

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Lauderdale Manors Early Learning & Family Resource Center
Thursday, January 23, 2020
1:00pm – 3:00pm

MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 1:08 p.m.

1. Welcome and Brief Introductions were made. Meeting attendance is recorded as an attachment.
2. Review [Minutes](#) from December 19, 2019. Minutes accepted by committee.

3. Attendance Campaign updates

- **New Design for Attendance Banner** – Feedback requested
 - A draft design was shared with committee members. Feedback included the use of a QR code that would take visitors to more information or statistics about attendance. Also recommended using a “teaser” around or near the QR code to entice people to use it.
 - Discussion about maintaining the same tense for the word “suspended” or use “suspensions” instead. There were preferences on both sides, “suspended” had majority support. Sentence will read “Chronic absenteeism is when a student is absent 10% or more school days (excused, unexcused, or suspended).”

- **February 14, 2020 – Early Release: A Day of Service & Love**

Attendance office is working internally with Office of Communications, Recovery staff, and OSPA to provide clear expectations for attendance on this day of commemoration. Communications will include a memo to principals and revisions for press release. That date is an early release day dedicated to “A Day of Service and Love” and is one of the 180 regular school days scheduled on the calendar. This is not to be perceived or communicated as an optional school day. Excused absences must be reported by parents just like all other school days.

- **April 23, 2020 – Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day**

*Memo published January 16, 2020 announcing April 23, 2020 as the day Broward Schools will observe this national day. In BCPS, this event is a District-approved field trip. Parents of students participating on any field trip must provide permission to the school. **Field trips are not absences.** When a parent does not communicate with the school prior to this event, the child will have an absence as all field trip forms must be returned before the actual field trip.*

The Attendance Program will work with the Office of Communications and OSPA to try to enhance the efficiency for parents to report their child's participation and for expectations to be delivered clearly from school and District offices.



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- **Mid-Year Data on the Attendance page of the District website**

To obtain attendance statistics about your school, go to www.browardschools.com/attendance

On the right side of the page under Quick Links, select “Data Snapshot for Attendance.” This web page provides descriptions of attendance categories and two mini-databases that provide data for the school selected by the user.

Information about this page will be available to principals through the PIVOT memo system. When approved, the memo will be sent to committee members. Principals and department directors will share with staff as needed. The page is open to the public so that parents and other stakeholders can take accountability for the school's attendance rates. No identifying information is available about individual students.

4. “Evening Among the Stars” – updates and planning committee.

As of the January preliminary data pull from Information & Technology, there are 5 seniors who qualify for “Best in Class” with zero absences from kindergarten through their senior year (so far). Final tally is recorded at the end of the 3rd quarter for qualification.

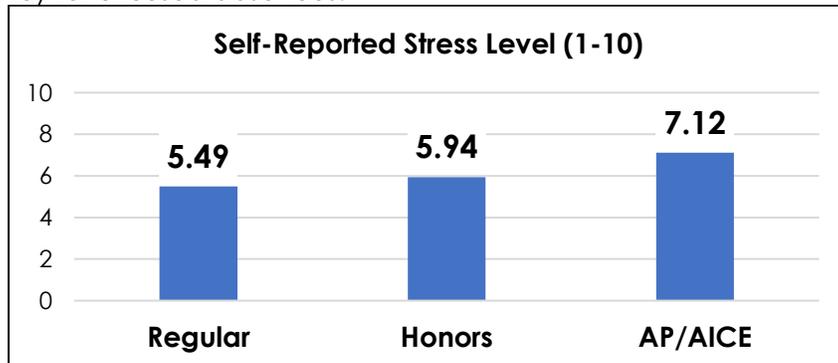
A total of 336 students meet criteria for K-5, or 6-8, or 9-12.

A planning committee is needed. An email will be sent requesting members and assistance. Monica Nelsas was asked to assist with fundraising to help supplement the scholarships for **Best in Class** students and to enhance the swag bags for all students that will be recognized.

