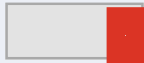


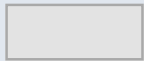
Orange Beach City (174) Public District - FY 2025 - Consolidated - Rev 0 - Improvement Planning

Alabama Education Stability for Foster Students

LEA Student in Foster Care Overview



Number of Students in Foster Care (Enrolled for Previous School Year)



List Agencies in Collaboration:

Orange Beach Board of Education - Student Affairs, Student Services

Baldwin County Department of Human Resources

Baldwin County Board of Education – Federal Programs, Transportation Department, and Attendance Department

Gulf Shores Board of Education - Federal Programs

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

OBBOE, DHR, GSBOE, and BCBE will conduct meetings as needed to collaborate and make revisions to the plan as needed. These meetings allow the team to ensure that both plans are being implemented effectively. As far as the transportation plan is concerned, we discuss any problems that may have occurred or are occurring regarding keeping students in their school of origin. In addition, we also discuss any issues that have or are occurring with regard to immediate enrollment for Foster Care children, as well as transportation concerns. If situations arise, OBCE will work quickly to remedy any potential problems, as well as work with the area LEAs.

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

Collaboration and coordination with agencies are crucial components of the Orange Beach Board of Education's Foster Care Plan. This ensures that the needs of students in foster care are effectively addressed through a

collaborative effort between the education system and relevant child welfare agencies. Here's how collaboration and coordination may be described:

1. **Interagency Collaboration:**

- **Description:** The Orange Beach Board of Education will engage in ongoing collaboration with local child welfare agencies, including the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and other relevant agencies involved in the foster care system.
- **Purpose:** To establish a seamless and cooperative relationship to support the educational needs and well-being of students in foster care.

2. **Joint Planning Meetings:**

- **Description:** Regular joint planning meetings will be scheduled between school personnel and representatives from child welfare agencies.
- **Purpose:** To discuss the unique needs of students in foster care, share information, and develop coordinated plans to address academic, social, and emotional needs.

3. **Information Sharing Protocols:**

- **Description:** Protocols will be established for the timely and secure sharing of information between the Orange Beach Board of Education and child welfare agencies.
- **Purpose:** To ensure that relevant information about students in foster care, including academic records and placement changes, is shared in accordance with legal and privacy requirements.

4. **Designated Points of Contact:**

- **Description:** Designate specific staff members within the Orange Beach Board of Education and child welfare agencies as points of contact for foster care-related issues.
- **Purpose:** To facilitate clear communication and streamline collaboration, ensuring that there are designated individuals responsible for coordination efforts.

5. **Training and Professional Development:**

- **Description:** Provide training and professional development opportunities for school staff and child welfare agency personnel.
- **Purpose:** To enhance the understanding of the unique challenges and needs of students in foster care and to promote effective collaboration in supporting their educational journey.

6. **Collaborative Decision-Making:**

- **Description:** Foster a culture of collaborative decision-making through regular meetings, where educational plans for students in foster care are discussed and developed jointly.
- **Purpose:** To ensure that decisions are made collectively, taking into consideration the expertise and perspectives of both education and child welfare professionals.

7. **Support Services Coordination:**

- **Description:** Coordinate the provision of support services for students in foster care, including counseling, tutoring, and other interventions.
- **Purpose:** To create a seamless system of support that addresses the diverse needs of students in foster care and promotes their academic success.

8. **Regular Data Sharing and Analysis:**

- **Description:** Implement a system for regular data sharing and analysis to assess the academic progress and well-being of students in foster care.
- **Purpose:** To monitor the effectiveness of interventions, identify areas for improvement, and make data-informed decisions.

9. **Emergency Response Planning:**

- **Description:** Develop and maintain emergency response plans that clearly outline procedures for addressing the educational needs of students in foster care during crises or transitions.
- **Purpose:** To ensure a coordinated and immediate response to unexpected situations that may impact students in foster care.

10. **Community Collaboration:**

- **Description:** Collaborate with community organizations and resources to enhance the support network for students in foster care.
- **Purpose:** To expand the range of available services and resources that can positively impact the lives of students in foster care.

11. **Regular Evaluation and Feedback:**

- **Description:** Establish a process for regular evaluation and feedback on the effectiveness of collaborative efforts.
- **Purpose:** To continuously improve collaboration strategies, address challenges, and enhance the overall support provided to students in foster care.

