



Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care: Office Hours with DCS

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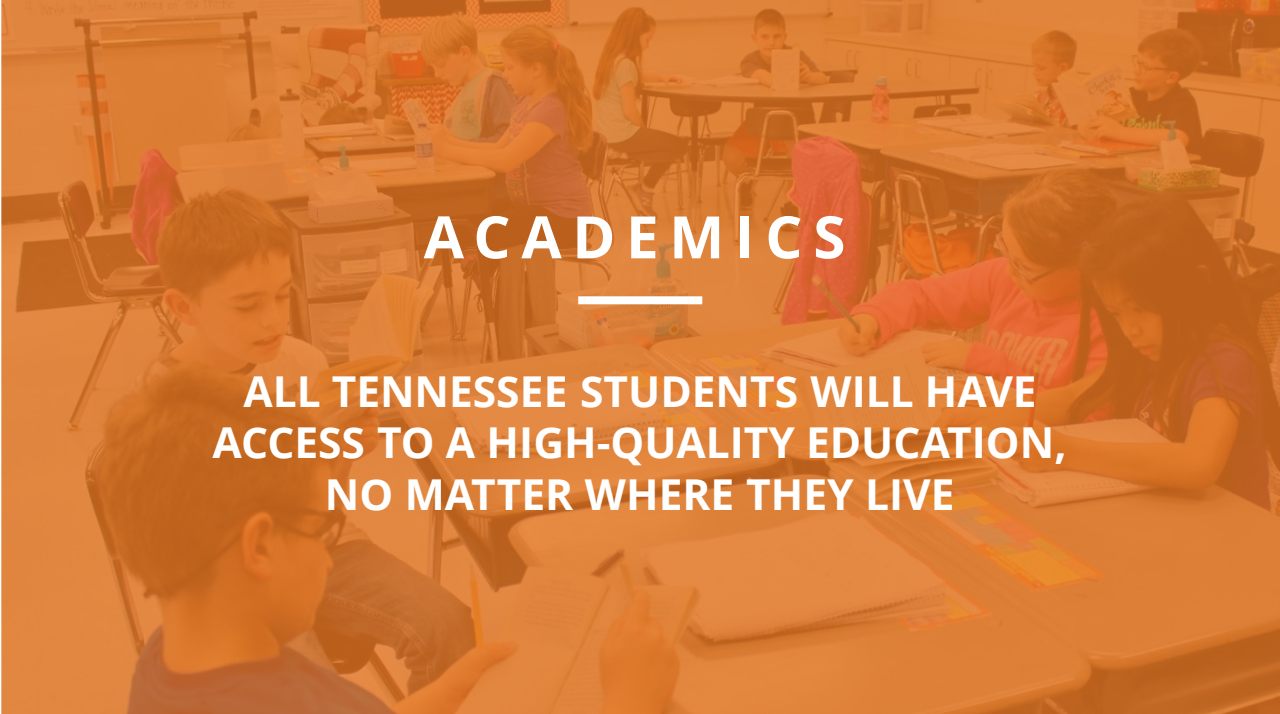
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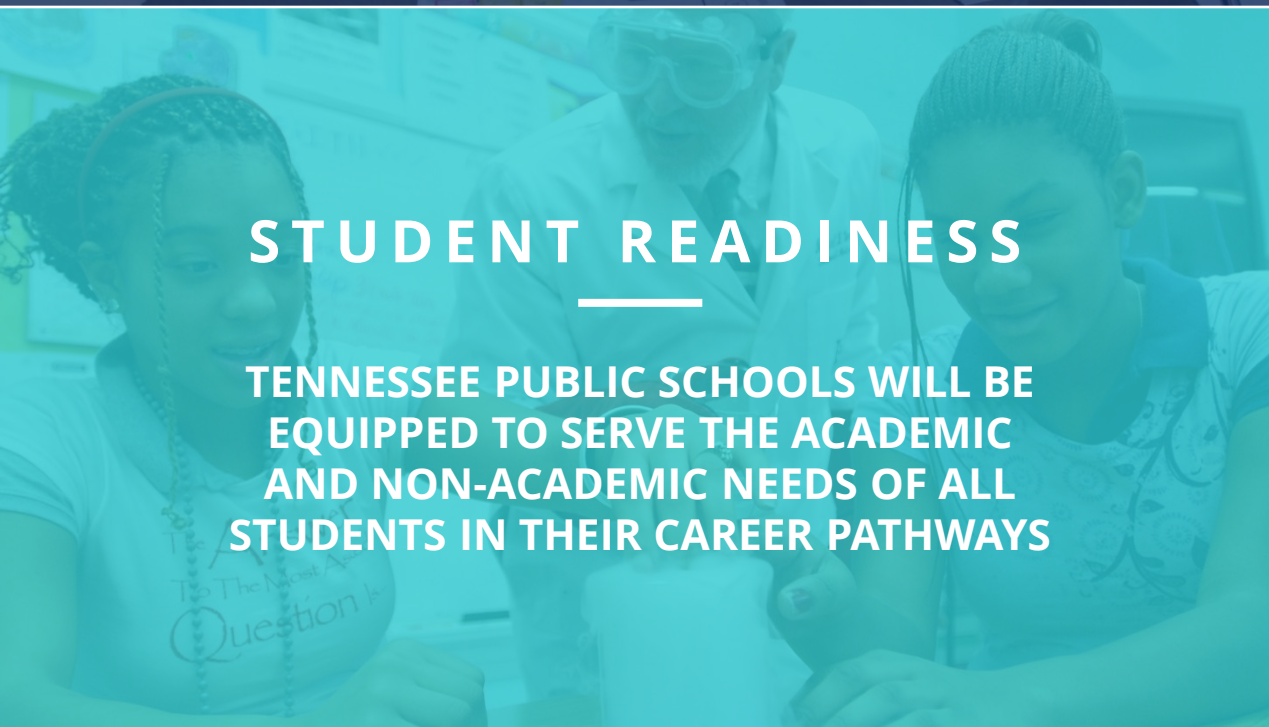
BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.



