

|                    |                                                        |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DATE:</b>       | <b>November 6, 2025</b>                                |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>    | <b>SB 991: Expansion of At-Risk Student Definition</b> |
| <b>CATEGORY:</b>   | <b>School Finance</b>                                  |
| <b>NEXT STEPS:</b> | <b>Share with the appropriate staff</b>                |

This correspondence outlines changes to the Texas Education Code (TEC), [Section 29.081](#), made by Senate Bill (SB) 991, 89<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, 2025, which broadens the definition of students deemed at risk of dropping out of school. As a result, school systems are now required to provide accelerated instruction to students who meet the criteria for chronic absenteeism or truancy.

### Overview

Chronic absenteeism is now a key indicator for identifying students at risk of dropping out, as emphasized in SB 991. A student is considered chronically absent if they are absent for more than 10 percent of the school's required instructional days during the school year, or more than 10 percent of an enrollment period that exceeds 30 instructional days. Students enrolled for 30 instructional days or fewer do not qualify as chronically absent, regardless of their number of absences.

For example, a student who attends 70 instructional days and is absent for 9 days would be considered chronically absent, as the absences represent approximately 12.9 percent of their instructional days. In contrast, a student who is enrolled only 29 instructional days would not be considered chronically absent, even if they missed several days.

Only specific types of absences count toward chronic absenteeism. These include unexcused absences and locally excused absences that are not eligible for state funding. Absences that qualify for state funding under the 20 provisions listed in [Section 3.6.3 Requirements for a Student to Be Considered Present for FSP \(Funding\) Purposes in the Student Attendance Handbook](#) should not be counted. These provisions address situations such as verified medical appointments, religious holy days, court appearances, college visits (within specified limits), and absences related to military deployment, among others.

Truant students are those who are subject to compulsory school attendance, are not exempt from attendance requirements, and have accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences, whether full or partial days, within a six-month period during the same academic year.

In response to these changes, school systems must identify students who meet the criteria for chronic absenteeism or truancy and provide targeted interventions. These interventions should include accelerated instruction designed to address academic gaps and promote school engagement.

To support effective implementation, districts are encouraged to review and update attendance monitoring systems to ensure accurate tracking of absences and enrollment periods. Strengthening collaboration among campus administrators, counselors, attendance officers, and instructional staff will be essential in identifying students early and developing support plans tailored to the needs of chronically absent and truant students.

## **Support**

Questions about this correspondence can be submitted to [schoolaudits@tea.texas.gov](mailto:schoolaudits@tea.texas.gov) or [financialaccountability@tea.texas.gov](mailto:financialaccountability@tea.texas.gov).