

Educational Provisions
Orientation for Foster
Care School District
Points of Contact



STATE OF MAINE

Department of
Health and Human Services

Gina Googins, LSW, MSW

Regional Associate Director
Office of Child and Family Services
Maine DHHS

Bobbi Johnson, LMSW
Foster Care DHHS Point of Contact

Associate Director
Child Welfare Services
Maine DHHS

Julie A. Smyth
Foster Care Statewide Point of Contact

Director, O3S
Maine Department of Education



Acronyms

- DOE: Department of Education
- O3S: Office of School and Student Supports
- DHHS: Department of Health and Human Services
- OCFS: Office of Child and Family Services
- CPS: Child Protective Services
- BID: Best Interest Determination
- MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
- IEP: Individualized Education Plan
- POC: Point of Contact (4)
 - School District Foster Care POC
 - District Foster Care POC (related to entire state – 8 in total)
 - DOE Foster Care POC
 - DHHS Foster Care POC

For Foster Care Points of Contact

- Our video training will be recorded for future use. Consider taking notes as there will be a quiz at the end.
- When you complete the quiz and score at least an 80%, you will earn your Certificate of Completion for SY 2022-23.
- Any feedback or questions? Share those with Julie Smyth, Statewide Foster Care Point of Contact at the DOE – Julie.a.smyth@maine.gov (Please insert Foster Care in subject line!)

Why Educational Stability

Frequent school transitions may have lasting academic, social, and emotional impacts

Maximizing educational stability can

- **improve attendance**
- **minimize educational gaps**
- **help families stay connected**



Foster Care - Title I Part A Provisions

- Ensures **educational stability**
- Establishes **specific educational rights**
- Requires a **district foster care point of contact**
- Requires a **state foster care point of contact** at both DOE (Julie Smyth) and DHHS (Bobbi Johnson)

Definition of Students in Foster Care

24-hour out-of-home care, placed away from their parents; DHHS has placement + care responsibilities

Students previously identified as “awaiting foster care” under McKinney-Vento

Includes resource homes - foster and kinship placements; crisis programs; and children’s residential care facilities

Educational Rights of Students in Foster Care

1. School of Origin and Transportation
2. Best Interest Determination
3. Immediate Enrollment



School of Origin

The school the student was attending when placed in foster care, or at the time of a subsequent change in foster care placement.

Students should remain enrolled in their school of origin, unless, after a best interest determination, it is decided **NOT** to be in their best interest.





Best Interest Determination (BID)

- Decisions about which school a student will attend should be made **collaboratively** and should consider a wide variety of factors.
- Collaboration should include those in the best position to understand the **student's unique needs**.
- Student should **remain in their school of origin until the BID is complete**.

Who should be involved in the Best Interest Determination?



Student, parent/guardian, foster parent



Educational decision maker (surrogate parent), legal representative (Guardian ad litem)



CPS Caseworker and/or CPS Supervisor



School District Foster Care POC liaison, special education, counselor, teacher



*CPS District POC/Educational Liaison (one of 8 in Maine)

OCFS Foster Care Points of Contact for Education

Email addresses for foster care points of contact all follow the same format:

first name.middle initial (IF PROVIDED).last
[name@maine.gov](mailto:firstname.middleinitial.lastname@maine.gov)

