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***

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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](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11239).

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/](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)

**DESE:** Outlines next steps when you disagree with the BID outcome
- [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/](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](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11239)

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