

Foster Care Plan

Albertville City (101) Public District - FY 2026 - Consolidated - Rev 0 - Improvement Planning

Alabama Education Stability for Foster Students

LEA Student in Foster Care Overview

20 Number of Students in Foster Care (Previous School Year)

12 Number of Students in Foster Care (Current School Year)

List Agencies in Collaboration:

Albertville City School System, Arab City School System, Boaz City School System, Guntersville City School System, Marshall County School System, Marshall County Department of Human Resources

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

Each participating agency reviewed enrollment and transportation policies/procedures currently in place. Enrollment policies/procedures include "CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE" in the "immediate enroll" list of student groups.

Each participating agency reviewed policies/procedures for "DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS" for CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.

A transportation plan for students in foster care was developed jointly by the participating agencies. Each agency will be responsible for transporting students to its attendance boundary if it is determined to be in the child's best interest to remain in his/her school of origin. The school system in which the school of origin is located will transport the student from the attendance boundary to the school. Should the school of origin not be in a neighboring school system, the Department of Human Resources will provide transportation. "Best Interest Determination Forms" (see attached) will be completed with input from the Department of Human Resources.

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

A planning meeting was held on September 4, 2025 at the Marshall County Department of Human Resources. (See attached sign-in sheet)

Tori Kitchens, Albertville City Schools; John Ingram, Arab City Schools; Jennifer Williams, Guntersville City Schools; Trevor Mitchell, Marshall County Schools; Cory Harris, DHR; Holly Smith, DHR

LEAs and the Department of Human Resources will continue to partner throughout the school year in making informed decisions regarding children in foster care. All efforts will be made to remove barriers that may hinder the implementation of the Title I foster care provisions. It is a joint goal to ensure that the appropriate interventions and strategies are in place to support foster care students' success in school.

LEA Point of Contact (name and email address):

Tori Kitchens, tkitchens@albertk12.org

DHR Point of Contact (name and email address):

Lori Bateman, lori.bateman@dhr.alabama.gov - Tracy White, tracy.white@dhr.alabama.gov

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.

A student in foster care will remain in his/her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest. If it is not in a student's best interest to stay in the school of origin, the student will immediately be enrolled (even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment) in a school in the system that serves the attendance area in which the student is living. [Reference: 20 U.S.C. §§6311(g)(1)(E)]

Arab City, Albertville City, Boaz City, Guntersville City, and Marshall County will engage in a collaborative process with the Marshall County Department of Human Resources (DHR) and foster parent(s) to determine the best interest of the student and ensure the student remains in the school of origin, if it meets the best interest of the child. If the best interest determination shows that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the DHR caseworker, previous LEA, and foster parent(s) will collaborate with the new school to enroll the child immediately. The new enrolling school will contact the school of origin immediately to obtain the student's academic records. For continuity of care, the form and all supporting documentation will be maintained in the child's 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 of 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.

Arab City, Albertville City, Boaz City, Guntersville City, and Marshall County will engage in a collaborative process with the Marshall County DHR to utilize current guidelines to make the best interest determinations for each student in foster care (see Best Interest Determination forms). The stakeholders will solicit input from all included parties, in addition to DHR and LEA representatives, to identify the school placement that is in the child's best interest. The following

factors will be considered for the best interest determination for each student in foster care:

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well is she/he performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have the past school transfers impacted the student?
3. How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities and other interests? How could the new school serve these needs?
4. What are the student's academic and career goals? How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, graduate on time, or receive an industry credential?
5. How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional, and cultural needs? Does the student access school-based supportive services? How could the new school serve these needs?
 1. Describe the nature, quality, and duration of the student's relationship in the current school. Specifically consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the school of origin. Consider where the student's go to school.
 2. Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities?
8. Is the student's new living arrangement to be short or long term? How is this impacted by school selection?
 1. How would the commute to the current school impact the student? Consider the child's age and developmental functioning as well as the commute with various modes (e.g., car, school bus). Note: The cost of transportation cannot be a factor when determining best interest.
 2. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so it coincides with a logical time on academic calendars of the new school and the current school?
11. What other factors did the team consider when making this decision?

The team will use the following possible supporting documentation for best interest determination:

1. Report cards
2. Progress reports
3. Test Scores
4. Attendance Data
5. IEP or 504 Plan
6. E-mails from individuals consulted during the best interest determination process
7. Other relevant documents

ESSA Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Description of transportation protocols and procedures to ensure students in foster care receive transportation to their school of origin. The procedures should 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, the LEA and child welfare agency responsibilities for providing transportation and description of the Dispute Resolution Policy. Dispute Resolution forms and templates may be uploaded to Related Documents.

Transportation for students in foster care will be provided in the same manner as provided to other students. Should it be determined that it is in the best interest of the child in foster care to remain in his/her school of origin that is outside the attendance boundaries of the school district, the student will be transported to the attendance boundary of the school district and the district in which the school of origin located will transport the child to school. If the school of origin is not located in a system that directly borders the school district, the Marshall County Department of Human Resources has agreed to provide transportations to the school of origin.

To dispute the LEA's decision related to school selection (best interest) or enrollment, an educational decision-maker must request dispute resolution in writing by submitting a dated appeal letter specifying the school in which enrollment is sought and the basis for seeking enrollment in that school. The appeal letter must include the name and contact information (phone, email and mailing address) for the educational decision-maker. The educational decision-maker must submit the appeal letter within five (5) school days of receiving from the LEA written notice of the right to dispute the decision. The letter may be submitted via an email with the subject " (Homeless, Migrant, Immigrant, Limited English Proficient, or Foster) Child Appeal," or delivered to any school to the attention of the superintendent. Regardless of how the appeal letter is submitted, the school or LEA shall ensure the LEA's superintendent or designee receives it immediately. The submission of the appeal letter by email or delivery to any school initiates the dispute. From that point, the student shall remain in the school of origin until the dispute reaches its final resolution. The student shall be provided with all appropriate educational services for which the student is eligible during the pendency of the dispute. Students attending their school of origin during the pendency of the dispute will be entitled to receive transportation. The LEA will provide or arrange transportation during the dispute. Once the dispute is resolved, transportation will be provided pursuant to the local transportation procedures.

Refer to the Foster Care Plan located in the Related Documents for specific procedures on dispute resolutions.

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

Upon initial enrollment, students identified as being in foster care will immediately be enrolled even if enrollment documents are not presented. The Foster Care point of contact will schedule a "best interest determination" meeting with all necessary parties involved. This meeting may include a phone conference if all parties cannot meet within 24 hours.