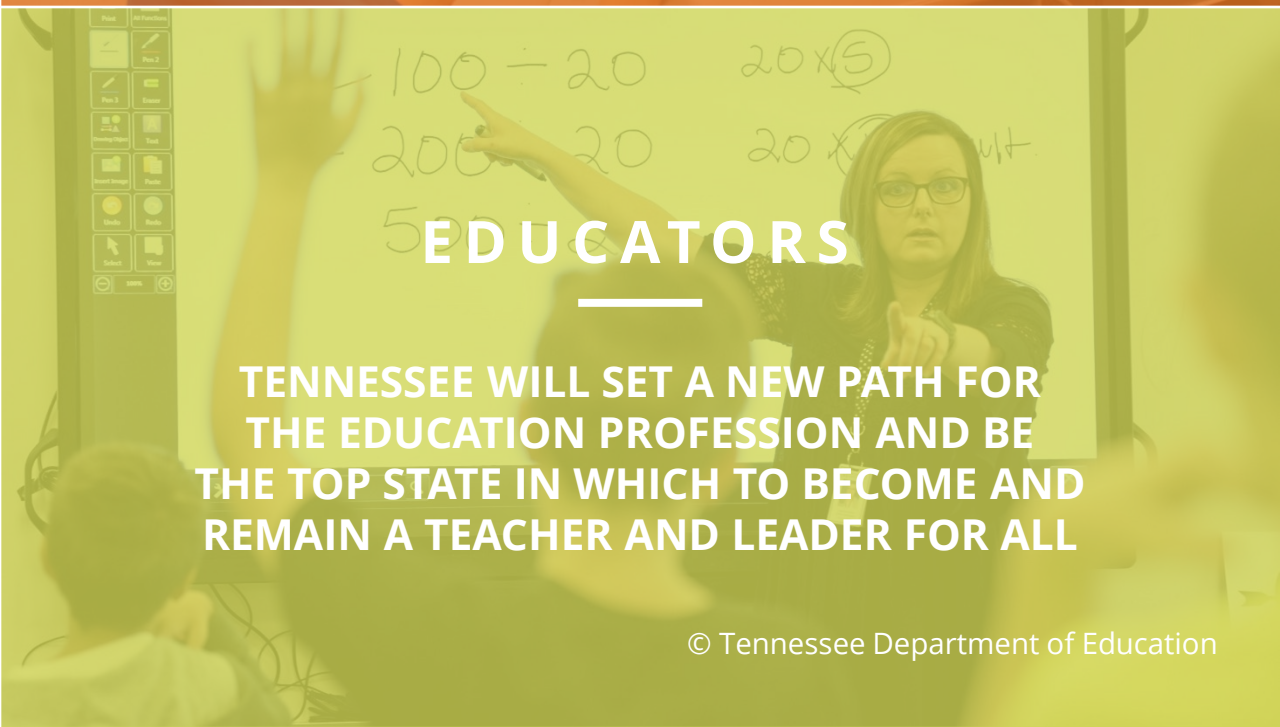
ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE



STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS



EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL



Agenda

- Introductions
- Collaboration is Key
- BID Notification and Education Passport
- Coding
- Questions from the Field
- Reminders



Collaboration is Key



Lots of Moving Parts

- Everyone plays an important role
- Misalignment can topple the entire structure



Collaborative Legislation

Fostering Connections (2008)	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015)
Coordination with LEAs	Collaboration with child welfare agencies
Presumption to remain in school of origin	Presumption to remain in school of origin
Best interest determination	Best interest determination
Immediate and appropriate enrollment	Immediate enrollment, even without documentation
Permissible use of federal Title funds to support transportation	Transportation must be arranged, provided and funded
	State and local Points of Contact





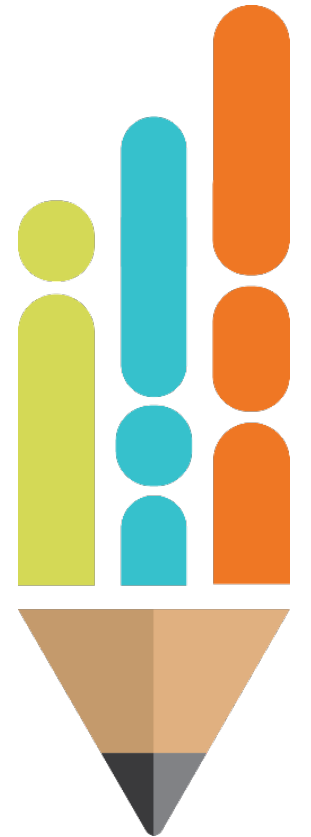
ESSA Requirement

- Local education agencies (LEAs) must provide assurances that children in foster care enroll or remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in her or her best interest to attend the school of origin.



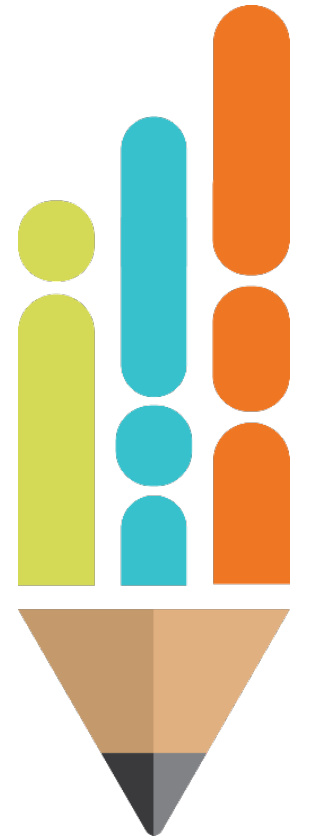
Reminder: Point of Contact (POC) Responsibilities

- All points of contact should have the capacity and resources to guide the implementation of the ESSA provisions.
 - Each LEA must have a POC designated to coordinate services for all students in foster care.
 - Federal and state requirement (PC951)
 - Minimum responsibilities include coordinating with regional Department of Children’s Services (DCS) offices to develop a process for implementation of ESSA provisions.



