

April 28, 2017

New resources supporting educational needs of students in foster care now available

AUSTIN – Commissioner of Education Mike Morath announced today that the Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission have collaborated to develop a new guide entitled Information Sharing Between Child Welfare and Schools: Maintaining Privacy and Promoting Educational Success.

The guide addresses confidentiality requirements in both the child welfare and education systems. It clarifies how teachers, caseworkers, caregivers, advocates and others can share and receive information about children and youth in foster care while maintaining and respecting privacy.

“Federal and state laws encourage collaboration between education and child welfare,” said Commissioner Morath. “To accomplish these goals, everyone needs a clear understanding about confidentiality and privacy, as well as when and how information is appropriately shared.”

In addition, a new Transition Planning Guide for Students in Foster Care Receiving Special Education Services is now available. The child welfare and education systems are charged with helping older youth transition to adulthood. This is especially true for students with disabilities.

While each system has extensive transition planning policies and procedures, the processes often work in parallel, but not in coordination with each other. The new guide clarifies the similarities and differences in the transition planning processes in the child welfare and special education systems. The guide also includes best practices and recommendations for improved coordination between systems to better support students with disabilities in foster care during the transition to adulthood.

Development of these new tools represents the latest collaborative efforts between the Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission. The three state agencies have worked together for more than five years to create resources to help schools better meet the educational needs of students in foster care.

To review the available resources (including the two newly-created guides), visit the Texas Education Agency’s Foster Care & Student Success web page at <http://tea.texas.gov/FosterCareStudentSuccess/Resources/>.