20-21 Attendance Guidance and Definitions

Background

- During remote learning in Spring, 2020, we made changes to our attendance and engagement expectations that allowed flexibility to accommodate different schools' and teachers' various remote learning plans and approaches while balancing the critical need to understand how students were accessing instruction and engaging with content to best target supports.
- As we move into the 20-21 school year, we are preparing to normalize our expectations regarding attendance as our systems become more consistent across the District.
- Keeping equity at the forefront, the 20-21 guidance will both simplify and standardize the definition of attendance so that it looks and feels more like it did before Spring, 2020, and will incorporate a tight, consistent definition of attendance for students in remote-only learning.
- In order to reflect our new (and likely evolving) context throughout the year, the guidance reflects the need to have centralized access to clear and reliable information about which students are attending, which are not, and what interventions have been attempted along the way.
- If you have any questions/concerns please reach out to your OS/R/AIS

20-21 Attendance Definitions

- In-Person attendance will be defined as a student being in school/class, reverting to the definition prior to remote learning.
- Students accessing remote learning (across scenarios of rejoin/resurgence/fully remote school opt=in) will be considered in attendance when there is minimally a "touchpoint" between the teacher of record and the student.
  - The prioritized definition of a "touchpoint" is the student attending a synchronous class during the time they would typically be in their in-person class.
    - Should a student be unable to participate in synchronous instruction due to extenuating circumstances, other examples of a "touchpoint" may include but are not limited to an email exchange with the teacher, an exit ticket/work completion, attendance at an online meeting/office hours session, a text message exchange with the teacher, or a phone call with the teacher.

Expectations for tracking attendance

Infinite Campus will continue to be our central source of truth with respect to attendance. Attendance should be input into IC regardless of learning scenario (return, rejoin, and remote) on a regular basis and in accordance with deadlines previously held by the school prior to COVID-19. The minimum requirements for attendance are as follow by ed level:

- 6-12: Attendance must be taken every scheduled period of the day (including in fully remote scenario)
- ECE-5: Attendance must be taken daily (including in the fully remote scenario)

Teachers will have similar IC access to the access from the Spring 2020, meaning that teachers, in addition to having the ability to take daily attendance, will also be able to use the Classroom Monitor tool to take attendance on previous days.. Teachers should not, however, delay taking attendance until the end of the day/week as occurred in certain cases during the spring of 2020, but instead follow regular attendance reporting deadlines provided by the school. The rationale for keeping the expanded IC access is to plan for fluidity across scenarios.

Here is a quick reference guide for your teachers to use as they get used to navigating this new module in IC. Here is a helpful video to support teachers in using the new Module.

Please continue to share your feedback as we continue to evolve our remote learning systems together!

Additional considerations:

1. Clear guidance on codes
   a. Teachers should take attendance as explained above.
   b. If the school is an in-person scenario, the Attendance Clerk should use the appropriate attendance code to replace the teacher entered absences the next school day.
   c. Schools should not use code 06 for students who are not attending as they likely have dropped out of schooling. Code 40 (drop-out/not attending) is the proper code and triggers outreach by Colorado Youth for Change to try and re-engage with the student/family as required under state Drop-out Prevention efforts.
2. Clear guidance on excused/unexcused -
   a. Excused Absence: Per state law and DPS Policy JHB-R, an excused absence is an absence for a day, or part of day, that is excused by permission from both the parent/guardian AND school principal. Such absences include those that are the result of the following:
      i. temporary illness or injury (can include subject to quarantine due to infectious disease exposure and contact tracing)
      ii. physical, mental, or emotional disability or condition
      iii. religious observances
      iv. death in the immediate family
      v. school service absences (absences that occur as a result of participation in school activities that are authorized and pre-approved by the school leader).
      Principals can request supporting information to help make their side of the decision if these absences go beyond reasonable time; i.e. a request to visit with the school nurse or provide a medical note if day 5 of stomach ache.
   b. Unexcused Absence: any absence without the permission of the parent/guardian **and** the school principal. Examples could be no call no show, a family powder (skiing) day, trip to another state/country without return date, or unauthorized leaving of building.
   c. Habitually Truant: 4 unexcused absences a month or 10 unexcused absences a year.
   d. For more information, please connect with your school social worker/psychologist.
3. Clear guidance on supports and interventions and consistency in use of interventions, including critical use of notes section in IC - see Attendance Intervention SOP from Whole Child. Specifically, there will be a **Documentation Requirement** that all attendance related parent/student communication and supports MUST be documented in IC in the "Attendance Intervention" tab; i.e. details about any calls and contacts with student or family regarding attendance should be documented in the Attendance Intervention Tab in IC. This documentation should indicate what was communicated by the school and the student/guardian/family member; i.e. "5/2/2020 at 5:30 pm – Teacher called father who is supporting student in Remote Learning and asked if there was anything I could do to help Student be attend our morning on-line class, father shared that he works during those hours at a new job and Student has to now watch younger siblings until Aunt can come at noon. We will try to schedule times in the afternoon to connect with Student to provide support."
   a. The purpose of this Documentation Requirement is
      i. To ensure compliance with state law,
      ii. To track supports tried across all school-types for mobile students or student's whose attendance improved but starts to dip,

      iii.   To help document in-person and remote support efforts should classrooms, schools, or the District have to return to remote learning or other location changes due to a COVID spike.

      iv.   To provide data for possible District-level support or case management (so case managers have reliable and accurate information) and for Truancy Magistrates or ARCH staffings to better help families by knowing what has been tried.

4.   While participation metrics during remote learning should not be used as the official attendance metric, there are many valuable insights educators can gain from the usage analytics in our common Learning Management Systems. See below for information on the usage analytics the Schools and Academics divisions will leverage across the system for instructional/coaching purposes to inform continuous improvement efforts (not accountability purposes with schools).

      a.   [6-12 Schools: Schoology Usage Analytics Guidance](#)

      b.   [K-5 Schools: SeeSaw Usage Analytics Guidance](#)