



† †† • † † †† “  
† • †Š††† ’ ¥• †

“”



• “ † š •

Each school district and open-enrollment charter school is statutorily required to appoint at least one employee to act as a liaison to facilitate the enrollment and transfer of records of students in the legal custody of DFPS when enrolling in or changing schools. The information in this section provides suggestions on practices for liaisons based on statutory requirements, and feedback from current foster care liaisons, as well as partners across education, child welfare, and the courts.

†† † † ^ † AND † † † “

**LAW** Each school district and open enrollment charter school shall appoint at least one employee to act as a liaison to facilitate the enrollment in or transfer to a public school of a child in the district who is in the conservatorship of the state.

What type of school staff would make an ideal district foster care liaison? While there are no formal requirements about who should serve in the district foster care liaison role, certain education professionals may be a natural fit considering their skills or existing job responsibilities. Specifically, those who:

- † Have the authority to champion new district efforts;
- † Work with mobile student populations;
- † Are familiar with enrollment, records transfer, existing community services, and student supports;
- † Understand the unique challenges of students who are in foster care;
- † Serve as a high-level administrator;
- † Are directors and leaders in student support services;
- † Are principals and campus leaders; and/or
- † Are counselors or counselor administrators.

These liaisons will build capacity and infrastructure within their district to support students in foster care. Ideally, they will also coordinate with individual campuses, community services agencies, caregivers, local colleges, and advocates involved with the child welfare system.



... † † †

### 1. Notify TEA of district liaison:

- All districts and open-enrollment charters must register their liaison(s) with TEA. Please send an email with the name, position, and contact information of the designated liaison(s) to: [fostercareliaison@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:fostercareliaison@tea.state.tx.us)
- Please complete the Foster Care Liaison Introductory Survey at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Fostercareliaisons](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Fostercareliaisons)
- To make sure the district has access to the most current information in Texas, join the Foster Care Education Listserv at: [ritter.tea.state.tx.us/list/](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/list/) and select Foster Care Education.

### 2. Notify campus and district leaders of liaison appointment:

Distributing an informational letter to leaders within the district and at individual campuses is an important first step to ensuring that people are aware of the liaison position and appointment within the district. To increase awareness and promote effective practices within the district, include information about the responsibilities of the liaison, the importance of school stability, and the statutory provisions that support students in foster care. In August 2015, TEA disseminated a To the Administrator Addressed (TAA) letter informing districts of the need for a liaison and the importance of school stability for students in foster care. Additionally, a TAA letter for Foster Care Awareness Month promoting understanding of foster care and education was distributed in May 2016. These letters may be attached to district and campus communications to increase awareness and strengthen support.

### 3. Visit the TEA Foster Care & Student Success website and listen to webinar trainings:

TEA will provide training and continued guidance for district foster care liaisons. To view archived trainings, visit: [www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/)

### 4. Develop and coordinate individual campus champions for students in foster care:

Best practices suggest identifying individual campus champions to share the work of the district liaison and to ensure students are served appropriately and effectively at each campus within the district. Having a point person at each campus may help to facilitate effective enrollment and withdrawal, to ease student transitions, to coordinate across departments, and to organize individualized and enhanced campus level support. The district liaison can coordinate with designated campus champions to provide trainings and streamline communication processes to ensure campuses work in a uniform and coordinated manner. Overall, the district liaison can play an important role in coordinating and working with campus champions to establish district practices that fulfill responsibilities for students in foster care.

● — - † † † • † † † † • † † † †

### 1. Streamline enrollment processes for students in foster care:

The district liaison can provide expertise to the school district and its campuses about enrollment for students in foster care. Specifically, the liaison should be aware of the special challenges of and legal requirements for students in foster care. They can assist campuses in establishing mechanisms to identify students and implement strategies for tracking student progress. Liaisons can also develop processes that streamline enrollment with school registrars and front office staff and provide overall ease of enrollment in a new school. For example, it is important to ensure that school records from the previous school are received, students are placed in the appropriate grade level classes and receive books, and special education services are secured, if appropriate. As the point person for enrollment, the liaison can serve as the district's designated contact person to address school-related questions and concerns regarding foster students (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 for more information on enrollment).

### 2. Implement student data tracking and monitoring mechanisms:

TEA is developing a PEIMS indicator code for students in foster care based on legislation passed by the 83rd Legislature. This information will support districts with identifying students, and with providing assistance to students in foster care. It will provide TEA with information to track, monitor and report aggregate student data and educational outcomes at the state level. TEA will provide districts and charters with guidance on tracking students in PEIMS after the new indicator code is developed.



Connected to the PEIMS Indicator code that is required to upload foster care student data to TEA, is the important role for districts to provide statutorily required academic supports for students who are identified and coded as in foster care. In order to implement statutory requirements to provide students with assistance in school, districts should implement local data tracking mechanisms. Local systems should have the capacity to identify student needs, plan interventions, and monitor student progress regarding academic services that are provided. In addition, the PEIMS code should help schools to support students during critical transitions, and also to support school stability (see page 84 for information on transitions)

### 3. Ensure that students in foster care receive school nutrition and meal programs without further application:

A student in foster care is categorically eligible for U.S.D.A. child nutrition programs without further application. This includes the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP), Special Milk Program

4.1 'SFTI 'SVJU BOE 7FHFUBCMF 1SPHSBN ''71 4VNNFS 'PPE 4FSWJD  
 Care Food Program (CACFP). Establish a coordinated process within one's district to ensure students are able to receive meals immediately. A student's DFPS Placement Authorization Form addresses meal eligibility and is the only proof the school district needs to confirm eligibility (see page ). This is an important training element for district food coordinators and campus champions. Foster care liaisons can ensure that students are enrolled in all food and nutrition programs offered by the district.

### 4. Help coordinate withdrawal, records transfer, and credit recovery:

The liaison can work with school staff to develop and implement processes to ensure that students' credits are accurately calculated and that school records and credits are transferred through the electronic Texas Student Records Exchange (TReX) system. Liaisons may coordinate with teachers to see that the students' education records are complete, especially when students move in the middle of a grading period. Liaisons should also provide information for students in acquiring credits for partial work completed (see page 85 for information on credit recovery).



---



---



---



**TIP:** The DFPS Regional Youth Specialist is a former foster youth (foster care alumni) that works for DFPS and is available to provide understanding and strengthen awareness about the experience of students in foster care.





coursework triggers this lifetime bene t.