

Administrative Memo

Date: July 7, 2020
To: School Administrators
From: Chris Neale, assistant commissioner, Office of Quality Schools
Subject: QS-20-007 – Attendance Changes for the 2020-21 School Year

In Missouri, because attendance is so closely associated with student success, student attendance is a key factor used in both school funding calculations as well as district accountability measures. To support local education agencies as they work to address implications of COVID-19, today the State Board of Education (State Board) took important action related to student attendance during the 2020-21 school year.

The State Board approved a new attendance rule that provides parameters for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to calculate state payments to districts and charter schools that implement unique schedules and patterns of instruction. These new learning models blend onsite and distanced instruction for the 2020-21 school year. These unique schedules and instructional patterns are allowable if the blended learning model: 1) meets DESE-approved standards for instruction and course content, and 2) is designed to address public health concerns during the pandemic. School districts and charter schools must have an approved Alternative Methods of Instruction – Extended (AMI-X) Plan before claiming attendance for blended learning models. [Click here](#) to learn more about the AMI-X amendment and approval. Further guidance on this topic can be found [here](#). More information can also be found on the FAQ document [here](#).

The State Board took further action regarding attendance. DESE uses student attendance metrics as one of the standards evaluated under the Missouri School Improvement Program-5 (MSIP-5). At the recommendation of DESE, the State Board agreed to waive Standard 4: Attendance Rate, Indicator 1, under MSIP-5 for the 2020-21 school year. As a result, attendance will not be used for state accountability purposes.

For further questions or information on the following attendance-related topics, please contact the appropriate DESE team member listed below:

- MSIP-5: Jocelyn Strand at 573-751-4104 or jocelyn.strand@dese.mo.gov
- Claiming Attendance: Tammy Lehmen at 573-751-7054 or tammy.lehmen@dese.mo.gov
- AMI & AMI-X: Konnie Koenigsfeld at 573-751-1362 or konnie.koenigsfeld@dese.mo.gov