



Addressing Student Attendance Through Intervention and Support

Florida Organization of Instructional Leaders (FOIL)

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
fldoe.org

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Legislative Update

The following bill with attendance-related provisions was passed by both the House and the Senate during the 2025 Legislative Session and is currently pending until signed by the Governor:

- Senate Bill (SB) 1344
 - Amends section (s.) 984.03, Florida Statutes (F.S.) revising requirements for early truancy intervention;
 - Amends s. 984.13, F.S. authorizing that a child be taken into custody pursuant to a finding of contempt; specifying placement of a child taken into custody in specified circumstances; revising the duties of a person taking a child into custody
 - Amends s. 1003.26, F.S., authorizing that certain meetings with parents may be conducted virtually or by telephone; providing for child study team meetings in the absence of a parent, legal guardian, or custodian or child; revising interventions by such team; providing for promotion of a child who is responsive to intervention and meets specified requirements; revising provisions concerning required notice of a child's enrollment or attendance issues; and revising provisions concerning returning a student to a parent or other party in certain circumstances.

Legislative Update, continued

- Senate Bill (SB) 1344, continued
 - Amends s. 1003.27, F.S., revising reporting requirements for reports by school principals to school boards concerning minor students who accumulate more than a specified number of absences; requiring actions by school boards; providing for remedial actions for failure to comply; revising provisions concerning habitual truancy cases; revising provisions concerning cooperative agreements; revising who may begin certain proceedings and prosecutions; deleting a provision concerning a civil penalty for students; revising provisions concerning truant students;
 - Changes in statutory language related to this bill are effective on July 1, 2025.

Definition of Truant

A “Truant” student is a student, subject to compulsory school attendance, who has had:

- 5 unexcused absences (or absences for which reasons are unknown) *within a calendar month*; or
- 10 unexcused absences (or absences for which reasons are unknown) within any 90 calendar days; or
- Has had *more than* 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days.

Note: Only the first provision requires the absences to be within a calendar month. The other two provisions are counted as calendar days (*not* school days) and may “float” between months.

[Section 1003.01, F.S.](#)

Definition of Habitually Truant

- “Habitual(ly) Truant”
 - 15 (or more) unexcused absences within 90 calendar days.
 - Subject to compulsory school attendance as defined in section (s.) 1003.21(1) and (2)(a), F.S. (Ages 6-16)
 - Not exempt from compulsory attendance under ss. 1003.21(3) and 1003.24, F.S., or any other exemption.
 - Activities to determine the cause of non-attendance and attempts at remediation *have been completed by the school*. See ss. 1003.26 and 1003.27(3), F.S.

Note: Section 1003.01(8), F.S., uses the word “student;” s. 984.03(27), F.S., uses the word “child.”

[Section 1003.01, F.S.](#)

Truancy vs. Chronic Absence

TRUANCY

- Counts only unexcused absences

VS.

CHRONIC ABSENCE

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused and suspensions

Excused and Unexcused Absences

District school boards are required to define excused and unexcused absences according to criteria established by the district school board (s. 1003.21, F.S., School attendance; s. 1003.24, F.S., Parents' responsibilities of attendance of children, attendance policy; and s. 1003.26, F.S., Enforcement of school attendance).

Schools must excuse absences for certain reasons including:

Illness, injury or
another
“insurmountable”
condition
s. 1003.24(4), F.S.

Religious instruction
and holidays
s. 1003.21(2)(a)1., F.S.

Receiving services
related to autism
spectrum disorder
ss. 1003.21(2)(a)2.
and 1003.24(4), F.S.

Early Warning System

Defined in s. 1001.42, F.S.:

(b) Early warning system.—

1. A school that serves any students in kindergarten through grade 8 shall implement an early warning system to identify students in such grades who need additional support to improve academic performance and stay engaged in school. The early warning system must include the following early warning indicators:
 - a. Attendance below 90 percent, regardless of whether the absence is excused or a result of out-of-school suspension.
 - b. One or more suspensions, whether in school or out of school.
 - c. Course failure in English Language Arts (ELA) or mathematics during any grading period.
 - d. A Level 1 score on the statewide, standardized assessments in ELA or mathematics.
 - e. For students in kindergarten through grade 3, a substantial reading deficiency under s. 1008.25(5)(a), F.S., or, for students in kindergarten through grade 4, a substantial mathematics deficiency under s. 1008.25(6)(a), F.S.

Enforcing School Attendance

School districts are responsible for taking an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance.

The parent of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance, except under any of the following conditions:

- Absence was permitted by the head of the school.
- Absence was without the parent's knowledge, consent or connivance.
- The parent was unable to provide financially the necessary clothes for the student.
- Sickness, injury or other insurmountable condition.

[Section 1003.26, F.S.](#)

Procedures for Addressing Unexcused Absences

The principal or designee must contact the parent for every unexcused absence.

The principal or designee must allow the student to make up assigned work within a reasonable period of time if absences are excused.

