

**BLUM ISD
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES MANUAL**

2023-2024



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Procedures Specific to Blum ISD

Schedule of Activities

First Day

Each high school teacher shall list, in ink, all students that are present at the beginning of each period. Each elementary teacher shall list all students that are present at 9:00 a.m., 2nd period, the accounting time for Blum ISD. No student names should be included on this list that are not present on the first day. This list shall be signed in ink by the teacher and turned in to the PEIMS clerk at the end of the first school day.

Daily

Each elementary teacher shall take attendance for the students assigned to him/her at 9:00am for each day of the school year and each secondary teacher shall take attendance assigned to him/her at 9:00 am for each day of the school year. The attendance shall be recorded in the Ascender attendance program on their computer.

Secondary teachers shall take attendance by period for each student assigned to him/her for each day of the school year. The attendance shall be recorded in the Ascender attendance gradebook program on their computer. If the teacher is absent the office will give the substitute attendance sheets to mark with a pen and sign. They must return attendance sheet to the office after each period. **In the event the teacher cannot take attendance on the computer then the teacher is responsible for turning in a paper copy of attendance. ***An example would be a coach that is not in a classroom or a teacher that is having computer issues.**

Teachers shall follow all rules and regulations for marking attendance set forth in the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook. Students not listed by name on the attendance sheet shall be printed on the list by the teacher for updates. Students should be marked A if absent. Nothing should be entered if the student is present.

Each Six Weeks

Teachers are responsible for entering their grades for each class in the Ascender Gradebook on their computer. Grades are then marked posted by the teacher and the office will import grades. Computer generated Student Details Reports, Campus Summary Reports, and District Summary Reports are generated from Ascender and verified by the appropriate school representative.

Each Semester

Student Details, Campus Summary, and District Summary Reports are generated for the Semester using Ascender.

Yearly

All required documentation is collected and stored in the record storage room for Blum ISD. Required documentation is listed on page 4 of this manual.

Forms used:

Computer generated data reports – Ascender

Official attendance procedures

- Each teacher that has students assigned during the 2nd hour of the day (9:00 am) shall post attendance each in The Ascender attendance program. Attendance is taken daily. The attendance is taken at 9:00 am for the school year. For official attendance accounting and Foundation School Program (FSP) purposes, "Tardies" do not exist. Students are marked with an "A" if absent and nothing is entered for students who are present.
- The central attendance staff should adjust an absence for a student who was with authorized school personnel (nurse, counselor, principal, etc.) and was recorded absent at the time the official attendance roll was taken. The change must be documented, and an audit trail must be established (e.g., mark through and initial the absent mark, and document the reason). A comment can also be put in the Ascender attendance system for a individual student.
- Always use ink to make manual entries or corrections in the attendance records, on daily absence slips, on six-week absence reports, and/or on daily summary sheets. If errors are made on any official attendance document, strike through the error, enter corrections nearby, and initial.
 - *Never record manual entries in pencil or use liquid correction fluid or use a signature stamp.*
 - *Under no circumstances use an eraser or ink eradicator in any attendance records*

Medical exemptions – If a Student attends school for any portion of the day and brings a note from a health care professional the student will qualify for a Medical exemption. Each student is required to sign in and sign out when they leave or return to school. When a child returns to school they are required to get an admit slip form the office and the attendance clerk will be responsible for marking all Medical exemptions.

Whether to count the student Absent or Present for funding purposes Students should be counted Present for the following instances:

Students who are on campus at the time attendance is taken, but who are not in their assigned classroom, are considered in attendance for FSP purposes provided they were with a responsible campus official (e.g., nurse's office, counselor's office, principal's office, etc.). Class admit slips or other documentation supporting the claim must be retained for audit purposes (Section II).

A student not actually on campus at the time attendance is taken may be considered in attendance for FSP purposes under the following five conditions.

1. The student is participating in an activity which is approved by the local school board and is under the direction of a professional staff member of the school district or an adjunct staff member. This adjunct staff member must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree **and** be 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 19 TAC §74.13(a)(3).
3. The student is a Medicaid-eligible child participating in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Programs (EPSDT) implemented by the Texas Department of Human Services with contractual cooperation of the Texas Department of Health. Such students may be excused for up to one day at a time without loss of ADA.
4. The student misses school for the purpose of observing religious holy days, including traveling for that purpose. Excused days for travel shall be limited to not more than one

day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student will observe the holy days.

5. The student is temporarily absent due to a documented appointment with a *health care professional* if that student *commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment*. The appointment should be supported by a document such as a note from the health care professional. 19 TAC §129.21(k), TEC §25.087(b)
6. Students participating in any activity which is not approved by the local school board and/or without certified district personnel supervision are counted absent. To qualify for funding purposes, the certified district staff member/adjunct staff member must be accompanying the students as an official of the school district for the specific purpose of supervising the students and must be approved by the school board to supervise the activity. For example, students participating in 4H activities which are supervised solely by a County Extension Service Agent are reported present. 19 TAC §129.21(k)(1)

Responsibility

- ◆ List in the space provided below the name and phone number of the district personnel to whom all general attendance questions should be directed:
Name: _____ **Tony Davis/Paula French**
Work Phone Number: _____ **254-874-5231**
- ◆ The **teacher** recording the initial absence **is responsible for the accuracy** of the report and attests to the validity of the data with his or her signature.
19 TAC §129.21(a)
- ◆ The **attendance personnel** generating absence summaries and/or transcribing the absences or coding information into the accounting system are responsible for adhering to all laws and regulations pertaining to student attendance accounting. Each person entering data into the attendance accounting system must sign an affidavit attesting that the data he or she has entered is true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge. **In no case should attendance personnel be assigned the responsibility of determining a student's coding information except for Medical exemptions, Extracurricular and Field Trips .**
- ◆ **Special program directors** and/or staff are responsible for reviewing special program data and totals for accuracy and completeness.
- ◆ The **principal** of each campus is responsible for reviewing his or her respective Campus Summary Reports for completeness and accuracy. Reports from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), which reflect Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data, should be compared to locally-produced reports for reasonableness and accuracy. The principals affirm that they have checked, or caused to be checked, the accuracy and authenticity of the attendance data by signing the Campus Summary Report.
- ◆ The **superintendent** is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and safekeeping of all attendance records and reports. These records must be available for audit by the School Financial Audits Division of TEA. The superintendent affirms that he or she has taken measures to verify the accuracy and authenticity of the attendance data by signing the District Summary Report. **In the event errors are detected during the course of an audit, either an adjustment to subsequent allocations of state funds will be assessed or the district will be required to refund the total amount of the adjustment when the audit is finalized.** 19 TAC §129.21(m), TEC §42.255

Entering information into the attendance accounting system

Blum ISD uses Ascender software to electronically save the attendance information provided by teachers. The attendance records are maintained in the Records storage room and are stored for 5 years . Blum ISD retains teacher hand generated and hard copies of all attendance information in the Records storage room. Electronic data is saved on the server. Blum ISD contracts with ESC12 for software and technical assistance with attendance software.

Responsibility for the coding of special programs

(Career & Technology, Special Education, Pregnancy Related Services, etc.)

The teacher for each special population shall submit to the PEIMS clerk students who are eligible to receive services for special populations and the effective dates for eligible students.

CATE – Counselor / FCS teacher / Ag Science teacher / Computer technology teacher

Special Education – Blum ISD Special Education Director

ESL – ESL district coordinator

GT – GT district coordinator

In no case should attendance personnel determine the special program code of a student.

Documenting changes to special programs

Changes to a special program are made when the appropriate teacher/counselor sends data to the PEIMS clerk. The person responsible for those changes will maintain evidence that eligibility requirements are met.

Reconciling student membership in teacher rosters and the attendance accounting database

Student Attendance Detail Reports are generated each six-week reporting period. Medical absences are printed and verified and the documentation from the health care professional is kept with that report for audit purposes.

All corrections to attendance data must be documented by the individual making the correction. This procedure is especially important when student absences, as documented by the teacher, were not recorded as absences in the system for funding purposes (because the student was with the nurse, on a board-approved field trip with a teacher of the district, etc.).