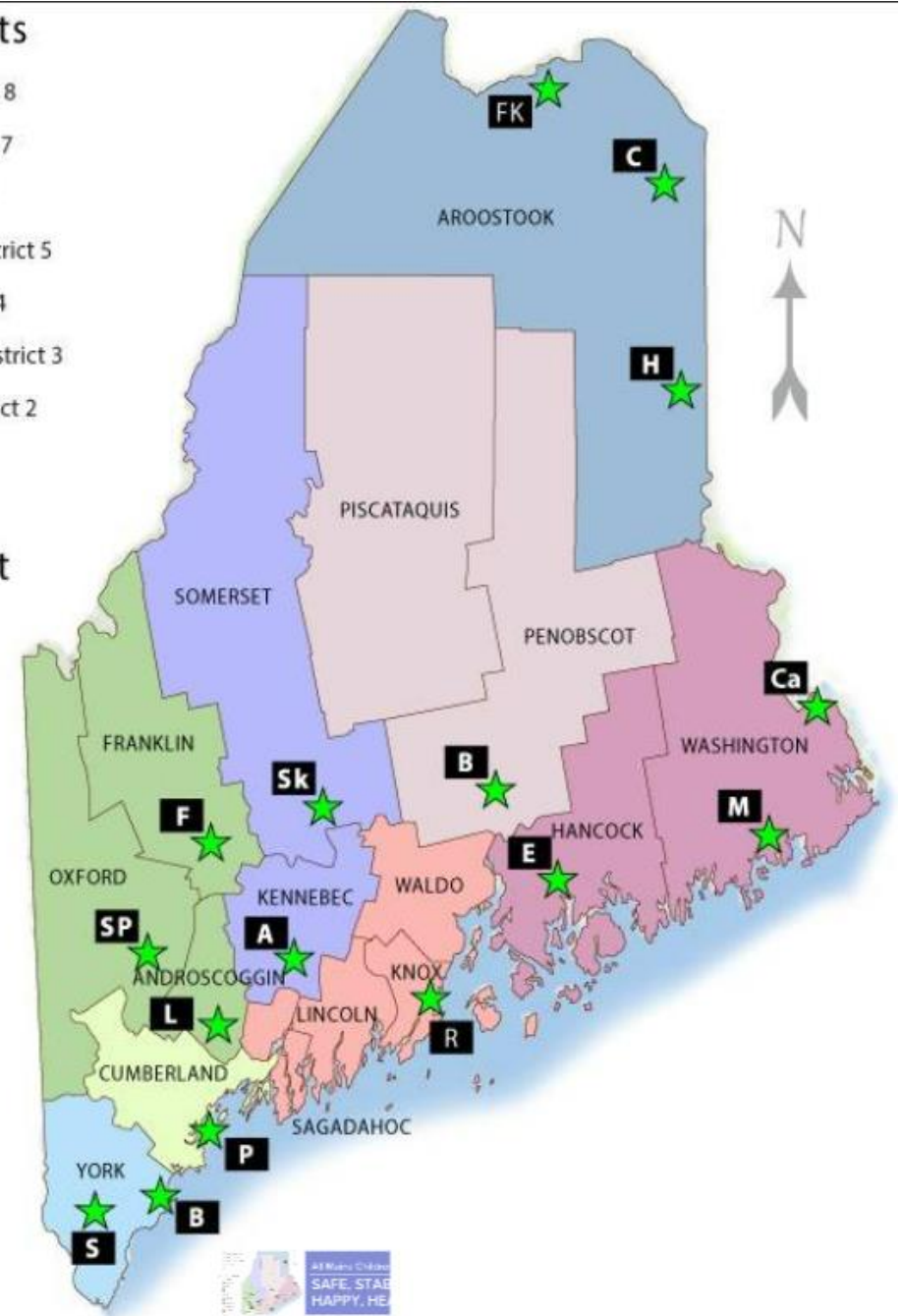
- District 1 - [Angela Burgess](#)
- District 2 - [Aurelie Bush](#)
- District 3 - [Paul Josephson](#)
- District 4 - [Christina Gilbert](#)
- District 5 - [Lindsey Caron](#)
- District 6 - [Jennifer E. Brewer](#)
- District 7 - [Shannon Prout](#)
- District 8 - [Chad Kelley](#)
- Statewide - [Bobbi Johnson](#)

DHHS Districts

-  Aroostook District 8
-  Downeast District 7
-  Penquis District 6
-  Central Maine District 5
-  MidCoast District 4
-  Western Maine District 3
-  Cumberland District 2
-  York District 1

★ DHHS District Offices

- FK** Fort Kent
- C** Caribou
- H** Houlton
- Ca** Calais
- M** Machias
- B** Bangor
- E** Ellsworth
- Sk** Skowhegan
- F** Farmington
- R** Rockland
- A** Augusta
- SP** South Paris
- L** Lewiston
- P** Portland
- B** Biddeford
- S** Sanford



What should we consider when making a best interest determination for school placement?



Consider the **unique needs of the student**, including but not limited to the following:

- student's **age** and **grade** level;
- student's **preference**, when age appropriate;
- student's **attachment** to the school, including meaningful **relationships** with staff and peers;
- placement of the student's **sibling(s)**;
- **distance/length** of time to travel to/from school;



- **time of academic year**, academic performance, and skills;
- anticipated **length of time** in placement, and whether reunification is the family goal;
- **number of placements** to date;
- ability to **maintain family relationships** and engagement (including in extracurricular activities, where appropriate);

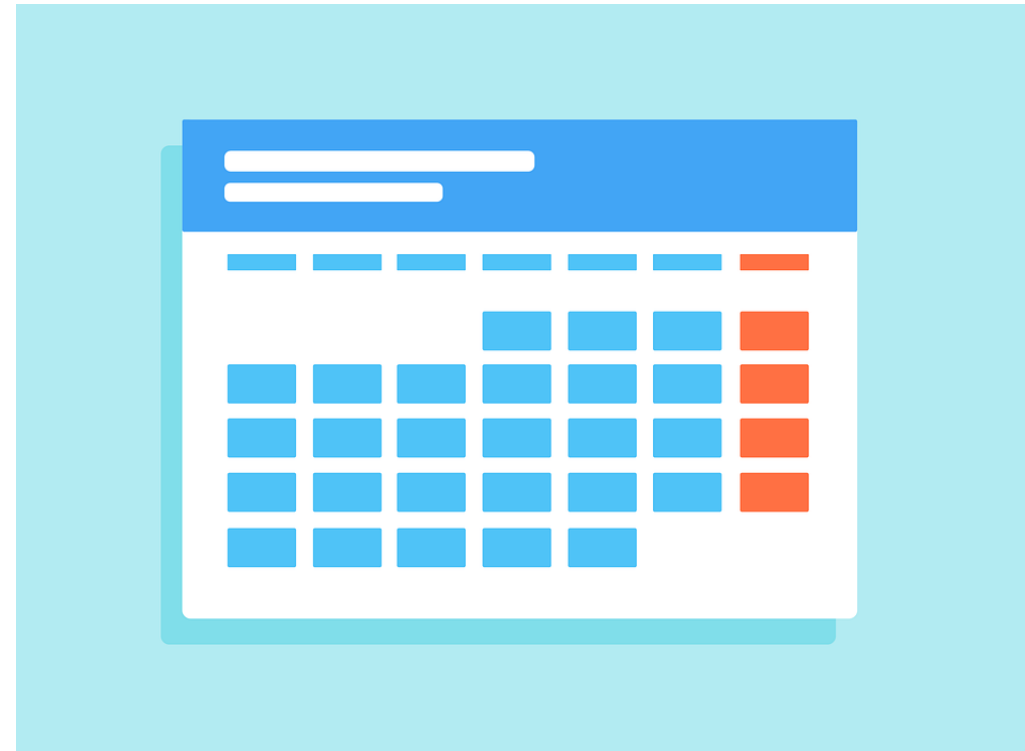




- clinical/**behavioral** issues;
- influence of the **school climate** on the student, including safety issues;
- **availability** and **quality of the services** in the school to meet the student's educational and social emotional needs; and
- availability of special education/504 services, if applicable.