By emphasizing collaboration and coordination with agencies, the Orange Beach Board of Education aims to create a cohesive and supportive environment that prioritizes the educational success and well-being of students in foster care. This approach ensures that all stakeholders work together to provide a holistic and coordinated system of support.

The following is a list of team members, position, and agencies.

Latorie Horn, Director of Baldwin County Department of Human Resources

Mary Courtney - Director of Student Affairs, Orange Beach City Board of Education

Joe Blevins - Director Student Services, Orange Beach Board of Education

Scott Cook - Director of Transportation, Orange Beach Board of Education

Randy Wilkes - Superintendent and Director of Federal Programs, Orange Beach Board of Education

LEA(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Joe Blevins, Director of Student Services

DHR(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Latorie Horn, Baldwin County DHR

LEA Student in Foster Care Responses

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.

When working with children in foster care, as a team, we work together to maintain a student's enrollment at the school of origin. However, we do look at all the variables that could be of detriment to the student if he/she were to remain in the school of origin. We will continue to implement the checklist of considerations to answer in order to make an informed decision concerning what is in the best interest of the student. DHR will use this form during their ISP meetings with the foster care parents and child. If it is determined that transferring the student to the zoned school is in his/her best interest, registrars at each school are aware of the policy to immediately enroll the student despite not having any and/or all records. The registrar at the new school will contact the prior school to obtain needed records. Registrars are made aware of this immediate enrollment of foster care children as they are trained prior to the new school year and then a follow-up occurs at a spring training by the OBCS liaison.

The OBBOE ensures that all children within county lines have access to a free and appropriate public education. There will be no barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success in school for students identified as homeless, migrant, immigrants, limited English proficient, living in foster care, and/or neglected and delinquent. The Local Education Agency (LEA) and all schools shall be in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and the Ensuring Education Stability for Children in Foster Care Provision of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016.

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.

OBCS Foster Care Liaisons and the Baldwin County DHR foster care liaisons have collaborated and will continue to implement the same process 2023-2024 school year.

A team approach will be utilized to make best-interest decisions for identified students transitioning into foster care or moving to another foster care home . The Foster Care Team will convene an individual school plan (ISP) meeting. The team may include, but not limited to, the following positions who have knowledge of the given situation and child: OBCS Foster Care Liason, DHR foster care point of contact, education decision maker, the child, school administrator, school counselor and/or social workers, teachers, coaches, transportation supervisor, and other individuals. The team will utilize the school selection best interest form that includes questions to answer (see below) with the ISP team to make an informed decision concerning what is in the best interest of the student. Ultimately, the final decision remains with the Baldwin County DHR.

If it is determined that transferring the student to the zoned school is in his/her best interest, registrars at each school are aware of the policy to immediately enroll the student despite not having any and/or all records. The Baldwin County DHR point of contact will assist in acquiring records.

The information gained in the ISP meeting includes the following:

1. Has the student established meaningful social and educational relationships? How long has the student been attending the school of origin? How much time is remaining in the school year? Are siblings in attendance at the school of origin?

2. How is the student's academic performance? Is he/she strong and at grade level or struggling and a transfer

would cause the student to fall further behind?

3. How is the student coping with mobility? Does he/she have strong ties to the current school? How does the student feel about changing schools?

4. What is the distance and time spent on travel to each school? Would a shorter commute help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school or impact any special or necessary educational needs?

5. Are there safety issues that should be considered?

Which school better meets the student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services?

How long is the family likely to remain at the current residence? What is the likelihood that the family will reestablish residency in the attendance area of the school of origin?

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

When the school of origin is determined to be in the best interest of the child, the school system POC will work with its Transportation Supervisor and DHR POC in providing transportation. Strategies will include but are not limited to the following methods:

- The school district will provide in-county transportation via traditional bus services, including route adjustments and team transport from one attendance zone to another, where feasible,
- Foster parent transportation from one attendance zone to another for school attendance
- BCDHR Case Manager transportation from one attendance zone to another for school attendance, and
- Bus transportation and/or foster parent and/or BCDHR Case Manager transportation to out-of-county schools.