Location! Location! Location! Our regular school locations are not available for May 7, 2020 (Plantation HS, Piper HS). Staff are working with other schools and auditoriums to set a location to be included on invitations prior to the next District Attendance Committee meeting.

5. Policy 5.5: Attendance – Review / Proposed Revisions

- Student perspective: Information from students Sean T. and Valeria V.B.
 - Students in the DECA Club at Coral Glades High School, Sean T. and Valeria V.B., spoke at the December School Board Meeting about their project relating to mental health. Their public speaking time from that meeting was played for the members of the District Attendance Committee during today's meeting. The students provided us with some of their information for the District Attendance Committee to consider:
 - 300 students were surveyed and asked to rank their stress level and sleeping habits only 2-3 weeks into the school year. Results are in the graph below. Most students reported getting an average of only 4-6 hours of sleep per night, while the CDC recommends teenagers get around 8-10 hours of sleep per night. The students also spoke with Executive Director, Sandra Cumper from the Broward National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), who shared with them that excessive stress can lead to mental disorders like depression or anxiety.
 - The students mentioned that the School Board should consider mental health days within the attendance policy for excused absences.



- Recommendations from the District Advisory Council (January 15, 2020).

From the Early Sign-out Section, the 4th paragraph mentions an accumulation of early sign-outs being recorded as excused absences. There was a recommendation to remove this paragraph. After conferring with principals and school social workers, this paragraph is needed for parents that consistently remove their child from school early, even when the principal will not allow it to be excused without a physician's note. This allows the school staff to release the child to the parent while maintaining the integrity of Florida's compulsory attendance laws and Broward Schools policy.

There was also a recommendation for phrase change in the "Report an Absence" section to change "handwritten" to a more open-ended "written communication". This will be reflected in the new language.

- Review remaining policy recommendations

Section 1. Compulsory School Attendance: Paragraph A and Paragraph B were amended to help everyone read the laws better for the age of compulsory attendance. Paragraph C was stricken from the policy as Policy 5.1: Enrollment & Withdrawal addresses that rule.

- *A motion was made by Ms. Hahn and seconded by Ms. Jacovino to accept the changes noted in paragraphs A, B, and striking paragraph C. Motion passed by committee.*

Section III. Absences, under A. Excused Absences, paragraphs 6, 7, and 9 have changes. Paragraph 6, adds wording to the "Special Event" to require principal approval prior to a special event, when possible. Paragraph 7 adds into policy the updated rule allowing therapy as an excused absence for students with autism spectrum disorder to be treated during the school day. Paragraph 9 was confusing people about Field Trips because it has been listed as a number. We are changing number nine to a note to clarify that a field trip is not an absence.

- *Linda Ferrara motioned to accept these changes and was seconded by Dr. Poitier. Approved by committee.*

"Reporting An Absence." A new section that is designed to inform parents, within policy, how the District expects parents to report their child's absence to a school. Committee members assisted with revising wording, ensuring that all information a school would need to know to excuse an absence are included in the policy, and recommended an asterisk to help define "parent" in this part of policy. An additional recommendation was made to move "Reporting an Absence" either to the beginning or end of Section III.

- *Ms. Lockett made a motion to approve the addition of "Reporting an Absence" as amended by the committee. Mr. Townley seconded the motion. Committee approved.*

Suspensions. A new addition to clarify the different types of suspensions and how a student's attendance record is affected by suspensions. This section uses language from other policies to define: In-School Suspension; Suspension, also referred to as out-of-school suspension; and Alternative to External Suspension. As Make-up Work was moved to Policy 6000.1, the language related to make-up work is stricken from paragraph 3 in that section.

Mr. Townley made a motion to accept the section labeled "Suspensions" as amended and reviewed by committee. The motion was seconded by D.r Poitier. Approved by Committee.

Parents Rights and Responsibilities. Paragraph 3 has added information to provide the options for parents to report an absence. Paragraph 5 was revised with the coordinator for Hospital Homebound Services to reflect current practice and language. Also included with paragraph 5 is a paragraph from Florida statute that requires a physician to certify the absences are related to a medical condition. Paragraph 6 includes clarifying language and an adjustment to a scrivener's error.