The primary teacher reports to the school principal or designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance (5 unexcused absences in 30 days or 10 unexcused absences in 90 days).

The principal refers the case to the school's child study team for determination of whether the student is developing early patterns of nonattendance, if absences are unexcused.

The Child Study Team convenes parent meetings to address patterns of truancy (whether absences are excused or unexcused).

The principal notifies the district school superintendent of the student's nonattendance if the Child Study Team determines a pattern of nonattendance is developing (whether absences are excused or unexcused).

[Section 1003.26, F.S.](#)

Child Study Team Responsibilities for School Nonattendance Intervention

1. Meet with the student's parents to identify potential remedies for nonattendance.
2. If the initial meeting does not resolve nonattendance, the Child Study Team must:
 - Make frequent attempts to engage family and teacher in communication.
 - Evaluate the student for alternative education programs.
 - Establish an attendance contract with the student.
 - Diligently facilitate intervention services.
 - Report the case to the district school superintendent when all reasonable efforts to resolve nonattendance have been exhausted.

Discussion

What are some of the factors in your school or district impacting student attendance?

Discussion

What are some strategies in your school or district to mitigate these factors?

Intervention Strategies

Recommended interventions to address truancy may include:

**Learning
environment
changes**

**Mentoring and
school counseling
services**

**Tutoring, including
peer tutoring**

**Placement into a
different class**

**Exploration of
educational
options**

**Referral to other
agencies for family
services**

**Follow-up parent
and teacher
conferences**

**Referral to school
nurse**

Hope Florida



Resiliency Education



Empathy



Responsibility



Citizenship



**Responsible
Decision-Making**



**Critical Thinking and
Problem Solving**



Mentorship



Grit



Perseverance



Gratitude



**Self-Awareness and
Self-Management**



Honesty

The Resiliency Characteristics



Hope Florida

HOPEFLORIDA

School District Action for Nonattendance

- The **parent** may:
 - Appeal to the district school board if the parent believes the Child Study Team strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate and the parent refuses to participate in the remedial strategies.
 - Refer the case to the Case Staffing Committee pursuant to s. 984.12, F.S., if the child refuses to comply with school attendance.
- If the parent appeals, the **district school board** may:
 - Provide a hearing officer, who must make a recommendation for final action to the district school board.
 - Make a final determination if the Child Study Team strategies are appropriate.

School District Superintendent Action for Nonattendance

- The **school district superintendent** (or designee) may:
 - Seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance if the parent refuses to participate or cooperate with remedial strategies. See requirement under s. 1003.27(2), F.S.
 - File a truancy petition pursuant to s. 984.151, F.S.
- The **school district superintendent** (or designee) must:
 - Refer the case to the Case Staffing Committee pursuant to s. 984.12, F.S., if all reasonable efforts have been made by the school to address the child's nonattendance.

School District Superintendent Action for Nonattendance, continued

- The **school district superintendent** (or designee) must:
 - Give written notice to the parent requiring the student's enrollment or attendance in school within three days after the date of the notice. The notice must be provided in person or via return receipt mail.
- The **school district superintendent** (or designee) may:
 - Refer the case to the child study team at the school the student would be assigned to, or to the case staffing committee. The child study team will diligently facilitate intervention services and report back to the district school superintendent when all reasonable efforts to resolve the non-enrollment have been exhausted.
- The **school district superintendent** (or designee) must:
 - Take necessary steps to bring a criminal prosecution against the parent if the parent refuses to cooperate or enroll the student in school.

Student Nonattendance Data

Age	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	21 or More Days	10% or More	21 or More Days	10% or More	21 or More Days	10% or More	21 or More Days	10% or More	21 or More Days	10% or More
Total	9.8%	16.6%	16.6%	25.1%	20.9%	32.3%	19.4%	30.9%	19.9%	31.4%
10 or Younger	8.5%	15.1%	13.9%	23.0%	17.9%	29.6%	16.0%	27.7%	15.7%	27.2%
11 to 13	7.1%	13.0%	14.9%	22.6%	17.8%	28.5%	16.8%	27.9%	17.5%	28.6%
14	8.9%	15.5%	17.8%	25.8%	20.9%	32.0%	20.0%	31.6%	20.9%	32.6%
15	11.0%	18.5%	19.8%	28.0%	24.4%	36.0%	23.0%	35.0%	24.0%	36.2%
16	13.1%	21.3%	21.5%	29.8%	27.4%	39.4%	26.3%	38.1%	27.1%	39.1%
17	17.1%	25.6%	24.2%	32.4%	32.9%	44.6%	31.7%	43.0%	32.6%	43.9%
18 or Older	32.0%	44.3%	38.2%	48.9%	44.1%	58.5%	41.6%	55.8%	41.9%	55.8%

