

Compulsory School Attendance

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State Board of Education

Vision: To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens.

Mission: To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community.



State Board Goals

1. **All** Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. **Every** Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. **Every** Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. **Every** School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. **Every** Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. **Every** School and District is Rated “C” or Higher



Mississippi Code 37-13-91

Mississippi law requires children from ages 6-17 years old to attend a public school, private school, or to receive home-based instruction.



Is Kindergarten Mandatory?



However, if a parent enrolls a child in a full day kindergarten program, the child and parents have to abide by the compulsory school attendance law.



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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



**In December 2015, Congress passed the
Every Student Succeeds Act.**



ESSA Defined

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This bipartisan measure reauthorized the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).



ESSA

- Reauthorizes and amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).
- Requires States to report on achievement and graduation rates for children in foster care.
- Includes new foster care provisions that complement requirements in the Fostering Connections Act
 - Emphasizes shared agency responsibility/decision-making
 - All education stability provisions must be implemented by December 10, 2016
- Removed “awaiting foster care placement” from the definition of a homeless child or youth under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Fostering Connections Act

The 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was enacted to support and promote school stability and success for students in foster care while collaborating with child welfare partners.

This law presents an important step forward, but state and local implementation are essential to ensure adequate protections for students in foster care.

Foster Care Requirements (Most Important)

- Every district must designate a “Point of Contact (POC)”.
- Students must be enrolled immediately.



Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is typically defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year -approximately 18 days a year, or just two days every month.



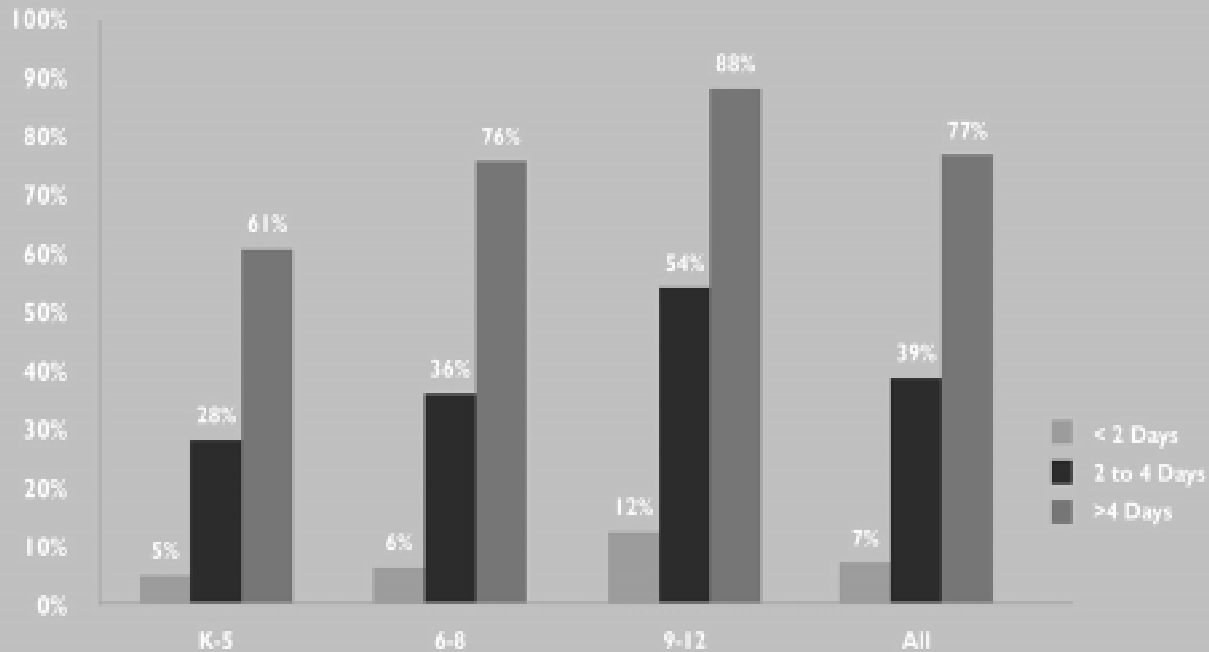
Mississippi Kids Count Research

- During the 2014/15 school year, 9.7% of Mississippi students in grades K-3 were chronically absent (excluding special education). Across all grades (K-12), 13.2% of Mississippi students were chronically absent.
- In a previous study by Mississippi KIDS COUNT, it was found that chronic absence in early grades (K-3) significantly reduces the likelihood that Mississippi students will be reading proficiently by third grade.



