



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Randy I. Dorn Old Capitol Building · PO BOX 47200 · Olympia, WA 98504-7200 · <http://www.k12.wa.us>

July 29, 2016

(X) Action Required
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() Informational

BULLETIN NO. 032-16 SECONDARY EDUCATION & STUDENT SUPPORT

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Title I, Part A Directors
School District Homeless Liaisons
DSHS/Children's Administration Education Leads

FROM: Randy I. Dorn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Designating a School District Foster Care Liaison

CONTACT: Jess Lewis, Foster Care Education Program Supervisor
jess.lewis@k12.wa.us, 360-725-6050
Agency TTY: 360-664-3631

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA, 2015), contains key protections for students in foster care to promote school stability and success. ESSA requires state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) to collaborate with child welfare partners in an effort to improve the educational outcomes of children and youth in care.

In an effort to ensure that children and youth in foster care have equal access to educational services, ESSA requires each school district to designate a foster care point of contact. This position, in Washington state, will be referred to as the Foster Care Liaison.

While additional local school district requirements under ESSA go into effect in the 2017–18 school year, LEAs are required to designate a Foster Care Liaison during the 2016–17 school year to implement the foster care provisions in Title I, A and facilitate the transition for NCLB to ESSA. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will be sharing information with the field through this district designated Foster Care Liaison, and they will be a critical partner while planning implementation.

The general role of the district **Foster Care Liaison** is to facilitate district compliance with state and federal laws as they relate to children and youth in foster care, and to collaborate with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)/Children's Administration (CA) in an effort to address educational barriers that prevent children and youth in foster care from being identified, enrolled, attending, and succeeding in school. Some of the roles and responsibilities of the Foster Care Liaison may include:

- Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency Point of Contact on the implementation of the Title I provisions.
- Coordinating with the Foster Care Program Supervisor at OSPI.
- Attending training and professional development opportunities to improve district implementation efforts.
- Serving as the primary contact person for DSHS/CA and social workers.
- Leading and documenting the development of a process for making best interest determinations.
- Facilitating the transfer of records.
- Facilitating immediate enrollment.
- Facilitating data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols.
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures.
- Managing best interest determinations and transportation costs disputes.
- Ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school.
- Providing professional development and training to school staff on the Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care, as needed.

Because the Foster Care Liaison role is complex and requires specific and intentional collaboration efforts with Children's Administration, it is important to designate a staff member who understands ESSA and is familiar with the issues associated with serving children and youth in foster care. In addition, it is important that the designated Foster Care Liaison has the time and capacity to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

When deciding who to designate as your school district's Foster Care Liaison, you may wish to consider Federal Program Administrators (i.e., Title I Directors), Directors of Pupil Services, Assistant Superintendents, Social Workers, School Counselors, or others.

The Foster Care Education Program at OSPI will maintain a database of contact information for each designated school district Foster Care Liaison. Keeping a current database is critical to the timely dissemination of information related to professional development opportunities for Foster Care Liaisons as well as updates related to the implementation of ESSA and state laws/policies.

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This year, Foster Care Liaisons will be identified through the Title I, Part A application (iGrants Form Package 201). **Applications will not be approved if the district fails to designate a Foster Care Liaison.**

If you have questions regarding the content of this bulletin, please contact Jess Lewis, Foster Care Education Program Supervisor at fostercare@k12.wa.us, 360-725-6050, or agency TTY 360-664-3631.

This information is also available on OSPI's website at www.k12.wa.us/BulletinsMemos/bulletins2016.aspx.

K-12 EDUCATION

Gil Mendoza, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent

SECONDARY EDUCATION & STUDENT SUPPORT

Dan Newell
Assistant Superintendent

Mona Johnson, Ed.D., Director
Student Support

RD:ks

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