

Policies of the Board of Education

Section I Students

TRUANCY

900.18 Rule

A. School Attendance Officer

1. The District Administrator shall serve as the school attendance officer and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.
2. The school attendance officer should annually review the compulsory attendance, truancy and curriculum modification laws.
3. The school attendance officer shall be responsible for determining on a daily basis which students enrolled are absent from school and whether the absence is excused or unexcused in accordance with Board policy and these procedures.
4. Annually, the school attendance officer shall determine how many students enrolled in the District were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. The school attendance officer may notify the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the determination.
5. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who is truant of the student's truancy and direct the parent/guardian to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence and may be made by personal contact, mail or telephone call on which a written record is kept. "Truancy" means any absence of part or all of one or more days from school during which the school attendance officer or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of the student's absence by the parent/guardian. It also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law.
6. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who initially meets the criteria of a habitual truant by registered or certified mail in accordance with state law and outlined procedures. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days on which school is held during a school semester. The habitual truancy notice shall include the following:
 - a. A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
 - b. A statement that the parent/guardian or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student and that the student may be eligible for the District's student at risk programming.

- c. A request that the parent/guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the student's truancy. The notice must include the name of the school person with whom the parent(s)/guardian(s) should meet; a date, time and place for the meeting; and the name, address and phone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place if the original date is inconvenient. The date for the meeting must be within five school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice has been sent to the student's parent/guardian. With the consent of the student's parent/guardian, however, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days.
 - d. A statement of the penalties that may be imposed under state law on the parent/guardian if he/she fails to cause the student to attend school regularly.
7. The school attendance officer may visit any place of employment in the District to ascertain whether any minors are employed there contrary to law. All cases of illegal employment shall be reported to the Department of Workforce Development as required by law.
8. The school attendance officer shall have access to information regarding the attendance of any child between the ages of six and 18 who is a resident of the District or who claims or is claimed to be in attendance at a home-based private educational program or private school located in the school district. The school attendance officer may also contact home-based private educational programs to attempt to discover whether such programs meet the program criteria established by law. All such contacts should be documented.
9. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information, the Board's student records policy and implementing administrative guidelines to appropriate agencies for purposes authorized by state law.

B. Legal Referrals for Truancy

Prior to any proceedings being brought against a student for habitual truancy or against the student's parent/guardian for failing to cause the student to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer must provide evidence that appropriate school personnel have, within the school year during which the truancy occurred, done all of the following:

1. Documented the student's truanancies and notified the student's parent/guardian of the truanancies as required by law and these procedures.
2. Met with the child's parent/guardian to discuss the student truancy or attempted to meet with the parent/guardian and received no response or been refused. This meeting is not required if it is not held within 10 days of the District's initial notice to the parent/guardian that the student is a habitual truant.
3. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the truancy and has considered curriculum modifications.

4. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be the cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken steps to overcome the learning problems, except that the student need not be evaluated if tests administered within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level.
5. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be the cause of the student's truancy, and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.

The activities in items (3), (4) and (5) above need not be carried out if the school attendance officer provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

Legal References:

- § 118.15, Wis. Stats. [Compulsory school attendance]
- § 118.16, Wis. Stats. [School attendance enforcement]
- § 118.162, Wis. Stats. [Truancy committee and plan]

Policy References:

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