

## **Pupil Attendance Policy (SSDA 19)**

### **Intent of Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and promote student attendance based on the active involvement of parents, students, teachers, administrators, other personnel, and community members.

### **Attendance Program Goals:**

The District will:

1. Notify parents of student absences, including notifying parents, when possible, on the day of each absence.
2. Increase parent and student awareness of the importance of regular student attendance through parent-teacher meetings and/or district-wide or school-based workshops.
3. Audit student attendance through the appointment of an Attendance Supervisor to track and monitor daily student attendance.
4. Provide staff development for certified and classified personnel, parents, and guardians, regarding the importance of daily student attendance in increasing student promotion and graduation rates and reducing truancy rates, chronic absenteeism rates, and dropout rates.
5. Provide alternative learning programs designed to respond to the different way students learn, such as independent study.
6. Promote joint efforts between law enforcement and schools. These efforts can include, but are not limited to, creating school-level attendance review teams to analyze the attendance patterns of students at each school, and working with law enforcement to return truant students to school.

### **Attendance Supervision**

1. The District will appoint a district employee to serve as an Attendance Supervisor.
2. The District will develop a district-wide attendance program to track and monitor student attendance.
3. The District will prescribe the duties of the Attendance Supervisor, which will include managing the district-wide attendance program. The Attendance Supervisor will also provide various support programs and services, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Promoting activities that increase student connectedness to the school, such as tutoring, mentoring, the arts, service learning, or athletics.
  - b. Recognizing students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate a significant improvement in attendance.
  - c. Providing referrals to a school nurse, counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and other student support personnel for case management and counseling.
  - d. Collaborating with child welfare services, law enforcement, courts, public health care agencies, government agencies, or medical, mental health, and oral health care providers to receive necessary services.
  - e. Collaborating with school study teams, guidance teams, school attendance review teams, or other intervention-related teams to assess the attendance or behavior problem in partnership with the student and their parents, guardians, or caregivers.
  - f. In schools with significantly higher rates of chronic absenteeism, identifying barriers to attendance that may require schoolwide strategies rather than case management.
4. The Attendance Supervisor will implement procedures to improve attendance rates and graduation rates and reduce truancy rates, chronic absenteeism, and dropout rates. These procedures will include, but are not limited to:
- a. Raising the awareness of school personnel, parents, guardians, caregivers, community partners, and local businesses of the effects of chronic absenteeism and truancy and other challenges associated with poor attendance, through workshops and one-one-one meetings.
  - b. Identifying and responding to grade level or student subgroup patterns of chronic absenteeism or truancy.
  - c. Identifying and addressing factors contributing to chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy, including suspension and expulsion.
  - d. Ensuring that students with attendance problems are identified as early as possible to provide applicable support services and interventions.
  - e. Evaluating the effectiveness of strategies implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism rates and truancy rates.

**Limiting Excused Absences & Eliminating Unexcused Absences**

1. The District will authorize each student to have 3 excused absences per academic school year.
2. The District will authorize each student to have 3 instances of excused tardiness per academic school year. An excused tardy occurs when the student is tardy or absent for no more than thirty (30) minutes.
3. Each student who is absent for three (3) full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than a thirty (30) minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is deemed a truant and may be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB), or to the probation department, for truancy or chronic absenteeism.
4. The District will ensure that, to the extent possible, the District's attendance program limits absences to those that are excused under current law.
5. The District will excuse a student from school when the absence is:
  - a. Due to the student's illness.
  - b. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
  - c. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
  - d. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the student's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the student's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the student as to be considered the student's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) days per incident.
  - e. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent.
  - f. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, attendance or an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student's religion, attendance at religious retreats not to exceed one (1) day per semester, or attendance at an employment conference.
  - g. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the student's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the District.

- h. For the purpose of attending the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
  - i. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.
  - j. For the purpose of a middle school or high school pupil engaging in a civic or political event, provided that the student notifies the District ahead of the absence and so long as the absence is not more than one (1) day, unless permitted otherwise by the District.
  - k. For the purpose of accessing services from a victim services organization or agency, grief support services, or to participate in safety planning or take other actions regarding the safety of a student in response to the death of either a member of the student's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the student's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the student as to be considered the student's immediate family, provided the absence does not exceed three (3) days per incident, unless permitted otherwise by the District.
6. In addition to the excused absences listed above, the District will excuse a student from school in the following circumstances:
  - a. A student who holds a work permit to work in the entertainment or allied industries will be excused for not more than five (5) consecutive days, for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year.
  - b. In order to participate in a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public school student audience for a maximum of five (5) days per school year, provided the student's parent or guardian provides a written notice to the District explaining the reason for the student's absence.
  - c. A student absent under these circumstances will be permitted to complete assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion, will be given full credit therefore.
  - d. The teacher of any class from which a student is absent shall determine what assignments the student shall make up and in what time period the student shall complete those assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence.
7. The District will have discretion to require written verification from the student's physician, medical professional, or any other individual the District deems appropriate, when the student's absences for medical reasons appear excessive.

8. The District has the discretion to require written prior notice from student's parent, guardian, or caregiver for excused absences, when the District deems such written prior notice is necessary.
9. A student eighteen (18) years old or older, or an emancipated student, may provide their own excuses for absences from school. The District has the discretion to require written verification of the absence when necessary.
10. The District, or school administrator, has the discretion to include other reasons for excusing student absences based on the specific facts and circumstances of the individual student.

### **Procedures to Address Truancy**

1. The District will monitor "chronic absenteeism" for various student subgroups and grade levels. "Chronic absenteeism" means a student who is absent on ten (10) percent or more of the schooldays in the school year when the total number of days a student is absent is divided by the total number of days the student is enrolled.
2. The Attendance Supervisor will refer students that are habitually truant, habitually insubordinate, or have irregular attendance, to critical support services to help such students succeed academically.
3. The Attendance Supervisor will conduct timely and unbiased investigations of all school attendance complaints or referrals.
4. The District will refer specified students to a SARB, or to the probation department, if the probation department has elected to receive these referrals, in cases where the student has engaged in persistent, irregular attendance or habitual truancy.
  - a. The Attendance Supervisor will notify the student and the parents or guardians of the student, in writing, of the name and address of the SARB or probation department to which the matter has been referred, and the reason for the referral.
5. A student's parent or guardian may contact the Attendance Supervisor in writing to challenge the content of the student's record as it relates to school attendance.
6. The Supervisor of Attendance will report the severance, expulsion, exclusion, exemption, transfer, or suspension beyond ten (10) school days, of any child who is an individual with exceptional needs, or who is a qualified handicapped person, to the county superintendent of schools.
7. The Attendance Supervisor will:
  - a. Coordinate truancy-prevention and chronic absenteeism-prevention strategies.

- b. Assist District staff to develop school site attendance plans.
- c. Maintain an inventory of community resources, including, but not limited to, alternative educational programs.
- d. Facilitate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs that are school-site specific.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

The District will support the development of early warning systems to identify and support students who are at risk of academic failure or dropping out of school:.

1. The District will establish a data system that collects and analyzes data regarding truancy, chronic absenteeism, graduate rate data, and dropout data, by school site, grade level, and any other subgroup the District deems necessary.
2. The District will use the data to provide periodic student reports to principals, teachers, and parents, in a manner that enables such individuals to timely identify and support students who are at risk of academic failure or dropping out.
3. The District will use the data to inform decisions regarding behavior strategies to reduce truancy, chronic absenteeism and failure of dropping out.