

WALTHALL

COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Teachers teaching. Students learning. Schools improving.



FEDERAL PROGRAMS DIVISION

FOSTER CARE PROCEDURES

FISCAL YEAR 2026–2027

*Supporting Educational Stability
for Students in Foster Care*



A Comprehensive Guide for District and School Personnel



BOARD APPROVED

July __, 2026



EFFECTIVE

July 1, 2026



REVIEWED ANNUALLY



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1. Introduction & Purpose

These procedures establish Walthall County School District's process for identifying, enrolling, serving, and supporting students in foster care in accordance with ESSA, the Fostering Connections Act, Mississippi Department of Education guidance, and local district procedures. The manual promotes educational stability, immediate enrollment, consistent implementation, collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS), and proper documentation.

2. Applicable Requirements & Definitions

- Applicable Requirements:
 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A
 - Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act
 - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - Mississippi Department of Education Foster Care Guidance

Key Definitions include Best Interest Determination (BID), School of Origin, Immediate Enrollment, Educational Stability, and the Federal Programs Director or designee as the District Foster Care Point of Contact.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Federal Programs Director or designee:** Serves as District Foster Care Point of Contact; coordinates BID meetings, transportation, training, documentation, and compliance.
- **Principals:** Ensure implementation and notify the Federal Programs Director or designee immediately when foster care status is identified.
- **Registrars:** Immediately enroll students, request records, and notify the Federal Programs Director or designee.
- **Counselors:** Support transitions, graduation planning, and student services.
- **Transportation Director:** Coordinates transportation with district and child welfare partners.
- **Teachers:** Support educational continuity and maintain confidentiality.

WCSD Internal Control: Whenever possible, schools shall notify the Federal Programs Director or designee before enrolling a student identified as being in foster care. If immediate enrollment occurs first, notification shall occur as soon as practicable.

4. Foster Care Procedures

4.1 Notification

Notify the Federal Programs Director or designee immediately upon learning that a student is in foster care.

4.2 Immediate Enrollment

Enroll immediately even when records are unavailable and provide timely access to classes and comparable educational services.

4.3 Best Interest Determination (BID)

Coordinate the BID process with MDCPS and appropriate school staff. Document all decisions.

4.4 School of Origin

Prioritize educational stability when it is in the student's best interest.

4.5 Transportation

Coordinate transportation and document agreements.

4.6 Student Records

Request and transfer records promptly.

4.7 Comparable Educational Services

Ensure access to academic instruction, special education, Section 504, EL, gifted, CTE, AP, dual credit, counseling, nutrition, and extracurricular activities.

4.8 Educational Stability Monitoring

Monitor attendance, achievement, graduation progress, and transportation concerns.

4.9 Confidentiality

Protect student information in accordance with FERPA.

4.10 Dispute Resolution

Resolve disagreements collaboratively while maintaining uninterrupted services.

4.11 Annual Review

Review procedures annually and revise as needed.

4.12 Required Documentation

- ☐ Foster care notification
- ☐ Enrollment documentation
- ☐ Best Interest Determination (BID) documentation
- ☐ Transportation documentation
- ☐ Communication log
- ☐ Evidence of comparable educational services

- ☐ Annual review and monitoring
- ☐ Staff training documentation

5. WCSD District Internal Control Procedures

- Notification and communication among school staff, MDCPS, and the Federal Programs Director or designee.
- District coordination of BID meetings and transportation.
- School placement oversight while ensuring immediate enrollment is never delayed.
- Documentation and compliance monitoring.
- Annual review, staff training, and continuous improvement.

6. Implementation, Monitoring, and Compliance Tools

Annual Compliance Checklist

- ☐ District Foster Care Point of Contact designated
- ☐ Annual staff training completed
- ☐ BID documentation maintained
- ☐ Transportation documentation maintained
- ☐ Annual monitoring completed

Student Enrollment Checklist

- ☐ Foster care identified
- ☐ Federal Programs Director or designee notified
- ☐ Immediate enrollment completed
- ☐ Records requested
- ☐ Comparable services provided
- ☐ BID initiated when applicable

BID Checklist

- ☐ Participants identified
- ☐ School of origin considered

☐ Transportation reviewed

☐ Decision documented

Annual Timeline

Timeframe	Activities
July–August	Review procedures; designate point of contact; provide staff training.
Throughout the Year	Enrollment, BID meetings, transportation coordination, monitoring, documentation.
May–June	Annual compliance review and updates.

7. References, Resources, and WCSD Commitment

- ESSA
- Fostering Connections Act
- FERPA
- Mississippi Department of Education Foster Care Guidance
- Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services Guidance

Questions or Assistance

Questions regarding these procedures should be directed to the Federal Programs Director or designee, who serves as the Walthall County School District Foster Care Point of Contact.

WCSD Commitment

Walthall County School District is committed to removing educational barriers for students in foster care by promoting educational stability, ensuring immediate enrollment, providing comparable educational services, and collaborating with families and community partners.

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