Before recommending that a youth involved in the foster care or probation system move from their school of origin, the district must provide a written explanation of why a school change is in the youth's best interests, and obtain a written waiver from the ERH. The following steps guide a determination of whether the youth should remain in the school of origin or should transfer to a new school, and what plans are needed to ensure continuous school enrollment. This form, once completed, can be submitted to the court to meet the district and ERH’s obligations to provide written explanations of their recommendations/decisions on school of origin.

School of Origin Best Interest Determination Procedures & Worksheet

Student Name: Current Grade: \_ Date of Meeting:

**STEP 1: Meeting Participants**

Education Rights Holder(s) (“ERH”) □ Present? Name:

**Mandatory Participant**

Youth □ Present? Name:

Caregiver(s), if different than ERH □ Present? Name:

Social Worker/Probation Officer □ Present? Name:

Attorney for Youth/Public Defender □ Present? Name:

AB Foster Youth Liaison (sending school) □ Present? Name:

AB Foster Youth Liaison (receiving school) □ Present? Name:

Academic Counselor □ Present? Name:

School Administrator □ Present? Name:

Other □ Present? Name:

Other □ Present? Name:

**STEP 2: Identify School Options**

**Option 1:** School youth attended before home placement change, or current school if youth has not yet moved: .

**Option 2:** School of residence after home placement change: .

**Option 3:** School attended when youth first entered foster care/probation system: .

**Option 4:** Any other school(s) attended within the last 15 months where the youth has a connection:  
 .

**Option 5:** Any school(s) to which the youth would have matriculated (elementary to middle or middle to high school) from options 1-4 above, using district feeder patterns: .

**STEP 3: Complete Best Interest Analysis by Considering Pros and Cons of School of Origin Options**

Discuss the pros and cons of each school using the chart below. First, write in the name of each school of origin option (identified in Step 2 above) into the top row. **School Option 1, the youth’s current school (or the school the youth attended before the home placement change), is shaded grey to remind meeting participants that it is strongly favored,** especially if the youth has experienced significant school instability in the past and/or has struggled to recover after past school changes. Then, discuss with the team which school or schools best answer each question and place an “X” in the appropriate box(es).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Option 1** | **Option 2** | **Option 3** | **Option 4** | **Option 5** |
| **Name of School** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Youth Preference**  What school(s) does the youth want to attend? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Length of Attendance**  Which school(s) has the youth attended long enough to develop relationships, trust, and a feeling of belonging? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Academic Strengths**  Which school(s) has the strongest academic program and/or college going culture to support the needs of the youth? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Special Education**  If the youth has an IEP, which school(s) can provide the most appropriate program? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **English Learner**  If the youth is an English learner, which school(s) can best support the youth’s language development needs? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Social/Emotional**  At which school(s) has the youth developed positive relationships with peers and/or teachers? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Timing of Transfer**  Which school will prevent a mid-semester school change? (Check only the school where the youth is currently attending) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Anticipated Length of Placement**  If the youth is in (or about to be placed in) a permanent living situation (e.g., with a relative or someone seeking legal guardianship or adoption of the student), which school(s) would also work for that home placement? |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Option 1** | **Option 2** | **Option 3** | **Option 4** | **Option 5** |
| **Extracurricular Activities**  Which school(s) will) enable the youth to be connected to extracurricular activities? |  |  |  |  |  |
| **School Discipline**  At which school(s) does the youth have positive behaviors (free or minimal discipline history)? |  |  |  |  |  |
| Which school(s) are within 15 miles of the new placement?[[1]](#footnote-2) |  |  |  |  |  |
| What is the school schedule? (Start time / End time) | **\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_** |

**Impact of Distance on Education**

How long is the youth willing to spend in transit each day? \_\_\_\_ minutes

How early is the youth willing to leave for school/get home from school? \_\_\_\_ AM / \_\_\_\_ PM

**STEP 4: Foster Youth Liaison Recommendation**

The youth's AB 490 Education Liaison:  recommends or  does not recommend that the youth remain in their school of origin for the following reasons:

.

**STEP 5: ERH Best Interest Determination**

The ERH makes the final decision about whether remaining in the current school or any other school of origin is in the youth’s best interest, based on the completion of the chart, all the information available to the team, the Foster Youth Liaison’s recommendation, and what the ERH believes would best serve the youth’s needs.

ERH Chooses:  to have the youth remain in school of origin (if checked, go to Step 6) OR

to waive the youth’s right to remain in their school of origin and requests immediate enrollment at: school (complete statement below, then skip to Step 7 for consent).

The youth's ERH waives the youth’s right to remain in their school of origin for the following reasons: .

**STEP 6: Transportation Plan**

If the youth is remaining in their school of origin, pursuant to an ERH decision that moving is not in their best interests, refer to your county Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) plan to determine who will arrange and fund the transportation between the school district and county child welfare agency.

**Summary of Transportation Plan**

Transportation to the school of origin will be provided by:

Group Home / Short-term Therapeutic Residential Treatment Program (STRTP).

Child Welfare or Probation Agency in the form of:

Reimbursement to an individual: Individual’s name:

Relationship to student:

Agency providing reimbursement:

Public transportation to be facilitated by the child welfare or probation agency:

The route identified is:

The School of Origin school district in the form of:

Bus or other vehicle

Reimbursement to an individual: Individual’s name:

Relationship to student:

Public transportation to be facilitated by the school district:

The route identified is:

Other (including shared responsibility with nearby district or County Office of Education). Describe:   
**STEP 7: Consent**

ERH Signature:

Student Signature:

Caregiver Signature[[2]](#footnote-3)5: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Administrator:

1. School districts may establish a distance within which transportation to the school of origin is presumptively feasible, such as 15 miles. However, a youth who lives further away may not be denied the right to attend the school of origin or denied access to transportation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. 5 Note that the ERH is the only person with the right to consent to a change from the school of origin. However, the caregiver should also be consulted regarding the mode of transportation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)