- *Motion to accept these changes was made by Mr. Townley and seconded by Ms. Lockett. Approved by committee.*

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School/District Responsibilities, paragraph 1d. Aligning with Hospital Homebound practices, this paragraph was updated with the assistance of District staff.

- *Mr. Townley made a motion to approve the changes. Ms. Jacovino seconded. Approved by Committee.*

School/District Responsibilities, paragraph f. An addition to school-based responsibilities within District policy. Paragraph f makes it clear that expectations for teachers are to record attendance within the first 15 minutes of the school day and within the first 5 minutes of each secondary class session. There are times when the online attendance/gradebook is not working properly. Teachers will record attendance for at the earliest possible opportunity.

- *Ms. Ferrara motioned to accept the new language. Ms. Lockett seconded the motion. Approved by committee.*

Remaining Meeting Dates for School Year 2019/20:

Dates (Thursdays)	Time	Location
Next Meeting February 20, 2020	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Media Center , Lauderdale Manors
March 19, 2020	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Media Center , Lauderdale Manors
April 16, 2020	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Media Center , Lauderdale Manors
May 21, 2020	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Room 507 , Lauderdale Manors

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	Name	Position	Representing	Attendance
1	Ashley, Elizabeth	Database Researcher	BCPS	Present (call)
2	Garrick, Richard	Principal, Elementary School	Principals	Present (call)
3	Haygood, Bardetta	Principal, Center School	Principals	Present (call)
4	Hersey, Lori	Parent and Community Partnership	Parent/Partner	Present (call)
5	Johnson, Christopher	Principal, Middle School	Principals	Present (call)
6	Nelsas, Monica	Parent Outreach Specialist, Bilingual/ESOL	BCPS	Present (call)
7	Yates, Dawn	Volunteer	BCPS Volunteer	Present (call)
8	Aragon, Jenelle	Program Officer for Education	Community Partner	Present
9	Blatt, Randi	School Social Work (MS/HS)	BCPS	Present
10	Cacace, Cammie	Manager, Community Youth Services Dept.	Community Partner	Present
11	Demme, Drew	Telecomm Analyst	IT Dept.	Present
12	Ferrara, Linda	Corresponding Secretary	Parent Voice	Present
13	Gunn, Christiane	Teacher	BTU	Present
14	Hahn, Erica	Teacher	BTU	Present
15	Jacovino, Michelle	Clinical Nurse Supervisor	BCPS	Present
16	Jenkins, Vivianne	SEL Specialist	BCPS	Present
17	King, Aneatra	Community Relations Specialist	BCPS	Present
18	Lockett, Lyda	SSW Team Leader	SSW Program	Present
19	Moreland, Karen	Instructional Facilitator, Equity & Diversity	BCPS	Present
20	Pinto, Yolanda	School Social Work (Elem.)	BCPS	Present
21	Poitier, Sherrie E.	Guidance Director, Whiddon-Rogers DJJ	BCPS	Present
22	Shaver, Phillip	Coordinator, District Attendance	BCPS	Present
23	Sherman, Diana	Senior Programmer	IT Dept.	Present
24	Townley, Christopher	Teacher	BTU	Present
25	Khan, Liza	Program Manager	Community Partner	Excused
26	Polakoff, Layne	Curriculum Supervisor	Broward Schools	Excused
27	Barros, Gabriela	Homeless Program Specialist	BCPS	Absent
28	Camerota, Marilyn	Director, Community Services	Community Partner	Absent
29	Forde, Giselle	School Social Work	BCPS	Absent
30	Howard, Mark	Principal, High School	Principals	Absent
31	Mayersohn, Robert	Commissioner	Government	Absent
32	Mitchum, Shavonda	PBIS Specialist	BCPS	Absent
33	Reynolds, Theresa	SSW Team Leader	SSW Program	Absent
34	Shorter, Michael	Program Specialist	BCPS	Absent
35	Stacey A. Wolfe	Designee for Dr. Neree	BCPS	Absent

