

Understanding House Bill 96



Change is
upon us!

Habitual
Truancy

Chronic
Absence

Tools in IC

Resources

What change looks like:

To significantly increase attendance and reduce chronic absences, it will take a shift in mindsets, policies and practices. Transforming districts approach to attendance is an opportunity to transform student outcomes.

Effective Pathways

- Changing attitudes and beliefs about attendance.
- Strategically using data for proactive solutions.
- Creating a capacity-building infrastructure.
- Implementing evidence-based strategies.

Shift the System

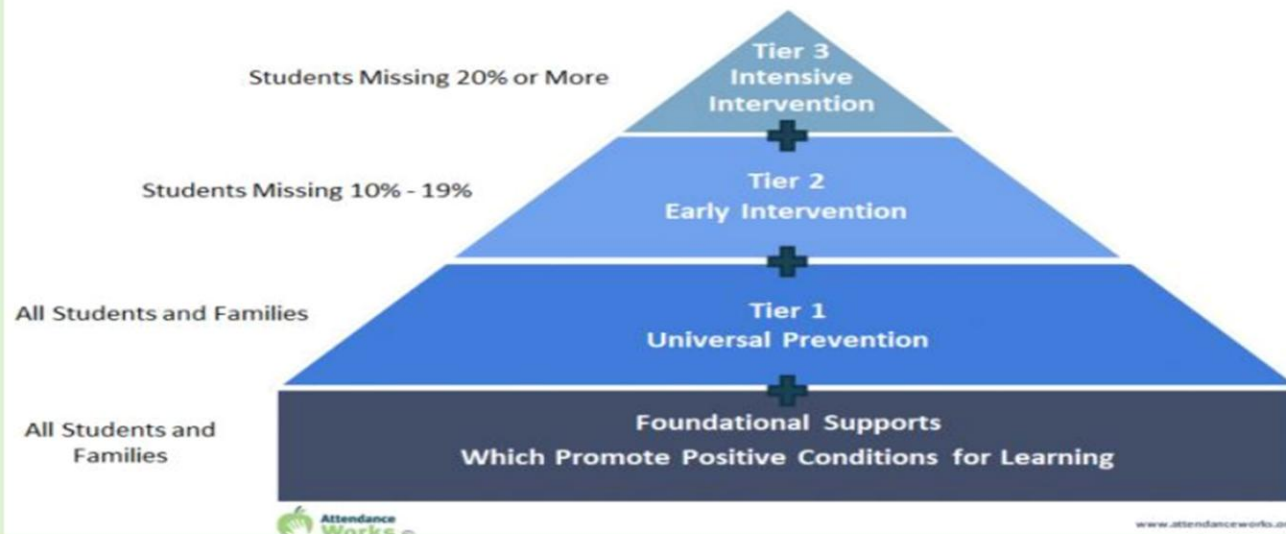
- Emphasizing the impact of missed days on learning and student wellness.
- Understanding the Engagement = Attendance
- Taking a positive, problem-solving approach verses legal and punitive approaches.
- Seeing students/families as an important part of the solution instead of the problem or people in need of rescue.
- Using an early warning system before absences add up.

Adopt A Multi-Tiered Approach:

The idea behind a multi-tiered approach is that most students will respond to schoolwide strategies for improving attendance and engagement and some students will require a more personalized support with more intensive measures.

****A districtwide emphasis on prevention and early intervention will have a greater impact on the chronic absence rate versus sole compliance with Ohio's attendance laws.****

Foundational Supports	Whole school practices promote positive conditions for learning . When positive conditions are in place, students are more likely to attend and be engaged.
Tier 1	Universal strategies to encourage good attendance for all students.
Tier 2	Early interventions for students who need more support to avoid chronic absence.
Tier 3	Intensive interventions for students facing the greatest challenges to getting to school.



