

# Model Best Interest Determination Form

**The presumption is that a student will remain in the current school; a student should only change schools if remaining in the current school is not in their best interest.** The caseworker or custodial agency point of contact should complete this worksheet in collaboration with school personnel and other supportive adults in the child's life. For continuity of care, this worksheet and all supporting documentation are to be maintained in the child's records.

## Best Interest Determination

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Custodial agent representative and contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

SACWIS Person ID number: \_\_\_\_\_ SSID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School and District: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential New School and District: \_\_\_\_\_

Schools the Student Previously Attended (if known):  
\_\_\_\_\_

District of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

## Supporting Documentation Attached:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Report cards and progress reports                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline records                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student achievement                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluations                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance data                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Written input from absent participants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IEP or 504 plan                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transcript with current credits, if in high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                           |

## Best Interest Determination meeting participants

Please note that not all roles might apply to every Best Interest Determination meeting.

| Role   | Printed Name | Signature | Contact Information |
|--|--------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Child  |              |           |                     |
| Parent   |              |           |                     |
| Parent   |              |           |                     |
| Custodial agent representative                               |              |           |                     |
| Caregiver  |              |           |                     |
| Student's guardian ad litem/court-appointed special advocate |              |           |                     |
| Educational surrogate parent, if applicable                  |              |           |                     |
| Educator from current school who knows student               |              |           |                     |
| District foster care point of contract                       |              |           |                     |
| School social worker and/or school psychologist              |              |           |                     |
| Guidance counselor   |              |           |                     |
| Other:   |              |           |                     |
| Other:   |              |           |                     |
| Other:   |              |           |                     |

## Discussion of Student's Best Interest

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well is he or she performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have past school transfers impacted the student?
3. How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities and other interests? How could the new school serve these needs?
4. What are 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?
5. How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional and cultural needs? Does the student access school-based supportive services? How could the new school serve these needs?
6. Describe the nature, quality and duration of the student's relationships in the current school. Specifically consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the school of origin. Consider where the student's siblings go to school, if applicable.

7. Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Is the student's new living arrangement expected to be short- or long-term? How is this impacted by the school selection?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. 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 (e.g., car, school bus, public transit). *Note:* The cost of transportation **cannot** be a factor when determining best interest.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so that it coincides with a logical academic juncture (e.g., the end of the quarter/semester/school year or following an event that is significant to the student)? Consider the academic calendars of the new school and the current school.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What other factors did the team consider when making this decision?

## Determination at end of meeting:

### Initial Placement or Changes in Placement

- ❑ It is in the best interest of the student to **remain** in the school of origin.
  - A permanent transportation plan for the student should be in place within **five school days** of the best interest determination, per the agreed upon transportation procedure. See Ohio's sample transportation procedure document for more information.
    - While permanent transportation is arranged, interim transportation must be provided to ensure there is no disruption in the student's education.
- ❑ It is in the best interest of the student to **not remain** in the school of origin.
  - The Transfer Notification form provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is to be completed by the custodial agency and provided to the new school and district within one school day of the child's placement.
  - The student will be immediately enrolled in the new school. The new school will request the student's records the same day from the school of origin. Enrollment means attending and actively participating in class.
  - The school of origin will send the student's records within **one school day**.

### Special Education IEP

- ❑ The student is currently receiving special education services and will need to continue special education services in the receiving school district.
  - The former school is to include all documentation of needed services when transferring educational information and records to the new school within one school day.

**Best Interest Determination Next Steps**

**Identify key factors relevant to the team's decision.**

**The student will remain in the same school.**

Transportation will be provided by:

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Responsible party/parties for transportation costs:

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**A change in school placement is needed.**

Enrollment in the new school must take place without interruption.

The above mentioned student will be enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ school in \_\_\_\_\_ district on \_\_\_\_\_ date.

The person responsible for enrolling the student in the new school is:

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