

Implementation of Recommendations - Joint Task Force on the Education of Children and Youth in the Care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families

DATE: 1/12/2026

Recommendations (from the 2012 Task Force report)

1. Prioritize educational stability in placement decisions and clarify the child's right to remain in the "school of origin."
2. Improve cross-agency alignment of DCYF, RIDE/LEA, and other agency data systems, and build analytic capacity.
3. Improve student transitions and minimize enrollment delays.
4. Ease transfer of credits, transcripts, and performance-based evidence for secondary students so school changes don't jeopardize graduation.
5. Develop and implement solutions for appropriate sharing of student information (incl. sensitive info).
6. Find collaborative transportation solutions for DCYF-involved students.
7. (Preliminary) Consider revising statewide school funding to account for education of foster-care youth.
8. Increase coordination between Family Court, RIDE/districts, and DCYF to inform the Court of the child's educational best interest.
9. Improve supports for DCYF-involved students at risk/in need of special education and strengthen the Educational Advocate/Surrogate Parent program.
10. Ensure access to early learning programs for children in DCYF care and those receiving preventive services.

RIDE Implementation Status (as of January 9, 2026)

- **Family Court Coordination**
 - DCYF policy on BIDs explicitly includes the GAL and (if assigned) **Educational Advocate**; Family Court orders can assign DCYF to make education decisions and trigger **Educational Advocate** referrals through RIDE.
 - Case materials show practical use of **Educational Advocates** appointed via the Sherlock Center for students in DCYF care.
 - Currently, RIDE maintains funding for the Surrogate Parent/Educational Advocate Program. Long-term funding remains a concern.
 - Performance measures of the Surrogate Parent/Educational Advocate are reviewed quarterly in accordance with the Consent Decree (entered in the case of Office of the Child Advocate, et al. v. McWalters, et al., C.A. No. 82-0091P (D.R.I. 1982)) demonstrating consistent oversight of the program.
- **Educational Advocate / Surrogate Parent Program Strengthening**
 - The **Sherlock Center (RIC)** continues to run the statewide **Educational Surrogate Parent Program** for DCYF-involved students with disabilities; recent postings (2025) and a 2024 Board action classify new positions, indicating program continuity/expansion. The **OCA** sought transfer/realignment in FY 2026 hearings (demonstrates active oversight).
- **Cross-Agency Data Alignment (RICHIST↔SASID) & analytics**
 - RIDE has built data sharing capacity for students in foster care that is accessible to all schools in the state. This system is in the RIDE Data Portal behind a secure firewall to protect the confidentiality of the students and families. School principals may view a verified list of students in the care of DCYF (as provided to RIDE from DCYF) and may run

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various data reports on the student's status and performance. This is not viewable to the public due to confidentiality laws and regulations.

- **Credit/Records Transfer & Graduation Continuity**

- Immediate records transfer is supported by § 42-72.4-1 and DCYF policy (ID card + records).
- Statewide **diploma system** and strong **dual/concurrent enrollment** infrastructure (RIDE regs; PrepareRI funding) help students accumulate credit toward graduation across settings; however, a statewide **automated high-school credit portability** system (beyond existing district processes) has not yet been developed.
- All RI secondary regulation requirements are listed on a student's transcript which travels with the student if they change school districts in the state. Additionally, all dual and concurrent enrollment coursework is also listed on the student transcript. The awarding of college credit remains with the college through an articulation agreement with the LEA. If a student transfers, the transcript should follow. As such, high school transcript portability is provided for all students in the state including those in the care of DCYF.