

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: August 26, 2025

NUMBER: 26-023

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Approval of Proposed
Revisions to BP 5113
Absences and Excuses;
First Reading

STRATEGIC PLAN/BOARD GOAL:

Track 1: Operational Improvements
Initiative: Optimize Business Practices

ABSTRACT:

Board policy revisions require Board approval.

ISSUE:

At issue is to approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5113 Absences and Excuses and open for public comments.

BACKGROUND AND/OR PERTINENT INFORMATION:

The Superintendent/designee presents drafts or suggestions for board policy revisions when the law changes or specific needs occur. Policy revisions shall normally be given two readings prior to adoption by the Board.

This is the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5113 Absences and Excuses within the Students series.

This update includes legal citation updates and clarifying verbiage not to conflict with AR 5113.

The Board Policy Committee reviewed the proposed changes, recommends approval and to open for public comments.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5113 Absences and Excuses as presented and open for public comments;
2. Do not approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5113 as presented;
3. Take no final action.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION:

The administration recommends the Board approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5113 Absences and Excuses as presented and open for public comments.

BP 5113 ATTENDANCE~~ABSENCES AND EXCUSES~~

The School Board believes that regular attendance plays a key role in the success a student achieves in school. The School Board recognizes its responsibility under the law to ensure that students attend school regularly. Parents/guardians of children aged 7 to 16 are obligated to send their children to public school except as allowed by law. The School Board shall abide by all state attendance laws and may use any legal means to correct the problems of excessive absence or truancy.

(cf. 5112.1 - Exemptions from Attendance)

(cf. 5112.2 - Exclusions from Attendance)

~~Regular attendance at school has been identified as a primary indicator of success in school. Students are encouraged to get to school every day on time, attend all classes, and actively participate in all classes in which they are enrolled.~~

Compulsory Education

~~Each parent or person having charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age shall be responsible for such child's regular, punctual, and active attendance at school as required under provisions of the law. Students share this responsibility. The administration shall enforce Alaska Statutes pertaining to compulsory education.~~

~~Regular and punctual attendance as well as active participation is essential to the successful learning process of students; excessive absenteeism disrupts and hinders that process, not only for the absent student, but for his/her classmates as well.~~

~~The Board believes that patterns of good attendance are set by students in their early school years and are dependent in large part on the attitude of parents. In all schools there will be firm, fair, and well-publicized rules of student attendance and close cooperation with parents on attendance problems.~~

~~The following procedures are established to prevent and reduce truancy. The superintendent shall take necessary action to correct the problems of excessive absence or truancy. If it reasonably appears, upon investigation, that a person has violated the compulsory education laws, the board or designee shall file a complaint with local law enforcement.~~

Daily Attendance Reporting Education

~~School principals are responsible for an adequate and comprehensive system of attendance reporting, with each teacher held responsible for accurate reporting of daily attendance in his/her classroom.~~

~~Each school site shall make every effort to notify the parents/guardians of their child's absence the first hour of the school day and to verify why the student is absent.~~

Attendance Policy

~~Students experiencing difficulty with attendance shall be counseled in an attempt to alleviate the problem. The district, the school, the parents/guardians, and the students shall work together to develop an appropriate plan for improving school attendance.~~

Excused Absences

The Superintendent or designee may excuse student absences for health reasons, family emergencies or other reasons the Superintendent or designee determines constitute good cause.

Note: The School Board, may allow students to be absent for religious exercises or instruction. The following optional language may be revised or deleted as needed.

Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be excused.

No student excused for religious holiday shall be denied the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday or denied an award or eligibility to compete for an award.

(cf. 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work)

Unexcused Absences/Truancy

The School Board is committed to keeping students in school. Truancy is defined as the absence of a student from class without the knowledge or prior consent of the parent/guardian. The Superintendent or designee shall implement all steps appropriate to reduce student absences and to ensure that all children residing within the district are receiving appropriate educational services as required by law.

(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)

(cf. 6164.5 - Student Study Teams)

(cf. 6176 - Weekend/Saturday Classes)

Note: The following optional paragraph is for use by districts that authorize teachers to assign failing grades for excessive unexcused absences as provided in BP 5121.

A student's grades may be affected by excessive unexcused absences in accordance with School Board policy.

(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the School Board any apparent violations of compulsory attendance laws. The School Board shall investigate such reports and any public complaints of violations of state compulsory attendance laws.

~~The following are considered to be acceptable absences:~~

- ~~1. Illness, medical, dental, and vision appointments substantiated by a statement from a parent/guardian, and/or medical practitioner. The principal may ask a parent/guardian to provide medical evidence from a physician or medical practitioner for excessive absences.~~
- ~~2. Death in the student's immediate family necessitating an absence. Immediate family is defined as legal guardians, birth or adoptive grandparents, parents, and siblings.~~
- ~~3. Other special circumstances approved by the principal.~~

~~When students who have been absent return to school and have not had that absence excused in advance, the student/parent must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. One of the following methods will be used to verify students' absences.~~

- ~~1. Written notes from parent/guardian.~~
- ~~2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the school and the student's parent/guardian.~~
- ~~3. Any other reasonable method that establishes the fact that the student was actually absent for the reason stated. The school shall retain or make a written record of the reasons for the absence.~~

~~Return to School~~

~~Students will have the right to make up schoolwork after returning to school. The teacher will determine the time required to complete assignments. It will be the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian, in conjunction with the classroom teacher, to ensure that the student completes any schoolwork missed while absent from school.~~

~~Satisfactory attendance at school is essential to learning, and regular attendance is key to academic success.~~

~~High School students (grades 9-12) absent more than sixteen (16) times from each semester course in which they are enrolled may be considered for alternate placement. The principal will make the determination of placement. This decision will take into~~

consideration input from the parent/guardian, student and teachers. The principal's decision shall be final.

Elementary students (grades K-5) and middle school students (grades 6-8) absent more than sixteen (16) times per semester may be assessed for additional interventions prior to being considered for retention.

Tardiness

Middle and high school students are considered tardy through the 10th minute of the class period. After the 10th minute, the student is considered absent from that period. Elementary students are considered tardy through the 30th minute of the day. After the 30th minute, the student is considered absent for one half day. If the student is tardy, he/she should report directly to the office to secure an admit slip.

Habitual tardiness is a constant disruption to the class as a whole. Therefore, in Middle and High School, to attempt to alleviate this behavior, each five (5) tardies will be considered an absence.

Appeals Procedures

If a parent or student wishes to appeal a decision made pursuant to this policy, such an appeal must be initiated in writing within fifteen (15) school days of the date of the decision or the date of the letter of notification to the principal who will, in turn, notify the Superintendent. The letter requesting an appeal must include specific reasons that the request should be considered. If an appeal is not filed within the timeline provided, the student/parent/guardian shall be deemed to have waived the right to an appeal and a hearing. The Superintendent shall render a written decision within five (5) school days of the close of the hearing. A parent/guardian may appeal the Superintendent's decision by requesting in writing that the school board review the decision within five (5) days of the Superintendent decision. The Board will hear the appeal in executive session at the next scheduled board meeting.

Legal References:

Alaska Statutes

14.03.070 School age

14.17.500 Student count estimates

14.17.160 Student counting periods

A.S. 14.30.010 When Compulsory Attendance

A.S. 14.30.020 Violations

A.S. 14.30.030 Prevention and reduction of truancy

ALASKA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

4 AAC 09.005-4 AAC 09.105 State aid

~~*Revised: January 24, 2012*~~

Adopted: July 25, 2006

Revised: January 24, 2012

Revised:

Northwest Arctic Borough School District