Mississippi KIDS COUNT

Percent Chronic Absence in Mississippi by Days Missed in September, 2013/14



Source: Analysis of MDE data by MS KIDS COUNT





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Resource

<https://www.fcru.ssrc.msstate.edu/380-2/>



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Mississippi Life Tracks

<https://www.lifetracks.ms.gov/>



Lost Instruction Time

$$\begin{array}{r} 330 \\ \times \\ 18 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

5,490

minutes of direct instruction



Components of Chronic Absenteeism

Unexcused Absence-The absence of a minor from school without valid excuse is unlawful and may subject to parent/guardian to criminal prosecution. Suspension are considered to be unexcused absences.

Excused Absence-Legislative or administrative release from school. An educational institution must publish and make available to parents and students the list of valid excused absences.

Suspension-(also known as temporary exclusion) is a mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one to ten days, during which time the student is not allowed to attend regular **school** lessons.



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Commonalities





School Day Defined

The number of hours of actual teaching which shall constitute a school day shall be determined and fixed by the board of trustees of the school district at not less than five and one-half (5 ½) hours.

Unexcused Absences

- Student misses five (5) cumulative unexcused days
- Report to School Attendance Officer
- School Attendance Officer will attempt to secure enrollment (i.e., letter, home visit, or phone call)



Referral Process

- Student misses twelve (12) cumulative unexcused days
- Report to School Attendance Officer
- School Attendance Officer will attempt to secure enrollment (i.e., letter, home visit, or phone call)
- Once all attempts have been made, the School Attendance Officer may file a petition in youth, city, county, or justice court



Observation

- ✓ Absenteeism is a habit that appears to start early
- ✓ A substantial number of kids miss over 20 days per year (9th -12th grade-over 20%)
- ✓ There is a small reduction in grades 2nd -5th but then a steady increase by grade 6
- ✓ Absenteeism increases in high school



Interventions

- ✓ Relationship-building: Students need individualized attention at school (this may explain why smaller schools have less absenteeism) and build strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
- ✓ Students need strong, positive relationships with teachers and other adults at school. In addition, research has found that older youth need strong and healthy relationships with peers, and that these can be a motivator for attending school.
- ✓ Contacting parents regarding absenteeism (works best with 10th grade and younger), creating meaningful incentives for parental responsibility, and including parents in all truancy prevention activities.
- ✓ Strong and clear attendance policies.



Interventions

- ✓ Family counseling that recognizes and builds on the family's own strengths and resources, with the overall goal of increasing attendance (minimum of six months).
- ✓ Intensive school interventions
- ✓ Establishing ongoing truancy prevention programs for school, rather than a one time effort or an effort that only targets high risk students.
- ✓ Include ongoing, rigorous evaluation, for each approach, to measure the impact of the program.



Excused Absence

- ✓ An absence is excused when the absence results from illness or injury which prevents the compulsory-school-age child from being physically able to attend school.
- ✓ An absence is excused when isolation of a compulsory-school-age child is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official.
- ✓ An absence is excused when it results from the death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family of a compulsory-school-age child. The immediate family members of a compulsory-school-age child shall include children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters.



Excused Absences

37-13-91

- ✓ An absence is excused when it results from a medical or dental appointment of a compulsory-school-age child.
- ✓ An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- ✓ An absence may be excused if the religion to which the compulsory-school-age child or the child's parents adheres, requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The approval of the absence is within the discretion of the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, but approval should be granted unless the religion's observance is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.



