

Questions for Judges Reviewing Educational Achievement and Stability for Children in Foster Care

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Court Subcommittee of the Department of Human Services Statewide Educational Stability Workgroup

Minn. Stat. § 260C.212, subd. 1 (c) (7) requires the out-of-home placement plan to state the agency's efforts to ensure the child's educational stability while in foster care including:

- efforts to keep the child in the same school when the child is removed from home or when the child is moved from one placement to another;
 - if it is not in the child's best interests to remain in the same school, to ensure immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school
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These questions are recommended to judges as follow-up to the education-related content of the out-of-home placement plan or court reports. School success begins with healthy early childhood development and continues through high school graduation and into postsecondary education. It includes attention to extracurricular activities which strongly correlates to academic success. In the case of foster children, involvement in extracurricular activities helps to "normalize" the school experience.

Children under school-age

- Has the child had a developmental / school readiness screening in the last six months if under age two, in the last year if age two or older?
- If the screening showed areas of concern, what areas of development were an issue?
- What referrals have been made to follow-up on the concern?
- What services are being received to address the issues?

Children enrolled in primary, middle, and junior high

- How does the student feel about remaining in the current school—relationships, safety, or desire to stay in the setting?
- Is the school within reasonable commuting distance from the location where the student lives or will live? If transportation is needed, is it available?
- Does the student regularly attend school? Has the student been suspended or expelled to an extent that impacts academic performance?
- Is the student in extracurricular activities at this school? Are there activities accessible to them at this school?
- If the student has special needs / IEP, is the school and student addressing them?

High school students

- Is the student on track to graduate / earn a GED, or if planning to transfer to a new school, will the student retain full credit in the move?
- If not, what is the plan to improve progress?
- Is the student in extracurricular activities at this school? Are there activities accessible to them at this school?
- What post-secondary plans does the student have? How are these being implemented now?