

LAMAR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Foster Care Plan

2026 - 2027

This plan is to address the requirement for foster care provisions under Title I of ESSA, which require State Educational Agencies (SEA) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to collaborate with Child Welfare Agencies (CWAs) to ensure educational stability and minimize educational disruptions for children in foster care.

FOSTER CARE PLAN

The Lamar County School District is committed to providing all students with sound educational experiences. We recognize that foster children are at an increased risk of grade retention, gaps in academic achievement, low high school graduation rates, and postsecondary enrollment. These provisions promote greater stability for children in foster care so that they can continue their education without disruption, maintain meaningful relationships with peers and adults, and have the opportunity to achieve college- and career readiness.

The Lamar County School District ensures that the educational stability of the child will be met as follows:

- 1) A child in foster care will remain in the child's school of origin unless it is determined that it is not in the child's best interest in that school.
- 2) If a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in the school of residence, even if the enrollee cannot produce records usually required for enrollment.
- 3) The new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSURANCES

- Each placement of the child in foster care considers the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services will coordinate with appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school where the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- If it is not in the best interest of the child to return to the resident school, the child will immediately be provided the appropriate enrollment to the Lamar County School District.
- The Lamar County School District will gather and maintain educational records and promptly send them to any district where the student moves.

FOSTER CARE CHILD LIAISON (POC)

The Lamar County School District will assign at least one person to serve as a Foster Care Child Liaison or Point of Contact (POC). The liaison assigned to the position will have access to available training and materials to inform them of any foster care regulations changes. The liaison will work closely with the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS):

- Coordinating implementation of the Title I, Part A provisions, as it relates to Foster Care provisions outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency,
- Facilitating the transfer of records and immediate enrollment,
- Facilitating data sharing with MDCPS, consistent with Family Education Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) and other privacy protocols,
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures,
- Managing best interest determinations

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

The custodial agency must notify the school and district within one school day of the child being placed in foster care or of a change in the foster child's living arrangement. When a school-age child enters foster care, or there is a placement change while in care, the youth's MDCPS caseworker shall work with the local school district to determine whether it is in the child's best interests to remain at the school of origin or enroll in a new school. **This determination must be in writing.** The school of origin is defined as the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of initial foster care placement or when a change in foster placement is made. The LCSD will use the MDCPS forms for documenting foster care placements and decisions.

Foster care children **Shall Not** be withdrawn or enrolled until a BID is completed.

The custodial agency (CPS) must have the following before a BID meeting.

- Grades, attendance logs, and any behavior reports/logs (suspension or expulsions) from the youth's current school
- Copy of youth's IEP/504 plan with current eligibility and supports/services (if applicable)
- Youth's current grade
- Youth's school of origin (the school they are currently attending)
- Distance between the school of origin and the youth's new placement

LAMAR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FOSTER CARE PLAN

- The foster care provider's willingness to assist with transportation

ENROLLMENT

- MDCPS policy allows the foster parent to enroll a student.
- The Notification of Placement (Change) Form must be provided at the time of enrollment.
- A BID from the school of origin must be provided when a foster child is newly enrolled.
- Each year, the school district should receive an updated MDCPS enrollment authorization form (Appendix I).
- If the necessary paperwork (birth certificates, shot records, academic records, special education records, etc.) is not immediately available, the school district will enroll the student.
- If the school is not provided with the foster student's records from the school of origin, the enrolling school will request records on the same day as the student's arrival. The school of origin is expected to provide the student records to the new school within one (1) school day of request.
- After enrollment, the foster family or CPS shall provide the following guardianship or legal custody documents for verification:
 - Power of attorney
 - Affidavit
 - Court Order

The local MDCPS is responsible for providing pertinent information regarding the child's age, grade, and academic history (e.g., current Individualized Education Program) to aid the LCSD in placing the student in an appropriate classroom setting until the district receives the student's records. The Lamar County School District will share education records with CPS that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows. This allows educational agencies to disclose academic records, including IDEA, of students in foster care to State agencies without parental consent.

WITHDRAWALS

- An MDCPS worker **MUST** withdraw a student from the school.
- Foster children cannot be withdrawn and enrolled in an educational setting of "home school." Foster children must be in a public school setting. A private school setting may be an option if a foster parent wishes to be financially responsible for a private school.
- Foster children **CANNOT** be withdrawn until a BID has taken place.
- The school should respond to an enrolling school's request for records within twenty-four hours.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

Students in foster care will immediately be enrolled in school even without the required documents. Transportation for students in foster care will be provided in the same manner as for other students. Should it be determined that it is in the best interest of the child in foster care to remain in their school of origin that is outside the attendance boundaries of the Lamar County School District, transportation will be coordinated with the MDCPS and the school district of residency to determine the best possible means of transportation.

DISPUTES

In the event of a dispute between the LCSD and MDCPS concerning the cost of transportation, the two entities must consider what is in the student's best interest. If the disagreement continues, the cost will be divided equally between the LCSD and the MDCPS. The dispute shall be brought before the state-appointed POCs. Current transportation expenses shall remain in effect until a decision is rendered to maintain the student's status quo.