

## THOMASVILLE CITY SCHOOLS' FOSTER CARE PLAN

### LEA Student in Foster Care Overview

**Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2016-17 (Enrolled for Previous School Year): 0**

**Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2017-18 (Currently Enrolled): 0**

**List Agencies in Collaboration:**

Thomasville City School System and Clarke County Department of Human Resources

**Policy Review and Revision (Describe how each agency in collaboration reviewed policies and the revisions made to policies as a result of reviews.** Each participating agency reviewed enrollment and transportation policies/procedures currently in place. Enrollment policies/procedures have been amended to include "CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE" to the "immediate enroll" list of student groups. A transportation plan for students in foster care was developed jointly by the participating agencies. Clarke County Department of Human Resources will be responsible for transporting students to its attendance boundary if it is determined to be in the child's best interest to remain in his/her school of origin. The school system in which the school of origin is located will transport the student from the attendance boundary to the school. Should the school of origin not be in a neighboring school system, the Department of Human Resources will provide transportation. "Best Interest Determination Forms" (see attached) will be completed with input from the Department of Human Resources.

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

A planning meeting was held on June 29, 2017. (See attached sign-in sheet)

Donna Calhoun, Thomasville City Schools; Clarke County DHR; Alvin Reed

**LEA(s) Point(s) of Contact:**

Donna Calhoun, Thomasville City Special Education Coordinator/ Federal Program Director

**DHR(s) Point(s) of Contact:**

Alvin Reed, Clarke County Department of Human Resources

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.

Enrollment policies have been revised to include "CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE" in the list of "immediately enrolled" students. Revised policies/procedures can be found in each school system's policy book.

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.

Forms to be used for BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION are attached to this plan and can be found in the office of the Foster Care point of contact in each school system.

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

Transportation procedures are attached to this plan and can be found in the office of the Foster Care point of contact in each school system.

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

Upon initial enrollment, students identified as being in foster care will immediately be enrolled even if enrollment documents are not presented. The Foster Care point of contact will schedule a “best interest determination” meeting with all necessary parties involved. This meeting may include a phone conference if all parties cannot meet within 24 hours.

# **THOMASVILLE CITY SCHOOLS' TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

## **FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS AND CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

### **Homeless Students**

Students eligible for McKinney-Vento assistance will immediately be enrolled in school even in the absence of required documents. Transportation will be provided to these students in the same manner as provided to other students. Should a homeless student wish to remain in his/her school of origin that is outside the attendance boundaries of the Thomasville City School (TCS) System, transportation will be provided to the TCS attendance boundary. The school system that serves as the school of origin will meet the student at the TCS attendance boundary and transport him/her to school.

### **Responsibilities and costs related to student transportation.**

Thomasville school district will collaborate with the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) to develop and implement clear, written procedures governing how transportation is provided to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin. The school district will also work with the CWA to reach an agreement concerning covering the transportation costs. The agreement will cover how the transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care. Each agreement can/will vary greatly because the unique needs of each child should be considered in making the decision on transportation.

### **Children in Foster Care**

Students in foster care will immediately be enrolled in school even in the absence of required documents. Transportation for students in foster care will be provided in the same manner as provided to other students. Should it be determined that it is in the best interest of the child in foster care to remain in his/her school of origin that is outside the attendance boundaries of the Thomasville City School System, transportation will be provided to the TCS attendance boundary. The school system that serves as the school of origin will meet the student at the TCS attendance boundary and transport him/her to school. If the school of origin is not located in a system that directly borders the Thomasville City School System, the Department of Human Resources has agreed to provide transportation to the school of origin (collaborative planning meeting was held at Clarke County DHR on June 29, 2017).

## Best Interest Determination

The presumption is that a student will remain in the current school; a student should only change schools if remaining in the current school is not in his/her best interest. The caseworker or custodial agency point of contact should complete this worksheet in collaboration with school personnel. For continuity of care, the worksheet and all supporting documentation are to be maintained in the child's records.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Custodial Agent Representative and Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current School System: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential New School: \_\_\_\_\_

Schools the Student Previously Attended (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

District of Residency: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### Supporting Documentation Attached:

Attach any supporting documentation used in making the determination of best interest. (The following is a checklist of sample documents that may be considered. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

- Report Cards
- Progress Reports
- Achievement Data (Test Scores)
- Attendance Data
- IEP or 504 Plan
- E-mails of correspondence from individuals consulted

## Best Interest Determination

ROLE	PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	CONTACT
Student			
Parent			
Custodial Agency Representative			
Student Guardian Ad Litem			
School Guidance Counselor			
School Administrator			
LEA Foster Care Point of Contact			
Other			

## Best Interest Determination

A representative from the school of origin 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.

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

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well is she/he performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have the past school transfers impacted the student?
3. How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities and other interests? How could the new school serve these needs?
4. What are the student's academic and career goals? How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, graduate on time, or receive an industry credential?
5. How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional, and cultural needs? Does the student access school-based supportive services? How could the new school serve these needs?
6. Describe the nature, quality, and duration of the student's relationship in the current school. Specifically consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the school of origin. Consider where the student's go to school.
7. Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities?
8. Is the student's new living arrangement to be short or long term? How is this impacted by school selection?
9. How would the commute to the current school impact the student? Consider the child's age and developmental functioning as well as the commute with various modes (e.g., car, school bus). Note: The cost of transportation cannot be a factor when determining best interest.
10. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so it coincides with a logical time on academic calendars of the new school and the current school?
11. What other factors did the team consider when making this decision?

# Best Interest Determination

## Initial Placement or Changes in Placement

- \_\_\_\_\_ It is in the best interest of the student to remain in the school of origin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is in the best interest of the student to **not remain** in the school of origin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The student will be immediately enrolled in the new school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The new school will request the student's records the same day from the school of origin. Enrollment means attending and actively participating in class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The school of origin will send the student's records within a timely manner.

## *Every Student Succeeds Act* requires the LEA to:

1. Ensure that a child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined not to be in the child's best interest; and
2. Develop in partnership, consistent with the SEA and local child welfare agencies, procedures that ensure that transportation is provided, arranged, and funded for students in foster care.

## Transportation

_____ The student will remain in the same school.	_____ A change in school placement is needed.
Transportation will be provided by: _____ Responsible party/parties for transportation cost: _____ _____	Enrollment in the new school must take place without interruption. The student will be enrolled in _____ (school) in the _____ (system) on _____ (date).  The person responsible for enrolling the student in the new school is: _____





Children in Foster Care Collaboration and Coordination Meeting

Sign-In Sheet

June 29, 2017

Name	School / Agency
Olivia Reed Ashley Calhoun	Shirley Clarke County DTP Thomasville City School (LEA)