Excused Absence

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- ✓ An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel, including vacations or other family travel. Approval of the absence must be gained from the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, before the absence, but the approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- ✓ An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, that conditions are sufficient to warrant the compulsory-school-age child's nonattendance. However, no absences shall be excused by the school district superintendent, or his designee, when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.



Excused Absence

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- ✓ An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in official organized events sponsored by the 4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA). The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by the Extension Agent or High School Agricultural Instructor/FFA Advisor.
- ✓ An absence is excused when it results from the compulsory-school-age child officially being employed to serve as a page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of Representatives or Senate.



- The Mississippi Department of Health (2016) notes that “68,000 Mississippi children have asthma, which can be aggravated by secondhand smoke”.
- Other respiratory issues are also attributed to Second Hand Smoke (SHS) affecting pregnant women, babies, and children including ear infections, bronchitis, coughing, pneumonia and SIDS (MSDH, 2016).



Interventions

- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Attendance Monitoring - Monitoring activities should provide schools with accurate and timely information to effectively identify students who are most at-risk of becoming chronically absent
- ✓ Cause Determination-Physical, Mental Health, School Environment, and/or Academic Concerns

Types of Suspensions

In-School Suspension

A temporary change in placement from the regular classroom setting to a special classroom monitored by a district employee.





Types of Suspensions

Out of School Suspension

Mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one to ten days, during which time the student is not allowed on school grounds.





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Suspension Data

<https://msdataproject.com/infographics/>



Suspensions in Mississippi Schools 2015-2016

- Black students were more than twice as likely to receive a suspension compared to White students.
- The extent of this disparity also varies by the type of suspension provided (in-school versus out-of-school suspension).



Suspensions in Mississippi Schools 2015-2016

- Black students were more than three times as likely to receive an OSS (12.7%) compared to White students (3.9%)
- Black students are twice as likely to receive an ISS (10.2%) compared to White students (5.1%).



Rationale

Research demonstrates this is due to teachers interpreting misbehavior differently depending on a student's race, rather than a difference in behavior between White and Black students.



Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools (2016)

Black students are more likely to be suspended for infractions which are determined subjectively by the referring teacher for:

- Insubordination
- Willful defiance disrespect
- Excessive noise
- Threat
- Loitering



Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools (2016)

White students tend to be referred for suspension due to offenses which can be objectively determined such as:

- Smoking
- Vandalism
- Leaving without permission
- Obscene language



Interventions

- Create an Early Warning Process
- Utilize Counselors
- Classroom Management
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)



The phrases “Response to Intervention” and “Multi-Tier System of Supports” are used interchangeably among most educators.



Difference between Rtl and MTSS?

Rtl is an integral part of MTSS but MTSS is more cohesive and comprehensive in the goal of meeting the needs of all learners.

Response of Intervention

- Response to intervention (RtI) is a framework that many schools use to help students who are struggling with academics. There are three levels of intervention in RtI.
- Most students can make progress in the first level, which uses high-quality instruction to help kids catch up. Students who need more intensive help can get it in the second and third levels of RTI.

Multi-Tier System of Support

- A multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) is more comprehensive. It may include the three levels of RTI.
- MTSS goes beyond just academics. It also covers social and emotional supports. That means it can include behavior intervention plans.
- MTSS covers the adults at school, too. It includes things like professional development for teachers. MTSS also focuses on creating ways for adults to team up to help struggling kids.



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Quote

**“YOUR PROFESSION
IS NOT WHAT BRINGS
HOME YOUR WEEKLY
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EARTH TO DO, WITH
SUCH PASSION AND
SUCH INTENSITY THAT
IT BECOMES SPIRITUAL
IN CALLING.”**

VINCENT VAN GOGH
KUSHANDWIZDOM



Quote

WORKING HARD
FOR SOMETHING WE
DONT CARE ABOUT
IS CALLED STRESS.
WORKING HARD FOR
SOMETHING WE LOVE
IS CALLED PASSION.



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