Reasons Students are Absent:

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Lack of access to needed services
- System involvement
- Unpredictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to technology
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences





Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, engaging instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

Shifting to a Positive Problem-Solving

Typical	To	Problem-Solving Approach
Approach family <i>only</i> to address a problem		Focus on building relationships with students and families and understanding their experiences
Use letters and robo calls to primarily communicate about poor attendance		Personalized positive outreach to students and families about student successes through emails, texts or calls
Only concentrate on students who are severely chronically absent or habitually truant		Promote a prevention and intervention approach that is inclusive of all students and uses data to identify students who begin to miss 2 to 3 days a month
Assign one person in each school to address attendance		Create a schoolwide approach that acknowledges everyone has a role to play

Shifting from Blaming to Positive

Typical Blame	To	Positive Approach
The student just sleeps late.	➡	What do we know about why the student sleeps late?
Their parents just don't care.	➡	What do we know about the family circumstances that makes getting their child to school challenging?
They never respond.	➡	Who has a connection with the family or who can build a connection with the family?
That parent never follows through on anything.	➡	Have we talked through the steps necessary to follow through in support of their child's attendance?

Habitual Truancy

Ohio law defines that habitual truant is determined by certain thresholds of **UNEXCUSED** absences only:

- 30 or more consecutive hours
- 42 or more hours per school month
- 72 or more hours per school year.

Habitual Truancy

The definition and thresholds has not changed. However, what districts must do has...

Truancy
Steps as
of
9/30/2025

- When a student hits a threshold, the school must communicate. in writing, to the student and family about the legal consequences of being truant.
 - ❖ *This can be electronically sent or through paper distribution.*
- When a student meets the definition of habitual truant, the school or district must file a complaint in juvenile court, **if the student is not making satisfactory progress with improving attendance.**
 - ❖ Satisfactory progress is a district decision. While considering individual barriers, medical diagnoses, etc. progress may not look the same for all students.
- *It is encouraged that districts to work with their courts on what reporting a student to them will look like and what processes were followed prior to the filings. Showcasing the tiered intervention in place for the student. The new policy is not an open invitation to just file just because!*

Habitual Truancy

Sample Notification

Schools and districts can use the template below to communicate with families once a student reaches habitual truancy thresholds. The template helps communicate accurate information in a clear, understanding, and approachable way.

To the family of _____,

We are sharing **[Student]**'s attendance report for this school year, which shows **unexcused** absences for 30 consecutive hours, 42 hours in a month, or 72 hours over the year. In Ohio, students with this number of absences are considered "habitually truant."

We want to work together to identify supports to help improve **[Student]**'s attendance and prevent any of the legal consequences that may result from habitual truancy.

We understand that families value their child's education and may face challenges that make it hard to attend school every day. Being in school helps students build confidence, stay connected with teachers and friends, and continue learning. We are here to listen and help.

[Staff Member] will reach out to schedule a conversation so we can learn more from you about how we can help. You can also reach out directly using the contact information below any time.

We look forward to working with you to help **[Student]** succeed!

Sincerely,

[Principal's Name]

[Contact Information]

Chronic Absence



“Absenteeism is a lost opportunity to learn. We can’t afford to think of absenteeism as merely a lack of compliance with school rules.”

What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for **ANY** reason. Which is different from truancy (*unexcused absences only*) or average daily attendance (*how many students show up to school each day*)



Chronic Absenteeism Calculation

Although this is the overall calculation to check the 5%, the State does NOT recommend districts to do an overall calculation for the year and then set up automation when a student hits a “threshold”. By doing it as a threshold marker, a student may have missed quite some time prior to connecting with them. We are looking Forward by building relationships, NOT Backwards with systematizing the process.

Total Time Missed

Total Time the Student could have been there

The Office of Accountability will do the final calculation to determine your districts Chronic Absenteeism rate for the Report Card.

If you have an instance where you did not withdraw the student, but they show up at another district, they will adjust the FTE for an accurate percentage for the student during their time at your specific district.

