

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the page, creating a modern, layered effect. The rest of the page is a plain white background.

# **Foster Care**

## **Educational Requirements**

# Foster Care Awareness

- ▶ Studies show that foster care children are more likely to drop out of school due to the constant mobility such as moving in and out of the system, as well as being moved from one home to another, and/or from one facility to another.
- ▶ Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - ▶ The district is responsible for helping improve educational conditions of and outcomes for foster youth.
  - ▶ Services must also be provided for students awaiting foster care placement.

# Rights of Foster Youth

- ▶ The child must be allowed to remain in his or her school of origin, to help keep the child's educational stability, unless it is determined it is not in the child's best interest.
  - ▶ The school of origin is the school the student is enrolled in at the time of the change in placement.
  - ▶ The school of best interest is a team decision which will be addressed in subsequent slides.
- ▶ Each child must have a child welfare agent (CWA), and the district looking out for their best interest at all times.
- ▶ The student, and the student's biological and/or foster family are all proper, and necessary representation.

# School of Best Interest

- ▶ When a student is placed in foster care or moves from one placement to another, the district, case worker, foster family and to the extent appropriate, the student will work together to determine the School of Best interest.
- ▶ The School of Best Interest is the school which is determined to be in the best interest of the student and may or may not be the school of origin.
- ▶ Cost of school transportation should not be a factor in determining the best interest of the child for the purposes of school selection.

# Best Interest Determination

- ▶ The district should consider all factors when making the determination of which school is in the best interest of a foster youth. Factors should include the following:
  - ▶ Proximity to school in which the youth is enrolled in at the time of placement
  - ▶ Appropriateness of current educational setting
  - ▶ Preference of the child, parent or educational representative
  - ▶ Placement of siblings, and/or child's attachment to the school
  - ▶ Availability and quality of services that meets the child's educational and emotional needs
  - ▶ The child's transfer history and the affect it has had on the child
  - ▶ Any special needs required by the student, and the services provided

# Disputes and Resolutions

- ▶ The district must ensure that the child is allowed to remain in school of origin while disputes are settled.
- ▶ If there are disputes, the district's foster care liaison, Mindie Friederich, should be involved.
- ▶ If an agreement cannot be made then the decision should be made by the CWA, ensuring that it is fair to all parties involved, and reached in a timely manner.
- ▶ If the educational decision-maker or parent disagrees with the Best Interest Determination (BID), the district will inform them in a language and format that is understandable, of their right to appeal the BID.
- ▶ The educational decision-maker shall also be provided the contact information for the district's foster care liaison (Mindie Friederich)

# Disputes and Resolutions – JC Schools

- ▶ The district's foster care liaison, Mindie Friederich, will provide the educational decision-maker with the following:
  - ▶ An explanation of the Best Interest Determination
  - ▶ A step-by-step description of how to dispute the BID (Level I procedure)
  - ▶ A statement ensuring the student shall remain in the school of origin, receiving all appropriate educational services, until the dispute reaches its final resolution
  - ▶ A timeline for resolutions of the dispute at each level
  - ▶ Notice of the right to appeal if the local-level resolution is not satisfactory

# Transportation

- ▶ Per an agreement between JC Schools, Children's Division and Every Child's Hope (2017), the following procedures are to be followed in regards to transportation of students in foster care:
  - ▶ School staff will contact the district foster care liaison, Mindie Friederich, when transportation is needed (this is only necessary when a student lives outside of the boundary lines of the school of best interest).
  - ▶ Mindie Friederich will work with First Student to determine if there is an existing bus route that could be used at little or no cost to the district.
    - ▶ If such bus route exists, the district will absorb the cost of transportation.
    - ▶ If such route does not exist, Mindie and First Student will assess options. Options include:
      - ▶ Rerouting or creating a new bus route. The option could come at a cost that would be passed along to Children's Division or its subcontractor.
      - ▶ Paying mileage to the family to offset the cost of transportation. Again, this cost would be absorbed by Children's Division or its subcontractor.

# JC Schools Foster Care Procedures

- ▶ If a staff member becomes aware of a foster care situation, please confirm that the principal and school registrar are aware of the student's placement.
  - ▶ This allows the office to update the student's mailing address and contact information, as well as provides an opportunity to have a conversation with the foster family.
  - ▶ Registrars should update the Household, Relationship, and Program Participation in Infinite Campus to reflect the foster placement.
- ▶ If the foster placement is in a different school boundary, the principal, foster family, CWA, and if appropriate, the student will begin the Best Interest Determination process.
- ▶ If it is determined that the student should stay in the school of origin (which is typically the best situation), the team should address transportation needs using the process on the preceding slide.

# Questions?

## CONTACT:

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