

**Alabama Education Stability for Foster Students
Bullock County Plan**

LEA Student in Foster Care Overview

Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2016-2017 (Enrolled for Previous School Year): 12

Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2017-2018 (Currently Enrolled): 17

List Agencies in Collaboration:

Bullock County School System (Sean Dees)

Bullock County Department of Human Resources (Juanita Smith)


Policy Review and Revision (Describe how each agency in collaboration reviewed policies and the revisions made to policies as a result of reviews.)

The Foster Care point of contacts for the Bullock County School System, the Bullock County Department of Human Resources and the foster care team members met to review and make revisions to the current policy. During the meeting, the team members discussed whether any revisions needed to made to the plan. Members reviewed the policy and no changes were made. The Bullock County School District's budget will include \$500.00 for transportation for foster children who want to remain at their school of origin.

Describe Collaboration and Coordination with Agencies (Include a list of team members, positions, signatures, and agencies.):


The Federal Programs Director for the Bullock County School System, the Bullock County Department of Human Resources Point of Contact, and the foster care team members met, reviewed and discussed whether changes needed to be made to the current Foster Care Plan. During the meeting, such items were reviewed as the number of children in foster care and the budget cost as it relates to transportation.

Sean Dees, Federal Programs Director, Bullock County School System
Signature 

Juanita Smith, Resource Developer, Bullock County Department of Human Resources
Signature 


Tony Cooper, Director of Auxiliary Services, Bullock County School System
Signature 

Jill Hall, Counselor, Bullock County High School
Signature 

Latashia Jackson, Federal Programs Resource Specialist, Bullock County School System
Signature 

Shirley Beachem, EL Coach/Parent Liaison, Bullock County School System
Signature 

Ruthie Perry, Parent/Retired, Bullock County/Bullock County Correctional Facility
Signature 

Mattie Harris, Foster Care Parent, Bullock County
Signature 

LEA(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Sean Dees, Federal Programs Director
Bullock County School System

DHR(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Juanita Smith, Resource Developer
Bullock County Department of Human Resources

ESSA Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Description of transportation protocols and procedures to include how additional costs for transportation will be calculated and funded as well as a policy for LEAs to resolve best interest disputes and interagency disputes related to transportation costs. Description must include how transportation and transportation costs will be monitored. (Include LEA and welfare responsibilities for providing transportation.)
Description of Dispute Resolution Policy

Bullock County Schools must collaborate with the Bullock County Department of Human Resources 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. When additional costs are incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, school districts will provide transportation if: (1) they are reimbursed by the child welfare agency; (2) the school district agrees to pay the costs; or (3) the school district and the child welfare agency agree to share the costs.

Bullock County Schools may use Title I Part A funds to fund transportation; however, the homeless set aside cannot be used for this purpose.

Bullock County Schools and the Bullock County Department of Human Resources must collaborate to write written policies and procedures.

Bullock County Schools and the Bullock County Department of Human Resources must make every effort to reach an agreement regarding transportation costs for a child in foster care.

In the event a dispute cannot be resolved at the local level, the State Superintendent of Education or his/her designee and the Director of the Department of Human Resources Family Services or his/her designee must address the issues within (10) days of the written request. One additional State Education Agency (SEA) staff member will help settle disputes at the state level. The student should be enrolled and transported to the school determined by the child welfare agency while the dispute is being resolved. If the dispute remains unresolved after the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources (AL DHR) may assign staff to make an on-site visit to gather or clarify information. A follow-up response or determination must be made within thirty (30) days. This collaborative determination will be final.

ESSA Section 111(g)(1)(E)(ii)-(iii) Describe protocol for a child in foster care to be immediately enrolled in a new school.

The school must enroll a foster care child even if the child is unable to produce proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records.

2 C. F. R. §§ 200.331(d), 200.328(a); 34 C.F.R. §76.770; ESSA SECTION 1111(1)(e) - LEAs must implement the Title I educational stability requirements of children in foster care, including ensuring that:

- A child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in that child's best interest;
- If it is not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin the child is immediately enrolled in the new school even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; and
- That the new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin, to obtain relevant academic and other records.

Describe procedures for implementing the above provisions.

The school district will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying foster care children without stigmatizing students or families. The school will maintain the form in the student's permanent records. The file should be housed in the school counselor's office or in close proximity. The school's counselor will be in collaboration with the Bullock County Department of Human Resources, Bullock County School District, foster parent, and previous school representative.

The school shall enroll a foster care child even if the child is unable to produce proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records. The school shall immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the child needs to obtain immunization or medical records, the enrolling school or principal's designee will provide the parent guardian and/or unaccompanied youth appropriate assistance in obtaining the necessary records and documentation for enrollment. Enrollment without their required immunization record will be pending in receipt or acquisition of immunization documentation. The existing methods of assigning a student number will be employed when a student enrolls without a social security number.

A committee will meet to determine if the school of origin is not in the best interest of each foster care child and the appropriate placement of the child. The committee will be comprised of the site administrator or representative, the LEA's POC, and members of the foster care team. This committee has the authority to make a decision regarding school placement, and then consult with the LEA and revisit the best interest determination of the child.

In the event of a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the foster care team will make the final decision. The committee will carefully examine educational factors as well as non-educational factors such as safety, sibling placements, the child's permanency goal, and other components of the case plan. The committee also has the authority, capacity, and responsibility to collaborate with and gain information from multiple parties including parents, children, schools and the court in making these decisions.

ESSA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i) – A description of how the LEA in collaboration with the local child welfare agency will ensure that in determining whether it is in the child's best interest to remain in his or her school or origin, and LEA takes into consideration all factors relating to a child's best interest.

Description of how the LEA will work with child welfare agencies to develop a clear policy or protocol on how to make best interest determinations including making every effort to gather meaningful input from relevant parties, in addition to required child welfare and school representatives, in deciding what school placement is in a child's best interest. Include a description of protocols in this description.

The educational stability plan must be documented in the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) no later than 60 days after the child's removal from the home and every six months thereafter, or whenever any subsequent placement moves require a change in school placement, as determined by the ISP team.

Factors to be considered when making Individualized Service Plan (ISP) team decisions regarding school placement(s) are as follows:

- Preferences of the child in accordance with the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard;
- Preferences of the child's parent(s) or education decision maker(s)
- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- Placement of the child's sibling(s);
- Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety;
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs;
- History of school transfers and how they have impacted the child;
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage;
- Whether the child is a student with a disability under the IDEA who is receiving special education and related services or a student with a disability under Section 504 who is receiving special education or related aids and services and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin; and
- Whether the child is an EL and is receiving language services, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin.

Best Interest Determination

A representative from the school of origin (Point of Contact (POC) or designee) should be knowledgeable about the child and able to provide feedback on significant relationships that the child may have formed with staff and peers and how changing schools would impact his or her academic, social, and emotional well-being. Based on the individual situation, this person could be a teacher, counselor, coach, or other meaningful person in the child's life.

The LEA and county child welfare designee should consult other relevant parties, such as the child, depending on age, foster parents, biological parents when appropriate, education decision maker(s), and other relatives for their perspectives on which school the child should attend during his or her time in foster care, consistent with the child's case plan. If a child has an IEP or a Section 504 plan, then the relevant school staff members would also need to participate in the best interest decision process. If the child is an EL, this may also affect the relevant school staff members who would need to participate in the best interest decision process.