

## Chapter 129. Student Attendance

### Subchapter B. Student Attendance Accounting

#### §129.21. Requirements for Student Attendance Accounting for State Funding Purposes.

- (a) All public schools in Texas must maintain records to reflect the average daily attendance (ADA) for the allocation of Foundation School Program (FSP) funds and other funds allocated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Superintendents, principals, and teachers are responsible to their school boards and to the state to maintain accurate, current attendance records.
- (b) The commissioner of education is responsible for providing guidelines and procedures for attendance accounting in accordance with state law.
- (c) The commissioner must provide for special circumstances regarding attendance accounting in accordance with the provisions of law.
- (d) The superintendent of schools is responsible for the safekeeping of all attendance records and reports. The superintendent of schools may determine whether the properly certified attendance records or reports for the school year are to be stored in the central office, on the respective school campuses of the district, or at another secure location. Regardless of where such records are stored, they must be readily available for audit by the TEA division responsible for performing school financial audits.
- (e) Districts must maintain records and make reports concerning student attendance and participation in special programs as required by the commissioner.
- (f) If a school district chooses to use a locally developed record or automated system, the record or automated system must contain the minimum information required by the commissioner.
- (g) A student must be enrolled for at least two hours of instruction to be considered in membership for one half day, and for at least four hours of instruction to be considered in membership for one full day.
- (h) Attendance for all grades must be determined by the absences recorded at the official attendance-taking time during the campus's instructional day, unless the local school board adopts a district policy, or delegates to the superintendent the authority to establish procedures, for recording absences in an alternative hour, or unless the students for which attendance is being taken are enrolled in and participating in an alternative attendance accounting program approved by the commissioner.
  - (1) Students enrolled on a half-day basis may earn only one half day of attendance each school day. Attendance is determined for these pupils by recording absences in a period during the half day that they are scheduled to be present. Students enrolled on a full-day basis may earn one full day of attendance each school day.
  - (2) Students who are enrolled in and participating in an alternative attendance accounting program approved by the commissioner will earn attendance according to the statutory and rule provisions applicable to that program.
  - (3) The established period in which absences are recorded may not be changed during the school year.
  - (4) Students absent at the time the attendance roll is taken, during the daily period selected, are counted absent for the entire day, unless the students are enrolled in and participating in an alternative attendance accounting program approved by the commissioner. Students present at the time the attendance roll is taken, during the daily period selected, are counted present for the entire day, unless the students are enrolled in and participating in an alternative attendance accounting program approved by the commissioner.
- (i) A student who is not actually in school at the time attendance is taken must not be counted in attendance for FSP funding purposes, unless the student is participating in an activity that meets the conditions set out in subsection (j) of this section, or unless the student is enrolled in and participating in an alternative attendance accounting program approved by the commissioner.

- (j) A student not actually on campus at the time attendance is taken may be considered in attendance for FSP funding purposes under the following conditions.
- (1) The student is participating in an activity that is approved by the local board of school trustees and is under the direction of a member of the professional or paraprofessional staff of the school district, or an adjunct staff member who:
    - (A) has a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and
    - (B) is eligible for participation in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.
  - (2) The student is participating in a mentorship approved by district personnel to serve as one or more of the advanced measures needed to complete the Distinguished Achievement Program outlined in Chapter 74 of this title (relating to Curriculum Requirements).
  - (3) The student is absent for one of the purposes specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.087(b), (b-1), (b-2), (b-4), (b-5), or (c). Excused days for travel under the TEC, §25.087(b)(1), are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the applicable site. A temporary absence excused under the TEC, §25.087(b)(2), must be supported by a document such as a note from the health care professional.
- (k) A student not actually on campus at the time attendance is taken also may be considered in attendance for FSP funding purposes under other conditions described in the handbook adopted under §129.1025 of this title (relating to Adoption by Reference: Student Attendance Accounting Handbook) related to off-campus instruction.
- (l) Before a district or charter school may count a student in attendance under this section or in attendance when the student was allowed to leave campus during any part of the school day, the local school board or governing body must adopt a policy, or delegate to the superintendent the authority to establish procedures, addressing parental consent for a student to leave campus, and the district or charter school must distribute the policy or procedures to staff and to all parents of students in the district or charter school.

*Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §129.21 issued under the Texas Education Code, §§12.106, 25.087, and 48.004.*

*Source: The provisions of this §129.21 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 588; amended to be effective September 1, 1997, 22 TexReg 7035; amended to be effective January 1, 2001, 25 TexReg 7155; amended to be effective April 26, 2009, 34 TexReg 2535; amended to be effective February 22, 2010, 35 TexReg 1465; amended to be effective August 23, 2012, 37 TexReg 6309; amended to be effective December 31, 2014, 39 TexReg 10473; amended to be effective August 21, 2016, 41 TexReg 6034; amended to be effective March 29, 2018, 43 TexReg 1851; amended to be effective December 25, 2019, 44 TexReg 7984.*