

Saraland City Schools

Foster Care Plan 24-25

Alabama Education Stability for Foster Students

LEA Student in Foster Care Overview

Number of Students in Foster Care (Enrolled for Previous School Year) 2

Number of Students in Foster Care (Currently Enrolled) 3

List Agencies in Collaboration:

Mobile County DHR

Saraland School System Health Services Division

Saraland School System Federal Programs Division

Saraland School System Attendance Services Division

Saraland School System Mental Health Services Coordinator

AltaPointe Health Systems

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

Saraland City School System maintains a Board approved Enrollment Policy that includes the immediate enrollment of foster care students. Additionally, the system Maintains a Board approved Mandatory Reporting Policy requiring all system employees to serve as mandatory reporters. All system employees complete Mandatory Reporting Training through MCDHR annually. Policies have been approved by the Alabama State Department Federal Programs Division, Alabama State Department Prevention and Support Services Division, MCDHR, and AltaPointe.

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

Stephanie Streeter Director, Mobile County DHR

Diana Collins Saraland City School System Health Services Supervisor

Jeff Ward Saraland City School System Federal Programs Director

Stephanie Pope Mental Health Services Coordinator

Mike Hastings Mobile County DHR

Saraland City collaborates with Mobile County DHR and AltaPointe Health Systems to guarantee that we offer adequate and sufficient services to foster care students in Saraland City Schools. Emphasis was placed on the needs of the whole child and providing the resources for each foster child to be successful. The areas of physical, social, emotional, and school readiness (uniforms, supplies, transportation, etc) were discussed among the agencies. The meeting was held on 9-11-24.

LEA(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Jeff Ward, Saraland City School System Federal Programs Director

DHR(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Mike Hastings, Mobile County DHR Education Liaison

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.

Presently, Saraland City School System has one school at each level. However, the LEA will ensure 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 the child's best interest. If so, the child will immediately enroll in the new school district, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. If a child moves into another school district, the LEA from both school districts will work collaboratively with all entities to ensure a smooth transition. The new school will immediately contact the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.

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.

Presently, Saraland City School System has one school at each level (i.e., early education center, elementary, middle, and high). However, the LEA will work collaboratively with child welfare agencies and the new school district to ensure the placement is in the child's best interest. These entities will ensure the child's safety, well-being, and transportation issues are addressed before the child enrolls in the new system.

If a dispute should arise about the school placement of the child, this would be solved by the Best Interest Determination Process. Participants in this meeting may include: child/youth, parents, caseworker, guardian ad litem, school of origin representative, potential new school administration and counselor, mental health coordinator. Areas that will be considered include: the child/youth's wishes and safety, academic and non academic needs, and possible time and distance of travel. Participants will be asked to bring any documents to the meeting that will help determine placement. Some supporting items may include: report cards, test scores, attendance data, discipline reports, and IEP or 504 plan. In the event that the LEA's decision is not in accordance with the wishes of educational caregiver an appeal may be filed. The Dispute Resolution Policy can be found in eGAP under related documents.

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

A Foster Care Student Transportation Plan has been developed between Saraland City School System (SCSS) and MCDHR. The plan includes procedures for ensuring the educational stability of foster care youth and the ESSA requirements. SCSS and MCDHR will split the cost of transporting foster care youth. SCSS will set aside a portion of local funds for foster care transportation. MCDHR will set aside local funds before the beginning of the school year to spend for transportation of foster care youth. SCSS and MCDHR will purchase city bus passes, gas vouchers, and/or pay for mileage to assist in interim transportation. Also the school system may elect to set aside Title I funds for foster care students. These funding sources will be monitored by the LEA Federal Advisory Council, SCSS Federal Programs Director, and MCDHR bi-annually. SCSS has one school at each level; therefore, a system-wide dispute policy is inapplicable. However, the system will work collaboratively with other school systems on transportation costs.

The Dispute Resolution and Transportation Policy can be found in eGAP under related documents.

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 live in the attendance areas of Saraland City School System and who are homeless, in foster care, migratory, immigrant and/or limited English proficient shall be enrolled immediately even if documents normally required for enrollment are not available. The following barriers will not delay enrollment into Saraland City Schools:

- Residency requirements
- Lack of social security number
- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunizations
- Legal custody requirements
- Transportation
- Language barriers
- Disabilities