

Saginaw Public School District (Proposed Policy for Board Review and Approval)

Excessive Absence Academic Policy (To be Added to the Attendance Handbook)

Purpose

To preserve the integrity of academic instruction and ensure student accountability, the Saginaw Public School District (SPSD) is implementing a policy regarding excessive absences. This addition addresses patterns of **chronic** absenteeism and sets clear academic consequences to ensure consistent student attendance and engagement.

Policy Overview

Students who miss an **excessive** number of days in a given semester or school year will receive a **failing grade** for the course(s) or be required to repeat the academic year, unless extraordinary circumstances exist and are formally documented and approved.

Threshold for Automatic Failure or Retention

- **Secondary (Grades 6–12):**
A student who accrues **15 or more unexcused absences** in a semester-long course or **30 or more in a full-year course** may automatically fail the course (“E”), regardless of current grade performance.
- **Elementary (Grades PreK–5):**
A student who accrues **30 or more unexcused absences** in a school year may be **retained in their current grade** pending an Attendance Review Committee (ARC) recommendation and administrative review.
- This policy applies to all absences, regardless of type, except for those exempted**

Extraordinary Circumstances

Students may be exempt from the academic consequences of this policy only if:

- A chronic or long-term medical condition is documented by a licensed health provider.
- There are verifiable mental health concerns or trauma-related circumstances.
- Other significant hardships (e.g., housing instability, court-ordered absence, etc.) are documented and reviewed.

All documentation must be submitted to the building administrator and/or Attendance Review Committee for consideration.

Appeals Process

Parents/guardians may request a formal review by the **Attendance Review Committee** if they believe the absences were due to **extraordinary** circumstances. The appeal must be submitted in writing with appropriate documentation within **5 school days** of notification of course failure or retention.

The appeal must include:

- A written explanation of extenuating circumstances
- Supporting documentation (e.g., medical notes, court orders, family emergencies)

Appeals will be reviewed by a committee composed of:

- A school administrator
- The course teacher
- A counselor
- A district-level designee

Decisions will be made within 10 school days of appeal submission and communicated in writing.

****Exemptions from Absence Count**

The following absences **do not count** toward the 20-day limit:

- **Documented medical hospitalizations**
- **Homebound instruction placements**
- **Religious holidays**
- **Approved school-sponsored activities**
- **Mandated court appearances**

Alignment with Existing Truancy Interventions

This policy supplements, and does not replace, the district's multi-tiered attendance intervention plan, which includes:

- Early identification by Attendance Improvement Paraprofessionals (AIPs)
- Parent conferences and School Attendance Agreements
- Interventions by Truancy Officers and ARC review
- Referral to SISD and potential legal action

Notification

Parents and students will be made aware of this policy:

- At the start of each school year
- During parent conferences related to attendance
- In all official letters sent at each intervention tier
- Social Media & other announcements

Policy Implementation Timeline

- Policy will go into effect **August 25, 2025**, at the start of the 2025–2026 school year.
- Communication will be distributed to all elementary & secondary students and families before the start of the school year.
- Policy will be included in the **Student Code of Conduct and Parent Handbook**.

Academic Support and Attendance Recovery Options

Students identified at risk of exceeding the absence threshold will be provided access to:

- Attendance contracts
- Targeted academic support or tutoring
- Mandatory Summer School/Credit Recovery
- Mental health and social-emotional support services

Summary Table

District / Location	Absence Threshold	Consequences
Detroit Public Schools (DPSCD)	Chronic / Long-term absences	Possible failure, repeat course/grade, retention
Suffolk Public Schools (VA)	20+ unexcused absences/year	Must repeat the year unless exempted
Lawrence County (TN)	8 total absences	Failing class, legal referral, event exclusions
Albuquerque Public Schools (NM)	20%+ school days (\approx 36 days)	Intensive support; risk of failure without progress

-