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

ATTENDANCE

Approved 11/21/19

ALL COMPULSORY AGE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY OF THE 180-DAY SCHOOL YEAR OR THE EQUIVALENT ON AN HOURLY BASIS PURSUANT TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILD'S DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. BECAUSE POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH NONATTENDANCE, SCHOOLS WILL RESPOND IN A TIMELY MANNER TO PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATTERNS OF ~~NON-ATTENDANCE~~ NONATTENDANCE WHICH MAY INDICATE EARLY SIGNS OF TRUANCY. SCHOOLS WILL COLLABORATE WITH APPROPRIATE LOCAL AND STATE AGENCIES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN TRUANCY PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND JUDICIAL ACTION.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO ATTENDANCE CAN ALSO BE FOUND IN THE CURRENT EDITION OF THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT APPROVED, AS SCHOOL BOARD POLICY.

RULES:

DEFINITIONS

Attendance: Students are to be counted in attendance for the school day if they are present at school and shall be recorded as present by the teacher or attendance clerk. **Students present at educational activities that constitute part of the approved school program, including field trips, are counted in attendance.** At the elementary level, the homeroom teacher will record daily attendance. At the secondary level, every class period will be used to count daily attendance.

Class Attendance: Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class at the secondary level (grades 6-12). Teacher codes for attendance include: "P" for Present; "TU" for Tardy Unexcused; "PN" for Present, Not in Class; "E1" for the student's first day of enrollment in the school. The absence code that may be entered by a teacher include "AU" for absent unexcused. **For field trips, teachers do not have "FT" as an option; field trips will be recorded by the attendance clerk.**

Field Trip: A District-approved trip away from a School Board site or the student's regularly assigned classroom. A student with a signed permission slip that attends a field trip shall be recorded in attendance as "FT." The school attendance clerk is responsible for recording "FT" for students on a field trip. The classroom teacher can enter "AU" (absent unexcused) to identify that the student is not **in class**. The attendance clerk will override the teacher's attendance record.

Chronic Absenteeism: When a student's absences total 10% or more school days for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences, and out-of-school suspensions. Using the percent of days enrolled, schools may identify students early in the school year to provide appropriate

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Approved 12/19/19

interventions. At the end of a 180-day school year, a chronically absent student misses at least 18 days of school (F.S. 1001.42(18)(b)(1)(a)).

Early Warning System: A system to identify students who need additional support to improve academic performance and stay engaged in school. The early warning system in Broward Schools includes data for students from kindergarten through 12th grade and includes "Attendance below 90 percent, regardless of whether the absence is excused or as a result of out-of-school suspension (F.S. 1001.42(18)(b)(1)(a)).

Physician's Verification Form: When a student is absent, or expected to be absent, more than 10% of the school year, this form may be required to excuse absences without adding further distress to the parent to verify their child's condition. The form requests the physician verifies an illness (without identifying the specific illness), that the child is under their care, and how the condition impacts the student's attendance.

Regular Attender: A student that attends more than 95% of the academic school year. A regular attender's absences range from 0 to 4.9% of school days. At the end of a 180-day school year, a regular attender may miss from 0 to 8 school days.

I. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A. All children who have attained the age of six years or who will have attained the age of six years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six years of age ~~but who have not yet attained the age of 16 years or age specified by state statute, whichever is older, except as hereinafter provided~~ until graduation, are required to attend school regularly during the entire 180-day ~~or the equivalent on an hourly basis pursuant to the state Board of Education~~ school term. (F.S.1003.21)(1)(a)).

B. Public school students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory attendance until the student graduates or files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. ~~A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the School Board.~~ The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the child student and the student's parent. A student who attains the age of 18 years during the school year is not subject to the legal sanctions for compulsory school attendance (F.S.1003.21 (2)(c)).

C. ~~Students under 16 years of age may not be withdrawn from school for any reason unless expelled through Board action or covered by an exemption allowed by Florida Statute (F.S.1002.20 (2)(b)).~~

D. Compulsory school attendance requirements may be met by attendance in a home education program (F.S.1002.01 (2) (b), 1002.20 (2)(b)).

