Chapter 9: Attendance Reporting

Rule 9.2 Reporting Attendance for Virtual Learning

Background As a part of Mississippi's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), many local education agencies (LEAs) will utilize one (1) of three (3) options (traditional schedule, hybrid schedule, or virtual schedule), or any combination thereof, beginning with the 2020 – 2021 school year to meet the statutorily mandated 180-day teaching day requirement. *See* Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-63. This policy contains the requirements for LEAs to report attendance beginning with the 2020 – 2021 school year for traditional, hybrid, and virtual schedules.

School Year Attendance Collection Policy Beginning 2020 - 2021 School Year
Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-13-91 makes education for any child between the age of 6 and 17 compulsory, requires schools to report daily attendance, and requires referrals to other entities when attempts to secure enrollment and/or attendance of a compulsory-school-age child are unable to effect the enrollment and/or attendance.

Existing regulations governing the collection of attendance assume physical presence. Beginning with the 2020 – 2021 school year, attendance shall be collected as follows:
- Schools shall report daily attendance using the following types: traditional (in-person) and virtual (i.e., online/distance learning).[1]
    - For <u>in-person attendance</u>, consistent with existing regulations, a student will be marked present or absent.[2]
    - For <u>virtual (online/distance learning) attendance</u>, the student shall be marked present or absent based on the following:
        - For a student to be marked present when attending school through virtual learning, the LEA shall meet one (1) of the following conditions:
            - If the LEA uses a learning management system (LMS),[3] the student shall be authenticated and engaged in education consistent with the LEA's prescribed policy; or
            - If the LEA does not use an LMS, the LEA shall make one-on-one contact with a student for the day to authenticate their presence ***and*** provide daily evidence of engagement consistent with the LEA's policy.[4]

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[1] For attendance reporting purposes, in-person is defined as classes where the student accesses instruction within the physical school building or on the school campus. Virtual learning is defined as the student accesses instruction outside of the physical school building such as online or through distance learning mechanisms.

[2] *See* Miss. Code. Ann. §§ 37-13-91 and 37-151-5(j)

[3] A learning management system (LMS) is a software application that allows schools to create, manage and deliver instructional content, and that includes collaboration and reporting tools (e.g., Google Classroom, Instructure Canvas and Schoology).

[4] LEAs shall describe their local board-approved attendance policies and what constitutes sufficient authentication and engagement to verify attendance in a virtual learning environment.

Types of Traditional, Hybrid, and Virtual Scheduling Based on Restart/Digital Learning Plan/Home Connectivity

1. In-Person Mode (Traditional)
   a. Hours at school[5]
   b. Reporting
      i. Report attendance in Local SIS[6] **daily**
      ii. Report attendance to MSIS[7] **monthly**
2. Mixed Mode (Hybrid)
   a. Designate in MSIS which days of attendance are counted via which mode (**daily** or **weekly**)
3. Synchronous[8] Online Mode (Digital-Virtual)
   a. Daily assignment [a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction] completed = hours toward daily attendance
   b. Attending scheduled daily interactions = hours toward daily attendance
   c. Reporting
      i. **Daily** metadata for accessing software, completing assignments, and participating
      ii. Report engagement in Local SIS **daily** [data integration with LMS]
      iii. Report attendance to MSIS **monthly**
      iv. Automated metadata report to MDE via LMS **monthly**
4. Asynchronous[9] Online Mode (Digital-Virtual)
   a. Daily assignment [a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction] completed = hours toward daily attendance
   b. Attending scheduled weekly interactions [one-on-one or in groups] = hours toward daily attendance
   c. Reporting
      i. **Daily** metadata for accessing software, completing assignments, and participating
      ii. Report engagement in Local SIS **daily** [data integration with LMS]
      iii. Report attendance to MSIS **monthly**
      iv. Automated metadata report to MDE via LMS **monthly**
5. Asynchronous Offline Mode (Digital-Virtual)
   a. Daily assignment [a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction] completed = hours toward daily attendance

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[5] Based on a waiver granted by the State Board of Education on June 11, 2020 for Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-67 and Process Standard 13.1 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019*, LEAs are required to provide a minimum of 240 instructional minutes per day to students for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Districts are encouraged to schedule in-person instructional days at 330 minutes when possible. However, minutes may be reduced to allow for altered transportation schedules, health screenings, class transitions, modified food service schedules, and other activities to maximize health and safety of staff and students.

[6] Student Information System

[7] Mississippi Student Information System

[8] Synchronous instruction: two-way, real-time/live, virtual instruction between teachers and students when students are not on campus.

[9] Asynchronous instruction: instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engaged at the same time.

b. Attending scheduled weekly interactions [one-on-one or in groups] = hours toward daily attendance
c. Reporting
   i. **Weekly** metadata for accessing software, completing assignments, and participating
   ii. Report engagement in Local SIS **weekly** [data integration with LMS]
   iii. Report attendance to MSIS **monthly**
   iv. Automated metadata report to MDE via LMS **monthly**
6. Asynchronous Offline Mode (Learning Packets)[10]
   a. Daily assignment [a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction] completed = hours toward daily attendance
   b. Attending scheduled weekly interactions [one-on-one or in groups] = hours toward daily attendance
   c. Reporting
      i. Report attendance in Local SIS[11] **weekly**
      ii. Report attendance to MSIS[12] **monthly**

In the LEA's plan required by the MDE for the 2020 – 2021 school year, the LEA shall clearly outline the LEA-defined policies it is using to meet the criteria for reporting students present in a virtual learning environment. Attendance shall be collected daily and reported in accordance with the requirements outlined in Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-13-91 and 37-151-5(j) and Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 30.2, State Board of Education Chapter 30, Rule 30.2, and Policy 2.1 of the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

Based on a waiver granted by the State Board of Education on June 11, 2020 for Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-67 and Process Standard 13.1 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019*, LEAs are required to provide a minimum of 240 instructional minutes per day to students for the 2020 – 2021 school year. The daily instructional minutes need not be consecutive but shall occur within the same day. A program meets the synchronous online method requirements if the minimum daily instructional minutes are met, even if part of the day includes asynchronous activities.

LEAs are required to maintain daily schedules that document the amount of instruction a student or group of students is scheduled to receive on a given day. The schedule shall detail the amount and type of instruction being provided that the LEA has approved for the purpose of recording attendance in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-13-91 and 37-151-5(j).

Dual Enrollment - When dually enrolled, the student may be counted, for adequate education program funding purposes, in the average daily attendance of the public school district in which the student attends high school. (*See* Miss. Code Ann. § 37-15-38(7)) Therefore, during dual credit class periods on days when the college schedule does not align with the LEAs schedule, students should not be counted as absent.

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[10] Asynchronous Offline Mode is typically used for students who do not have access to content via an electronic device and who are present for class off-site, completing assignments via pencil and paper.
[11] Student Information System
[12] Mississippi Student Information System

Absences shall be entered as either excused or unexcused consistent with definitions defined in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 30.2, State Board Policy Chapter 30, Rule 30.2. Unexcused absences will result in the same reporting of truancy referrals.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-1-3, 37-13-91, and 37-151-5(j). *(Adopted July 16, 2020 as a Temporary Rule)*