

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 the child's 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

Date of Meeting: _____ Meeting Facilitator: _____

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 Previously Attended (if known): _____

District of Residence: _____

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION ATTACHED:

Report Cards and progress reports

Discipline records

Student achievement data

Evaluations

Attendance data

Written input from absent participants

IEP or 504 plan

Other: _____

Transcript with current credits (if in high school)

Other: _____

Best Interest Determination Meeting Participants

Role	Printed name	Signature	Email address
Student			
Parent			
Parent			
Custodial agent representative			
Caregiver			
Student's guardian ad litem/court-appointed advocate			
Educational surrogate parent			
Educator from current school who knows student			
District foster care point of contact			
School social worker and/or school psychologist			
Guidance counselor			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			

Discussion of Student's Best Interest

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well are they performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have past schools/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 those 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?

Discussion of Student's Best Interest

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). Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Are they involved in extracurricular or other activities?

7. Is the student's new living arrangement expected to be short- or long-term? How is this impacted by the school selection?

8. 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.**

9. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so 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 both the new school and the current school.

10. 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 student's best interest to **remain** at 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 **not in the student's best interest to remain** at 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 Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The student is currently receiving special education services and will need to continue special education services in the receiving school district.

- The school of origin 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 at the same school.

- Transportation will be provided by:

- Responsible party/parties for transportation costs:

A change in school placement is needed.

Enrollment in the new school must take place without delay. The above-mentioned student will be enrolled in:

_____ in

_____ on

_____.

The party/parties responsible for enrolling the student in the new school is:
