



What is the BID process?

When DCF identifies a long term placement for a child, DCF initiates the **best interest determination** (BID) process, which ideally should take 5 school days. The goal of the process is to answer 1. Is it in the best interest of the child to remain in his/her school of origin? and 2. If so, how will the student be transported there?

When a child is hot-lining between short term placements, the child should be attending his/her **school of origin** (the school he/she was attending when placed in foster care or previous foster placement). If the child was not attending school before the new placement, the child typically is placed in the **local school district** of the foster family. The BID process is typically not a face to face meeting but rather DCF will consult stakeholders (including yourself) via email or phone.

Who does DCF consult?

- The child
- Foster parents
- Education decision maker (if not foster parents:SESP/ Ed-GAL)
- DCF social worker
- C+P/ CRA attorney
- School of origin: teachers, guidance/adjustment counselors, special education
- School of local district (if being considered)

What should be considered?

- Age/grade
- Child's preference
- Foster parent/ education decision maker's preference
- Anticipated length of placement
- Distance/travel time to school
- Child's connections to school (peers and faculty)
- Number of placements
- Placement and school of child's siblings
- Availability of student services

Transportation costs should not considered



What are the outcomes of the BID process?

- After collaboration, a decision is made on where the child will attend school. A short and long term plan about transportation is developed.
- If a child will change schools, DCF will send a notice to that new school and the school of origin. If it is decided that the child will remain at the school of origin, DCF will also send a notice (however, sometimes they fail to do so). This notice includes a statement that the child is in foster care and that there is a change in emergency contacts (DCF social worker, foster parent, education decision maker). It also includes a student's residential address and transportation needs, and a record release.

What can be expected if it is decided that the child will attend a new school?

- The child will be enrolled in the new school **immediately** by that district even if some documents are missing or pending.
- The new school is responsible for initiating the request of the educational records from the old school to be transferred
 - This is facilitated by the school district's **foster care point of contact** (POC). You can find out your school's POC [here](#).

Information was gathered from the resources below. If you want to learn more, check out the following:

DESE: Overview of the BID process, and includes a helpful worksheet that can be used as a guide and documentation

- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/>

DESE: Explains how the BID process ensures educational stability for children in foster care. Also relates goals of BID to the federal law 2015 *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and the 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections Act)

- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=24765>

DESE: Outlines next steps when you disagree with the BID outcome

- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/>

DESE: Database of foster care point of contact for the school/district in MA

- <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11239>