

Foster Care Plan
Collaboration Meeting
June 23, 2023 10:30 AM

Agenda

The meeting was held at Hoover Board of Education and the following were in attendance:

Kandace VanWanderham – Hoover City Schools

Dorann Tanner – Alabaster City Schools

Missy Brooks – Mountain Brook Schools

Monique Lewis – Shelby County DHR

Beth Fuller – Shelby County Schools

Kiana Coleman – Homewood City Schools

Randall Reeves – Pelham City Schools

Regina Weathersby– Jefferson County DHR

Jennifer Bailey – Vestavia Hills City Schools

1. Introductions

2. Overview of Federal Program updates

There are currently no updates from the Alabama State Department of Education regarding any changes to the Foster Care Plan requirements. A summary of the purpose of the Foster Care Plan was provided for members of our group that are new.

3. Overview of any changes regarding plans or board policy

Kandace VanWanderham provided everyone with an update of wording in the ESSA Section 111(g)(1)(E)(i) the state made me specify exactly who would be included in the consultation. Protocol would ensure, on a case-by-case basis and in a timely manner, the LEA will consult with DHR and ***others (to include, but not limited to and if appropriate, parent/legal guardian, school administrator or designee, school counselor, 504 or Special Education case manager, DHR liaison, school foster care liaison, teacher(s) and student if appropriate)*** to determine whether it is in the best interest for a student to remain in their school of origin.

There were no changes made to any school system policy.

4. Presentation of individual school system plans

Plans were presented and signed by all in attendance. With no further questions, the meeting was adjourned.

Foster Care Plan
Collaboration Meeting
June 27, 2023

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Alabama Education Stability for Foster Students
Alabaster City Schools
2023-2024

LEA Student in Foster Care Overview	
Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2022-2023 (Enrolled for Previous School Year): 12	
Number of Students in Foster Care SY 2023-2024 (Currently Enrolled): 12	
List Agencies in Collaboration: Hoover City Schools: Kandace VanWanderham Homewood City Schools: Kiana Coleman Vestavia Hills City Schools: Jennifer Bailey Mountain Brook City Schools: Melissa Brooks Department of Human Resources (Jefferson County): Regina Weathersby Department of Human Resources (Shelby County): Monique Lewis Shelby County Schools: Beth Fuller Alabaster City Schools: Dorann Tanner Pelham City Schools: Randall Reeves	
Policy Review and Revision (Describe how each agency in collaboration reviewed policies and the revisions made to policies as a result of reviews.) Alabaster City Schools emailed with collaborating LEAs and DHR to arrange a meeting to discuss plans. The collaborating team’s meeting was on June 23, 2023. Each LEA reviewed and edited, if needed, their previously developed foster care plan, shared it with the collaborating LEAs/agencies, and made any needed adjustments. Each LEA reviewed their current school board policies with regards to barrier-free enrollment needed to fulfill the Stability in Foster Care requirements outlined in ESSA. Alabaster City Schools did not change its current school board policy with regards to Stability in Foster Care, and no ALSDE revisions were required. LEA representatives shared plans and collected signatures to document collaboration.	

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

We have collaborated via email and meetings discussion and signatures.

Kandace VanWanderham: Hoover City Schools, Mental Health and Student Support Specialist

Kiana Coleman: Homewood City Schools, Director of Student Services

Regina Weathersby: Jefferson County DHR, Assistant Director

Jennifer Bailey: Vestavia Hills City Schools, Director of Student Services

Missy Brooks: Mountain Brook City Schools, Director of Instruction and Special Education

Monique Lewis: Shelby County DHR

Beth Fuller: Shelby County Schools, Federal Programs Supervisor

Dorann Tanner: Alabaster City Schools, Chief Student Services Officer

Randall Reeves: Pelham City Schools, Special Education Coordinator

LEA(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Brent Byars

Alabaster City Schools

10111 Hwy 119

Alabaster, Alabama 35007

205-663-8440

DHR(s) Point(s) of Contact:

Shelby County DHR

Ahzhshaka Johnson

987 Highway 70

Columbiana, Alabama

(205) 669-3000

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.

