Educational Stability in Foster Care

mdek12.org

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

1. **ALL** Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. **EVERY** Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. **EVERY** Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. **EVERY** School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. **EVERY** Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. **EVERY** School and District is Rated “C” or Higher

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes provisions that promote educational stability for children in foster care so they can continue their education without disruption, maintain important relationships, and have the opportunity to achieve college and career readiness.

Foster Care

means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency (MDCPS) has placement and care responsibility.

Foster Care Placement

- Foster Family Homes
- Kinship Placements
- Group Homes
- Emergency Shelters
- Residential Facilities
- Childcare Institutions
- Pre-adoptive homes

Key ESSA Provisions

- Children in foster care remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his or her best interest.
- If it is in the best interest of the child to leave the school of origin, the child must be immediately enrolled in the new school even if they don't have the required documentation. The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain the child's records.
- LEAs must collaborate with CPS to develop & implement clear written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of a child's time in foster care.

Educational Stability's 4 Major Components

- Collaboration
- Best Interest Determination
- Immediate Enrollment
- Transportation

Quick Definitions

Definitions

School of Origin – the school that a student was attending at the time of placement in foster care or the school a student is attending at the time of any subsequent change in foster care placement

COR: County of Responsibility is where the foster care student comes from
COS: County of Service is where the foster care student is currently residing

Caseworker: CPS staff assigned to the foster care student

Educational Liaison: a person authorized to make educational decisions on behalf of a student in MDCPS custody.

MSIS

Documenting Foster Care Students in MSIS

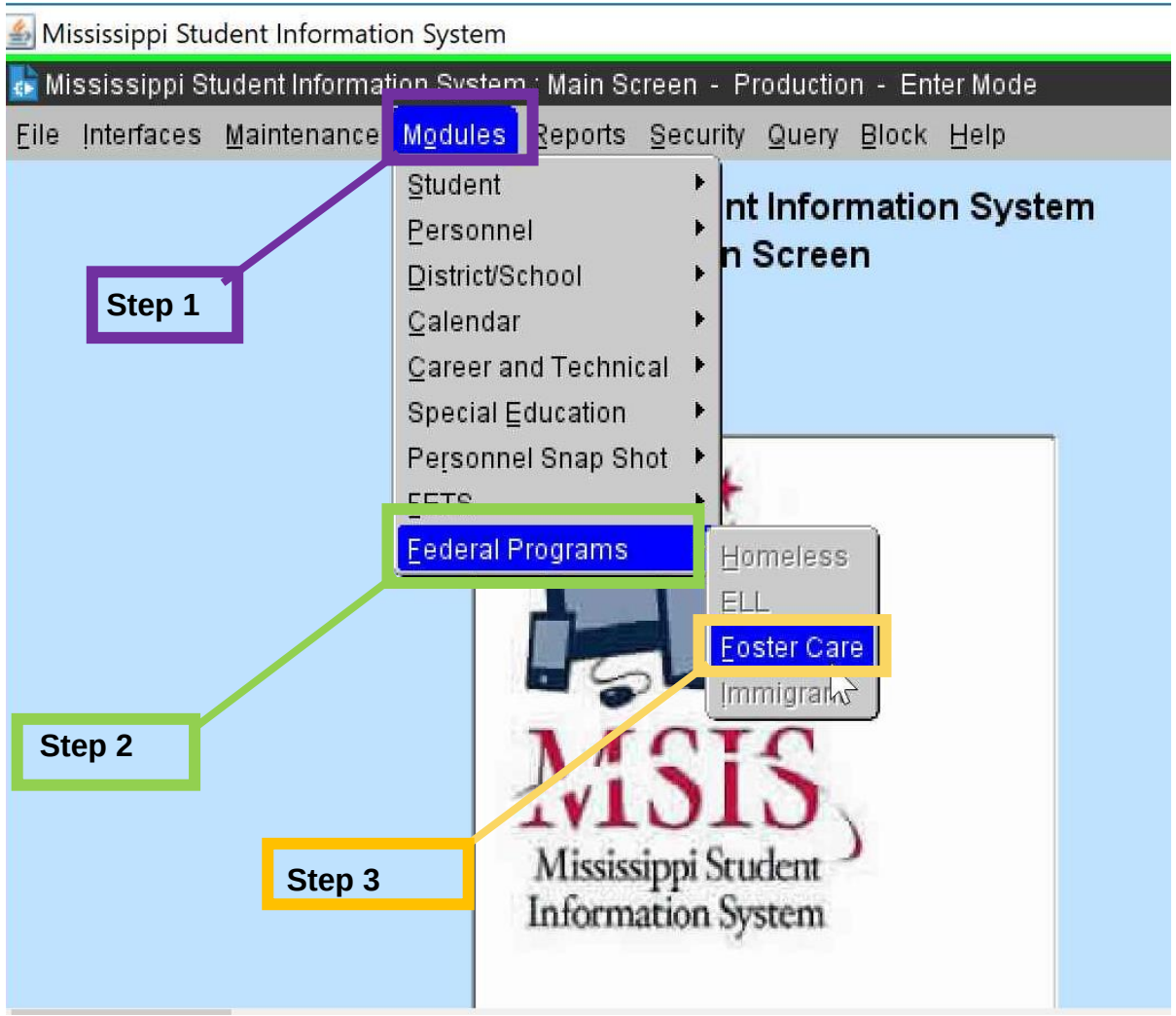
Foster Care Module

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MSIS – Foster Care Module

Accessing the Foster Care Module in MSIS

1. Select **Modules** from the MSIS Main Screen
2. Next select **Federal Programs** from the drop box.
3. Finally select **Foster Care** from the Federal Programs drop box.



