

To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Guidance – Ensuring Educational Stability**

PURPOSE

This information is intended to support child welfare agencies (CWAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) with the implementation of the ESSA.

BACKGROUND

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed by Congress in December of 2015 amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The ESSA, in conjunction with the Fostering Connections Act of 2008 and the Uninterrupted Scholars Act of 2013, requires certain actions of state and local educational and child welfare and tribal child welfare agencies designed to increase collaboration among those agencies to support successful educational experiences for children in out-of-home care.

In November 2016, a joint letter the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) was sent to CWAs and LEAs informing them that the departments would be developing joint guidance related to both the mandated requirements and the best practice recommendations in coming months. This memo serves as the first release of such guidance.



INFORMATION SUMMARY

The attached joint guidance and *sample* procedures have been developed to assist with making a best interest determination regarding a child's educational placement.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Bureau of Youth Services Section Manager
608-422-6993
DCFEDUPOC@wisconsin.gov

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments: Joint Letter DCF/DPI
ESSA Guidance
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/ys/pdf/essa-guidance.pdf>
ESSA Sample Worksheet
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/ys/pdf/essa-template.pdf>

	<p>DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p> <p>Eloise Anderson Secretary</p>	<p>DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION</p> <p>Tony Evers, PhD State Superintendent</p>	
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March 1, 2017

Dear Colleague:

As you are aware, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasizes the need for collaboration between Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and child welfare agencies in making a “best interest” determination related to where the child will attend school. It is the presumption under the federal law that the child will continue to attend the school of origin (the school in which the child was enrolled or the school in which the child was last enrolled at the time of placement into out-of-home care). If it is determined that it is not in the best interest of the child to remain in the school of origin, the child must be immediately enrolled in his or her resident school (in the LEA in which the child’s out-of-home care placement exists).

The school of origin, the resident school, and the county or tribal child welfare agency all have a shared responsibility for assuring the educational stability of the child. This includes the best interest determination, transportation, and funding for the transportation.

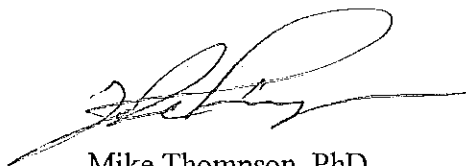
The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Department of Children and Families jointly developed materials to assist in making the best interest determination. They are located on the new DPI Foster Care website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/foster-care>.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure educational stability and promote educational success for this vulnerable population.

Sincerely,



Fredi-Ellen Bove
Administrator
Division of Safety and Permanence
Department of Children and Families



Mike Thompson, PhD
Deputy State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction

FB:MT:dgs