Alabaster City Schools will collaborate as necessary with state and tribal child welfare agencies to implement Title 1 educational stability provisions. Alabaster City Schools will work closely with child welfare agency counterparts to tailor procedures to the unique local context as well as the child's best interest. Alabaster City Schools will provide training to registrars, counselors and school administrators and others regarding the procedures for enrolling foster care students.

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.

Protocol would ensure, on a case by case basis and in a timely manner, the LEA will consult with DHR and others **(to include, but not limited to and if appropriate, parent/legal guardian, school administrator or designee, school counselor, 504 or Special Education case manager, DHR liaison, school foster care liaison, teacher(s) and student if appropriate)** to determine whether it is in the best interest for a student to remain in their school of origin. Factors considered may include:

- Preferences of the student
- Preferences of primary caretakers and/ or education decision maker(s)
- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers
- Placement of the student's siblings
- Extra-curricular or co-curricular activities
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs
- History of school transfers
- Length of the transportation commute and its impact on the child, based on the child's development state
- Time of year as it relates to the school calendar
- Whether the student is identified as a student with a disability under IDEA or Section 504 or is receiving language services

under EL

-Other documentation including school records may be considered for best interest determination

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

The cost of transportation is not a factor in determining the child's best interest.

- Shelby County DHR will reimburse foster parents for out of zone transportation of students to their school of origin within Alabaster City.
- Shelby County DHR will coordinate transportation for all students placed in foster homes or in the home of a caregiver outside of the Alabaster City School zone.
- If the foster parents are unable to transport the student to their school of origin, but have a relative who will be transporting the student to and from school each day, Alabaster City Schools will reimburse for mileage within the Alabaster City School zone.
- If the foster parent or a relative is unable to transport the student to their school of origin, the Coordinator of Student Services, Shelby County DHR, the school counselor, and the foster parents will work together to review other possible modes of transportation. ACS will assist in paying for mileage or arranging bus transportation if possible.

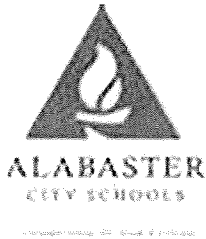
Description of Dispute Resolution Policy- Please see attached Protocol for students in Foster Care

If Alabaster City Schools seeks to place a child in foster care in a school other than the school of origin, or the school requested by the educational decision-maker, or if transportation cannot be arranged, the educational decision-maker shall be provided written notice of his/her right to appeal the decision.

To dispute the district's decision related to school selection (best interest), or enrollment for a child in foster care, an educational decision-maker must request a 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 for the educational decision-maker.

FSSA Section 111(g)(1)(E)(ii)-(iii) Describe protocol for a child in foster care to be immediately enrolled in a new school.

Upon notification of DHR, a student in foster care will be immediately enrolled in school as soon as possible. Enrollment must not be denied or delayed. The enrolling school must immediately contact the student's school of origin to obtain the relevant records and documentation. The school of origin should immediately transfer those records. The school should also ensure that children in foster care are regularly attending and fully participating in school and that their educational needs are being met.



Alabaster City Schools
Shelby County Department of Human Resources
Protocol for students in Foster Care
Effective January 12, 2017

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and includes new provisions that promote educational stability for children in foster care so they can continue their education without disruption, maintain important relationships, and have the opportunity to achieve college and career readiness. The law also emphasizes the importance of collaboration and joint decision-making between child welfare agencies and educational agencies.

Following is the Alabaster City Schools System plan to adhere to the aforementioned information:

Students in Foster Care within the Alabaster City School District have the right to the following:

- Access the same public education as other children
- Continue in the school they attended before Foster Care placement (i.e. school of origin), if it is determined to be in the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided, if needed, to the school of origin.
- Participate in all programs and activities available to students that are not in foster care.
- Enroll immediately in school. The school will work with the foster parents and the Shelby County DHR case worker to obtain necessary records.