Foster Care

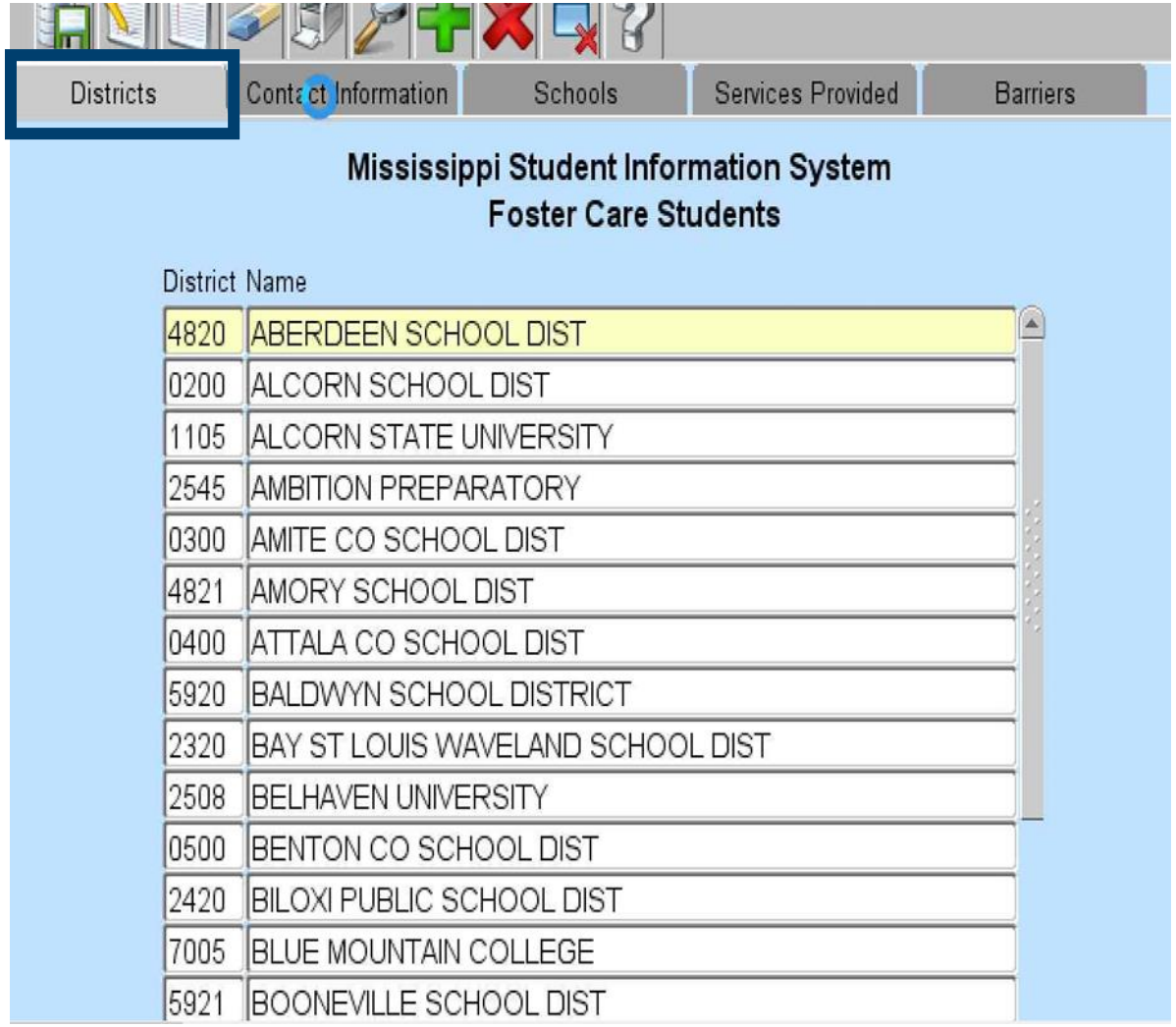
- The indicator in SAP is selected as “Y” and the student’s information populates on the foster care screens after the district has approved the MSD file sent to MDE.
- The student identification starts over in month 1 (by September 30).

