

HB 1577 -- STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that specified criteria are implemented in every school district regarding the enrollment and educational success of foster care children.

If a foster care student transfers before or during the school year, the receiving school must initially honor placement of the student in educational courses and programs based on the student's previous enrollment or educational assessments from the sending school, provide comparable services to a foster care student with disabilities based on his or her current Individualized Education Program, and make reasonable accommodations and modifications to address the needs of incoming foster care students with disabilities, subject to an existing 504 or Title II Plan, to provide equal access to education. The receiving district may conduct subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placements.

A school may waive the prerequisites or other preconditions for placement in a course or program and must waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed at another school or provide reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted, the receiving school must provide an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that graduation may occur on time. If a foster care student who transfers at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the receiving school after all alternatives specified in the bill have been considered, the sending and receiving schools must ensure the student receives a diploma from the sending school if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending school.