Foster Care Enrollment Strategies for Registrars and School Administrators

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability rights such as school of origin, best interest determinations, and immediate enrollment. It is important to have consistent contact with the school district Foster Care Liaison to ensure that these rights are maintained before registering or withdrawing students.

If any of these situations occur, pause the enrollment, withdrawal, and/or transfer process and contact the school district Foster Care Liaison:

- A caregiver indicates the student was "placed" or "moved."
- A caregiver provides a Caregiver Authorization Form.
- A DCYF caseworker contacts the school about enrollment or withdrawal.
- A DCYF caseworker provides a School Notification Form.
- Enrollment paperwork lists a foster parent, relative caregiver, or group home.
- Another school district requests records and indicates the student is in foster care.
- The student has moved unexpectedly and the reason is unclear.

Strategies and Tips

- Notify the school district Foster Care Liaison as soon as a students' foster care status is suspected or confirmed.
- Enroll the student immediately (even if they do not have the documents that are normally required) if there has been a Best Interest Determination Meeting (BIDM) indicating the school is in their best interest. If you are unsure, reach out to your school district foster care liaison to confirm.
- Keep information about foster care status confidential and share it only with staff on a need to know basis.

Avoid:

- Withdrawing a student who has moved before checking to see if they have foster care status.
- The assumption that a student should attend the neighborhood school.
- Waiting for immunization records, transcripts, court orders, or other documents before enrolling.
- Determining that a student in foster care should change schools based on their home placement. That decision is made through the Best Interest Determination Meeting (BIDM) process.