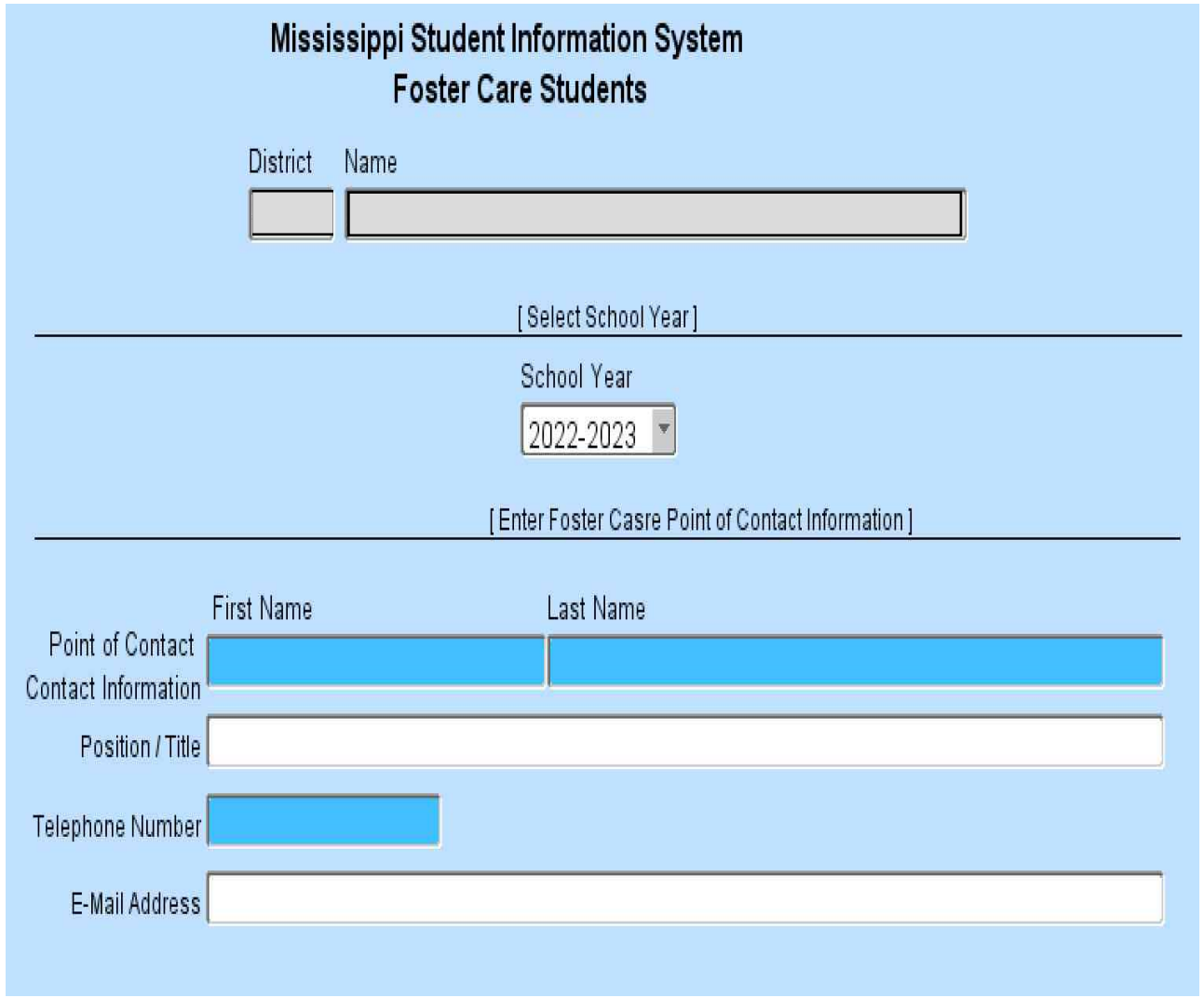
Foster Care

- Each Foster Care student must be marked "Title I Foster Care" in your SAP for each month they are considered Foster Care.
- All students identified as “Foster Care" retain the identification for the entire school year.
- This ensures the students being labeled Foster Care in MSIS for those months.

Districts Tab

The school district in which you are currently employed will appear in a box in the District tab.