Other Considerations for BID

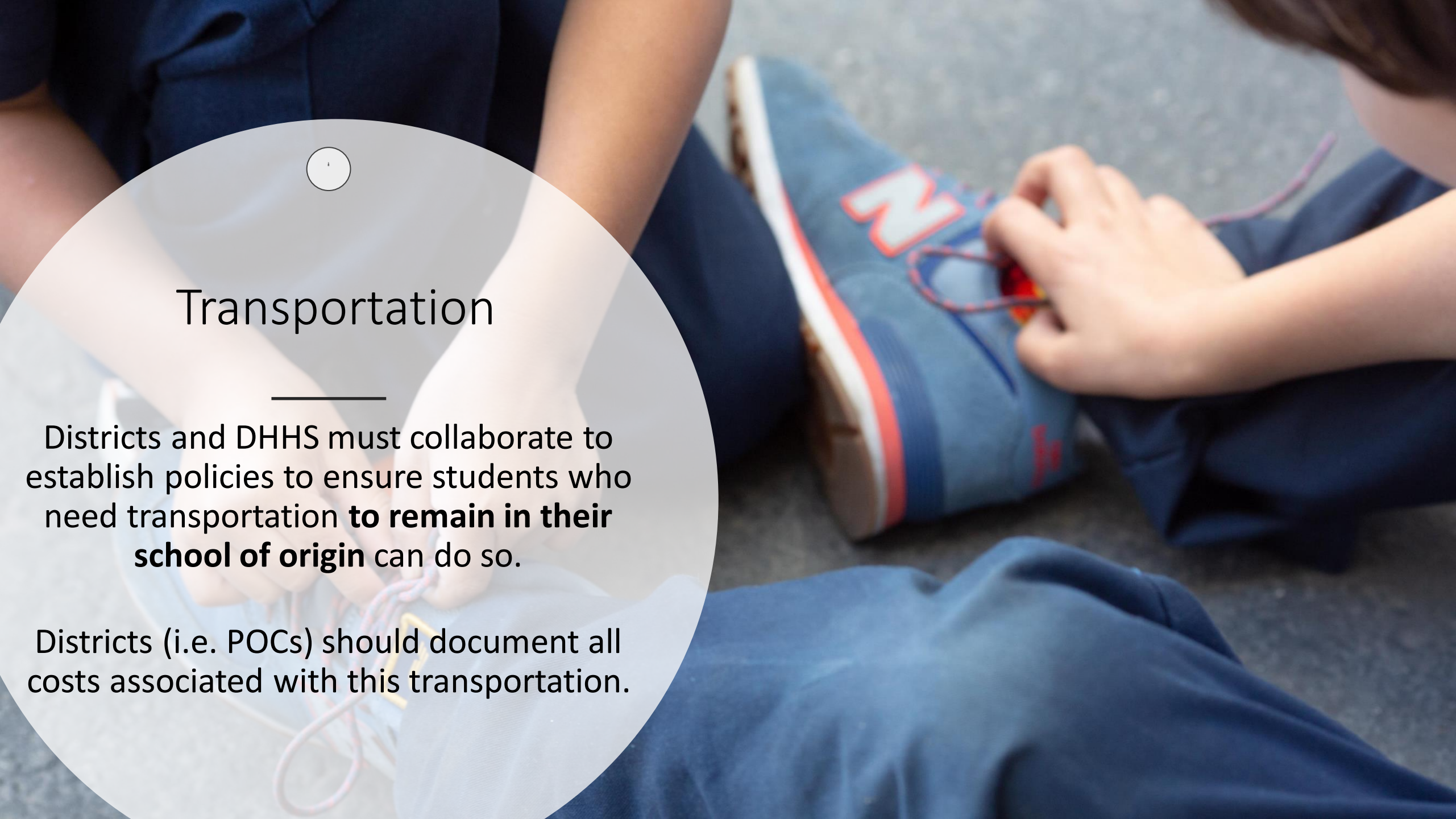
Is the school of origin in the best interest **for a limited duration of time** (e.g., until the end of the school year, the end of a testing or grading period, or the end of a particular grade)?



Other Considerations (cont'd)

Transportation costs should **NOT** be a factor in determining the best interest.





Transportation

Districts and DHHS must collaborate to establish policies to ensure students who need transportation **to remain in their school of origin** can do so.

Districts (i.e. POCs) should document all costs associated with this transportation.

DOE-DHHS
Transportation
MOU
(est. 2019)

Follow these steps to determine how transportation will be provided:

1. If the student has an IEP with transportation service → DOE reimburses (DOE contact – lori.freeman@maine.gov)
2. If the student does NOT have an IEP, check with CPS Caseworker or Supervisor to see if they can assist with transportation
3. If CPS cannot assist with transportation, any additional transportation costs will be split 50/50 between school districts

Transportation Strategies

- Liaise with school and transportation staff and shelter workers.
- Assess access to school **buses** (including special education).
- Coordinate formal/informal **agreements** with districts where students covered under McKinney-Vento cross district lines.
- Access **public transit**, including supporting parents to travel with younger children.
- Consider approved **carpools, van** or **taxi** services, **Uber**, etc.
- Provide **vouchers** for families with access to cars.
- Pursue **inter-agency** solutions.



Immediate Enrollment

If BID supports attending school locally (where placed in foster care), districts **must enroll immediately, with or without documentation**, including academic, health, discipline and/or special education records.

DHHS provides notice to school district, which includes emergency contact, residence, CPS Caseworker, record release, transportation needs, etc.





School Selection Disputes

After the BID, **DHHS has the authority to make final decisions** about the best interest, but a **school district may dispute**.

During the dispute resolution process, **the student must attend the school selected by DHHS**. Transportation must be provided if needed.



Role of School District Foster Care POC

- Ensure that **students in foster care** are...
 - **identified** and **supported** through coordination between School Districts and OCFS.
 - are **enrolled** in and regularly attending school.

School District Foster Care POC, cont'd:

- **Participate** in making and documenting **BIDs** with OCFS representatives.
- **Ensure school enrollment** of students and timely transfer of records.
- **Develop procedures** for coordinating cost-effective **transportation**.
- **Facilitate professional development** for district staff.



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Maine Schools ▾

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 Students & Families

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School in Maine

School & Student Supports

School Enrollment & Operations

Nutrition

Transportation

Facilities & Construction

Maine School Safety Center

Structure and Governance

Regionalized Programs and Services

School and
Student
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<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/safeschools>

Home → Maine Schools → School & Student Supports (O3S) → School & Student Supports (O3S)

School & Student Supports (O3S)

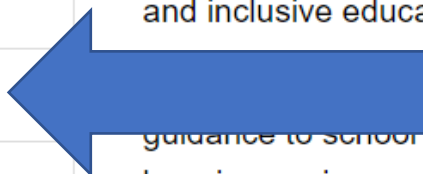
About Us

The Office of School and Student Supports (O3S) strives to ensure that Maine schools are inclusive, healthy, safe, and supportive communities where every student thrives. O3S endeavors to coordinate resources and programs that promote equitable, psycho-socially, physically, and environmentally healthy school communities for all.

Each O3S team provides information and guidance to parents, administrators, educators, legislators, and other stakeholders within their focus areas:

The Climate, Culture, Resilience Team provides trauma-informed resources to develop safe and inclusive educational communities.

The School Health Team provides professional development, resources, and guidance to school health professionals (or school personnel) resulting in healthy and safe learning environments, physically literate and health literate students, and access to health care resources and services.



Where We Are

Mailing Address:

Office of School and Student Supports
Maine Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0023

Physical Address:

Burton M. Cross Building, 5th floor
111 Sewall Street
Augusta, Maine 04333

[Home](#) → [Resources for Highly Mobile Students](#) → Resources for Highly Mobile Students

Resources for Highly Mobile Students

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/highmobility>

Attendance & Dropout Prevention

Community Schools

Counseling & Social Services

Employee and Student Wellness

Family Engagement and Cultural Responsiveness

Highly Mobile Students

Migrant Education

Foster Care



Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care in Maine

▼ Overview

▼ Laws

Who can I contact?

DHHS has Regional Points of Contact that can be located [here](#). Each school district has a District Point of Contact that can be found [here](#). For general questions, contact Staci Warren, Statewide Foster Care Point of Contact at the DOE.

Contact

[Foster Care Points of Contact](#)

If you have any questions [click here!](#)

Resources

- [Foster Care Presentation](#) (PPT, 893KB)
- [Joint Maine DOE/DHHS Webinar](#) (35 mins)
- [Joint Guidance Maine DOE/DHHS & Child Welfare District Map](#) (PDF, 1.04MB) +
- [Foster Care Points of Contact by school district](#)
- [DHHS Points of Contact for Education](#)



Contact Search

From Maine Department of Education

Dashboard

Primary Contacts

Select Primary Contact Type

Foster Care Point of Contact ▼

Search

Neo.maine.gov



Link to required quiz for 2022- 2023

Click [here](#) to complete the Point of Contact Quiz to check comprehension (required for all district POCs annually) – a certificate will be sent to you after completion

Or copy and paste this link to the quiz:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=q6g_QX0gYkubzeoajy-GTh3ciwadsupAk4Irx08pO-1UMEY2NIVRMTY1UDVBMkIVWIZGNzBHVzZDTS4u

Contact

Julie A. Smyth, Director O3S
State Foster Care Point of Contact

Julie.a.smyth@maine.gov

Staci H. Warren, Administrative Asst.

staci.h.warren@maine.gov

