



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

---

To: Indiana Superintendents and Principals

From: Catherine Danyluk, State Attendance Officer

Date: June 21, 2024

Subject: Indiana Attendance Guidelines Pursuant to Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 282

To ensure more students are attending school to maximize their future opportunities, SEA 282 (2024) requires the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to establish guidance regarding truancy policies to be adopted by schools in an effort to deter absenteeism and promote school attendance.

Pursuant to Indiana Code (IC) 20-33-2-3.2, “attend” means to be physically present: (1) in a school; or (2) at another location where the school’s educational program is being conducted (e.g. a work-based learning opportunity occurring outside the four walls of the classroom.)

SEA 282 defines a “truancy prevention measure” as an action designed to address truancy before a child becomes a habitual truant and minimize the need for referrals to a voluntary truancy prevention program or reports to a juvenile court.

School corporations locally define “excused” and “unexcused” absences, and this memorandum serves to assist schools in defining and reporting attendance data and absences in accordance with new legislation. The following information delineates IDOE recommendations for defining these terms, legislative requirements, and guidance regarding Indiana’s attendance reporting requirements.

**Habitual Absence:** IC 20-33-2-25 requires the superintendent or attendance officer to report a student who is habitually absent from school to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). SEA 282 includes the responsibility for superintendents/attendance officers to report a child’s habitual truancy to the prosecuting attorney. Prosecuting attorneys must notify parents if an affidavit of habitual truancy is filed with their office.

IC 20-33-2-14 (b) requires the governing body of each school corporation to have a policy outlining the conditions for excused and unexcused absences. The policy must include the grounds for excused absences required by Sections 15 through 17.5 of this chapter or another law. Any absence that results in a student not attending at least 180 days in a school year must be in accordance with the governing body’s policy to qualify as an excused absence.



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

IC 20-2-6.5 defines habitual truancy to include students absent from school for 10 or more days within a school year without being excused or being absent under a parental request filed with the school. IDOE defines chronic absenteeism as students absent from school for 10 percent or more of a school year for any reason.

## Legislative Requirements

**SEA 282 (IC 20-18-2-26.5):** This legislation requires public school, including charter school, attendance officers to:

- Implement truancy prevention measures required under IC 20-33-2.5;
- Meet at least once annually with DCS and the intake officer for the juvenile court to discuss the effectiveness of truancy prevention measures (IC 20-33-2-39);
- Meet once annually with the State Attendance Officer (IC 20-33-2-39); and
- Establish a local truancy prevention policy (IC 20-33-2.5) that defines an “absent student” as a student who:
  - Is enrolled in kindergarten through grade six, and
  - Is absent five days from school within a 10-week period without being excused (IC 20-33-2.5).
  - The policy must also specify that schools will notify absentee students’ parents of their responsibilities regarding their child’s attendance and participation in an attendance conference.

**Excused Absences:** Excused absences are defined as absences that the school corporation regards as legitimate reasons for being out of school, as included in the local attendance policy. These reasons could include:

- Illness verified by note from parent/guardian;
- Illness verified by note from a healthcare provider;
- Family funeral; and/or
- Absences related to deployment and return for military-connected families.

**Exempt Absences:** Under certain circumstances, schools are legally required to authorize the absence and excuse of a student who is: serving as a page or honoree of the Indiana General Assembly (IC 20-33-2-14 ); serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the day of a municipal, primary, or general election (IC 20-33-2-15); subpoenaed to testify in court (IC 20-33-2-16); serving with the National Guard for at least 15 days in a school year (IC 20-33-2-17); serving with the Civil Air Patrol for up to five days (IC 20-33-2-17.2); approved for an educationally-related, non-classroom activity (IC 20-33-2-17.5); and/or exhibits or participates (or a member of the student’s household exhibits or participates) in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes (IC 20-33-2-17.7). In each of these



## Indiana Department of Education

---

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

circumstances, the student is excused from school and should not be recorded as absent or penalized in any way. To review this statute in its entirety, refer to Indiana's compulsory school attendance law (IC 20-33-2).

**Unexcused Absences:** An unexcused absence is any absence not covered under the definition of excused or exempt absences outlined above.

**Providing Education for Students with Long-Term Medical Conditions:** A long-term provider note is necessary when a student has been injured or suffers from an illness and is anticipated to be absent for a minimum of 20 instructional days over the course of the school year. 511 Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 4-1.5-9 requires a school to provide instruction to students under these circumstances if the parent provides documentation from a licensed healthcare provider with prescriptive authority indicating the student will meet the 20-day criteria due to a medical condition. This long-term medical documentation provides the information necessary for a school to create a plan for meeting the student's educational needs during these absences. Further consultation with the licensed healthcare provider may be necessary to determine the student's ability to engage in educational activities and instruction during these absences. If the student is also a student with a disability, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) case conference committee will determine services during these absences.

For additional information, refer to IDOE's [State Attendance Officer webpage](#) or contact [Catherine Danyluk](#), state attendance officer.