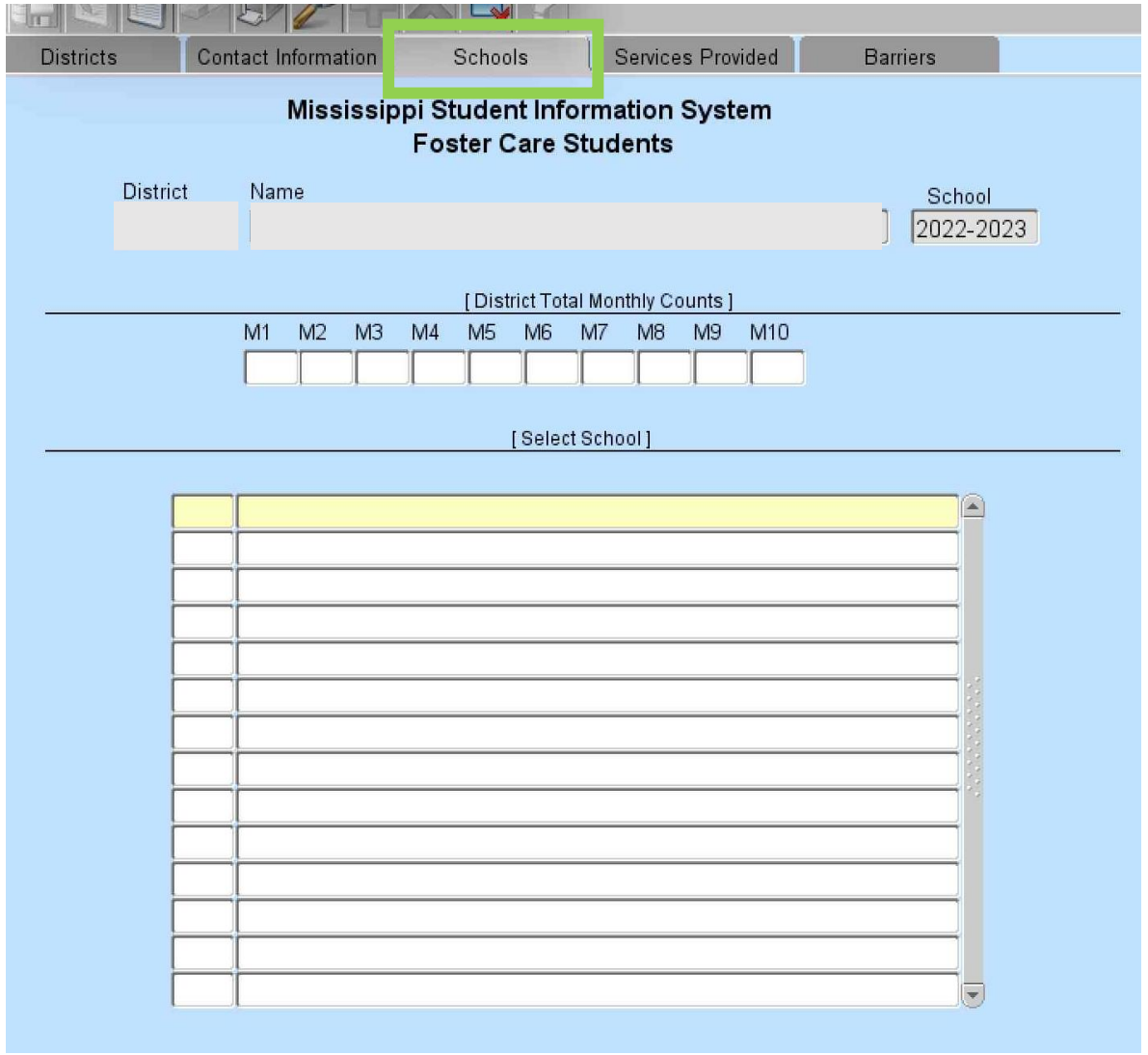
Contact Information Tab

Please complete all sections of this screen.

The Point of Contact Information is required.

Schools Tab

This tab displays all schools in the district.