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1. A "home education program" means the sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent in order to satisfy the attendance requirements of ~~S.S.~~ ss. 1002.41, 1003.01 ~~(4)~~ (13) and 1003.21 (1). (F.S. 1002.01(1))

E. For students enrolled in Department of Juvenile Justice Programs, the compulsory school attendance requirement is governed by state law and regulations and includes a longer term (F.S. 1003.52).

II. PATTERNS OF ~~NON-ATTENDANCE~~ NONATTENDANCE

~~Non-attendance~~ Nonattendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day. The District recommends that students attend school every day.

A pattern of nonattendance shall be reviewed by the Collaborative Problem-Solving Team to assist in identifying strategies and/or interventions intended to improve academic performance and student engagement. A pattern of nonattendance may be identified based on one or more of the following:

- a) Prior history of chronic absenteeism (to provide interventions at the beginning of the school year),
- b) Chronic absenteeism within the current school year,
- c) Habitual Truancy as defined by F.S. 1003.01(8), see below.
- d) Excessive absences due to illness (excused and/or unexcused). This may be 3 or more consecutive days or more than 8 nonconsecutive days in a school year.

A. Unless acceptable documentation is presented/submitted, an accumulation of daily unexcused absences by tardiness, or early sign-outs that equals 5 days (30 hours) in a marking period or 10 days (60 hours) within two marking periods may establish a pattern of nonattendance.

B. If the student exhibits a pattern of nonattendance, principals may request documentation for subsequent absences. (F.S. 1003.24(4)) Nonattendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day.

C. "Habitual truant" means a student who has 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or ~~justifiable~~ consent of the ~~child's~~ student's parent, is subject to compulsory school attendance under s. 1003.21 (1) and (2)(a), and is not exempt under F.S.1003.21(3) or s. 1003.24, or by meeting the criteria for any other exemption specified by law or rules of the State Board of Education. Such a student must have been the subject of the activities specified in ss. 1003.26 and 1003.27(3), without resultant successful remediation

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of the truancy problem before being dealt with as a child in need of services according to the provisions of chapter 984 (F.S.1003.01 (8)).

- D. Home Education Program: For Home Education attendance requirements see Board Policy # 6000.1 (F.S. 1003.26(1)(f)).

III. ABSENCES

A. EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below (F.S. 1003.24(4), 1003.26)

1. Illness of student which may be related to physical or mental health.

A student's physical and mental health are factors that parents will consider to determine if their child must stay home from school.

Physical Health: Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) recommends keeping a child home if they have:

- a) A fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher,
- b) Sore throat, coughs, chills, and/or body aches,
- c) Rashes, yellow eye drainage, greenish-yellow phlegm from a cough or cold, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Mental Health: BCPS considers mental health to be a part of a person's overall health and wellness. A student's successful participation in school activities may be severely affected by the social/emotional well-being of the student (e.g., excessive stress or anxiety, depression, grief/bereavement).

PHYSICIAN'S NOTE: If a student is continually sick and/or repeatedly absent from school, the student must be under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner, or if the absence is related to the student having autism spectrum disorder, receiving services from a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to s. 393.17, in order to receive an excuse from attendance (F.S. 1003.24(4)).

- 2. Illness of an immediate family member.
- 3. Death in the family.
- 4. Religious holidays of the student's own faith.
- 5. Required court appearance or subpoena.
- 6. Special event. Examples of special events include important public functions, educational enrichment activities, conferences, state/national competitions, college/university campus tour/visit as well as exceptional cases of family need. A special event must be approved by the principal or the principal's designee prior to the absence. In cases where prior approval was not possible, the principal may excuse the absence.
- 7. Scheduled medical or dental appointment.

This may include "an appointment to receive therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to s. 393.17 for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder, including but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy" (F.S. 1003.21 (2)(b)(2)).

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8. Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of five excused days absence for each infestation of head lice.

9. ~~NOTE: Students on field trips, and students who attend alternative to suspension programs or in internal in-school suspensions~~ are not considered absent.

Reporting an Absence

Absences should be reported by parents within two school days of the absence.