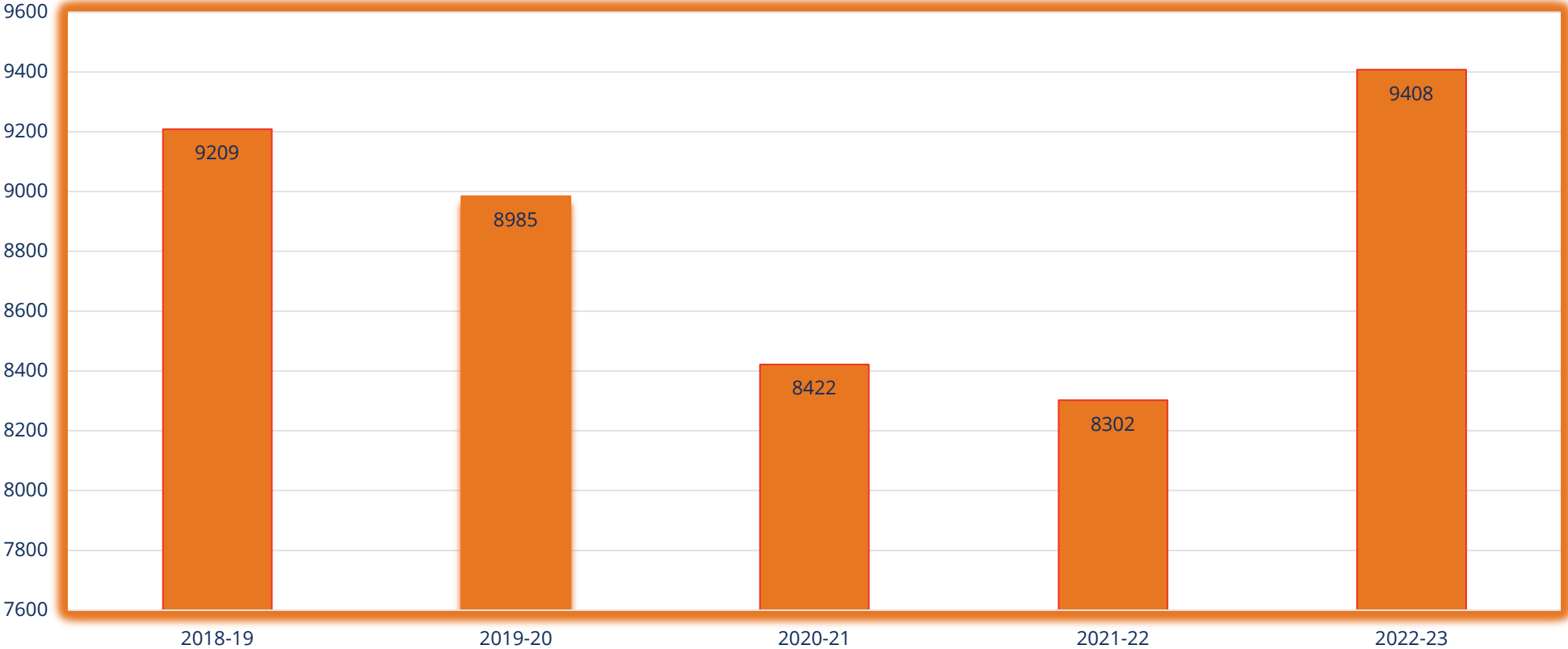
Reminder: POC Responsibilities

- Maintain agreement(s) between the LEA and DCS
- Identify students in foster care
- Coordinate and document Best Interest Determination (BID) meetings
- Coordinate and document transportation
- Remove barriers to ensure immediate enrollment
- Train all applicable staff



Foster Care in Tennessee

Students in Foster Care Coded as FOS01



BID Notification and Education Passport



Identification and BID Notification

- Students should be identified at the time of enrollment or withdrawal by the DCS Education Specialist or DCS caseworker if a student needs a best interest determination (BID) meeting.
- This notification allows for real time communication between DCS and the LEA to ensure that BID meetings happen in a timely manner.
- The Education Specialists are regional and have specific LEA assignments, but caseworkers may be employed by DCS or a contracted agency such as Youth Villages.





NEW as of 2022: Education Passport and BID Notification

- DCS has moved from one centralized point of notification.
- The Education Passport is the primary method of notification of entry into foster care or change of foster care placement.
- Caseworkers should present the documentation at the time of enrollment or at the time of withdrawal.
- The school of origin should receive an Education Passport for every custodial event or change of address, and the school of zone (if determined to be the best interest) should receive notification with enrollment.