Chronic Absent Order:

5% “Threshold”:

- Communication can be via Call, Text, in person, in writing, etc. just needs to be documented. *Attendance Contact Log is a great place to input the correspondence.*
- To ensure you are always in compliance doing it earlier and viewing your attendance on a rolling basis (*weekly*) is recommended, verses worrying about exact percentage amount.
- Currently, The Law requires that you connect with the student within that 5% marker, does not have to be an “each time they hit” type of ordeal. *It is a District Decision that will be outlined in Local Policies.*



Absence Intervention Team

- Can be the same team members that worked with Truant students under HB410. However, their scope of duties has widened with a potentially larger case load.
- This team will work with ALL students and their families that are at risk of becoming Chronically Absent.
- *It is a local decision on what the teams work will look like for your district.*



Student Hits 10%

- The whole point of communicating early and having the team working with them is to prevent the 10%.
- If the student continues to miss school, there isn't a next step needing to be communicated, as there is no ramification to the family. **UNLESS** they hit a Truancy Threshold based on unexcused absences (*then the districts truancy process starts*).

5% “Threshold”

First few month of school:

- View students' patterns of missed days.
- Missing just 2-3 days a month can lead to chronic Absences, so you may want to connect with the families of students who hit this threshold.
- Looking at percentages, may not be the best route, as it will appear to be a higher rate, since there are not many overall days to offset the missed days.
- Although each situation may be different, connecting with the families early, helps them understand the importance of their student missing school. Does not have to be anything overly formal

Mid November and beyond:

- Still should view if there is a pattern of missed days for the student.
- Running a report to view days missed/ overall days to get current percentage may be helpful at this stage. Doing this bimonthly (*at minimum*) is recommended.
- Keep in mind that the sporadic absences can add up, as well as student missing many consecutive days. It is important to pay attention to both.
- Although each situation may be different, connecting with the families early, helps them understand the importance of their student missing school. Does not have to be anything overly formal

Attendance Teams:

	<p>➤ Teams can be the same, but the focus is on students at risk of becoming Chronically Absent. By working with these student, they are inadvertently connecting with student who become Habitually Truant.</p>
	<p>➤ The primary purpose of a school team is to organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This can be accomplished by incorporating attendance team functions into existing collaborative teams that focus on academics and behavior. <p>➤ The team is expected to review attendance data every other week (at a minimum) for every tier, not just students who have the most absences or students who are truant.</p> <p>➤ The team should reflect the demographics of the school and district community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the team does not reflect the diversity of the school community, the school or district leadership may consider the following questions: 1. How can the school seek community input before creating policies? 2. Are there recruiting strategies to help the school team better reflect the community? 3. How can we incorporate teachers, parents, students or community members to participate on the team who reflect the demographics of the school community? <p>➤ Functions of a school team focused on attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention. • Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence. • Identify assets, barriers and strategies that affect attendance. • Mobilize everyone in the school community (teachers, parents and students) to address attendance. • Determine if you are making a difference.

Chronic Absence Sample Notification:

Schools can use the templates below to share attendance information with families in a clear, supportive, and approachable way.

Templates

LETTER/NOTE TO PARENT(S)/CAREGIVER(S):

To the family of _____,

Our school wants to keep you updated about your child's attendance because it's an important part of their success. So far this year, **[Student]** has missed **[X]** days/**[Y]** hours of school. We understand that absences happen. Being in school helps students build confidence, stay connected with teachers and friends, and learn important skills. If there are challenges making it hard for **[Student]** to attend, we'd like to partner with you to find solutions. You can reach us by phone or email, or by scanning the QR code below to set up a meeting.

TEXT MESSAGE

Hi **[Parent/Guardian Name]**, this is **[School Name]**. We want to keep you updated on **[Student]**'s attendance. So far this year, **[student]** has missed **[X]** days/**[Y]** hours. We know absences happen. Being in school helps students build skills, confidence, and friendships. If anything is making attendance difficult, we want to work together to find solutions. Please let us know how we can help at **[phone/email address]**.

