

Senate File 2435: Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Summary for Schools

[Senate File 2435](#) was signed into law on May 9, 2024 with an effective date of July 1, 2024. Division VII of SF2435 details public school attendance requirements. The following provides a summary of district responsibilities.

Definitions

Chronically absent means any absence from school for more than ten percent of the days or hours in the grading period established by a public school.

School official means an employee of a public school whose job duties involve identifying children who are at risk for becoming chronically absent, creating interventions to limit the rate of student absenteeism, and participating in the legal process related to student absenteeism.

Truant is defined as any child of compulsory attendance age who does not qualify for the specified exemptions listed in Senate File 2435, fails to follow the school board's attendance policy, lacks a reasonable excuse for their absence, and has been absent from school for at least 20% of the days or hours in the grading period.

Establish Board Policy

- Set board policy that includes:
- The number of days or hours of required attendance,
- Reasons considered to be acceptable excuses for absence from school related to absenteeism and truancy. The policy may *exceed* the requirements in state code.
- Rules relating to children who are chronically absent. The policy or rules must contain provisions that clearly explain all of the following:
 - How a student is deemed chronically absent,
 - Interventions that may be used when a child is chronically absent, and
 - Actions associated with a child being chronically absent.

Coding Exemptions

Chronic Absenteeism data will be collected by the SRI collections similar to previous years. Local truancy determinations and required actions are not applied to a student, who based on local discretion, meets one of the six exemptions,

1. Completed requirements for graduation or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.
2. Excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge.
3. Attending religious services or receiving religious instructions.
4. Unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reason(s).
5. Individualized Education Program (IEP) that affects attendance.
6. Section 504 plan under the Federal Rehabilitation Act that affects attendance.

Parent/Guardian Communication

When a child becomes chronically absent, a school official must notify the county attorney and the child's parent or guardian (or the child if emancipated) by certified mail, including details about the absences and related disciplinary policies. A school official may also send a notice before chronic absenteeism occurs if:

1. The county attorney and the school's board agree on the number of absences that will trigger the notice.
2. This number of absences is stated in the school's student handbook.

Engagement Meetings

If a child is absent from school for 15% or more of the days or hours in the grading period, a school official must investigate the cause and initiate a school engagement meeting. This meeting aims to identify attendance barriers and interventions to improve attendance. A school official can also hold this meeting before reaching the 15% absence threshold. The meeting must include the child, their parent/guardian, and a school official.

During the meeting, participants will create and sign an absenteeism prevention plan, detailing the causes of absences and each participant's responsibilities. The school official will monitor compliance with the plan, contacting participants weekly for the rest of the school year. If participants fail to create a plan or if the child/parent/guardian does not comply with the plan or participate in the meeting, the county attorney may take legal action.

Truancy/County Attorney

The county attorney of the county where a public or accredited nonpublic school's central administrative office is located is responsible for enforcing attendance laws. Legal actions initiated by the county attorney will occur in the same county.

The county attorney enforces attendance laws, with actions taken in the county of the school's central administrative office. Violations of absenteeism prevention plans or attendance laws result in public offenses.

A child is considered truant if absent for at least 20% of the days or hours in a grading period, excluding certain exceptions, as listed above. The truancy officer must promptly take legal action against anyone violating attendance laws.

Additional Supports

See the [2024-25 Attendance Coding technical assistance document](#).