Parents can find absence reporting options on each traditional school's website. On the website, under CONTACT, select "Report an Absence" where parents can choose their preferred absence reporting method:

- a) Online Form: Submit an online form that will provide a confirmation email that includes the date and time of submission
- b) Voicemail (Attendance phone line)
- c) Written communication from parent* delivered to the front office.

When reporting an absence for a student, the following information is required:

- a) Student first and last name
- b) Student ID or Date of Birth
- c) Grade level
- d) Date(s) of absence
- e) Reason for absence
- f) Parent first and last name
- g) Parent Contact information

* Parent includes either or both parents of a student, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent (F.S. 1000.21).

B. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Absences not excused as defined in the previous section, are considered unexcused.

Examples of absences that are not excused:

- a) Failure to communicate the reason for absence(s)
- b) Family trip that does not include one of the excused reasons listed in this policy.
- c) Vacation
- d) Excessive absences due to illness without the requested physician verification that a medical condition justifies the pattern of absences will be recorded as unexcused.
- e) Oversleeping
- f) Missing the school bus (as routinely scheduled)

1. Students without a completed Certificate of Immunization indicating compliance with the current required schedule of immunizations will not be allowed to attend classes until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained. Absences due to ~~non-compliance~~ noncompliance with immunization requirements shall be considered unexcused. (F.S. 1003.22(1)).
2. For students transferring into Broward County, including but not limited to foster care students, or homeless students, a temporary 30-day waiver of both health examination documents and certificates of immunization must be granted. (F.S. 1003.22(1) (5) (e))

C. SUSPENSIONS

1. "In-school suspension" means the temporary removal of the student from their regular school program and placement in an alternative program within their school, under the supervision of District school board personnel, for a period not to exceed 10 school days (1003.01(5)(b)).

A student assigned to in-school suspension will be included in the school's daily attendance count. The appropriate code for in-school suspension will be recorded by the attendance clerk to override the classroom teacher's reported attendance.

2. "Suspension," also referred to as out-of-school suspension, means the temporary removal of a student from all classes of instruction on public school grounds and all other school-sponsored activities, except as authorized by the principal or the principal's designee, for a period not to exceed 10 school days and remanding of the student to the custody of the student's parent with specific homework assignments for the student to complete (1003.01(5)(a)).

A student assigned to out-of-school suspension will not be included in the school's daily attendance count. The student will be recorded as suspended, which will count as an absence due to suspension. This absence type is not counted as unexcused. The distinction between an absence due to suspension and an unexcused absence alleviates the double penalty problem associated with noncompliance with regular attendance as required by law (e.g., driving privileges and Learnfare).

3. [“Alternative to External Suspension,”](#) students who have been externally suspended may be offered an opportunity to participate in an alternative to [external](#) suspension program ([AES](#)). If they do not attend, the assigned days, the absences will be considered suspensions. For a student with a disability (SWD) if FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education) is provided and the student does not attend, the student will be marked absent based on this attendance policy. ~~The SWD will be permitted to make up work whether they attend the alternative to suspension program or not.~~

NOTE: For make-up work, refer to Policy 6000.1: Student Progression [Plan](#).

C. [D](#). TARDINESS

Tardiness is defined as a student not being in the classroom when the class is scheduled to begin.

1. Parents must follow the same process to excuse a tardy as they do to excuse an absence.
2. Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of ~~non-attendance~~ [nonattendance](#). ~~Non-attendance~~ [Nonattendance](#) for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day.
3. Tardiness to any class without documentation may be considered unexcused.
4. Habitual tardiness is defined as being tardy 5 times within a marking period.
5. Principals have the discretion to excuse tardiness for extenuating circumstances.
6. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated tardiness will be recorded as unexcused absences. (F.S. 1003.02 (1) (b)).

D. [E](#). EARLY SIGN-OUTS

1. No students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency.
2. All schools will establish procedures for early release that ensure that all students are treated consistently.
3. Excessive early sign-outs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of ~~non-attendance~~ [nonattendance](#). Nonattendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day.
4. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated early sign-outs will be recorded as unexcused absences. (F.S. 1003.02 (1) (b)).

