

The district believes that traditional, in-person school attendance leads to the greatest learning opportunities for students. Students who are present in school and engaged active learners take greater ownership over their educational outcomes. For this reason, it is the priority of the district to foster regular student attendance throughout the school year and reduce barriers to regular attendance for students in the district.

**Attendance Definitions:**

**“Chronic Absenteeism”** is missing 10% of the school days or hours in a grading period.

**“School Engagement Meeting”** is a meeting of the student, parent, and a school official to identify barriers to attendance and interventions to develop an Absenteeism Prevention Plan to improve student attendance. This meeting takes place when a student is missing 15% of the school days or hours in a grading period.

**“Absenteeism Prevention Plan”** is plan put into place during the School Engagement Meeting to assign responsibilities to the student, parent, and the school official to improve the student’s attendance.

**“Truancy”** is missing 20% of the school days or hours in a grading period. Truancy is filed with the county attorney when a parent does not attend the School Engagement Meeting, do not enter into an Absenteeism Prevention Plan, or violate the terms of the Absenteeism Prevention Plan.

**Exemptions to be considered for Truancy:**

Students not attending the minimum days or hours must be exempted by this policy as listed below or, referred to the county attorney:

- has completed the requirements for graduation in an accredited school or has obtained a high school equivalency diploma;
- is attending religious services or receiving religious instruction;
- is unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reasons;
- has an individualized education program that affects the child’s attendance;
- has a plan under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. 794, that affects the child’s attendance;
- is attending an approved or probationally approved private college preparatory school;
- is attending an accredited nonpublic school;
- is excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge;
- is receiving independent private instruction; or
- is receiving competent private instruction.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of a child to provide evidence of the child's mental and physical inability to attend school or of the child's qualifications for one of the exceptions listed above.

### **Legal Requirements (Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy Steps):**

1. When a student has 5 absences in the grading period (semester) the school official will notify the student and the student's parent/guardian or legal or actual custodian via email or mail that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies associated with additional absences.
2. When a student has 10 absences in the grading period (semester) they are considered chronically absent. The school official will send notice by mail or e-mail to the county attorney where the district's central office is located. The school official will also notify the student, or if a minor, the student's parent/guardian or legal or actual custodian via certified mail that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies associated with additional absences.
3. When a student has 15 absences in the grading period (semester) the school official will schedule a School Engagement Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to identify barriers to attendance and interventions, and to create and sign an Absenteeism Prevention Plan to improve student attendance. The student, parent/guardian or legal or actual custodian, and a school official must participate in the School Engagement Meeting.
4. The Absenteeism Prevention Plan will identify the causes of the student's absences and the future responsibilities of each participant. The school official will contact the student and student's parent/guardian at least once per week for the remainder of the school year to monitor the performance of the student and the student's parent/guardian under the plan. If the student and student's parent/guardian do not attend the meeting, do not enter into a plan, or violate the terms of the plan, the school official will notify the county attorney.
5. When a student has 20 absences in the grading period (semester) the school official will file truancy with the county attorney. The school official will send notice by mail or e-mail to the county attorney where the district's central office is located. The school official will also notify the student, or if a minor, the student's parent/guardian or legal or actual custodian via certified mail that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies associated with additional absences.

### **Academic and Disciplinary Requirements:**

Students are required to attend school a minimum of 90% of the days or hours offered in the school calendar unless their absences have been excused by the principal for illness (absences of five or more consecutive days due to illness may require a doctor's note), family emergencies, doctor or dental appointment, recognized religious observances and school sponsored or approved activities. Reasonable excuses may also include family trips or vacations approved by the building principal if the student's work is finished prior to the trip or vacation.

Absences that do not fall within the categories listed above will be considered unexcused unless approved by the principal. Students who are absent without a reasonable excuse, as determined by the principal, may be assigned to detention, Saturday school, in-school suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary sanctions.

Students are subject to disciplinary action for truancy including suspension and expulsion. It is within the discretion of the principal to determine, in light of the circumstances, whether a student may make up work missed because of truancy. Students receiving special education

services will not be assigned to in-school consequences unless the goals and objectives of the student's Individualized Education Program are capable of being met.

Parents are expected to telephone the school office to report a student's absence prior to 9am on the day of the absence.

Adopted: 12/18/13

Reviewed and Amended: 6/8/16; 2/28/22; 8/26/24