

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Guidance Regarding Foster Care and Distance Learning

The department has created resources that address school-related questions and resources around educational services during this public health crisis. These resources can be found on the department's [Update on Coronavirus](#) website and will help to answer questions around virtual learning and student access to curriculum and materials.

Foster Care

1. *If a student in foster care moves into a new school zone while schools are closed for COVID-19, is the LEA required to enroll and/or withdrawal the student?*

- Yes. Though school buildings are currently closed, LEAs should still process enrollments and withdrawals at this time. LEAs should continue to provide the essential service to ensure students are enrolled correctly for the remainder of this school year and next.
- The enrolling LEA should provide a record request to the previous LEA to ensure records are transferred properly.
- The previous LEA should use the records request to process the withdrawal. If the previous LEA is unable to forward paper records due to building closure, they must notify the enrolling LEA immediately and flag those students to provide the records when they are able to access the building. Electronic records should be sent as soon as the request is made.
- If you use paper enrollment packets to enroll your students, please provide these via mail to the families that wish to enroll in school in your LEA. You can ask the family to mail the packet back to the LEA office for normal processing.
- If the student has accommodations, the receiving LEA can request the individualized education plan information can be transferred in EasyIEP as normal. For the record to be transferred, the previous LEA must complete the withdrawal so the receiving LEA can process the enrollment. Any paper records that go along with those students should be sent to the receiving LEA as early as possible after schools can return to their buildings.
- Because EIS does not allow for students to be enrolled in two LEAs at the same time, in order to prevent errors in basic education program (BEP) calculations, it is the responsibility of each LEA to ensure their EIS errors are processed as normal during this time. The normal deadlines and timelines for reporting remain unchanged. For the yearly calendar, please visit the [LEA Operations Reporting page](#).

2. *Are Best Interest Determination (BID) meetings required while schools are out or providing instruction remotely due to COVID-19 concerns?*

Students in foster care are still entitled to remain in their school of origin whenever it is in their best interest. As a result, LEAs and the Department of Children's Services (DCS) must make efforts to consider the student's best interest when determining educational placement after a move in foster care. During this public health crisis, phone, email, and virtual meetings should be considered as a means for making this determination. In determining a student's best interest, the impact of school closures and limited personnel certainly can be considered. Teams should also consider that changing schools at this time may increase the likelihood of the student falling behind academically or missing out on services.

3. *Are schools required to provide student records to DCS if they are closed due to COVID-19 concerns?*

Yes. Schools must create a way to provide necessary school records to DCS upon request. Foster Care points of contact should be available to assist with records requests if building level personnel are not working. These records are used for transfers to other LEAs, court hearings, and foster care review boards. LEAs may only be able to provide electronic records at this time, and at a minimum, should ensure that schedule, grades, transcripts, special education records, and discipline records are available.