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. RULES

- a. Students when age-appropriate, have a responsibility to ask their parents to notify the school when they are absent.
- b. Students must maintain current classroom assignments while on internal suspension and turn in work daily.
- c. Students who are married, are parents, or are expectant parents have the right to remain in the regular school program or attend a special center program tailored to their specific needs.

Note: For additional information on students' rights and responsibilities, see the Code of Student Conduct as well as the Driving Privileges & Attendance section of this policy.

PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Parents have a right to be informed of the attendance responsibilities and consequences for truancy for both parents and students as described in the Code of Student Conduct.
2. Each parent of a child of compulsory school attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law. (F.S. 1003.24)
3. Parents must report [the reason for](#) their child's absence to the school [\(either by phone, written note, or the online form on the school website\)](#). ~~in accordance with the procedures in the Code of Student Conduct.~~ The parent shall provide documentation of illness from a physician or public health unit, if requested.
4. Parents have the right to request a hearing if they refuse to participate in the interventions developed by the child study team because they believe that those interventions are unnecessary or inappropriate (F.S.1003.26 (1) (b) (e)).
5. The parents of a student expected to ~~be absent~~ ~~miss~~ at least 15 consecutive school days due to ~~illness, medical condition, or social/emotional reasons~~ [a physical or psychiatric condition \(medically diagnosed and certified by a physician\)](#), or ~~who would miss excessive~~ [due to a chronic condition for at least 15 school](#) days, [which need not run consecutively](#) ~~intermittently~~ throughout the school year ~~for the same reasons~~, and could benefit from instruction should notify the school and request a copy of the Hospital Homebound [Services](#) referral packets.

[A physician licensed in Florida in accordance with Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., unless a report of medical examination from a physician licensed in another state is permitted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331\(3\)\(e\), F.A.C., must certify the absences are related to the medical condition.](#)

6. Parents have a right to be notified if their child ~~misses~~ [is absent from](#) school [or class](#) and the parents have not reported the absence to the school (1003.26(1)(a)).
7. It is the parents' responsibility to maintain current contact information including telephone numbers with the school's registrar. Failure to comply may include the school needing to contact the proper authorities.
8. Florida law supports the active involvement of parents* until the student graduates from school (F.S. 743.07, 1003.26; 1003.21). It is presumed that students are dependent students

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(as defined by FERPA 34 C.F.R. §99.31 (a)(8) and by Internal Revenue Code § 152). Parents will be notified that when a student reaches the age of majority (18 years of age), the parent shall continue to perform the parental functions of a dependent student, including, but not limited to, provide excusal of absences and tardiness, permission slips for early release, field trips, other activities, as necessary, and to register or terminate (withdraw) school enrollment, until the student graduates, except under the following circumstances:

- (1) The student has submitted specific and acceptable documentation (such as rental agreement, lease etc.) to establish that he or she is independent of his/her parents and that the presumption of a dependent student does not apply to him or her.
- (2) The student has been emancipated in compliance with Florida laws (FS 1003.21 (1)(c), F.S. 743.07).
- (3) When the student has no parent and this fact is verified by the school administration (e.g. by communications with relatives, the Homeless Education Program, or the Florida Department of Children and Families, as is appropriate).

* The term parent is defined to include biological parents, any guardian, any person in a parental relationship or "any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent." 1000.21(5),F.S.

SCHOOL/DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. MAINTAINING RECORDS AND IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS

