Foster Care Plan

12/1/2016

This plan is to address the requirement for foster care provisions under Title I of ESSA which require State Educational Agencies (SDE) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to collaborate with Child Welfare Agencies (CWAs) to ensure educational stability and minimize educational disruptions for children in foster care.
Foster Care Plan

The Tecumseh Public School District is committed to provide all students with sound educational experiences. We recognize that foster children are at an increased risk of grade retention, gaps in academic achievement, low high school graduation rates, and postsecondary enrollment. These provisions promote greater stability for children in foster care so that they can continue their education without disruption, maintain important relationships with peers and adults, and have the opportunity to achieve college- and career readiness.

The educational stability includes assurances that (1) a child in foster care will remain in the child’s school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child’s best interest in that school and (2) if a determination is made that it is not in the child’s best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in the school of residence, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.

School District Assurances

- Each placement of the child in foster care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- The state child welfare agency will coordinate with appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- If it is not in the best interest of the child to return to the resident school, the child will immediately be provided the appropriate enrollment to the Tecumseh Public School District as long the placement does not violate any existing cooperative agreements with other agencies.
- The Tecumseh Public School District will gather and maintain educational records and send them to any district where the student moves following school record sharing guidelines set forth by the OK State Department of Education.

Foster Care Child Liaison (POC)

The Tecumseh Public School District will assign at least one person to serve as a Foster Care Child Liaison, or Point of Contact (POC). The name of this person will be turned in annual to the OSDE through the online Grants Management System by September 30th of each year. If additional staff members are needed to meet the requirements, the district will make assignments as deemed necessary. The Foster Child Liaison will work in the best interest of the child to ensure that all educational requirements are being met. The liaison that is assigned to the position will have access available training and materials to keep them informed of any changes in the Foster Care Regulations. The liaison will work closely with state and tribal child welfare agencies to:
• Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency,
• Leading the development of a process for making the best interest determination,
• Documenting the best interest determination,
• Facilitating the transfer of records and immediate enrollment,
• Facilitating data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols,
• Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures,
• Managing best interest determinations and transportation cost disputes,
• Ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school, and
• Providing professional development and training to school staff on the Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care.

Committee

A committee will meet to determine the appropriate placement of each foster care child. The committee will comprise of the site administrator or LEA representative, the Foster Care Liaison, and a member of the CWA. The determining factors that may be evaluated include:

• Proximity of the resource family home to the child’s present school;
• Safety considerations;
• Age and grade level of the child as it relates to the other best interests factors;
• Needs of the child, including social adjustment and well-being;
• Child’s performance, continuity of education and engagement in the school the child presently attends;
• Child’s special educational programming if the child is classified;
• Point of time in the year;
• Child’s permanency goal and likelihood of reunification;
• Anticipated duration of the placement;
• Preferences of the child;
• Preferences of the child’s parent(s) or educational 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;
• 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, as long as the decision is not in violation of any other cooperative (coop) agreement the school has with other school districts; 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.

*Transportation costs will not be considered when determining a child’s best interests.

**Enrollment of Students**

Foster care parents, social workers or other legal guardians will be allowed to enroll children in Tecumseh Public Schools. Necessary paperwork (birth certificates, shot records, and residency) will be important upon enrollment. As is common practice when requesting records, academic records, special education records, etc. may not be available upon enrollment, but the LEA will request those files from the sending school district. We want to provide a smooth transition for the student into our district and the verification of certain details, like age, date of birth, and health records are very important detail, so as a result, proper placement and support is provided by the receiving school. We will contact the home school district for the records and make adaptations as needed. Upon enrollment the following guardianship or legal custody documents shall be provided for verification by the foster family or CWA:

- Power of attorney
- Affidavit
- Court Order

**IDEA Students**

The IDEA, Part B directs school districts must make a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to all eligible children with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). FAPE under IDEA includes the provision of special education and related services at no cost to the parents in accordance with a properly developed Individualized Education Program (IEP). Each child’s placement decision follow guidelines set forth in the Special Education guidance provided by Federal and State Government. The Tecumseh Public School District will operate in accordance with all state and federal laws regarding special education students. Special education services will be available to all students that meet the qualifying criteria for receiving special education service, in accordance with Federal and State guidelines.
EL Students

The Tecumseh Public School District will ensure that EL students in foster care will participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs that follow the Federal and State EL guidelines.

Transportation

The Tecumseh Public School District will collaborate with the 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 Tecumseh Public School District will also work with the CWA to reach an agreement in regards to 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 needs of each child should be considered in making the decision on transportation.

The regular transportation policies approved by the Tecumseh Public School District, and following the guidelines for transportation outlined by the OK State Department of Education, will be followed in transporting foster care students. Drivers will be appropriately licensed, certified, and with the required DMV and background checks. Students that must be transported out of state will be school board approved as required by Oklahoma law.

Student Records

The Tecumseh Public School District will share education records with the CWA when the request follows the guidelines outline by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
# Best Interest Determination Evaluation

**Child's Name:**

**Birthday:**   **Age:**   **Grade:**   **Date:**

**Current District:**   **Current Site:**

*Student will remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates a change of school placement is in the child's best interest (check all that apply.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Origin (A)</th>
<th>Receiving School (B)</th>
<th>Other Previous School Attended (C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Which school will better meet the relational needs of the child?**
Select all that apply:
- [ ] Siblings
- [ ] Relationships with peers
- [ ] Relationships with staff

Describe the relationship connections at current school:

______________________________

List strategies for maintaining important connections should other best interest determination be made:

______________________________

**Which school will better meet the individual academic needs and challenges of the child?** Select all that apply:
- [ ] IEP
- [ ] 504 Plan
- [ ] Gifted Program
- [ ] Career Tech
- [ ] EL Services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which school will better meet the social/emotional needs and challenges of the child? Select all that apply:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Emotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which school will better meet the unique needs and interests of the child? Select all that apply:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student will describe the areas of desired school involvement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which school will best meet the permanency goal and likelihood of reunification with parents or siblings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which school is more appropriate for the child’s age and length of travel? Explain:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the child’s transfer history.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which school does the student prefer to attend? Explain:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which school does the caregiver or current placement provider recommends the student attend? Explain:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify strategies for successful transition to new school and/or support in current school:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Documentation
Attach any supporting documentation used to determine best interest of child:
  o Report Cards
  o Progress Reports
  o Achievement Data (test scores)
  o Attendance Data
  o IEP or Section 504 Plans
  o Other: __________________________

Determination
Based on the information provided and considering the best interest of the child, the team has determined the following school is the most appropriate educational placement for the child:

Team Members:
LEA representative: __________________________ Printed name __________ Signature __________
CWA representative: __________________________ Printed name __________ Signature __________
Education Decision Maker: __________________________ Printed name __________ Signature __________
Other: __________________________ Printed name __________ Signature __________