

FAQ – Educational Quick Facts re. Youth in Foster Care

INCLUDING important WCHSA policy updates!!

(Updated 9/30/21)

Did you know??

- **SCHOOL OF ATTENDANCE: Foster youth have the right to remain at their School of Origin** (see definition at end of document) when they come into care and/or change placements – even if it’s an adoptive placement - to reduce additional disruptions and maintain their educational stability.
 - WHY?
 - Often the school they attend when they come into care is the “only” stable environment in their world – while parents and placements are in flux.
 - Statistically, foster youth lose an average of 6 months of education for every school move/disruption.
 - WCHSA is bound by State and National legislation, to ensure that every effort is made to maintain our foster youth in their School of Origin.
 - IF it is determined to be in the best interest of the student to change schools, it **MUST** be approved by WCHSA leadership. This process is coordinated through the student’s worker and the WCHSA educational liaison.
 - Foster Parents, relatives and fictive kid **CANNOT** change a youth’s school without proper approval through WCHSA.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Mileage reimbursement is available to whomever is assisting with transportation if there is no bus available. This applies to “anyone” transporting the youth, while the case is open.
 - The district tracks the miles, so you don’t have to! The reimbursement is one round trip, based on mapped miles between school and placement address and is disbursed once a month (electronic payments are available!) for the prior month of transport.
- **STRONG COMMUNICATION IS KEY**
 - The relationship with your student’s school is your first line of defense in providing support.
 - Communicate with your worker when things get confusing or challenging.
 -
- **INFINITE CAMPUS:** Get acquainted with Infinite Campus to follow student progress – provide kudos earned and track missing assignments. “It takes a village” and caregivers are an essential part of that village!
- **WCSD Board of Trustees meets (almost) every other Tuesday**, so if you would like to be “in the know” and have the opportunity to have your voice heard, please tune in! <https://www.washoeschools.net/domain/168>
- **SUPPORT:**
 - **WCHSA Educational Liaison & WCSD Foster Liaison** work together to support all things education! Your case worker can reach out when things get sticky!
 - **TUTORING is always available.** Be sure to check with your worker.

Important updates to WCHSA Policy and good information for you!

Updates to WCSD Attendance Policy

A. [Attendance Policy of the WCSD](#)– School principals may consider chronic absence when making decisions regarding retention or course failure. The emphasis of the attendance policy is on the importance of keeping students in school and providing access to the curriculum.

1. **Chronic Absenteeism** – If a student misses 10% or more of their enrolled days,

he/she will be labeled Chronically Absent. Chronically Absent students include students who are absent for any reason (e.g., illness, suspension, the need to care for a family member), regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused. Being chronically absent has a significant impact on a student’s ability to read at grade level, perform academically, and graduate on time. It is a proven predictor of academic failure and dropout rates. Students will not be automatically retained(elementary and middle school) or fail a course (high school) just because of attendance. However, students who miss 10% or more of class periods for any course that meets in a semester will be chronically absent in that course(s) and are at greater risk for serious academic challenges.

2. **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities** – The Parent/foster parent MUST call or email the school each day their student(s) is absent to acknowledge the student’s absence on that day. Please refer to the [WCSD Family Guide to Attendance](#) for more details. When there are concerns of truancy, the parents must communicate with the school so that services can be provided to address concerns related to attendance. Schools will reach out to Truancy/Attendance Officers when appropriate. Please refer to “When to Call Truancy from the following [WCSD Intervention Dept. web page](#) for more details.

Special Education Evaluation

A. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) – The MTSS Process is a framework followed by schools prior to the development of an IEP and is designed to provide support and interventions in four different areas: RtI: Response to Intervention (Academics); PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions; SEL: Social & Emotional Learning; and RP: Restorative Practices. The RtI/Educational module is categorized in 3 tiers that range from Tier 1: Universal Prevention (all students) to Tier 3: Individualized Intensive Interventions (few students). MTSS uses data-based decision making to inform academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. This approach helps to ensure children are provided academic and behavioral services to improve outcomes for all students, including students who do not qualify for special education services. Instruction and intervention is delivered to students in varying intensities based on the student’s needs and in the least restrictive environment. It is important to note the MTSS process is very complex and the decision to evaluate for an IEP is made by the WCSD Special Education Team. See the [WCSD MTSS Website](#) for more information.

Prior to making a request for an initial evaluation for special education services it is very important for the case worker to meet with the child’s teacher, counselor or other school professionals, and the child’s team (to include the foster parents) to review the MTSS processes that have been utilized to date and whether the MTSS process is effectively addressing the child’s educational needs without implementing an IEP. All services provided and the effectiveness of those services must be documented in case notes and the child’s case plan.

LEGISLATION SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY

Educational Stability NRS 388E.045 to NRS 388E.125

NRS 388E.045 “School of origin” defined. “School of origin” means the public school in which a child was enrolled at the time that the child was placed in foster care or the school in which a child who is in foster care is enrolled at the time of the most recent change in the placement of the child.

(Added to NRS by [2017, 3109](#))

NRS 388E.105 Determination of best interests of child entering or in foster care regarding school to attend; considerations when determining best interests; required actions when child is to attend public school other than child’s school of origin; school not to refuse enrollment.

1. When a child enters foster care or changes placement while in foster care, the agency which provides child welfare services to the child shall determine whether it is in the best interests of the child for the child to remain in his or her school of origin. In making this determination, there is a rebuttable presumption that it is in the best interests of the child to remain in his or her school of origin.

2. In determining whether it is in the best interests of a child in foster care to remain in his or her school of origin, the agency which provides child welfare services, in consultation with the local education agency, must consider, without limitation:

- (a) The wishes of the child;
- (b) The educational success, stability and achievement of the child;
- (c) Any individualized education program or academic plan developed for the child;
- (d) Whether the child has been identified as an English learner;
- (e) The health and safety of the child;
- (f) The availability of necessary services for the child at the school of origin; and
- (g) Whether the child has a sibling enrolled in the school of origin.

☐ The costs of transporting the child to the school of origin must not be considered when determining whether it is in the best interests of the child to remain at his or her school of origin.

3. If the agency which provides child welfare services determines that it is in the best interests of a child in foster care to attend a public school other than the child’s school of origin:

- (a) The agency which provides child welfare services must:
 - (1) Provide written notice of its determination to every interested party as soon as practicable; and
 - (2) In collaboration with the local education agency, ensure that the child is immediately enrolled in that public school; and
- (b) The public school may not refuse to enroll the child on the basis that the public school does not have:
 - (1) A certificate stating that the child has been immunized and has received proper boosters for that immunization;
 - (2) A birth certificate or other document suitable as proof of the child’s identity;
 - (3) A copy of the child’s records from the school the child most recently attended; or
 - (4) Any other documentation required by a policy adopted by the public school or the local education agency.

(Added to NRS by [2017, 3109](#))

NRS 388E.115 Pupil who leaves foster care to remain enrolled in school of origin until end of school year; exception.

The board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school must allow a pupil who leaves foster care to remain enrolled in his or her school of origin until the end of the school year during which the child leaves foster care unless the parent or guardian of the pupil elects to enroll the pupil in a different school.

(Added to NRS by [2017, 3110](#))