DCS Process

The *Education Passport*, form **CS-0657**, is defined as a compilation of documents that constitutes the educational history for a student. It is composed of the completed Education Passport Face Sheet with demographic information, additional school enrollment information, a listing of recent schools attended, the child/youth's status, and the following documents:

- Immunization records
- The most recent grade card with attendance data
- A current transcript for high school students
- As applicable, special education, student plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or TEIS records.

• The Education Passport (CS-0657) shall be generated only by DCS and serves as verification of custody when presented to the public school system. Court documents and information generated by the courts remained protected under TN Code § 37-1-153.



Education Passport:



EDUCATION PASSPORT

All forms and documentation listed below should be kept with the passport. Information contained on this passport is subject to confidentiality laws. This Education Passport [CS-0657] shall be generated only by DCS and serves as verification of custody upon presentation to the public school system. Court documents and information generated by the courts remain protected under Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-153.

**PRESENT THIS FORM
TO EACH NEW SCHOOL OR
CURRENT SCHOOL FOR EACH
PLACEMENT**

PREPARED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL (See Additional School Information)

School of Origin: _____
School of Zone: _____

STUDENT'S INFORMATION

Child's Name: _____
Foster Parent: _____
Address: _____
City/ST/ZIP: _____
Telephone () - _____
Is this a Change of Address Notification? Yes No

MOTHER'S INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/ST/ZIP: _____
Telephone () - _____
Parental Rights Terminated? Yes No

FATHER'S INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/ST/ZIP: _____
Telephone () - _____
Parental Rights Terminated? Yes No

FAMILY SERVICE WORKER'S INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/ST/ZIP: _____
Telephone () - _____
Email: _____

RECORDS CHECKLIST (REQUIRED)

	Enclosed	Not Applicable
1. Immunization Records		
2. Most recent grade card with attendance data		
3. Current transcript (for high school students)		
4. Current IEP (if applicable)		
5. Current 504 Student Services Plan (if applicable)		
6. TEIS screening results and Family Services Plan (if applicable)		

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

	Yes	No
1. Has student been officially withdrawn from previous school? (BID meeting required with exception of placement into residential in-house school) Date of BID Meeting: _____		
2. Is this student currently suspended or expelled from public school?		
3. Are any medications needed during the school day? If yes, list: _____		

LIST THE SCHOOL OF ORIGIN and PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED SCHOOLS

School System Name	School Name	Withdrawn Date
1.	School of Origin:	
2.		
3.		

Child/Youth's Status: Check one box for each numbered item below.

1. School Age Under 3 yrs old Ages 3 to 5 (not in school) Ages 3 to 5 (receiving Sp. Ed)
2. Copy of H.S. Diploma enclosed Copy of GED/HISET Enclosed Not Applicable
 Copy of other diploma enclosed (List type of diploma: _____)

Compiled by: _____ Date: _____

Distribution: Child/Youth's File
CS-0657, Revised 06/22
RDA 10/223



STATE OF TENNESSEE -- DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Education Division -- UBS Tower 10th Floor, 315 Deaderick Street - Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 360-4350

School Notification Letter

Tennessee Department of Children's Services
School Notification Letter

To: School Name, (School of Origin) located in _____ (city), _____ (county)
 To: School Name, (School of Zone) located in _____ (city), _____ (county)
 Re: Child's Name
 Date: _____

Child's Name has either:

recently been placed in the custody of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services
 or
 is currently in custody but has experienced a change of placement prompting a potential shift of school zones.

Placement Address: _____

Per the ESEA § 1111(g)(1)(E)(i), the SEA and its agencies (LEA's) are required to collaborate with the state Child Welfare Agencies to ensure that a student entering foster care or experiencing a change of placement in foster care should remain in the school of origin unless otherwise determined that the school of zone (school of residency) would be more aligned with the student's best interest. As such, Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) is requesting that a BID meeting be scheduled within 5 days to consider all factors for the student's educational stability.

TN DCS serves as the Educational Decision Maker for all routine education issues outside of those still maintained by legal parents for services under IDEA; legal parents, however, are encouraged to attend meetings facilitated by the school and shall be considered partners in school planning when possible or unless otherwise deemed unsuitable by DCS. To determine your primary contact for matters concerning ESSA or disciplinary procedures, please refer to the Family Service Worker indicated on the Education Passport.