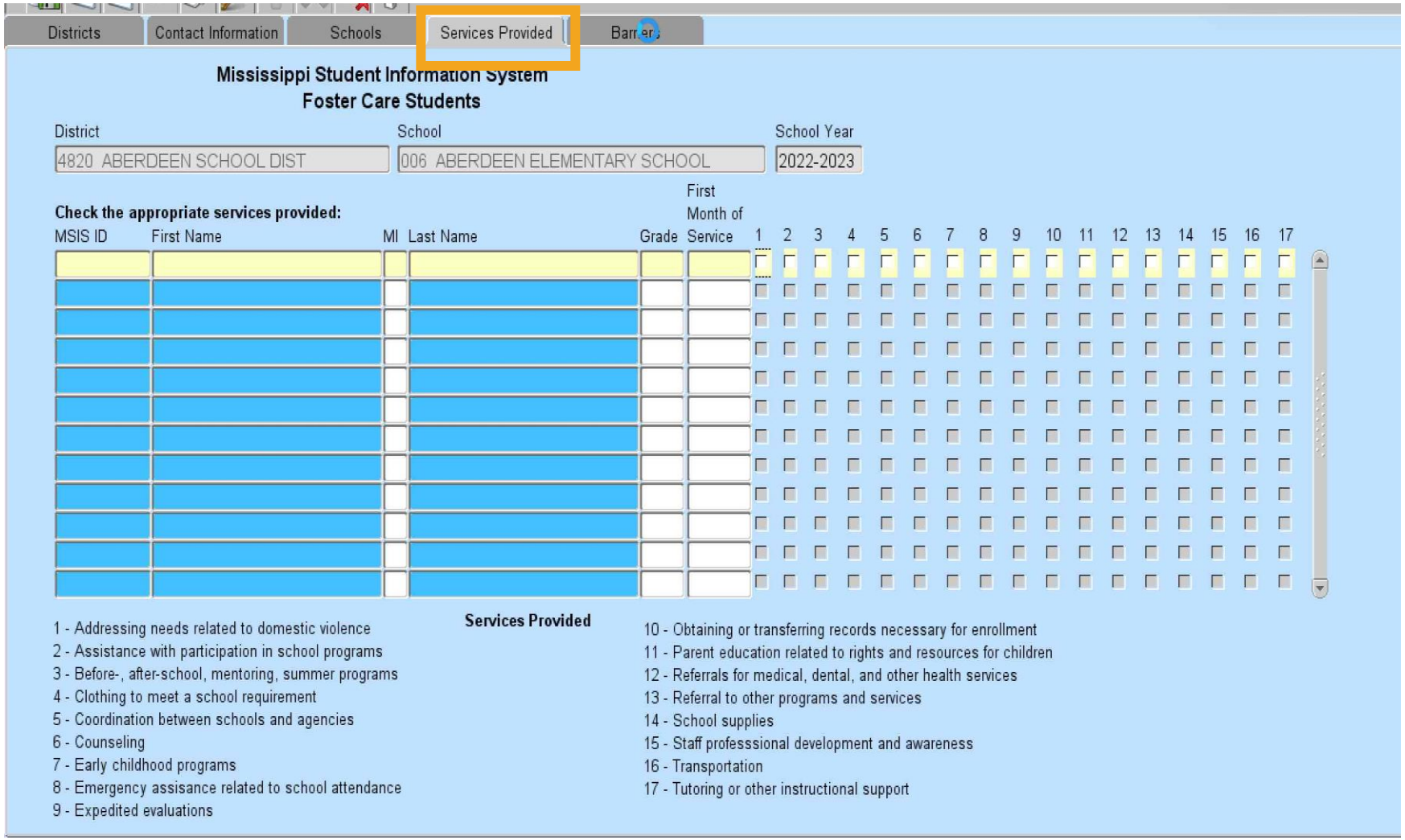
District Total Monthly Counts

District Total Monthly Counts are the number of students identified monthly in the SAP in the entire district as Foster Care.