SMS VERSION (<158 CHARACTERS)

Hi **[Parent/Guardian Name]**! **[Student]** has missed **[X]** days of school. We know absences happen, but regular attendance helps them succeed. Reply for support.

How Chronic Absence Differs:

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

- School level measure (not student level).
- Notice aggregate attendance at certain points in time (e.g., half days, holidays, bad weather).
- Masks individual student chronic absences.

Truancy

- Counts ONLY unexcused absences.
- Emphasizes individual compliance with rules.
- Uses legal, typically more blaming, and punitive solutions.

Chronic Absence

- Counts ALL Absences (excused, unexcused and suspensions).
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present.
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies.
- Cultivates family and student engagement.

Helpful IC Tools:

Habitual Truancy

- Student's Truancy Tab
- Attendance Letters with adhoc
 - *May want to update the verbiage of the letters. However, the thresholds remain the same.*

Chronic Absenteeism

- ADM and ADA Detail Report (*Student Percentages*)
- Day Count Report (*Count of absences within a specified period*)
- Attendance Reason Report (*Why students are missing school*)

ADM and ADA Detail Report

ADM and ADA Detail Report

Average Daily Membership (ADM) & Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Summary with Student Detail

This report displays Membership, Absent, and Present Days and calculates ADM and ADA. ADA calculation options use either Exact (Present Minutes divided by Student Day Minutes for the Calendar) or Whole/Half (Absent Minutes compared to Whole Day and Half Day Absent Minutes for the Calendar) logic. The Summary version displays data for each Calendar/Grade selected and as a grand total for all Calendars; the Detail version displays the Summary data plus a row for each student actively enrolled during the entered date range. Blank Start and End Dates default to the start/end dates of the calendar. This is a very complex report; try to limit the number of calendars run per batch.

Which date range would you like to include in the report?

Start Date: 07/01/2025
End Date: 02/10/2026

1

Adhoc Filter:

Report Type: ☐ Summary ☒ Detail

3

Calculation Options

- ☒ EXACT (The sum of minutes absent / student day)
☐ DAILY APPROXIMATION (Whole Day/Half Day attendance is approximated and these days are summed)
☒ Use percent enrolled in ADM calculations

4

☐ Add signature line at the end of the report

Report Format: PDF
PDF
CSV
DOCX

5

6

Submit to Batch

Which calendar(s) would you like to include in the report?

- ☒ active year
☐ list by school
☐ list by year

2

25-26
25-26 Arthur Elementary
25-26 Carter Middle
25-26 Cleveland Elementary
25-26 Elementary Training
25-26 Fillmore Middle School
25-26 Harrison High
25-26 High School/MSTraining
25-26 Taylor K-8
25-26 Van Buren High School

CTRL-click or SHIFT-click to select multiple

- 1) **Start Date** 07/01/2025 and **End Date:** The Current date you are running the report
- 2) **Calendar:** Select specific school(s) you would like to run the report for.
- 3) **Report Type:** Detail
- 4) **Calculation Options:** Exact
- 5) **Report Format:** Your Preference
- 6) **Click Generate Report**

❖ *After running for current point of the year. You can run with biweekly dates to check status of improvement.*

ADM and ADA Detail Report

Once the report generate, scroll down to the detail section. The Important columns are **Membership Days** (*Total Attendance days*), **Absent Days** (*Students time missed*), and **Percent in attendance** (*Anything below 95% means the student has hit the 5%*).