Please note that the primary point of contact for routine education alerts and for the daily support for this student shall be the foster parent where student is residing. A contracted agency point-of-contact may be assigned for general case management.

Best Interest Determination teams must explore multiple considerations under ESSA when deciding the most appropriate educational placement. Although not all-encompassing, I would like to note the following factors of preference for Child's First Name in preparation of this process.

Determination: Mark either school of origin or school of zone.

	School of Origin	School of Zone	Evidence / Comments	DCS Rep's Initials
Consideration Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Child's/youth's attachment to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Placement of Sibling(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
IEP or 504 needs and supports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Time in Transit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Existing Services (ELL, Pre-K, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other academic needs (advanced courses, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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- The School Notification Letter should be sent to the School of Origin for any new custodial event, change of address within the same school zone to update contact information, or change of address outside of the school of origin or school of zone.
- The School Notification Letter should be sent with the Education Passport to the School of Origin when change of placement occurs to initiate the BID process.
- Consideration factors discussed by DCS are listed on the Notification Letter as preferences at the time of a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM). Final decisions for educational best interest of the child will be discussed at the BID meeting where all factors shall be considered.



Coding



Student Classifications for Coding

- **FOS01-Foster Care:** Use the *FOS01-foster care student classification* only for students on the DCS foster care list.
- **J-Direct Certification of Economic Disadvantage:** Students on the DCS foster care list are part of the economically disadvantaged (ED) subgroup and are coded with *J-direct certification of economic disadvantage* student classification in addition to the *FOS01-foster care* student classification because they are categorically eligible for free school meals due to their foster care status.





Foster Status Applies for the School Year

- Once the student enters foster care, the status applies for the remainder of the school year.
- Code students with the ***FOS01-foster care and J-direct cert*** student classifications in ***all enrollments for the remainder of the school year, regardless of changes in foster care status.***





Dual Eligibility

- Students with foster care status due to a DCS placement who **also** qualify as homeless per the McKinney-Vento definition are dual eligible for foster care and homeless status and services.
- Students with foster care status due to a DCS placement who **also** qualify as runaway are dual eligible for foster care and runaway status and services.



The Intersection of McKinney Vento

- It is possible for a student to hold dual status as both foster care and homeless.
- In 2022-23, there were **550** cases, including 248, in which students were identified as foster care and homeless in the same enrollment.
- There were **187** instances in which students were identified as homeless in an enrollment that preceded the foster care enrollment.
- There were **115** enrollments in which the homeless identification occurred in an enrollment that followed the foster care enrollment.



Dual Status: Foster Care and Runaway

- In 2022-23, there were **55** instances including 17 in which students were identified as foster care and runaway in the same enrollment.
- There were **27** instances in which the runaway identification occurred in an enrollment that preceded the foster care enrollment.
- There were **11** instances in which the runaway enrollment occurred after the foster care enrollment.
- Of the 55 enrollments, **DCS** was the LEA for 43 of the foster care enrollments and 17 of the runaway enrollments.



Questions from the Field





Questions from the Field

▪ Passports

- Who is responsible for starting the Passport paperwork? Is that person also responsible for making sure everyone has a copy?
- How frequently is the passport updated?
- What is the process if there is no passport (i.e., enrollment by foster parent)

▪ Enrollment

- What if the foster parent arrives without a caseworker?
- How long can we hold enrollment or withdrawal?
- What if we don't receive a passport?
- When a child is on a 90-day home trial, how should we proceed when the biological parent enrolls the child? Will there be a passport?





Questions From the Field

- **Transportation**

- Who will make transportation decisions for DCS?
- Which district is responsible for transportation cost? The district of zone or the district of origin? What is DCS' responsibility for transportation?

- **BID Meetings**

- Who schedules the BID?
- Who initiates the BID meeting?
- What if we can't locate a caseworker?
- Why did the people needing to attend the BID meeting change?
- My education specialist was instrumental in setting up and facilitating BID meetings. How will that change now?
- Why would we need a POC at each school? I would like to remain the primary point of contact.





Thoughts to Consider

- Require the passport prior to withdrawal or enrollment
- Assign a point of contact at each school
- Train staff to ask about school of origin
- Develop a process for schools to alert the LEA POC
- Triage the cases (i.e., Where is the school of origin?)



