

State Requirements for Withdrawing, Claiming, Reporting, & Responding to Student Absences

Are districts required to withdraw students after 20 days of nonattendance?

No. OSPI has the following requirements and recommendations that impact district withdrawal practices.

Apportionment

It is often misunderstood that OSPI's requirements for claiming students for state funding determine or direct school districts to withdraw students from the district. That is not the case. Apportionment requirements **do not direct or require** school districts to withdraw students from their classes or the school. Apportionment guidelines only require that the district cannot claim these students for state funding. See the [OSPI Enrollment Reporting webpage](#) for more details.

Students who have not attended school within the first four school days of September or within twenty consecutive school days prior to the other monthly count days thereafter cannot be claimed on Form P-223 for state basic education funding ([WAC 392-121-108\(1\)](#)). This includes both excused and unexcused absences. There is one exception to this funding rule, as outlined in [WAC 392-121-108\(1\)\(a\)](#). If there is an agreement in place between the district and the student's parents that the student will continue his educational progress while temporarily absent from school, the student can be counted for two months. However, the student must return to school by the end of the school year. This exception does not apply to ALE enrollment.

A student who is eligible for special education services but has not received special education services in the month prior to the count day, cannot be claimed on Form P-223H for special education funding. However, a district is not automatically relieved of its special education and Section 504 obligations if a student is not claimed for funding and is still enrolled. School districts are still obligated to provide Free and Appropriate Public Education for students that are not enrolled in their district.



CEDARS

CEDARS reporting guidance states that school districts have the flexibility to define minimum enrollment thresholds for their students (e.g. when to withdraw students) in their district policy. For CEDARS data reporting, a threshold of 20 consecutive full days of unexcused absences is suggested as the minimum amount of time to keep a student enrolled prior to withdrawing the student for non-attendance. (For more details, see Non-Attendance Withdrawal section of the [CEDARS Reporting Guidance 2022-23](#) pg. 31)

OSPI CEDARS Reporting Guidance instructs districts not to submit a student enrollment record to CEDARS for a student that never attends the school at the beginning of the year. **This guidance does not instruct districts to withdraw students**, it only clarifies that students who do not attend school at all (e.g. do not show up) should not be reported in CEDARS (see Changes Between School Years section of the [CEDARS Reporting Guidance 2022-23](#) pg. 32).

Please note that current school year CEDARS submissions are not due until October 15 (see [CEDARS Data Manual 2022-23](#) pg. 18). Even after October 15, districts can retroactively change or update CEDARS submissions to reflect changes in enrollment. Additionally, CEDARS reporting is **not required** to be aligned with P223 reporting dates for claiming students for apportionment. Different deadlines and reporting rules apply to these collections.

For the remainder of the year, the guidance states that school districts have the flexibility to define minimum enrollment thresholds for their students (e.g. when to withdraw students) in their district policy. For CEDARS data reporting, a threshold of 20 consecutive full days of unexcused absences is suggested as the minimum amount of time to keep a student enrolled prior to withdrawing the student for non-attendance. (For more details, see Non-Attendance Withdrawal section of the [CEDARS Reporting Guidance 2022-23](#) pg. 31)

Absences and Responsibilities of School Districts

Truancy

If a student accrues unexcused absences attending school and accumulates unexcused absences, the school and district must follow the required steps outlined in the Compulsory Attendance law ([RCW 28A.225](#)) and they include, but are not limited to:

- Inform parent of each single unexcused absence
- Schedule a parent conference to address the underlying barriers to attendance
- Administer the WARNS or other assessment
- Provide data-based interventions
- File a truancy petition with the local juvenile court between the student's 7th unexcused absences in a month or 15th unexcused absence in a year
- Refer the student to a Community Engagement Board

For a detailed summary, see OSPI's Attendance & Truancy [Legally Required Steps for Elementary and Secondary](#).

Absence Rules

[WAC 392-401-045](#) requires districts to conduct outreach and attempt to reengage students even if they have been withdrawn.

Finally, a school district maintains the responsibilities to conduct outreach ([WAC 392-401-045](#)) and intervene ([RCW 28A.225.020](#) & [RCW 28A.225.030](#)) even if the student does not attend in the first several days of school (e.g. the students that are sometimes recorded in data systems as "No Shows"). For further clarity, school districts cannot withdraw students involuntarily at the beginning of the year or otherwise without attempting the outreach and interventions required in rule and statute.

As a reminder, OSPI does not direct or require districts to keep students enrolled. Districts are encouraged to keep students in their systems to continue outreach and reengagement. That will look different depending on the district and the student information system. OSPI is working on forthcoming guidance that will provide details on options to accomplish this, based on experience from several districts.

Contact

For questions regarding Enrollment Reporting and Apportionment, please contact Becky McLean at becky.mclean@k12.wa.us.

For questions regarding CEDARS Reporting, please contact Lisa Ireland at lisa.ireland@k12.wa.us.

For questions regarding Attendance, Truancy and Reengagement, please contact Krissy Johnson at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us.