- a. Each principal must make the necessary provisions to ensure that all school attendance reports are accurate and timely and must provide the necessary training opportunities for staff to accurately report attendance (F.S.1003.23 (1)). Principals are required to maintain an attendance record which shows the absence or attendance of each child enrolled for each school day of the year. (F.S.1003.23 (2)).
- b. Upon each unexcused absence, the school shall contact the student's parent in a timely manner (F.S.1003.26 (1) (a)).
- c. If a student has accumulated five days (30 hours) of absences in a marking period or 10 days (60 hours) within ~~two~~ marking periods, the principal/designee shall determine if there may be a pattern of nonattendance. If there is no acceptable documentation, the principal/designee shall refer the student to the Collaborative Problem-Solving Team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing, and provide appropriate interventions. (F.S.1003.26(1)(b)).
- d. The principal/designee shall provide ~~a~~ the Hospital Homebound Services referral packets to the parent of a child who under the care of a physician that certifies the student is expected to be absent ~~miss~~ at least 15 ~~or more consecutive~~ school days due to a physical or psychiatric condition. ~~illness, medical condition, or social/ emotional reasons, or who would miss excessive days intermittently throughout the year for the same reasons.~~ Placement is determined by an IEP committee based on the medical needs of the student.
- e. If the parent or guardian of a child who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of ~~non-attendance~~ nonattendance enrolls the child in a home education program, ~~the Superintendent/designee shall refer the parent to a home education review committee composed of the district contact person for home education and at least two home~~

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~~educators selected by the parent from a district list of all home educators who have conducted a home education program for at least three years and have indicated a willingness to serve on the committee.~~ the parent or guardian will be required to attend the portfolio review committee meeting(s) as required. (F.S. 1003.26(1)(2) and 1003.26(f)(2)).

- f. Teachers shall report attendance promptly every school day. At the elementary level, the homeroom teacher is expected to submit attendance within the first 15 minutes of the school day. At the secondary level (grades 6 – 12), a teacher with students on their roster is expected to record and submit attendance within the first 5 minutes of the class period. If the online grading/attendance program is not available or operating properly, teachers will record attendance at the earliest possible opportunity.

DRIVING PRIVILEGES AND ATTENDANCE

Florida Statute 322.091 and 1003.27(2)(b) requires school districts to report to the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) the names, dates of birth, sex and social security numbers of students ages 14–18 who accumulate 15 unexcused absences in any consecutive 90 calendar day period. Districts are also required to hold hardship hearings if requested by a student whose license has been suspended. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop administrative procedures to implement this legislation.

- a. The principal/designee will conduct the hardship hearing within 30 calendar days of receiving the request in accordance with the procedures established by the Superintendent.
- b. Students are eligible to have their driving privileges reinstated if they accumulate 30 consecutive days of attendance.

CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO TRUANCY

- a. A child who is found to be truant may be taken to the Juvenile Assessment Center or other locations that are established by the school district to receive students who are absent from school. It is the responsibility of the Law Enforcement Officer to call the school to determine if the child is legitimately out of school.
- b. Students 14-18 years of age who have 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days and have a driver's license will have their driver's license suspended by the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles or will not be issued a license if they apply for one.
- c. If a child subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance and the Superintendent elects not to file a truancy petition or if the child does not successfully complete the sanctions ordered by the Court, the child will be referred to the case staffing committee pursuant to Section 984.12. The staffing committee may file a child-in-need-of-services petition. (F.S. 1003.26)
- d. If the parent refuses to participate in the truancy interventions and exercises the right to appeal to the School Board because the parent believes the interventions are unnecessary or inappropriate, the school district will provide a hearing officer who shall make a recommendation for final action to the Board. If the Board determines that the interventions are appropriate and the parent still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent/designee will seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance. (F.S.1003.26 (1) (e))

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- e. Students who are habitually truant may lose their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants through the Learnfare Program. The grant will be restored only when conditions as provided by law are met (30 days of attendance with no unexcused absences).
- f. When a student transfers to another school district in an attempt to circumvent the applicable remedial truancy procedures, copies of all records pertaining to said procedures shall be forwarded to the new school district free of charge. (F.S.1003.28)

Statutory Authority: 1001.41(1) &(2), 1001.42, 1001.51(24) Fla. Stat.

Laws Implemented: 1002.20(2), 1003.01(5), 1003.02(1)(g), 1003.21, 1003.22, 1003.23, 1003.24, 1003.25, 1003.26, 1003.27, 1003.28, 1003.29, 1003.31, 1003.32, 1003.4156, 1006.08_Fla. Stat.

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