



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Best Interest Determination Conversation/Worksheet

8/1/2017

Student Name:  Current Grade:  Date of Meeting:

### STEP 1: Meeting Participants

Position	Name
DHS Worker	<input type="text"/>
LEA POC	<input type="text"/>
Others (Name/Position)	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

### STEP 2: Identify School Options

**Option 1:** School district/building where student is currently attending (SOO).

School District:  School Building:

**Option 2:** School district/building where student is will be living in foster care placement.

School District:  School Building:

**Option 3:** School district/building of other options considered.

School District:  School Building:

### STEP 3: Select the key indicators for the best interest decision

- Distance from new home placement
- School year calendar (semester vs. trimester)
- DHS Placement decisions (case planning)
- Proximity to end of grading period
- Student, parent preference
- Availability of school support services (ELL, Spec. Ed)
- Relationships with peers, teachers & adults
- Extracurricular activities

(Additional factors are listed on the best interest decision guidance document)

Other:

**School Placement Decision:** Option:

### STEP 4: Transportation Plan:

School of origin is responsible for arranging the transportation, billing, contracting for service provided etc., when more than one school district is involved. School district boundaries and state border will determine when DHS will pay for transportation. Please review the MOU and DHS/DE Contract agreement.

- Student will live in the district of origin and transportation **will not** be required
- Student will live in the district of origin and transportation **will** be required (intra-district)
  - established route (different building, in district)
  - specialized transportation (special program transportation)
- Student **will not** live in the district of origin and transportation **will** be required between contiguous districts
- Student **will not** live in the district of origin and transportation **will** be required between non-contiguous districts/out of state
- Other (please specify):

### Form completed by:

Name:  Position:  Date:

cc:

## Instructions for the best interest conversation and completing the worksheet

Fostering a system of shared and coordinated responsibility of DHS and local school districts is one way to improve the educational success and overall well-being of system-involved youth. Such a collaborative system is one in which all agencies take it upon themselves individually and communally to ensure that all students under their care progress academically.

A best interest decision will be most successful when it is made prior to a placement decision being finalized. Gathering information and inviting parties with relevant information is critical to the decision making process. In the event of an emergency removal, the best interest determination should take place as soon as possible, with temporary transportation provided until a final decision is determined.

1. Enter Student Name, grade and the date the conversation occurred.
2. Step 1 – Enter the name of the DHS worker and the LEA POC who participated in the conversation. If other participants were involved in the conversation/meeting, please add the name and position in the box labeled other.
3. Step 2 – Enter the name of the district and the building name for each of the following school options:
  - a. School of Origin (school/building the student attended prior to the foster care placement)
  - b. Receiving School (school/building in the district where the foster care placement is located)
  - c. Other Options (school/building that is neither the school of origin or receiving district)
4. Step 3 – When determining best interest the DHS worker and the LEA POC shall review all factors feasible (best interest guidance document lists several factors to consider) related to living arrangements, social, emotional behavior and school setting and services available. Please check only those factors used for decision making and add any factors not listed in step 3.
5. After the final decision has been reached, state which option was the agreed upon choice for school attendance by entering the school district and building.
6. Step 4 – After determining the school option, determine if transportation is required. Check the box next to the statement that describes the action for transportation. If transportation is required, this should be arranged for immediately. Temporary transportation should be provided if the transportation option cannot be arranged within one day of notification of placement. Local districts may have additional paperwork to be completed, that should be attached to this agreement.
7. Please enter the name and the position of the person who completed this form. Enter the date of the actual decision. Enter the name and position of anyone that will receive a copy of this form.
8. If the best interest decision cannot be agreed upon by those involved in the decision making process, each agency should contact their state level POC for further guidance.