

# Point of Contact (POC)

## Local Education Agency (LEA)

### Overview

At the local level, Local Education Agencies (LEA) must designate one person as the foster care *Point of Contact* (POC) when notified in writing by local child welfare agencies that they have done so. Iowa has collected the names of all LEA POCs and Department of Human Services (DHS) regional POCs and have posted them to the [Iowa Department of Education](#) website.

The ESSA Non-Regulatory Guidance (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016) lists potential roles and responsibilities for state and local POCs. Duties for **state POCs** include, but are not limited to:

- coordinating with state child welfare agencies to develop and issue joint state guidance;
- facilitating data sharing consistent with privacy laws;
- monitoring LEAs to ensure compliance at the local level;
- developing and coordinating local transportation procedures (DE is creating guidance for transportation procedures, when there may be additional costs);
- developing a process for making best interest determinations and documenting those determinations;
- providing professional development opportunities; and
- providing technical assistance for LEA POCs and others regarding school stability and educational supports for children in foster care.

At the school district level, the LEA POCs serve as the primary contacts between children in care and school staff, district personnel, and other service providers. The Non-Regulatory Guidance also notes the persons appointed by each LEA must have the capacity and resources to guide implementation of the ESSA's requirements for children in foster care. Duties for **LEA POCs** could include, but are not limited to:

- coordinating with corresponding DHS POCs to implement ESSA's requirements;
- coordinating with local DHS to establish a process to notify LEAs when the child is placed in care or when a foster care placement change will occur;
- establishing a process for coordinating with LEAs, schools of origin and local DHS regarding best interest determinations;
- documenting best interest determinations;
- managing best interest decisions and transportation cost agreements;
- developing, coordinating, and ensuring implementation of written transportation procedures in collaboration with local DHS;

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- following dispute resolution processes when issues arise;
- ensuring children are promptly transported to their school of origin even when there is a dispute regarding which agency will fund additional costs incurred and that the agency (or agencies) identified in the written transportation procedures pays any additional costs pending resolution of the disputes working with LEAs and school of origin and DHS to facilitate immediate enrollment and coordinate transportation services;
- facilitating records transfers including educational, medical and special education records;
- coordinating services so children in foster care can access a full range of educational services and supports;
- ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school
- facilitating data sharing with the child welfare agencies consistent with the FERPA and other privacy laws and policies;
- providing training to LEA and DHS staff on children's needs and relevant state and local policies; and
- informing parents, education decision makers, and community stakeholders about children's rights (ABA Center on Children and the Law, Juvenile Law Center, Education Law Center, 2017)

### Works Cited

ABA Center on Children and the Law, Juvenile Law Center, Education Law Center. (2017, January 18). *ABA Center on Children and the Law*. Retrieved from Legal Center for Foster Care & Education: [http://fostercareandeducation.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?portalid=0&EntryId=2080&Command=Core\\_Download](http://fostercareandeducation.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?portalid=0&EntryId=2080&Command=Core_Download)

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016, July 23). *U.S. Department of Education Initiatives*. Retrieved from Students in Foster Care: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/edhhsfostercarenonregulatorguide.pdf>