

## **File: JFABF- EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

The Lowell Public Schools District (hereinafter “District”) shall collaborate with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. Foster care refers to 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents and guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placement in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. To the extent required under applicable law, a child in foster care under this policy also includes children who an appropriate child welfare agency indicates are awaiting a foster care placement.

Children in foster care in preschool – grade 12 shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children in the District. They shall be provided the services and have access to the programs and activities that are offered to other children attending District schools, including educational services for which the children meet eligibility criteria. This includes but is not limited to special education, Title I programming, programs and services for English Language Learners, talented and gifted programming, career and technical education programs, and school nutrition programs.

### **Foster Care Point of Contact**

The District will designate at least one Foster Care Point of Contact who will have primary administrative level oversight of the District’s services for children who are in foster care. He/she, or a qualified designee, shall be responsible for (1) providing any required assurances to applicable state and federal agencies that the District is complying with applicable state and federal requirements related to ensuring the educational stability of children in foster care; and (2) reasonably monitoring compliance with such assurances.

### **School Enrollment**

The presumption is that a student will remain in the school of origin (i.e., the school in which the child is enrolled or the last school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement into out-of-home care); a student should only change schools if remaining in the school of origin is not in the child’s best interest, as determined collaboratively by the District and the child welfare agency or if the student completes the final grade level available in the school of origin.

### **Transportation**

The District will ensure that all federal and state laws governing transportation of students in foster care placements are appropriately implemented.

Adoption Date:

Legal References:

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

*Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Administrative Assistance Advisory  
SPED 2018-3*

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts Department of  
Children and Families Educational Stability for Students in Foster Care, January 16, 2018

Family Education Right and Privacy Act

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