DETAIL		School: [REDACTED]		Calendar: 25-26		[REDACTED] High Sch			
Grade	Student Name (Student#)	Membership Days	Absent Days	Present Days	ADM	ADA	Unexcused Absences		Percent In Attendance
							Days	Avg. Daily	
06 Ad	[REDACTED]	105	0.00	105.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	100.00%
06 A	[REDACTED]	105	2.83	102.17	1.00	0.97	1.00	0.01	97.30%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	11.81	93.19	1.00	0.89	3.00	0.03	88.75%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	7.49	97.51	1.00	0.93	0.00	0.00	92.87%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	4.05	100.95	1.00	0.96	0.00	0.00	96.14%
06 B	[REDACTED]	65	0.00	65.00	0.62	0.62	0.00	0.00	100.00%
06 B	[REDACTED] (5)	105	10.83	94.17	1.00	0.90	9.16	0.09	89.69%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	1.00	104.00	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.01	99.05%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	7.90	97.10	1.00	0.92	1.00	0.01	92.48%
06 B	[REDACTED]	105	0.00	105.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	100.00%
06 Br	[REDACTED]	105	2.00	103.00	1.00	0.98	1.00	0.01	98.10%

At the beginning of the school year, or for students just entering the district the Absent Days Column is the important reference point, as you can locate to connect with the students that are on track to Chronic Absenteeism (*Missing 2-3 days within a school month*)

Common Questions:

Where are Student Counting

- Students count for Habitual Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism while they are enrolled in your district ONLY (*FTE is adjusted if they are not there the full year*). Attendance issues at another district may not carry over for various reasons, so students have a clean slate upon entering your district.

Calendar Used for chronic absenteeism

- The calendar hours used is based on the calendar assigned to each student individually, NOT the state minimum 910 or 1001 calendar hours.

Percent of time in building

- Students must have a minimum of 100 hours at your district to count. If the student is only there half day, they would have 50% FTE and would take longer to reach the thresholds.

Medical/Religious Absences

- Counts towards Chronic Absenteeism, since it considers all absences, excused or unexcused. For Chronic Medical conditions, schools may want to work with parents/students on alternative options.

Field Trips

- Do not count as time away from the building is school mandated. Use Present Attendance code to code the students out on school field trips.

CCP

- Th law did not change, and per ODEW schools and colleges should collaborate on the student's attendance at the college.

Suspension

- OSS is usually included in Chronic Absenteeism because the student is out of school. However, OSS is not counted towards Truancy because they were not allowed in the building. ISS is not typically counted for neither since it has a Present attendance code.

Board Policy

No later than August 1, 2026, Ohio law requires schools & districts to adopt a policy that:

- Is developed in consultation with their county juvenile court, parents/families, and any appropriate state and local agencies
- Acknowledges missing school for any reason can negatively affect learning
- Names strategies that help prevent Chronic Absence
- Determines when and how parent and families will be notified about student attendance concerns. Parent and families must be notified when their student has missed 5% or below the minimum number of hours required in the school year
- Establishes tiered intervention and support for students and families in addressing root causes of absences
- Provides for absence intervention teams to work with students at risk of becoming chronically absent
- Prohibits using attendance as a reason to suspend or expel students.

Example Board Policy [HERE](#)

Helpful Links

Link	Details
<u>Ohio Attendance Guide</u>	Provides insight into attendance changes and contains many resources for District and School Attendance Teams
<u>ODE School & District Support Page</u>	Provides details on various tools, policies and quick access to many helpful resources.
<u>Report Portal</u>	A way to easily access your school's previous years data.
<u>Attendance Works</u>	Massive Nationwide resources to help improve Chronic Absenteeism
<u>Stay in the Game!</u>	Schools and districts can join this professional network to connect with peers and access resources for implementing effective attendance strategies.
<u>ODE Attendance Law FAQ</u>	Answers to common questions regarding the current attendance laws.

Questions?

Please feel free to contact our META Help Desk for any additional guidance

infinitecampushelp@metasolutions.net

Also, feel free to check our website

**(<https://www.metasolutions.net/member-resources/infinitecampus/>)
for recording and copy of handouts following the meeting.**