Maintaining district attendance records at the end of the school year (including computerized records, period absence slips, and official calendar)

Teacher generated reports are maintained in the Registrar's office during the school year. Electronic data is maintained on attendance clerk's and PEIMS clerk computer, file server and on computer hard drive. At the end of the school year, all records are maintained in the Records storage room. School calendars are kept with this data.

Backup systems to protect the attendance accounting records

Copies of data are stored in separate locations both on and off campus. Copies are stored on computers, the file server, and on CD.

Responsibility for security of the attendance accounting records.

- ✧ Each teacher is to see that attendance records are secure while in their possession. The attendance clerk is to see that data is secure after the paper trail reaches him/her.
- ✧ Software used to store attendance data is password protected. Attendance clerk has edit rights to attendance and special populations data. Students have no access to the software as a result of controls used on the LAN.

Overview

From the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

Attendance Accounting Overview

- ↳ The *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (Handbook)* is the official standard of required information for all attendance accounting systems, whether manual or automated. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that the basis used to record and process attendance accounting data meets this standard. 19 TAC §129.21(e), 129.1023, and 129.1025
- ↳ Attendance and contact hours will be reported on the student level for the entire school year through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).
- ↳ 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 filed in the central office or properly stored on the respective school campuses of the district. Regardless of where such records are filed or stored, they must be readily available for audit by the School Financial Audits Division of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Auditors have the authority to examine attendance records for any year the district is required to retain records (Section II). In the event errors are detected during the course of an audit, either an adjustment to subsequent allocations of state funds will be assessed or the district will be required to refund the total amount of the adjustment when the audit is finalized. TEC §42.255, 19 TAC §129.21(m)
- ↳ TEA refrains from formally approving or certifying attendance accounting systems of any organization, public or private, that is in the business of providing services to Texas public schools. The software they purchase meets the requirements for attendance accounting as described in this *Handbook* before contracting with a vendor. A locally-designed system may be used, provided the instructions and information requirements prescribed by this *Handbook* are included. 19 TAC §129.21(e)
- ↳ Information for all Foundation School Program (FSP) attendance reports shall be made a part of the school's permanent records. Superintendents, principals, and teachers are responsible to their school board and to the state for maintaining accurate and current attendance records, regardless of the attendance accounting system in use. 19 TAC §129.21(a)
- ↳ No school district official (or any other person in the school district) has the authority, either implied or actual, to change or alter any rules, regulations, or reporting requirements specified in this *Handbook*.
- ↳ Participation in PEIMS is mandated for Texas public schools. TEC §42.006.
- ↳ Waivers for program requirements do not waive rules associated with eligibility for funding purposes unless the waiver specifically states that funding regulations are altered.

Audit Requirements

Introduction

- **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 filed in the central office or properly stored on the respective school campuses of the district. Regardless of where such records are filed or stored, they must be readily available for audit by the School Financial Audits Division of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). 19 TAC §129.21(m) Incomplete or inaccurate data will result in attendance not being allowed.
- It is the district's responsibility to ensure that the basis used to record and process attendance accounting meets this standard. 19 TAC §129.21(e)

General Requirements

Procedures

- A student must be served at least **two** hours of instruction per day to be included in membership. Students must be in membership before they are eligible for attendance. Students with disabilities follow the same two-hour-per-day eligibility rule.

