

# Model Local Board Attendance Policy

[REVISED 9/2025]

## Section I: Value Statement

The Board believes that **[local BOE should develop a value statement regarding attendance, the following are examples]**

- **Example 1:** Students who attend school regularly are more likely to read on grade level, graduate ready for postsecondary learning and workforce opportunities, and contribute to civic life. It is the policy of the district to support removing barriers to full participation in learning and reduce chronic absence.
- **Example 2:** Attendance and engagement are key to success in school. Students who attend school regularly have a greater opportunity to develop well academically and socially. Research shows that Ohio students who are never chronically absent are much more likely to read and perform on grade level and graduate on time. It is the policy of the district to support removing barriers to full participation in learning.

## Section II: Definition of Terms

The Board has adopted the following terms and definitions that will be consistently utilized in our attendance-related work and reporting.

**Compulsory school age:** A child between 6 and 18 years of age is "of compulsory school age" and must attend school each day. A child under 6 years of age who has been enrolled in kindergarten also shall be considered "of compulsory school age."

**Average Daily Attendance (ADA):** A schoolwide measurement that shows the total hours **all** students attended school divided by the total hours **all** students could have attended the school year. It is an indicator of how many students typically show up each day. Average Daily Attendance tends to mask chronic absence and can make it difficult to see when a school or district has an attendance issue.

**Chronic Absence:** Missing at least 10% of instructional time for *any reason* in the school year. Student absences from school, whether excused, medically excused, unexcused, or out-of-school suspensions, take away from instructional time and have an adverse effect on student learning.

**Excused Absence:** The Board acknowledges there are times when a student simply cannot be at school. The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

1. Illness of the child, which may require a written physician's statement
2. Illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child
3. Quarantine in the home
4. Death of a relative
5. Medical, behavioral, or dental appointment. Coming to school before and/or after the appointment is recommended
6. Observance of religious holidays, when outside "Religious Expression" below
7. Pre-enlistment reporting to military enlistment processing station, unless used to help fulfill graduation requirements and will be counted as "present" for school
8. Absences due to a child's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to the child's foster care status
9. Absences due to a student experiencing homelessness, defined as a student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
10. Children of military families. Absences due to deployment activities of a parent, legal guardian, or custodian
11. Emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the superintendent of schools constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school
12. **[Local board can add additional reasons that may be applicable to the families enrolled in the district or school]**

The parent, legal guardian, or custodian must provide an explanation for the absence, which shall be recorded by the approving authority of the school and shall include the date and time of the absence according to local policy.

**Religious Expression:** A student may have up to three days excused for religious expression. To receive these days, the building principal must receive written notice from the student's parent or guardian within 14 days of the beginning of the school year or within 14 days of the student's enrollment date. A student absent in this way may still participate in after-school activities. The student will also receive reasonable accommodations for any academic requirement or testing missed.

A non-exhaustive list of major religious holidays, festivals, and religious observations is available on the district's website.

**Postsecondary Visitation:** Students are encouraged to explore postsecondary options (such as technical college or university), and sometimes this must happen during the school day. Parents and guardians must coordinate with their child's building administrator to receive approval and discuss accommodations before each visit. With building approval, each student will be marked as "present" for school for up to three days each school year.

**Extracurricular Activities:** In-state events sponsored by the district may be considered instructional opportunities for students. The superintendent or designee may determine

under what conditions these opportunities allow for a participating student to be marked as “present” for school.

**Habitual Truancy:** Any student who is absent without legitimate excuse from the public school the child is supposed to attend for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in one school year, unless the student’s district or school determines the student and student’s family are making satisfactory progress in improving the student’s attendance at school. However, if the student and the student’s family cease to continue making progress in improving the student’s attendance, a complaint in the juvenile court shall be filed.

**Out-of-School Suspension:** A disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from their usual educational setting. This is different from in-school suspension, which may include an alternative learning opportunity for a student in a different setting and still may be counted as present.

Truancy shall not be the sole reason for a student’s suspension or expulsion.

## **Section III: An Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports as Part of an Attendance Strategy**

The Board maintains that students must be present and engaged to learn, and attendance is a critical factor for academic success. The Board is committed to a problem-solving approach to improving attendance and uses legal action as a last resort. When absences are the result of community and school challenges, a punitive approach is not likely to be effective and can undermine partnering with students and families to identify and address the underlying reasons for absence.

