

DATE:	February 3, 2026
SUBJECT:	District Attendance Policies, Complaints and Educator Responsibilities
CATEGORY:	Attendance, Complaints and Educator Responsibilities
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

Overview

Texas public school leaders partner with educators and families to help students succeed and to prepare them to be active and engaged citizens after they graduate. However, schools have a responsibility and duty to keep students safe as they seek to help them learn. It is inappropriate for educators to neglect students released onto public streets with no supervision or parental notification or to facilitate disruption by encouraging students to leave campus during instructional hours. Instead, educators should take affirmative steps to prevent students from disrupting education during the school day. In addition, educators must adhere to all provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics and adhere to all local policies regarding conduct in the workplace. The freedom of expression does not include the right to disrupt an orderly learning environment.

Actions Required of School Systems

Parental Notification and Unexcused Absences

School systems have an obligation to ensure students attend school and remain safe. With news of student walkouts happening across the state, this guidance is a reminder that students are not free to engage in speech that disrupts the school learning environment. Students must face the consequences of their actions during the school day, including potentially being assigned an unexcused absence under Texas Education Code (TEC), [Sec. 25.087](#). Numerous absences, whether excused or unexcused, may jeopardize a student’s ability to receive credit or final grades for classes under [TEC, Sec. 25.092](#). In addition, state law recognizes the importance of parental engagement and involvement in every aspect of their child’s education, which includes parents knowing the location of their child during the school day. School systems should make every effort to notify parents in instances where students may leave school property.

Educator Responsibilities

School systems should provide clear direction to their educators regarding the requirements and prohibitions included in [TEC, Sec. 28.022](#). School systems should further provide clear direction to students on attendance and absence policies and should not give exceptions to students for unexcused absences based on the political nature of the absence. School systems should also remind educators that any individual who encourages, facilitates or attempts to encourage or facilitate a student’s departure from a class or other school activity the student is required to attend may be in violation of [TEC, Sec. 37.124](#). If violations of law are found, the agency will take appropriate action, including referring any violations by certified educators to SBEC Enforcement, which will pursue enforcement actions with the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to seek sanctions as warranted.

Attendance and Related Enforcement

School systems are reminded that student attendance at public school is compulsory under [TEC, Sec. 25.085](#), and that absences for funding purposes are addressed in Section 3.6.3 of the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook ([SAAH](#)). School systems are required to follow the SAAH, and those alleged to have violated the SAAH may be subject to an attendance audit or agency investigation. If a school system is found to be in violation of state law, the agency will take appropriate action, which can include the appointment of a monitor, conservator or board of managers.

Complaints

Local School System Grievance Process

Individuals with concerns regarding school system or educator involvement in student protests should begin with the local grievance process. School systems should take review of student conduct and potential educator involvement seriously. They should then determine if any local district policies were violated and take appropriate action.

TEA Investigations Process

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also takes allegations that educators or school systems have violated state law seriously and will investigate these complaints thoroughly. If violations of law are found, the agency will take appropriate action to ensure that state law is upheld, and school systems and certified educators will be sanctioned accordingly.

For questions, please email generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov.