

GUIDE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIALISTS: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH “PROMOTION IN DOUBT” STATUS

...WHAT TO DO, STEP BY STEP!

Fair Futures Middle School Specialists help combat the low graduation rates for students in foster care. One of the most critical things a Specialist can do is to support students with a PID status. There is still time to help them get promoted!

Please follow the best practice guide below with tips from Advocates For Children, foster care providers, the DOE, ACS, and the Center for Fair Futures.

Overall, you want to understand the drivers of the student's PID status by reviewing recent data and/or documents, having conversations with the student, and meeting with the student's Dream Team (see below). From there, help the student access any needed services to target whatever it is they are struggling with ... And for those students who are not attending school regularly, find out why this is the case (e.g., transportation) and support the student/foster parent.

If you need help getting started or have questions along the way, you can always sign up for a TA session! (See a full contact List on [page 5](#).)

STEP BY STEP TO PROMOTION

FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH PID STATUS:

Your Fair Futures Relationship Manager sent you a list of all your DOE students with a PID status. As this only contains DOE students, **make sure to reach out to any non-DOE schools** to obtain the student's PID status (e.g., charters, schools outside the DOE, etc.), and follow the steps below!

STEPS:

1: REACH OUT TO THE SCHOOL TO SCHEDULE A SCHOOL VISIT

This will take some time. As it's being scheduled, follow the other steps below.

☐ **Request a conference to address the student's PID status and discuss any needed services/ supports.**

Make sure to include everyone - the guidance counselor, teacher(s), parent and foster parent, someone from the special education team if the student has an IEP, etc. This helps to keep the school accountable because they know there are people who care about how the student is doing. It also ensures everyone is on the same page and ensures all parties are accountable.

While that gets scheduled, follow the steps below to prepare for the meeting (meeting guidance in [Step 6!](#)).

2: GATHER KEY DOCUMENTS & DATA FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH A PID STATUS!

Don't know how? Here's info on how to obtain the following documents:

☐ **Biweekly DOE attendance/data.**

ACS sends agencies (including all Fair Futures Education Specialists and Coaches) DOE attendance data every two weeks.

If you are not receiving this, please tell your Supervisor and reach out to Roberto.Romero@acs.nyc.gov to be put on the recipient list. These reports also contain important info on whether the student has an IEP, Promotion in Doubt (PID) status, is repeating a grade, or been suspended.

☐ **Report card.**

First check to see if someone else at your agency has the student's report card (Supervisor, Case Planner, Care Manager). If not, reach out to the student's school and request their most recent report card; the school will need you to send the [FERPA](#). Contact information for all DOE school Designated Liaisons can be found [here](#). If schools aren't being responsive, contact the DOE Foster Care Coordinator assigned to that school and ask them to intervene.

(For contact information, turn to [Page 5](#).)

☐ **IEP (if the student has one).**

The Monthly DOE Report includes a column labeled "IEP Flag" that indicates if a student has an IEP.

First check to see if someone else at your agency has the most recent IEP. If not, reach out to the student's school to request the most recent IEP (you will need to send the FERPA). If schools aren't being responsive, contact the DOE Foster Care Coordinator assigned to that school and ask them to intervene. *(For contact information, turn to [Page 5](#).)* As a last resort, you can email ACS (Anjella.LaBarca@acs.nyc.gov).

3: FOR EACH STUDENT WITH PID STATUS, LOOK AT THEIR ATTENDANCE AND GRADES;

This will help you decide what approach(es) and supports may be most effective!

☐ **Look at their attendance each month in the DOE attendance data**

- Refer to the column labeled “Days on Reg” for the **total number of school days in that time period**.
- The next column shows the **number of days the student attended**.
- The following shows the **number of days the student was absent**.
- The column labeled “407” are students who have or have had prior **cases red-flagged by the DOE for absences of 10 consecutive days without acceptable explanations**. If you see the number 2 in the column, this means that the student may have missed 20 days of school so far this school year! The “407” data is provided for the current and previous year so you can look for patterns of chronic absenteeism.

☐ **Does their PID status seem to be driven by attendance?**

If monthly attendance is consistently strong (90%+), the student may instead need [academic supports](#).

If the student does have low attendance, you want to understand the potential drivers:

Is it transportation-related? Contact the foster parent and Case Planner and find out what’s going on. If needed, call the school and request they submit the transportation form. If you encounter challenges, reach out to the DOE liaison for that school. *(For contact information, turn to [Page 5](#).)*

Look to see if there is any suspension history. There is a column in the DOE report that marks the days suspended called “Suspended Count.”

Is the student skipping school? If so, speak to the foster parent to see what is going on and try to meet with the student in-person, if possible. Try to find out what is going on in their lives/hearts/minds that may be preventing them from attending school, in a non-judgmental, compassionate way. *How can you support them with any of these struggles?*

☐ **Look at the student’s Course Grade history.**

Are they struggling in just 1-2 classes? Or all classes? Check out their report card(s) and observe any patterns to gather more info ... e.g., do they tend to struggle in Math? Were they doing well and now they aren’t (what could drive that)?

If they are attending school regularly but have low grades, this may indicate that they are not getting the services/accommodations they need and/or that they need a Tutor or other academic supports.

- If they are struggling in any class(es) and are open to exploring tutoring, ask your Supervisor if you can connect them to tutoring! The Center recommends New York Foundling or TierNYC; both provide quality, 1:1, trauma-informed tutoring!
- In addition to tutoring, there are other academic supports provided by the schools; see Step 6 below!

TIP: Use coaching approaches/language to sell the idea of a tutor.

TIP: New York Foundling has stipend incentives!

4: REVIEW THEIR IEP (IF THEY HAVE ONE); ARE THEY RECEIVING ALL THE SERVICES/ ACCOMMODATIONS IN IT?

If not, this could be a potential driver of their PID status. If you’re unsure how to find this out:

☐ **Ask your colleagues and/or the school when the student’s annual IEP meeting is; did it happen yet?**

(Reminder – the Middle School Specialist is supposed to attend their IEP meeting!) If you did not attend it, find out who from your agency did – ask your Supervisor and reach out to the Case Planner. *If the student was not receiving all services, you can help advocate for them!* If you need support, reach out to your Fair Futures Relationship Manager or AFC.

5: MAKE SURE TO SHARE DATA AND CONSULT WITH CASE PLANNING TEAM TO DISCUSS THE "STORY" BEHIND THE DATA.

What happens in the home impacts what happens in the schools!

6: NOW YOU ARE PREPARED FOR THE SCHOOL MEETING!

It may be helpful to also review the Fair Futures resource, "[Conducting an Effective School Visit](#)" Guide for key tips before the meeting.

- ☐ **In the meeting, try to find out from the teacher(s) specifics about what the student is struggling with,** so those areas can be targeted.
- ☐ **Ask schools to provide Academic Intervention Services (AIS).**
Students who are Promotion-in-Doubt are entitled to additional services, and schools get money specifically to provide these supports.
- ☐ **If the student has an IEP, make sure to ask about the COVID Compensatory Services available to students** – see more info [here](#).
- ☐ **If the child has visits with the parent, particularly overnight or weekend,** these could be opportunities for the parent to assist with homework or studying.

7: IF STUDENT IS NOT PROMOTED, HELP ENSURE THEY ATTEND SUMMER SCHOOL.

Decisions about summer school aren't made typically until the second week of June, so there is very little time to ensure the student enrolls in and attends summer school! ... The parent will get a letter; ACS usually sends out a list shortly thereafter. You should be maintaining communication with the youth's school counselor throughout the process to be informed as soon as possible.

Once enrolled:

- ☐ **Make sure the student has transportation and check-in to ensure they are attending.**
- ☐ **Provide emotional and persistence support.**

KEY EDUCATION CONTACTS

Advocates For Children (AFC) & The Center For Fair Futures (for all TA needs):

Erika Palmer (AFC) | EPalmer@advocatesforchildren.org

Holly Smeltzer (VP of Implementation, Center for Fair Futures) | holly.smeltzer@fairfuturesny.org

Donald Duggan (Director of Implementation, Center for Fair Futures) | donald.duggan@fairfuturesny.org

Stephanie Dueño (Director of Implementation, Center for Fair Futures) | stephanie.dueno@fairfuturesny.org

ACS Education Team

Anjella LaBarca | Anjella.LaBarca@acs.nyc.gov

Roberto Romero (DOE info) | Roberto.Romero@acs.nyc.gov

Jenel Owens-Gordon | Jenel.Owens-Gordon@acs.nyc.gov

Shebana Fakira | Shebana.Fakira@acs.nyc.gov

Chandrawatie Kissoon | Chandrawatie.Kissoon@acs.nyc.gov

Department of Education (DOE)

All DOE Guidance Counselors | [Click here for a list of All DOE Designated Liaisons](#)

DOE Students in Foster Care Inbox | fostercareinfo@schools.nyc.gov

Rebekha Askew-Morris (DOE Dir. of Clinical Support & Spec. Populations) | RAskew2@schools.nyc.gov

DOE Foster Care Team [Webpage](#)

DOE Foster Care Team by District

Go to [this website](#), and scroll to the “Connect with a Foster Care Coordinator” section; select the Borough of the student to see the contact info of the Foster Care Coordinator assigned to each district.

DOE Pupil Transportation

Busing Exceptions | BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov

Shloime Weinstein | Sweinstein9@schools.nyc.gov

Daniella Inga | Dinga2@schools.nyc.gov