- A student must be enrolled for 3 classes to be counted as eligible ½ day and in 5 classes to be counted for full day attendance.
- Always use ink to make manual entries or corrections in the attendance records, on daily absence slips, on six-week absence reports, and/or on daily summary sheets. Never record manual entries in pencil or use liquid correction fluid or use a signature stamp. If errors are made on any official attendance document, strike through the error, enter corrections nearby, and initial.
- Students are either present or absent at the time the official attendance roll is taken, at 9:45 am (during the 2nd period). The central attendance staff should adjust an absence for a student who was with authorized school personnel (nurse, counselor, principal, etc.) and was recorded absent at the time the official attendance roll was taken. The change must be documented, and an audit trail must be established (e.g., mark through and initial the absent mark, and document the reason).
- For official attendance accounting and Foundation School Program (FSP) purposes, "Tardies" do not exist.
- Attendance and contact hour eligibility begins the first day of school and continues for the entire school year, provided all required documentation is in order.
- Student Attendance Detail Reports are generated each six-week reporting period. After all documentation is reviewed, corrected and reconciled, the teacher information is stored.
- The Campus/District Summary Report is generated each six-week reporting period and reviewed by the superintendent's designee, following the same analysis as the Campus Summary Reports.
- All required documentation which is stored electronically can be reproduced in an acceptable format at the time of an audit.
- The district maintains this procedures manual specific in detail to the school attendance accounting system. This procedure manual will outline but is not limited to:
 1. how and when official attendance is to be taken by teachers,
 2. how attendance is entered into the attendance accounting system,
 3. which position(s) is/are responsible for the coding of special programs (such as Career & Technology, Special Education, Pregnancy Related Services, etc.),
 4. how changes to special programs are to be documented,
 5. how student membership is to be reconciled between the teacher rosters and the attendance accounting database,
 6. how the district will maintain attendance accounting records (including computerized records, period absence slips, and official calendar) after the completion of the school year,
 7. what backup systems are in place to protect the attendance accounting records, and
 8. which position is responsible for the maintained and security of the attendance accounting records.

Documentation Required

All attendance accounting systems must possess the ability to readily reproduce the student attendance data required in the *Handbook* upon notification of an audit, regardless of the medium of storage used. Student attendance data must be organized into three distinct data sets, all of which are described below: the Student Detail Report, the Campus Summary Report(s), and the District Summary Report. The retention period for all documentation required for audit purposes is five years from the completion of the school year unless specified differently later in this section. Blum ISD has contracted with RCI to oversee all records retention periods.

Copies of all required attendance records must be available and provided to the School Financial Audits Division of TEA within twenty (20) working days of written request by the Agency. Failure to provide all required attendance records [specific program(s) and/or grant(s)] could result in the retention of least 30% of the district's FSP allotment for the school year(s) requested.

Student membership from the teacher's roster is to be reconciled to the attendance accounting records at the end of each six-week reporting period. The reconciliation is verification that all students reported on attendance records and whether all "no show" students were purged from the attendance accounting system. The total number of students in membership is to be reconciled to the

total number of students listed in attendance accounting records. This document is to be certified by the attendance clerk and his/her supervisor by signature.

Additional Documentation required:

1. Gradebooks (retained for the required time after entering grades into the student's AAR). These are especially important when proving a student's special program service when end-of-semester grades were not received. *Local Schedule SD*, Texas State Library and Archive Commission
2. Admit slips from the office should be signed by the teacher or substitute.
3. For paperless accounting systems where absences are posted directly to the ADP system, any changes are documented in the comments section of attendance module.
4. Campus Daily Absence Summary reports, if used.
5. Class admittance slips or other documentation to support the claim that a student was with a nurse, counselor, assistant principal, or other school official at the time attendance was taken.
6. Documentation supporting the claim that a student was attending a board-approved activity, accompanied by a certified teacher/adjunct staff member of the district, signed by the person who supervised the student(s)
7. Documentation supporting the claim that a student was at a documented appointment with a health care professional.
8. Documentation supporting the claim that a student was participating in a district-approved mentorship through the Distinguished Achievement Program
8. **If any data changes are made subsequent to submission to TEA, updated and/or corrected copies of all reports are required to be available for audit**
9. Copies of the student's schedule showing the date of change if the student experienced a program change, including dates of withdrawal. For example, there must be documentation on file if a student changed from a one-hour to a three-hour career and technology course or if the student withdrew from the program.
11. Copies of any approved waivers the district may have received that affect funding.
12. Copy of the official school calendar reflecting all days of instruction and holidays (including bad weather days) for each instructional track offered in the district. (Each six week reporting period should be clearly identified.)
13. Copies of student transfer forms, if applicable.
14. Special program documentation.
15. Documentation which indicates the meaning of all locally-designed codes in the attendance system.