Reminders



Best Interest Determination Meetings

- Must be held when a student enters foster care or changes foster care placement and the school of zone has changed.
- The DCS regional educational specialist or the child's caseworker is responsible for notifying the LEA when a BID meeting is needed.
- The school may receive written BID notification at the time of enrollment.
- All BID meetings must include the DCS personnel and the LEA foster care POC (or their surrogate).
- Meetings can occur in person, virtually, via teleconference, or, in some cases, email exchanges may be appropriate.





Training the LEA and School Staff

- All personnel who may have contact with foster students should be trained on process and procedure.
- This may include:
 - School counselors
 - Social workers
 - Receptionists
 - Attendance personnel
 - Registrars
 - Administrators





Timelines

- Upon a student entering custody or changing placement, the DCS Child and Family Team (CFT) should discuss the educational best interest of the child.
- The school or LEA point of contact will be notified through the delivery of an education passport.
 - This notification may also be made directly from the DCS education specialist.
- The BID meeting should be held within **five days**.





Timelines

- Once the BID meeting has been held and it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child, transportation is arranged.
- DCS will collaborate with the LEA to ensure the child receives transportation within **five days** of the BID meeting.
- DCS will provide transportation during the time prior to the BID meeting and for up to **five additional days** after the BID meeting is held.





Immediate Enrollment

- Barriers to enrollment must be eliminated.
- LEAs must ensure that a child in foster care is immediately enrolled in his or her new school even if the student does not have required documentation.
- The enrolling school must immediately contact the child's school of origin to obtain all relevant records.
- The school of origin must immediately transfer the records.



Let's Share!

What additional questions or concerns do you have?



**Thank you for being
a guiding light!**





Contact Information

Jackie Jacobson | Foster Care Point of Contact

Jackie.Jacobson@tn.gov

(615) 390-4549

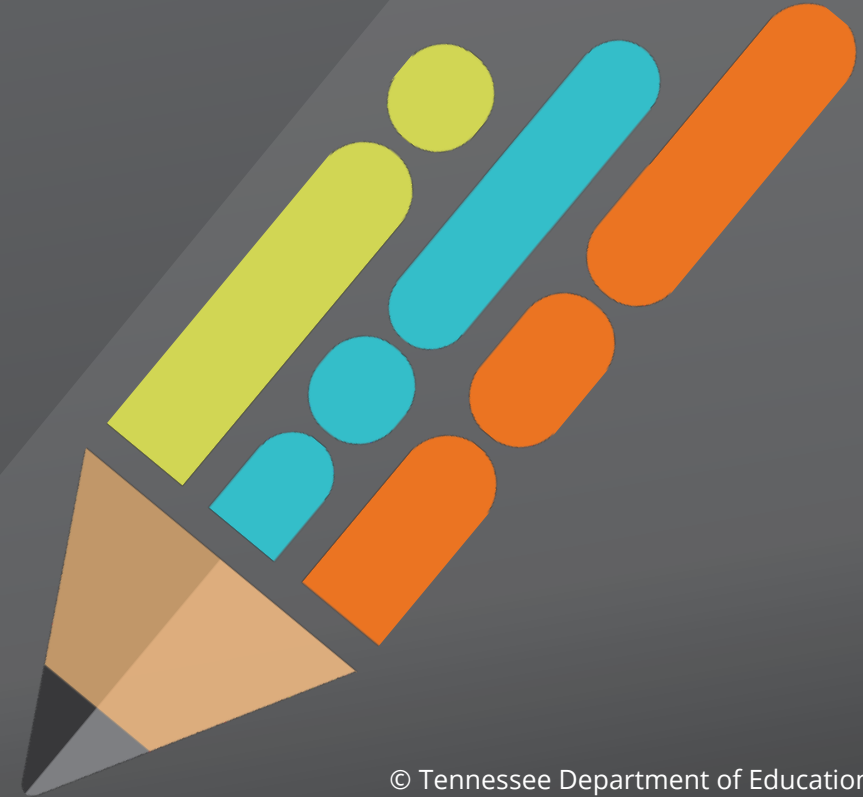
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1-800-232-5454

Notifications can also be submitted electronically at:

<http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline>