immediate enrollment of students (even without required paperwork) and efforts to obtain education records.

**D. Evidence of coordinated transportation services.**

[Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#) requires all LEAs to “develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded to maintain children in foster care in their school of origin when in their best interest will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the time in foster care...” (Section III2(c)(5)(B)).

Please provide evidence of written transportation procedures, completed forms, transportation request forms, emails, or other evidence to show evidence of timely and coordinated transportation services.

**E. Copies of any school board adopted policies addressing the enrollment and transportation needs of children in foster care.**

The LEA collaborates with the State or local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear, written procedures governing how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child’s time in foster care.

Please provide copies of any school board adopted policies addressing the enrollment and transportation needs of children in foster care, including dates of adoption.

## 17.3 Foster Care Student Progress and Support

### **A. Evidence that LEA has used to demonstrate supports in place when attendance becomes a concern or barrier to educational stability.**

Students who are subject to a dependency proceeding should have their unexpected or excessive absences regularly reviewed by a school district representative (Foster Care Liaison) or school employee (Building Point of Contact), the students' caseworkers, educational liaisons, attorneys if appointed, parents or legal guardians, and foster parents or the persons providing placement for the students. A school district representative or a school employee must proactively support the students' schoolwork so the student does not fall behind and to avoid suspension or expulsion based on truancy. [RCW 28A.225.023](#); ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E).

Please provide evidence of supports through emails, meeting documentation, MTSS process, or other explanatory evidence may be used to demonstrate how the district monitors attendance of students in foster care and the supports in place when attendance becomes a concern or barrier to educational stability.

## 17.4 Dispute Resolution

### **A. A signed statement ensuring that the LEA “has read and will follow the OSPI Foster Care Dispute Resolution Process.”**

Please review the OSPI [Foster Care Education Program: Dispute Resolution Process](#), and submit a statement signed by the LEA Foster Care Liaison ensuring that the LEA Foster Care Liaison “has read and will follow the OSPI Foster Care Dispute Resolution Process.”