

LOUISIANA BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR SCHOOL PLACEMENT OF CHILD IN FOSTER CARE

This document serves as a tool related to school placement. Children in foster care remain in their school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his or her best interest. The Best Interest Determination School Placement Form serves as a mechanism through which relevant parties can meaningfully participate in the best interest determination. The Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) makes the final school placement determination.

All children in foster care (with the exception of voluntary placements) are placed under order of the court. As such, court determinations, findings, and orders are critical to best interest discussions. Teams should be aware of and must follow existing court orders. If a court order specifies an educational placement for the child, the DCFS must request and obtain a modified court order prior to the child changing schools if a best interest educational determination is different from the court order.

Child's Name: _____

Student's Louisiana Unique ID: _____

Child's DCFS Case Number: _____

School and School System of Current Attendance: _____

School System of Current Residence: _____

Previous School System(s) Attended (if applicable): _____

Current Grade of Student: _____

Has the child's current school placement been determined by the court? Yes No

If yes, has the court order been shared with the School System? Yes No

Does the child have an educational decision-maker appointed? Yes No

In addition to the required LEA and DCFS representatives, every effort should be made to gather meaningful input from additional relevant parties. This might include the child (depending on age), foster parents, biological parents when appropriate, education decision-makers, teachers, counselors, coaches, other relatives, child’s attorney, guardian ad litem, or other meaningful persons in the child’s life.

Note: If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 plan, or is an English Learner (EL), then those relevant LEA staff members must also participate in the best interest determination (BID).

Please complete the following chart, and include all individuals involved in this Best Interest Determination (BID):

| NAME | RELATION TO STUDENT | ORGANIZATION |
|------|---------------------|---------------|
| | School System POC | School System |
| | Representative | DCFS |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |

Date of BID Meeting: _____

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN MAKING A BID

The student shall remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates that a change of school placement is in the child's best interest. (Check all that apply and provide explanation)

- Transferring schools will positively impact the child emotionally or socially (e.g., the child's siblings attend the new school). Please explain.

- The student is best served at a different school due to his or her academic history or future (report cards, GPA, progress reports, etc.). Please explain.

- The parents/prior custodians believe that changing schools is in the child's best interest. Please explain.

- The preferences of the child (depending on age) have been taken into consideration. Please describe why the child believes that changing schools is in his or her best interest.

- The student's need for special instruction or special education and related services can be met better at the new school. (Consider: Is the child receiving any special education services? Does the child participate in other specialized instruction (e.g., gifted program, English language learner, career and technical program?) Please describe how the student's need for special instruction or special education can be met at the new school.

- The new school is able to meet the child's academic needs. (Consider: Would the child's new school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the current school does not have?) Please explain.

- Changing schools will NOT undermine the child's ability to stay on track to graduate. (Consider: How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, or graduate on time?) Please explain.

- The timing of the school transfer will not undermine school success. (Consider: Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture in the child's academic or personal progress (e.g., after an event that is significant to the child or end of the school year)? Please explain.

Please note, if applicable, any additional considerations or factors that indicate a change of school placement is in the child's best interest.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please attach any supporting documentation used in making this determination of best interest. The following is a checklist of sample documents; the list is not exhaustive.

- Report Cards
- Progress Reports
- Achievement Data
- Attendance Records
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Section 504 Plan
- Family Service Plan
- Child Permanency Plan
- Individualized Service Plan
- Emails or correspondence from individuals consulted
- Documentation supporting child's participation in extracurricular activities such as athletics, clubs, or afterschool programs
- Documentation of any special needs which require consideration in the educational environment

DETERMINATION

Date of Best Interest Determination (BID): _____

- The student shall remain in the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement.

Name of School/School System: _____

- Based on the BID, a change in school placement is needed. The student will be enrolled in the school of current residence.

Name of School/School System: _____

Foster Parent/Relative Caretaker Signature: _____

DCFS Representative: _____

Educational Decision-Maker (if applicable): _____

School System Foster Care Point of Contact Signature: _____

ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES (IF APPLICABLE):

Name: _____

Organization/Title: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____

Organization/Title: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____