



CONNECTICUT STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**Talk Tuesdays**  
*Student Attendance,  
Engagement and Support*  
**#8**

John Frassinelli, Division Director  
Kari Sullivan, State Attendance Lead

Connecticut State Department of Education  
September 8, 2020

# Welcome & Talk Tuesday Objectives

- To ***engage district attendance administrators in open dialogue*** around student engagement and participation during COVID-19.
- To provide an opportunity for districts and the state to ***work together*** as we reopen schools for the 2020-21 school year.
- To ***share lessons learned, common concerns*** and to provide overall support to each other.
- To ***ensure that participants' needs and interests*** inform future meetings, agendas and future guest speakers.
- To ***identify ways the state can support districts*** to improve student attendance in different learning models.



# Meeting Outline

1. Introductions & Check-in
2. Latest Resources
3. Attendance Reporting & Monitoring
4. Supporting Student Attendance During Remote Learning
5. Ideas for next steps & Feedback
6. Closing & Next Meeting



# INTRODUCTIONS & CHECK-IN



# LATEST RESOURCES



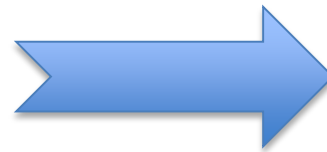
# Superintendent's Digest

## September 4, 2020

- [Update on Facial Coverings \(see question 12\) - Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Reopening Public Schools, Volume 3](#)
- [Updated Guidance Regarding IDEA Eligibility Until Age 22 \(A.R. v. CT State Board of Education\)](#)
- [Return to Learning Playlist](#) ★
- [Tracking Attendance on Remote Days for State Reporting](#) ★

## September 2, 2020

- [Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Reopening Public Schools, Volume 3](#)
- [District Reopening Plans](#)



[Link to Superintendents Digest](#)



# Superintendents' Digest

## August 31, 2020

- Addendum 11: [Interim Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings in Schools during COVID-19](#) Updated on 9/4



## August 27, 2020

- Addendum 9: [Contact Tracing Scenarios in Schools](#)
- Addendum 10: [Reframing and Reopening School Discipline Amidst COVID-19 Guidance](#) ★



## August 25, 2020

- [Healthy Schools Start with Healthy Adults](#) ★
- [Professional Support Series for Districts - Series 14](#)
- [Hackers Eye Students Returning to Virtual Classes as Easy Targets](#)



# **SUPPORTING STUDENT ATTENDANCE DURING REMOTE & HYBRID LEARNING MODELS**

*(FOR DISCUSSION ONLY – NOT OFFICIAL)*





# Supporting Student Attendance

1. Tracking Student Attendance
2. Supporting Students and Families
3. Strengthening Schools to Support Attendance
4. Structures and Systems of Support
5. Addressing Student's Safety and Well-being

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Tracking Student Attendance

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is requiring attendance be taken and tracked for each student each day. Student attendance in all learning models should be consistent with the State Board of Education's definition for attendance that, "A student is considered to be 'in attendance' if present at their assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day."

Please use the [CSDE guidance for tracking attendance on remote days](#) for state reporting purposes during the 2020-21 school year. This guidance would apply to students who have opted-in to full-time remote learning, are learning remotely during the week as part of a hybrid model, or are learning remotely because the entire school is operating remotely due to health concerns.

If there are any questions about this guidance, please contact Kendra Shakir at [Kendra.shakir@ct.gov](mailto:Kendra.shakir@ct.gov).

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Supporting Students and Families

- **Listening to and understanding issues** families are facing and addressing any that may interfere with student attendance, including: transportation, child care, housing, and employment.
- **Providing training opportunities for families on device use and access to school platforms.** Planning ways to engage families in person at the beginning of the school year, following all health and safety rules, since the target audience may not be able to access training online.
- **Implementing high-impact family engagement strategies** by applying the [guiding principles](#) in [Connecticut's Framework for Family Engagement](#).
- **Communicating, in a variety of modes, clear attendance and participation expectations** during remote learning to families and students early on in the school year and continuously during the period of time that students are in remote learning models.
- **Identifying special populations of students that may require additional supports** and connect with school or community partners that can assist them, e.g., students with a history of chronic absence; English learners; students with chronic health issues; students with disabilities.
- **Keeping lines of communication open and accessible** by providing parents with an email or phone number they can use to easily address issues related to attendance or connectivity during remote learning.
- **Launching a local campaign** as part of the national [2020 Attendance Awareness Campaign](#) with Attendance Works.

