It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that every student receives the high-quality instruction, supports, and interventions they need to graduate high school on time and prepare for the future. Students in out-of-home care are likely to experience mobility in and out of the foster care system and from one home placement to another. This mobility may disrupt education and create barriers to academic success and on-time graduation. By collaborating with involved state, local, and/or tribal child welfare agencies, the District will strive to minimize or eliminate educational barriers for students in out-of-home care, particularly with regard to enrollment, transfer of student records, and transportation to their school of origin. The District will review unexpected or excessive absences and facilitate on-time grade level progression and graduation of students in out-of-home care.

Throughout the processes involved in this work, the District will maintain as a priority the provision of services wherein all students in out-of-home care will have the opportunity to benefit equally regardless of their race, class, or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

The Superintendent or their designee will appoint a staff member to serve as the District’s liaison for local child welfare agencies. The liaison will:

1. Coordinate with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) on the implementation of state and federal laws related to students in out-of-home care;
2. Coordinate with the Foster Care Education Program (FCEP) staff at OSPI;
3. Attend training and professional development to improve District implementation;
4. Serve as the primary contact person for representatives of DCYF;
5. Lead and document the development of a process for making best interest determinations;
6. Facilitate immediate enrollment of students in accordance with RCW 28A.225.330;
7. Facilitate the transfer of records in accordance with RCW 28A.150.510 and 28A.225.330;
8. Facilitate data sharing with child welfare agencies consistent with state and federal privacy laws and rules;
9. Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures;
10. Manage best interest determination and transportation cost disputes according to best practices developed by OSPI;
11. Ensure that students in out-of-home care are enrolled in and regularly attend school, consistent with RCW 28A.225.023; and
12. Provide professional development and training to school staff on state and federal laws related to students in out-of-home care and their educational needs.

The District’s out-of-home care liaison will work with the involved state, local, and/or tribal child welfare agencies to receive notifications and share information regarding the status and progress of students in out-of-home care. This liaison will also work collaboratively with the District’s Title I coordinator, building points of contact, and/or other staff or agencies to provide needed supports for students in out-of-home care that are enrolled in, or seeking to enroll in, the District.

Best interest determinations should be made as quickly as possible to prevent educational discontinuity for the student. Whenever practical and in the student’s best interest, students in out-of-home care will remain enrolled in the school they were attending upon entering out-of-home care. To determine the student’s best interest, the District will consider the factors provided in the procedures that accompany this policy. In addition, students in out-of-home care who need transportation to their school of origin will have their transportation provided, arranged, and funded pursuant to the procedures that accompany this policy. Students will also automatically be enrolled in the free and reduced-price meals program.

If remaining in the student’s school of origin is determined not to be in the student’s best interest, the District will immediately enroll the student in their new school. Enrollment will not be denied or delayed based on a failure to provide documents that are normally required for enrollment. Further, the District will expedite the transfer of records for former students in out-of-home care that are placed in a school outside of the District.

The Superintendent is authorized to establish procedures for implementing this policy.

Adopted: September 2017
Revised: September 2018
Cross Reference: Board Policy No. 0030, 3115
Related Superintendent Procedure: 3116SP; 3115SP
Previous Policies:
Management Resources: