

School of Origin Best Interest Determination Procedures & Worksheet

Before recommending that a foster youth move from their school of origin, the district must provide a written explanation of why a school change is in the youth's best interests, and obtain a written waiver from the ERH. The following steps guide a determination of whether a youth should remain in the school of origin or should transfer to a new school, and what plans are needed to ensure continuous school enrollment.

Student Name: _____ Current Grade: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

STEP 1: Meeting Participants

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Education Rights Holder(s) ("ERH") | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Mandatory Participant | | | |
| Student | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Caregiver(s), if different than ERH | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Social Worker/Probation Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Minor's Attorney/Public Defender | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Foster Youth Counselor/Liaison | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Academic Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| School Administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present? | Name: _____ |

STEP 2: Identify School Options

Option 1: School student attended before home placement change, or current school if student has not yet moved:

_____.

Option 2: School of residence after home placement change: _____.

Option 3: School attended when student first entered foster care/probation system: _____.

Option 4: Any other school(s) attended within the last 15 months where the student has a connection:

_____.

Option 5: Any school(s) to which the student would have matriculated (elementary to middle or middle to high school) from options 1-4 above, using district feeder patterns: _____.

STEP 3: Complete Best Interest Analysis By Considering Pros And Cons Of School Of Origin Options

Discuss the pros and cons of each school using the chart below. First, write in the name of each school of origin option (identified in Step 2 above) into the top row. **School Option 1, the student’s current school (or the school the student attended before the home placement change), is shaded grey to remind meeting participants that it is strongly favored**, especially if the student has experienced significant school instability in the past and/or has struggled to recover after past school changes. Then, discuss with the team which school or schools best answer each question and place an “X” in the appropriate box(es).

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Name of School					
Student Preference What school(s) does the student want to attend?					
Length of Attendance Which school(s) has the student attended long enough to develop relationships, trust, and a feeling of belonging?					
Which school(s) would the student like more time at to continue their development of positive relationships and/or academic progress?					
Academic Strengths Which school(s) has the strongest academic program and/or college going culture to support the needs of the student?					
If the student has academic challenges, which school(s) has a robust intervention program to support the needs of the student?					
Which school(s) has an academic emphasis or program of interest to the student?					
Special Education If the student has an IEP, which school(s) can provide the most appropriate program?					
English Learner If the student is an English learner, which school(s) can best support the student’s language development needs?					
Social/Emotional At which school(s) has the student developed positive relationships with peers and/or teachers?					
If the student has experienced difficulties with peers or staff, which school(s) is free of those negative experiences?					

Which school(s) has positive behavioral programs, restorative justice, or other schoolwide social-emotional interventions in place?					
If the student would benefit from it, which school(s) provides access to school-based counseling?					
Timing of Transfer Which school will prevent a mid-semester school change? (Check only the school where the student is currently attending)					
Consistency of Curriculum Which school(s) uses the same curriculum or set of standards as the most recent school?					
Which school(s) follow the same graduation requirements as the most recent school?					
Anticipated Length of Placement If the student is in (or about to be placed in) a permanent living situation (e.g., with a relative or someone seeking legal guardianship or adoption of the student), which school(s) would also work for that home placement?					
Extracurricular Activities Which school(s) will enable the student to be connected to extracurricular activities?					
School Discipline At which school(s) does the student have positive behaviors (free or minimal discipline history)?					
Which school(s) has identified positive ways to address future disciplinary issues? ¹					
Which school(s) are within 15 miles of the new placement? ²					
What is the school schedule? (Start time / End time)	____ / ____	____ / ____	____ / ____	____ / ____	____ / ____

Impact of Distance on Education

How long is the student willing to spend in transit each day? ____ minutes
 How early is the student willing to leave for school? ____ AM
 How late is the student willing to get home from school? ____ PM

STEP 4: Foster Youth Liaison Recommendation

The youth's AB 490 Education Liaison: ___ recommends or ___ does not recommend that the youth remain in their school of origin for the following reasons:

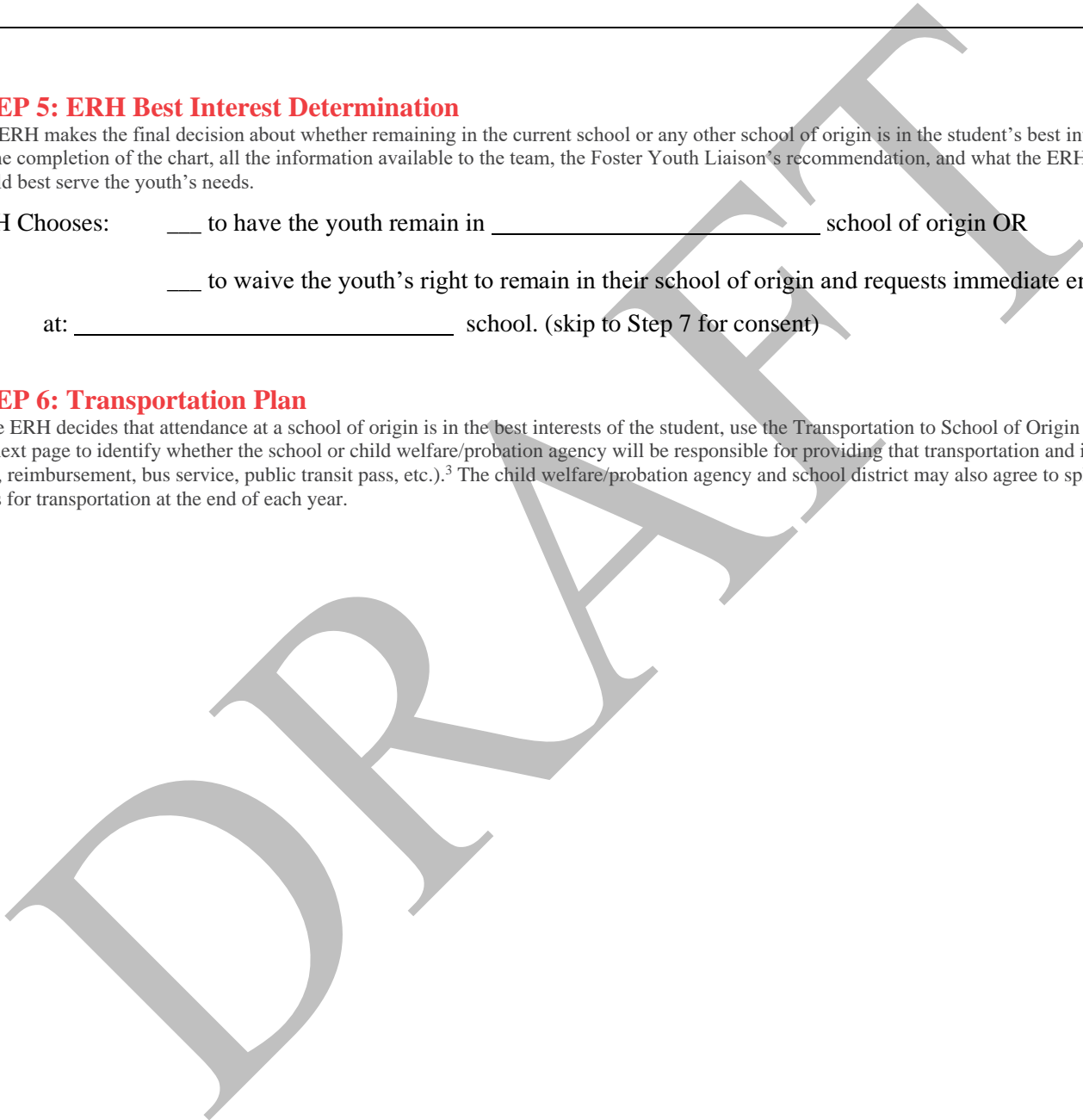
STEP 5: ERH Best Interest Determination

The ERH makes the final decision about whether remaining in the current school or any other school of origin is in the student's best interest, based on the completion of the chart, all the information available to the team, the Foster Youth Liaison's recommendation, and what the ERH believes would best serve the youth's needs.

ERH Chooses: ___ to have the youth remain in _____ school of origin OR
___ to waive the youth's right to remain in their school of origin and requests immediate enrollment
at: _____ school. (skip to Step 7 for consent)

STEP 6: Transportation Plan

If the ERH decides that attendance at a school of origin is in the best interests of the student, use the Transportation to School of Origin Flowchart on the next page to identify whether the school or child welfare/probation agency will be responsible for providing that transportation and in what form (e.g., reimbursement, bus service, public transit pass, etc.).³ The child welfare/probation agency and school district may also agree to split certain costs for transportation at the end of each year.



Summary of Transportation Plan

Transportation to the school of origin will be provided by:

Group Home / STRTP.

Child Welfare or Probation Agency in the form of:

Reimbursement to an individual:

Individual's name:

Relationship to student:

Agency providing reimbursement:

Public transportation to be facilitated by the child welfare or probation agency:

The route identified is:

The School of Origin school district in the form of:

Bus or other vehicle

Reimbursement to an individual:

Individual's name:

Relationship to student:

Public transportation to be facilitated by the school district:

The route identified is:

Other (including shared responsibility with nearby district).

Describe:

.

STEP 7: Consent

ERH Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

School Administrator: _____

School of Origin Recommendation Letter

Date: _____

TO: Education Rights Holder:
Address:

RE: Name of Student: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Dear Education Rights Holder,

We recently attempted to contact you regarding _____ because the student moved to a new home placement.

This student no longer lives within the boundaries of _____, which was the school the student was attending prior to moving. However, as a foster/probation youth, the student has a right to continue attending this school if you believe it is in the student's best interest. Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853, 48853.5.

As the student's education rights holder, you have the responsibility to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in their school of origin or if they should transfer to the new local public school. Factors you may wish to consider include: (1) the distance between the student's new home and the school they were attending; (2) the quality of the previous school and the new local public school; and (3) the timing of the transfer (beginning of the semester or mid-semester).

At this time, this student is currently enrolled in:

The school the student was attending before changing home placements: _____.

The new local public school based on their new home address, pending your decision regarding whether the student should return to their previous school: _____.

The youth's AB 490 Education Liaison: recommends or does not recommend that the youth remain in their school of origin for the following reasons:

Please contact us immediately so we may discuss the pros and cons of transferring schools and whether you think it is in the student's best interest to continue attending the same school they were attending before moving to their current home.

Thank you,