MSIS – Foster Care Module

Foster Care Services Provided Tab

REQUIRED completion for all identified foster care students

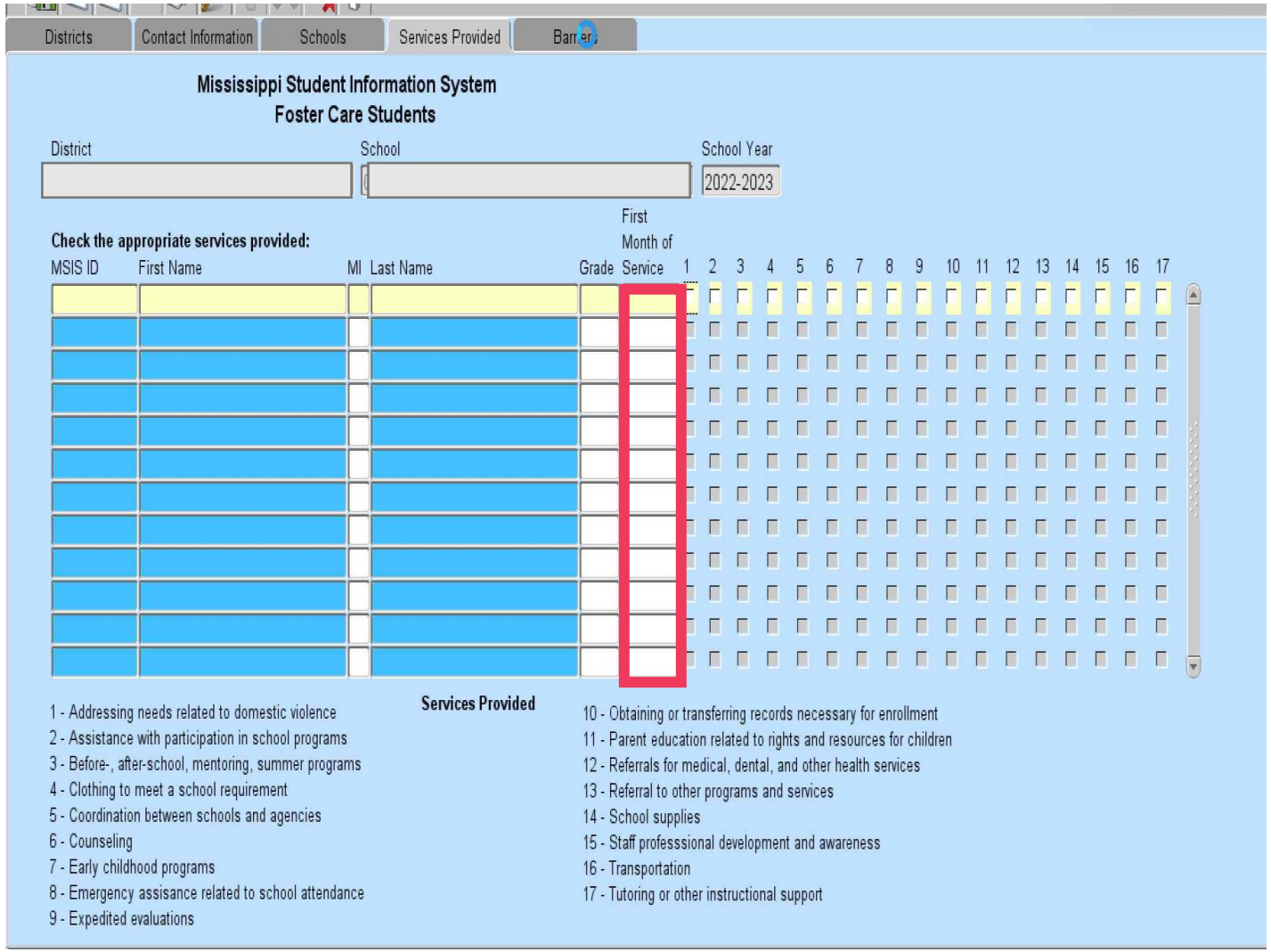


First Month of Service

The reporting month which the data was submitted to MSIS

REQUIRED

Enter a number 1-9 for each student (first month of service is the month the student was identified as foster care)

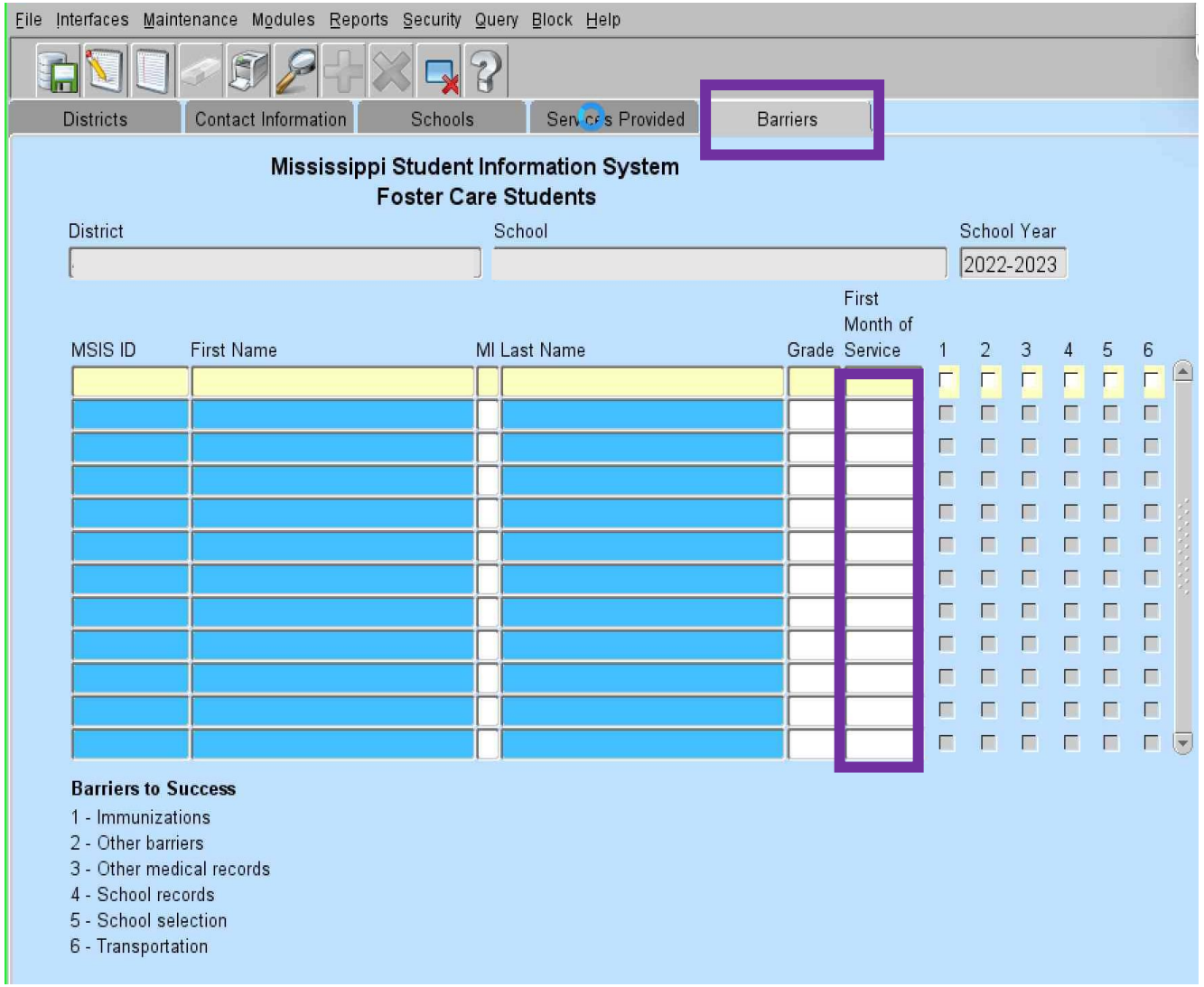


Foster Care Barriers Tab

REQUIRED

First Month of Service

Enter a number 1-9 for each student (first month of service is the month the student was identified as foster care)



