



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

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Notice to Resource Families: Keeping Children in School of Origin: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Dear Resource Family,

It is important that you are aware of a new Federal law called "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)". As described in an ESSA fact sheet, on December 10, 2015, President Obama signed into law the ESSA, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Originally enacted in 1965 and last reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, ESSA's mission is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education." ESSA is the first major overhaul of federal education law in over a decade. For the first time, the ESSA now contains key protections for students in foster care to promote school stability and success.

With school approaching, it is important that you know how ESSA affects you and the children you serve. Here are the highlights:

- Ensure that foster youth and children remain in their school of origin (unless there is a clear reason it is not in the best interest of the child/youth). When children and youth are removed from their home, it is important for them to maintain in their regular school with their teachers and friends.
- If you have planned on registering your foster youth or child in school this semester that is not their home school, you must request a meeting with the assigned OCS representative and the Guardian Ad Litem to discuss whether it is in the child's best interest.
- If your foster youth/child attends a school that is out of your bus zone, there are other options that can be explored (Resource family transports and receives gas vouchers; People Mover bus passes for older youth; contracted bus; taxi cab).
- Prior to accepting placements into your foster home ask the placing worker the child's school of origin. If different from the school within the boundary of your home's location, please talk with the placing worker about transportation options so the child may remain in their school of origin.

Thank you for your cooperation, and for caring for foster children in Alaska!