

Summers County Board of Education

Scope: This policy is established to ensure that each child and youth in foster has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth.

Authority: 45 C.F.R. 1355.20.

Adopted: February 10, 2022.

Amended:

Reviewed: January 13, 2022.

FOSTER CARE STUDENTS

Purpose

The County Board shall ensure that each child and youth in foster care has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.

Defined

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes, all as defined by federal law. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the State or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoptions, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments made.

Enrollment

Where compulsory residency requirements or other requirements, in laws, regulations, practices, or policies, may act as a barrier to the identification of, or the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of children and youths in foster care the County Board will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that children and youths in foster care are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

The school system shall remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youths in foster care in schools in the district. Children and youths in foster care shall be enrolled immediately, even if they do not have the necessary enrollment documentation such as immunization and health records, proof of residency or guardianship, birth certificate, school records and other required documentation.

School Attended

Children and youths in foster care have the right to remain in their school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the child's best interest. The school of origin is the school that the student

attended when permanently housed or last enrolled. The local attendance area school is any public school in which the student is actually living and is eligible to attend.

Liaison

The attendance director shall serve as the liaison for children and youths in foster care and will perform the following duties:

- ensure that public notice of the educational rights of children and youths in foster care situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services;
- ensure that parents or guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- ensure that parents or guardians are informed of and assisted in accessing all transportation services for their children, including to the school of origin;
- coordinate with designee to help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes, and provide the youth with notice of his/her right to appeal the county system's decision;
- immediately assist in obtaining immunizations or record of immunizations or other medical records for those students who do not have them, and assure that students are enrolled in school while the records are being obtained;
- ensure that children and youths in foster care are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- ensure that children and youths in foster care enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the county system;
- ensure that children and youths in foster care, their families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the county system and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services; and
- ensure that enrollment disputes are resolved using the resolution process established by the West Virginia Department of Education.

Additionally, the liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the state coordinator for the education of children and youths in foster care as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youths in foster care and other duties as assigned by the Superintendent.