Responsibilities

Local School Districts & Local Child Protective Services

Responsibilities for Point of Contacts

MDE POC

- ✓ Collaboration (LEA & CPS)
- ✓ Provide assistance upon request
- ✓ Provide clarification for transportation
- ✓ Provide technical assistance
- ✓ Maintain the contact list for LEA's POCs
- ✓ Provide professional development opportunities for LEA POCs

LEA's POC

- ✓ Collaboration (other LEA staff & CPS workers)
- ✓ Identify students in foster care through MSIS
- ✓ Complete the BID Process
- ✓ Ensure transportation for foster care students
- ✓ Ensure immediate enrollment or transfer of records
- ✓ Ensure the services needed are provided to the student

Responsibilities for Point of Contacts

MDCPS POC

- ✓ Collaborate with LEAs to ensure immediate enrollment
- ✓ Collaborate with LEAs for transportation plans
- ✓ Assist the youth's worker, foster parent, or agency designee in educational concerns
- ✓ Ensure comprehensive tests & IEP meetings are following IDEA & MDE SBP

MDCPS Case Worker

- ✓ Ensure continuity of education by keeping child in a familiar school or neighborhood.
- ✓ Identify students in foster care through MSIS
- ✓ Complete the BID Process
- ✓ Ensure transportation for foster care students
- ✓ Ensure immediate enrollment or transfer of records
- ✓ Ensure the services needed are provided to the student

Responsibility of MDCPS Caseworker

Making all reasonable efforts to ensure the continuity of a child's educational experience by keeping the child in a familiar or current school and neighborhood when feasible and in the child's best interests by limiting the number of schools changes the child experiences.

If school change is unavoidable, the MDCPS caseworker or agency designee (including foster parents) must enroll the child in the most appropriate educational setting available to meet the child's needs as identified though the BID process.

Ensuring the child's educational needs are met. Services may include, IEP, tutoring, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or after-school programs. (attend IEP meetings)

Obtaining educational records from the school(s) and maintaining the records in the child's case file.

Best Interest Determination (BID)

LEAs and MDCPS

The Best Interest Determination (BID) is a collaborative decision about whether the student should remain in their school of origin or be immediately enrolled in a new school.

Best Interest Determination

Notes:

- BID completed when a child/youth comes into custody
- BID completed when there is a change in placement
- Always completed by the School District of Origin
- BID must be completed within 5 business days
- MDCPS is considered the final decision maker
- When feasible & appropriate, a student must remain in his/her school of origin while BIDs are being made

BID Considerations

The MDCPS case worker and the school of origin POC should engage in a conversation with the youth and any other appropriate parties to discuss the following information as it relates to the youth's educational stability:

- Number of schools the youth has attended
- How often the youth is changing schools
- Home placement type/length as well as number of placements
- Youth's involvement in extracurricular/community activities
- The youth's academic/career goals

BID Considerations

- The youth's academic achievement
- The youth's ability to earn full academic credits, participate in sports, graduate on time, etc.
- The student's ability to receive necessary supports/services
- What the youth wants, what the family wants, what the resource family wants, what CPS wants
- School safety concerns

BID Considerations

- Youth's access to gifted or accelerated programs
- If changing schools could affect the youth's end of year testing
- Travel time to and from school
- Biological family, resource family, friends, mentor, residential staff, MDCPS connections
- Youth's relationships and connections to teachers and school staff

Discussion Questions for BIDS

- How long has the student attended this school?
- How well is the student performing academically?
- How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year?
- How have past school transfers impacted the student?

Discussion Questions for BIDS

How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities, and other interests? How can the new school serve these needs?

What is the student's academic and career goals?

How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, graduate on time, or receive an industry credential?

How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional, and cultural needs?

Discussion Questions for BIDS

Does the student access school-based supportive services in the current school? How can the new school serve these needs?

Describe the student's relationships in the current school. Consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the current school. Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities?

Is the student's new living arrangement expected to be short-or long term? What impact will this have on the student?

How would the commute to the current school impact the student? Consider the child's age and developmental functioning as well as the length of the commute with various modes of transportation.

Cost of Transportation cannot be factor when making the best interest determination.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION
FOSTER CARE SCHOOL PLACEMENT FORM

BID Timeframe

A BID must be completed every time a youth comes into care or there is a placement change while in care.
BID conferences/meetings with the school district POC must take place within five (5) business days of a child entering foster care or changing placement.
The youth shall not be withdrawn/enrolled until a BID is completed.

