

## EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) GUIDANCE

### *Utilizing the Education Passport*

Under ESSA, the presumption is that a student will remain in his or her current school (school of origin) when they enter out-of-home care (OHC) or there is a change in their out-of-home care placement setting. A variety of factors may impact the student's placement in a setting within the school of origin's district, which necessitates a conversation about what is in the child's best interest with regard to their education. When a school change is being considered, both the school and the child welfare agency must collaborate to conduct the best interest determination. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recommend use of the Education Passport when engaging in best interest conversations.

The Education Passport (herein referred to as "passport") is a tool that prefills key pieces of information from other areas within the electronic Wisconsin State Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWisACWIS) and also allows for additional narrative by child welfare agency staff. The passport is easily printed as a Word document to be shared with appropriate school staff. This information can be shared without a release of information, although a release is always recommended for sharing things beyond this type of "need to know" information.

Below are examples of when the passport can be utilized to support collaboration between the child welfare agencies (CWA) and local education agencies (LEA).

- **When a child enters care.** The passport can be created and shared with the LEA based on the information known to the CWA when a student first enters out-of-home care.
- **When new information is available.** The passport can be updated and shared with the LEA when new information is learned or when significant changes occur.
- **When there's a change with the child's placement.** The passport can be utilized to communicate when a youth exits care or has a change in placement to the LEA.
- **When a best interest determination is needed.** The passport can be sent to both the school of origin and, when applicable, the school of residence to initiate the best interest determination conversation.
  - Example policy/procedure: CWA prepares and submits an Education Passport to the Foster Care Point of Contact at the school of origin and, when applicable, the school of residence. This occurs when a child enters care or has a change in placement that may result in a school change. All parties review the passport along with other information to determine which school it is in the child's best interest to attend.
- **When a transportation plan is needed.** The passport can be shared with the child's school if a change in placement occurs that does not result in the student moving outside of the school district.
  - Example policy/procedure: The CWA submits the Education Passport to the Foster Care Point of Contact at the school of origin and requests a revision to the transportation plan for the child. The team meets to discuss options for ensuring the child's attendance.