

PARENT-TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

February 10, 2026

MEETING AGENDA

- Attendance and Truancy Policy and Definitions
- District Attendance Data
 - Chronic Absenteeism
 - Truancy
 - Chronically Truant
- Current Proactive and Reactive Approaches
- Barriers and Challenges
- Next Steps

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

(POLICY AND DEFINITIONS)

[Board Policy 7:70 Attendance and Truancy](#)

Compulsory School Age: 6 years (on or before September 1) and 17 years

Chronically Absent: A student is considered “chronically absent” if their absences total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause and out-of-school suspensions for an enrolled student.

Chronic/Habitual Truant: A chronic or habitual truant is any student who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 attendance days

Valid Cause: Illness, medical or therapeutic appointment, death in immediate family or family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student, additional situations related to a student’s status as an expectant parent, parent, or victim of domestic or sexual violence

Exemptions [105 ILCS 5/26-1](#)

- Up to five mental health days
- Additional accommodations for students missing school for religious reasons
- One day for a civic event

ILLINOIS SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Chronic Absenteeism 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause and out-of-school suspensions for an enrolled student.

Demographic	District		State	
	2025		2025	
All	14.5		25.4	

ILLINOIS SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Truancy Rate: This graph shows the percentage of students who miss more than 1 percent but less than 5 percent school days per year without a valid excuse.

Demographic	District	State
	2025	2025
All	1.6	26.3

ILLINOIS SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Chronic Truancy Rate: A chronic or habitual truant is any student who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 attendance days

Demographic	District	State
	2025	2025
All	0.6	19.8

How should districts handle situations where a family goes on extended vacation or travel in excess of 15 days?

A district that is concerned about the impact of absences in these circumstances should engage their families and communities on the importance and impacts of attendance or to explore other solutions that may meet the needs of their communities. A school board could adopt a remote educational program policy for individual students to participate in with the consent of their parent/guardian, per 105 ILCS 5/10-29. Please note that statute requires that the criteria for determining that a remote educational program will best serve the student's individual learning needs must consider, at minimum, the student's prior attendance, disciplinary record, and academic history. Statute also requires that the remote instruction must be aligned to state learning standards, must be consistent with the instruction and educational experiences given to students at the same grade level in the district, and must be delivered by licensed teachers. We have been asked repeatedly if a district can drop a student from its enrollment roster in this circumstance. The answer generally is "No." Under law, districts can only remove a student from the roster after 15 consecutive days of absence without valid cause if either the student cannot be located or the student can be located but has been provided all available supportive services and still refuses to return to school. This means that districts cannot remove a student because their family has taken an extended trip, for example, to visit relatives in another country. The district's knowledge that the student is on a trip and plans to return means they do not meet the statutory qualifications to be removed

Do mental health days or the civic engagement day count against attendance?

Both are considered an excused absence. They count toward a district's chronic absenteeism rate since that metric is calculated using both excused and unexcused absences, but they do not count toward truancy or chronic truancy rates.

Are mental health days included in the calculation for chronic absenteeism?

Yes. "Chronic absence" means absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause ... (See – 105 ILCS 5/26-18.) Therefore, whether a mental health day is excused or unexcused, it will be included in the calculation for chronic absenteeism

Is there any documentation required when a student uses a mental health day?

No. A student cannot be required to provide a medical note or any other documentation when using one of the five allowed mental health days. Beyond five days, a doctor's note can be required subject to the district's absenteeism and truancy policy.

PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE APPROACHES

PROACTIVE

- Regular attendance checks and check in with students/families
- Purposeful entry - relationship building – special projects
- Dean/counselors meet – review discipline, social emotional, attendance data
- Nurse contact
- Home visits

REACTIVE

CURRENT K-8 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School	Total Letters Sent in November 2025	Percent of Student Population Receiving a Letter	# of Students Displaying True Attendance Concern
Fabyan	21	10%	3
Harrison	30	7%	10
Heartland	18	6%	2
Mill Creek	23	6.7%	4
Western Avenue	25	7.5%	1
Williamsburg	39	16%	27
GMSS	53	9.2%	N.A
GMSN	58	10%	N.A

GENEVA HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1st Semester Data:

- 58% of students absent for 5% or less of the semester
- October-19% of students missed 10% or more of the semester
- December-17% of students missed 10% or more of the semester

Reasons for absences: illness (lots of Influenza), vacations, college visits, mental health days, hospitalizations

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Difficulty Supporting Students During Extended Absences

- Hospitalizations and Partial-Hospitalization Programs
- Vacations

School Procedures/Policies Need to be Reviewed

NEXT STEPS

- GHS Deans meeting with Deans from other Districts
- Review attendance data at a District Level
- Share information with the Board – data, proactive, reactive steps – consider policy/procedures
- Share information at Back to School Nights
- Consider universal grading practices at each level
 - High school adopted late work policy – you can get up to a 70% by the end of the unit

Send home positive letter for attendance improvements