**Represents average percent of students with unexcused absences*

Source: FDOE Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accessibility

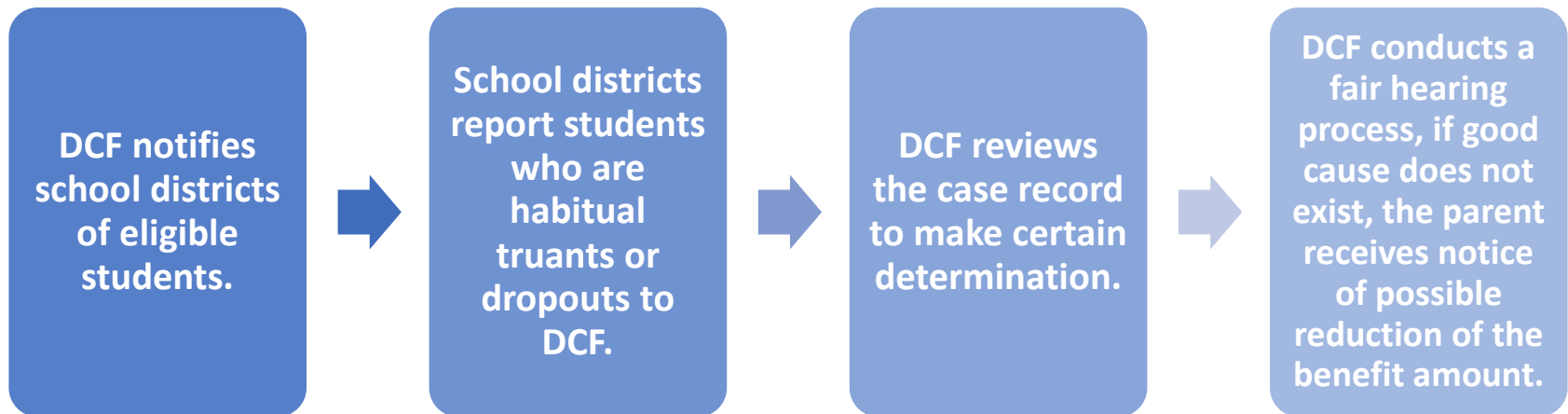
Cooperative Interagency Agreement

Per s. 1003.27(4), F.S., a cooperative interagency agreement must be developed between the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the district school superintendent to:

	Define roles
	Identify and Implement measures to reduce truancy
	Address issues of streamlining service delivery
	Review appropriateness of procedures for addressing truancy
	Delineate implementation timeframes
	Identify a mechanism for reporting results
	Designate intervention responsibility

Learnfare Program

Requires the DCF to reduce the amount of temporary cash assistance for families with students who are identified as habitual truants or dropouts per s. 414.1251, F.S.



If a sanction is imposed to the benefit amount, the benefits may be reinstated when the truant student's substantially improved attendance is confirmed, or after a student who has dropped out of school has re-enrolled in school, attains a high school diploma or its equivalent, enrolls in preparation for the GED®, or enrolls in another educational activity approved by the district school board.

Attendance Requirements to Maintain Driving Privileges

Students are required to attend school to maintain their driving privileges.

- Schools must report any habitually truant minor over 14 years old to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) per s. 1003.27, F.S.

Actions initiated by DHSMV:

- **Licensed minors** will lose their driving privilege unless they comply with attendance requirements; and
- **Unlicensed minors** may not apply for a license until:
 - attendance requirements are satisfied, or
 - the student reaches the age of 18.

Reinstatement of Driver's License

A student's license may be reinstated if the student has, either:

- Attended school for 30 consecutive school days without any unexcused absences, or
- Earned a high school diploma or a State of Florida diploma.

Hardship Waivers

The student's public school principal or the designee of a student's private school can waive the suspension of a driver's license with verification of the following hardships:

- Employment (based on verification of substantial financial contribution to their family's needs)
- Medical care (need for transportation, for the student or their household, to access required treatment)

Florida DHSMV– Motorist Compliance Data

Withholding License Eligibility	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024	Suspension for Truancy	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024
Intent to Withhold License Eligibility	12944	16008	17752	15092	Suspensions created	2372	4976	5778	4528
Still not resolved	11340	15415	3371	3323	Suspensions still on record	356	1738	1412	2432
Resolved	1604	593	14381	11769	Cleared prior to effective date	143	548	85	120
NOTE: A student could remain truant and could just put off getting a driver's license until they are 18 and the requirement would programmatically be deleted from their record.					Cleared after effective date	1873	2690	3480	332
					Still suspended	270	1181	801	1644

CY = Calendar Year

PK-12 Database Manuals

The Student Information System houses all available data elements that can be used to support school districts with the proper coding of students who are enrolling, withdrawing or graduating from a school district in Florida.

Updates on all available codes may be accessed at <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/database-manuals-updates>.

Evidence-Based Practices for Improving Attendance

- **Positive Engagement** with families and students.
- **Actionable Data** to help you identify students with too many absences.
- **Capacity Building** to help build an expectation for attendance in your classroom, school or district.





Questions?

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