OBCS will reimburse the BCDHR for additional transportation costs. Costs will be split between both OBCS and BCDHR. Additional costs will be the difference between what the school district would spend to transport a student to his or her assigned school and the cost of transporting a child in foster care to his or her school of origin. The reimbursement rate will be the state rate for bus transportation, currently \$1.85 per mile. DHR will provide OBCS with a monthly mileage log and invoice which will be payable in accordance with accounting timeframes. Likewise, DHR will reimburse foster parents for transportation cost at the state rate for personal vehicles, currently \$0.625 per mile. DHR will establish the process and pay schedule for foster parent reimbursement. DHR will utilize state and federal funds as reimbursement funding sources for eligible children in foster care. The school district will utilize Title I funds reserved for foster care transportation to aid reimbursement efforts.

Dispute Resolution

OBCS and BCDHR (and other LEAs if applicable) must make every effort to collaborate in serving children in foster care. When a dispute arises between the agencies over paying the costs of transportation, the OBCS, BCDHR and other LEAs must make every effort to resolve the dispute collaboratively at the local level. Documented patterns of excessive disputes to the ALSDE from particular LEAs and/or local child welfare agencies will be reviewed by the ALSDE and State child welfare agency and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure compliance by both local agencies. The ALSDE and State child welfare agency may establish a Memorandum of Understanding regarding appropriate measures to limit disputes and ensure compliance by both OBCS, BCDHR and other LEAs. All parties are encouraged to seek assistance from the Foster Care Point of Contact at the ALSDE, Sally Meek, and the Education Coordinator at the State Child Welfare Agency (or similar personnel) prior to any dispute.

In addition, under no circumstances shall the dispute delay or interrupt the provision of transportation for a child to the school of origin. To ensure no such disruption, the agency that had been paying for transportation prior to the dispute will continue to pay until the dispute is resolved. If transportation was not provided previously, the BCBE will arrange and provide the transportation while payment disputes are being resolved.

Disputes between OBCS, BCDHR and other LEAs regarding implementing the local transportation procedures, calculating and paying for additional costs of transportation to the school of origin for children in foster care, or other inter-agency transportation disputes will be resolved by a three-person panel including the ALSDE foster care point of contact, Sally Meek, another ALSDE staff, and a representative of the state child welfare agency. Either OBCS, BCDHR or other LEA can bring a transportation payment dispute to the ALSDE by submitting a dispute resolution request to the ALSDE foster care point of contact via an email with the subject "Foster Child Transportation Dispute."

The dispute resolution request must include:

- A complete explanation of the basis of the dispute, with all pertinent facts.
- The name and contact information of the people who have been addressing the dispute thus far on behalf of both BCBE, BCDHR, and other LEA (phone, email and mailing address).
- Details of how the agencies have attempted to resolve the dispute at the local level prior to appealing to the state.

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the dispute resolution request, the ALSDE foster care point of contact will contact the party that did not submit the request (either OBCS, BCDHR, or other LEA) identifying the subject matter of the dispute and inviting that party to submit any information pertinent to the dispute. The party will have ten (10) days to submit its explanation of the dispute, with all pertinent facts. Documents submitted by either party after the applicable deadlines will not be considered.

The panel shall make a final decision within thirty (30) days of receiving all information related to the dispute. The ALSDE foster care contact will forward the written decision and an explanation of that decision to the appropriate

parties at both OBCS and BCDHR (and other LEA if applicable). The decision shall be the final resolution

ESSA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(ii)-(iii) Describe protocol for a child in foster care to be immediately enrolled in a new school.

Students who are placed in foster care are to be enrolled immediately into the new school. The school selected on the basis of a best interest determination must enroll the student who is placed in foster care, even if the foster care parents and/or DHR are unable to provide the records typically required for enrollment. The enrolling school will contact the school last attended to obtain needed records. Records should be accepted directly from the foster care parent and/or DHR representative if available to aid in the enrollment and placement until records are received from the previous school. The DHR Case worker, school counselor/social worker, and/or school nurse will assist in obtaining the immunizations records.

Orange Beach Board of Education ensures that all children within county lines have access to a free and appropriate public education. There will be no barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success in school for students identified as homeless, migrant, immigrants, limited English proficient, living in foster care, and/or neglected and delinquent. The Local Education Agency (LEA) and all schools shall be in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and the Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care Provision of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016.