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Strengthening Schools to Support Attendance

- **Training and supporting teachers and school support staff** on how to engage families and accurately track attendance during remote learning, e.g., estimating the amount of time to complete an assignment; special considerations for students with disabilities; role of the school nurse and district medical advisor.
- **Implementing Child Find protocols** that require promptly referring to a PPT any student whose attendance is considered unsatisfactory or at a marginal level of acceptance.
- **Developing approaches to discipline** that consider educator input and avoid setting unreasonable expectations for staff or students/families as outlined in [Addendum 10, Reframing and Reopening: School Discipline Amidst COVID-19 Guidance](#).
- **Ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE)** to each student determined eligible and for whom the parent has provided written consent for the provision of special education and related services as described in [Addendum 6, Reopening Guidance for Education Students with Disabilities](#).
- **Working with families and health care providers to ensure that school health and immunization requirements are met** prior to missing deadlines that could result in school exclusion for noncompliance. The CSDE resource, [Improving Attendance by Addressing School Health Assessments and Immunizations](#), outlines best practices for working with key partners, including school personnel, families and community-based providers.
- **Engaging the school nurse** to connect with families where health or COVID-19 are barriers to participating in remote learning.

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Structures and Systems of Support

- Convening district and school **attendance teams**.
- **Monitoring attendance early and often** ([Monitoring Attendance in Distance Learning, Attendance Works](#)).
- **Assigning roles/responsibilities to team members** to connect with families immediately, ascertaining the root causes and implementing solutions or interventions to assist with improving attendance.
- **Pinpointing common barriers or causes of students missing school** and partnering with community partners to assist with solutions.
- **Reviewing and revising the schools tiered system of interventions** to better align with the remote learning model ([Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era and User's Guide](#)).
- **Promptly referring to a planning and placement team (PPT)** any student whose attendance is considered unsatisfactory or at a marginal level of acceptance.
- **Continuously tracking and monitoring the effectiveness** of all interventions.
- **Partnering with your regional DCF office and local YSB** to develop strategies to address attendance issues *prior* to the need for an official referral for educational neglect (DCF) or truancy (YSB).

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Addressing Student's Safety and Well-being

**A trauma-informed approach that is sensitive to the family's needs** should be taken prior to considering a student to be truant or a family to be suspect of educational neglect. Districts should ***prepare staff, including staff working directly with families,*** to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.

It is important that districts and schools ***ensure that the following efforts to improve attendance occur prior to filing a referral:***

- **Meeting/s held with parents and student** to understand family's needs and reasons behind missing school, including making and documenting multiple efforts to contact the family if the family is not immediately responsive.
- **Planning and placement team (PPT)** held or scheduled.
- **Appropriate interventions** determined, implemented, and monitored to support improved attendance.
- **Services and/or referrals and made with community agencies** providing student and family services.

*(for discussion only – not official)*



# Addressing Student's Safety and Well-being (continued)

Particularly given the trauma the community has experienced during this pandemic and its effect on our students, referrals for educational neglect should be considered only after all supports and resources have been exhausted. “[Educational neglect](#)” occurs when a school-aged child has excessive absences from school through the intent or neglect of the parent or caregiver. For children older than 12, excessive absenteeism through the child’s own intent, despite the caregiver’s efforts, is truancy which is handled through the school district. Additional information on truancy referrals can be found on the [CSDE Truancy webpage](#).

While rigorous efforts are encouraged to facilitate student attendance, ultimately lack of response to school contacts raises concerns about the overall safety and well-being of families during these challenging times. CSDE, in partnership with DCF, provided considerations for districts and school when mitigating the risk of students being unsupported and in unsafe situations in [Attendance Guidance and Ensuring Student Engagement during School Class Cancellations Due to COVID-19 memorandum issued on April, 9, 2020](#).

The following guidance is also available:

- Form to file Non-Emergent Report Online (attached);
- [FAQ for DCF Electronic Reporting Update](#);
- [When to Make a Referral to the DCF Careline](#).



*(for discussion only – not official)*

# IDEAS FOR NEXT STEPS & FEEDBACK





# Closing & Next Meeting

*September 22, 2020*

*10 to 11 a.m.*