Student Information

Student Name: (first, middle, last)	**DOB:** **Grade:**	**Date of BID:**
Address/District of Residence:	**MSIS:**	**IEP Ruling** ☐Yes ☐No
School/District of Origin: (enter school name)		

Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services Information

Case Worker: _____	**COR:**	**Phone:** (___) ___-____
ASWS: _____		**Phone:** (___) ___-____

Determination

☐ The student shall remain in the district/school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement (**school of origin**).
Name of School District/School: (enter school name)

☐ Based on the best interest determination, a change in school placement is recommended. In accordance with ESSA, the child will be enrolled in the district/school of current residence (**receiving school**).
Name of School District/School: (enter school name)

NOTE: *If a change in educational placement is necessary, enrollment in the new school must take place* ***immediately.*** *All educational records must be provided to the receiving school. * An IEP Placement meeting should be scheduled with the new school district's POC.*

BID Participants

Title	Participated	Printed Name	Signature	Agree with Determination
Student	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
Birth Parent(s) if applicable	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
MDCPS POC- Case Worker or Supervisor	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
Guardian Ad Litem	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
POC for School of Origin	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
POC for New School District (if applicable)	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No
IEP Team Member	☐Yes ☐No			☐Yes ☐No

mdcps
Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services

The State of Mississippi
Tate Reeves, Governor
Andrea Sanders, Commissioner
www.mdcps.ms.gov

_____
Date

Dear _____ enrollment office:
Name of school

This letter is to inform you that _____, _____
Name Relationship to youth
has permission from the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services in
_____ County to enroll _____ in school.
Youth's name

The above-named individual may enroll the youth; however, school withdrawals of children in foster care must be initiated and completed by MDCPS or an individual specifically authorized by the youth court to execute primary and secondary school registration procedures. **Parent(s), foster parent(s), and group home staff are not permitted to withdraw a child in foster care from school under any circumstances**.

The above-named individual has permission to receive and have access to the youth's current records regarding grades, discipline, teacher conferences, accommodations, and other educational related matters/concerns. The above-named individual may also attend educational meetings regarding the youth.

Thank you for your immediate assistance with this matter. Should you have additional questions, please contact me at _____.
Email or phone number

Respectfully submitted,

_____
ASWS Signature

_____
ASWS Printed Name

mdcps
Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services

Notification of Placement (Change)Form

For Children/Youth in the custody of MDCPS

The below information is for official use by authorized State Child Welfare Agency (CWA) and Local Educational Agency (LEA) personnel only.
To Be Completed & Signed by MDCPS COR Worker/Designee within 7 days of Initial Placement or Placement Change.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Child/Youth Name: Age: DOB:
Grade Level/Classification:
Enrollment Status:
Initial Enrollment ☐ **School Change** ☐ **Currently Enrolled-No School Change** ☐

Date of Placement/Placement Change: Date of Enrollment: Date of BID:

AGENCY AND PLACEMENT CONTACT

MDCPS COR Worker: Phone: Email:
MDCPS ASWS: Phone: Email:
COR:
Check one: Initial Placement ☐ Foster Care Placement Change ☐ Exiting Foster Care ☐
Foster Care Provider Type: Family Foster Home ☐ Relative/Kinship Home ☐ Therapeutic Home ☐ Facility ☐

Foster Care Provider Name: Phone
Foster Care Provider Address:

The above Foster Care Provider has permission to receive and have access to the above student's current records regarding grades, discipline, teacher conferences, accommodations, and other educational related matters/concerns: Yes ☐ **No** ☐

MDCPS COR Worker Signature Date

LEA/SCHOOL INFORMATION (To Be completed by/obtained from School Personnel Within 7 Days of Initial Placement or Placement Change)

Student's MSIS #:
Current School Year:
School Name: Phone:
School Address: Responsible
School District: Phone:
Received/Completed By: Title:
Date Received/Completed: Signature:

Email this completed form to education@mdcps.ms.gov

Enrollment

Enrollment Notes

The foster care student must be enrolled within 2 business days

Must enroll regardless of paperwork or lack there of

MDCPS must ensure enrollment is initiated immediately

The local school district foster care POC must initiate a school-to-school transfer of records with the school of origin and ensure that the student is attending school while the records are being transferred.

Transportation

Any child in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin must promptly receive transportation services, regardless of whether the district provides transportation otherwise.

Transportation

The LEA must collaborate with the local MDCPS to develop & implement clear written transportation procedures in accordance with 20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B) if the child remains in their school's attendance zone

This requirement includes students in foster care who attend public pre-schools

The two entities must establish a system that expedites transportation for children placed in foster care

Transportation should not be a factor when deciding the BID for the foster care student

Federal & State Statutes, MDE SBP

Federal Joint Guidance

Fostering Connections to Success

Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

The Uninterrupted Scholars Act

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Free Appropriate Public Education for students with disabilities

Public Law 94-142

Protecting Student Privacy

MDE Rule 30.8 Foster Care Policy

MDE Rule 74.19 Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act

MDE Rule 74.1 Educable Child Program

MDCPS Policies

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