Instead, the Board endorses an integrated multi-tiered system of supports that is inclusive of universal prevention and early intervention before students become chronically absent. A continuum of supports will be in place with different types of evidence-informed instruction and interventions to meet the diverse needs of students and address the range of barriers that prevent students from participating and engaging in learning. More intensive supports are provided for students with greater numbers of absences, along with resources to help students and their families address the root causes of the absences. The district shall have teams work with students at risk of becoming chronically absent and their families to improve the students’ attendance at school. The Board encourages the superintendent to integrate the district’s attendance improvement strategy within existing initiatives and teams whenever possible.

These components will inform the district’s use of an integrated multi-tiered system of supports:

**Universal Screening:** District and building teams will regularly review attendance data alongside other student data using an early warning system. This proactive, systematic process helps identify areas of need early on, allowing for timely interventions.

**Data-Based Decision-Making:** Collecting, analyzing, and using various forms of data to inform student needs and allocate resources. This approach ensures that decisions are grounded in evidence and tailored to the specific needs of students.

**Continuum of Supports:** Organizing evidence-based academic and non-academic instruction and supports across three tiers:

- Core: Universal attendance messaging and engagement practices provided to all students and families to establish the expectation of daily attendance.
- Targeted: Early intervention for students who miss 5% - 19% of instructional time. The Board requires schools to begin communication and supportive outreach as soon as absence patterns indicate a concern which can be missing just 2-3 days per month.
- Intensive: Individualized supports provided to students missing 20% or more of instructional time.

This structure allows for a range of interventions to address the diverse needs of students and prevent chronic absenteeism before it affects achievement.

**Progress Monitoring:** Ongoing and frequent collection of data to assess student performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and supports. This continuous feedback loop helps in adjusting strategies to better support students and improve attendance.

**Team-Based Problem Solving:** A collaborative, responsive, and systematic process for understanding and addressing complex problems impacting students. This approach involves personalized outreach to students and families, intentional engagement strategies, and ongoing progress monitoring.

**Shared Leadership:** A collaborative approach to providing strong, ongoing leadership for implementing an integrated multi-tiered system of supports, including infrastructure, professional development, and monitoring. This ensures that staff have the skills and support to create strong foundations for learning. The district believes that all adults have an opportunity and responsibility to support attendance, and the district will provide regular and embedded professional development opportunities to support this understanding and drive action.

**Professional Capacity:** Ensuring staff members are knowledgeable, organized, and equipped to deliver effective instruction using an integrated multi-tiered system of supports. The district will continually review and evaluate practices and skills to ensure they align with attendance improvement for all students.

**Communication and Collaboration:** Essential processes to promote and support engagement and shared responsibility for creating conditions for effective instruction for all students through a strengths-based lens among all teaching and non-teaching staff, administrators, families, caregivers, and students. This reinforces the importance of attendance and fosters a supportive community.

## Section IV: Data and Accountability

The Board requires the superintendent to create and maintain real-time attendance reports that allow district and building staff to access and use attendance data throughout the year. Such data shall be disaggregated and used to identify:

- Districtwide patterns and trends for the development of annual student attendance
- Engagement goals and strategies for inclusion in the district's strategic and/or improvement plan and individual school improvement plans

The Board requests that the superintendent provide the Board with attendance and chronic absence data, for each school, each grade, and each student group. The superintendent shall periodically report to the Board, at least quarterly, on the district's progress in improving student attendance and meeting district goals.

The superintendent shall ensure building leaders and school teams collect and review chronic absence data to:

- Identify positive, district-wide messaging and expectations that make regular attendance a priority
- determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students, students at risk of becoming chronically absent, and their families,
- use attendance data to promote continuous improvement, and
- assess the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies and the impact on educational outcomes.

The Board expects the superintendent to develop administrative protocols and training for how all staff will contribute to improving attendance and student engagement and thus maintain a chronic absence rate under 5%.

## Legal References:

R.C. 2151.011, 3313.48, 3313.668, 3317.034, 3321.01 et seq., 3321.13(B)(2), 3321.19, 3321.191

R.C. 3321.22, 3321.38, 3323.041 A.C. 3301-35-03, 3301-47-01, 3301-69-02