Additional Support Services, if needed, are provided to students in Foster Care. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Tutoring
- After school care
- School supplies
- Payment of class fees/dues
- Payment of field trips
- Clothing
- Personal hygiene items
- Extra-curricular activities
- Medical services

The local school counselor at each school of origin is the contact person regarding any of the above services. The counselor will then contact the Coordinator of Student Services; who serves



as the district's liaison with the Department of Human Services (DHR). The Coordinator of Student Services, will contact DHR to facilitate meeting the educational needs for students in foster care. The Alabaster City Schools Coordinator of Student Services, Shelby County DHR, the school counselor and the foster parents will work together to fund field trips and extra-activities that academically supports each identified student.

Tutoring

The Coordinator of Student Services will work with the local school counselor to contract with a teacher within the student's school to provide after school tutoring when needed. Foster parents are required to pick the student up immediately after the tutoring session ends.

After School Care

Shelby County DHR will provide for after school care from 3:00-6:00 p.m. for students 5-12 years of age if foster parents are employed during these hours. ACS will assist with cost as needed.

Medical Services

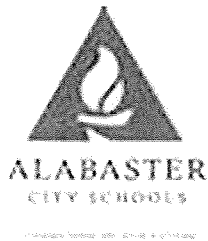
Shelby County DHR will address medical needs of students that are not met by Medicaid (dental, vision, prescriptions, etc.).

Transportation

- Shelby County DHR will reimburse foster parents for out of zone transportation of students to their school of origin within Alabaster City.
- Shelby County DHR will coordinate transportation for all students placed in foster homes or in the home of a caregiver outside of the Alabaster City School zone.
- If the foster parents are unable to transport the student to their school of origin, but have a relative who will be transporting the student to and from school each day, Alabaster City Schools will reimburse for mileage within the Alabaster City School zone.
- If the foster parent or a relative is unable to transport the student to their school of origin, the Coordinator of Student Services, Shelby County DHR, the school counselor, and the foster parents will work together to review other possible modes of transportation.

Alabaster City Schools
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205-663-8400

Department of Human Resources
Ahzshaka Johnson
Shelby County DHR Director
ahzshaka.johnson@DHR@alabama.gov
205-669-3031



Alabaster City Schools Foster Care Dispute Form Process

If Alabaster City Schools seeks to place a child in foster care in a school other than the school of origin, or the school requested by the educational decision-maker, the educational decision-maker shall be provided written notice of his/her right to appeal the decision.

To dispute the district's decision related to school selection (best interest), or enrollment for a child in foster care, an educational decision-maker must request a 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 for the educational decision-maker.

To appeal the district's decision, please complete Alabaster City Schools Foster Care Dispute Form, and submit it by the date indicated on the Written Notice you received from the school. You may submit this form by any of the following methods:

- Scan and email it to dorann.tanner@acsboe.org with the subject "Foster Child Appeal"
- Return the paper form to any school in this school district; or
- Submit the paper form directly to the office of the superintendent at the following address:

Alabaster City Schools
C/O: Superintendent
1953 Municipal Way, Suite 200
Alabaster, AL 35007



Alabaster City Schools Foster Care Dispute Form

Student Name: _____

School in which enrollment is sought: _____

I am the educational decision-maker for this student, and I believe the school in which we are seeking enrollment is in the student's best interest because:

I believe the student has a right to attend this school because:

If you would like to provide additional information, please attach it to this form.

The student shall remain in the school of origin, receiving all appropriate educational services including transportation, until the dispute reaches its final resolution. Once this conference with the education decision-maker, the student (if appropriate), and at least one representative from the local child welfare agency within five (5) business days, and the conference will take place as expeditiously as possible. Within five (5) business days of the personal conference, the superintendent or designee will inform the decision-maker of the decision in writing. The educational decision-maker will be able to appeal to the State if the local resolution is not satisfactory.

Educational decision-maker name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

