



# School Attendance and Truancy

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## DEFINITIONS

# Truant

- ▣ A “truant” is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause for a school day or portion thereof<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Definition provided by school code 105 ILCS 5/26-2a

# Chronic Truant

- “Chronic or habitual truant” shall be defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days (*equivalent to 9 school days*)<sup>1</sup>
- This formula changed from 10% to 5% in the 2011-12 school year. This data is reported to ISBE through the End of Year Report by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Definition provided by school code 105 ILCS 5/26-2a

# Valid Cause

- ▣ "Valid cause" for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the board of education in each district, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Definition provided by school code 105 ILCS 5/26-2a

# Drop Out

- A "dropout" is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district enrollment roster for any reason other than the student's death, extended illness, removal for medical non-compliance, expulsion, aging out, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school and is not known to be home-schooled by his or her parents or guardians or continuing school in another country<sup>1</sup>
- Dropout age changed from 16 to 17 in 2005

<sup>1</sup> Definition provided by school code 105 ILCS 5/26-2a

# Out of School Suspension (OSS)<sup>2</sup>

- When a student receives an out-of-school suspension, the attendance is considered as unexcused absence(s)
- Counts towards truancy

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# In School Suspension (ISS)<sup>2</sup>

- When a student receives an in-school suspension, he/she is considered present and, therefore, it does not count as an absence
- Does not count towards truancy

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# How does Woodruff Safe School's attendance affect District 150?

- For funding purposes, the ADA is claimable through the Regional Office of Education (ROE), not District 150.
- Truancy and chronic truancy data is reported through the student's home school.

# How does Skyward report truancy?

- Skyward counts a student absent based on the amount of periods they miss in a single day<sup>2</sup>
  
- For Example:
  - Lindbergh has 9 periods. If a student is absent 2-4 periods, they are considered absent for ½ day.
  - If a student misses 5 or more periods, they are considered absent for the entire day.

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# What constitutes a full-day of student attendance?<sup>2</sup>

- 300 minutes = A full-day of attendance for students in grades 2 – 12
- 240 minutes = A full-day of attendance for students in grades K – 1

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# What constitutes a half-day of student attendance?<sup>2</sup>

- ▣ 150 minutes = A half-day of attendance for students in grades 2 – 12
- ▣ 120 minutes = A half-day of attendance for students in grades K – 1

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# Can students be counted present if they are in attendance for a portion of the class period?

- Yes, for schools that offer a regular schedule (i.e. class periods of 40-60 minutes in length). This is how the majority of our Middle Schools and High School take attendance.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# Regular Schedule Example<sup>2</sup>

	1 <sup>st</sup> – 60	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 60	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 60	4 <sup>th</sup> – 60	5 <sup>th</sup> – 60	300
<b>Student Attendance</b>	60	60	60	60	10*	250
<b>Minutes Allowed</b>	60	60	60	60	60	Full-Day

\* Can claim for full-period

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# Attendance is only taken at the beginning of the day for primary schools. How is attendance tracked?

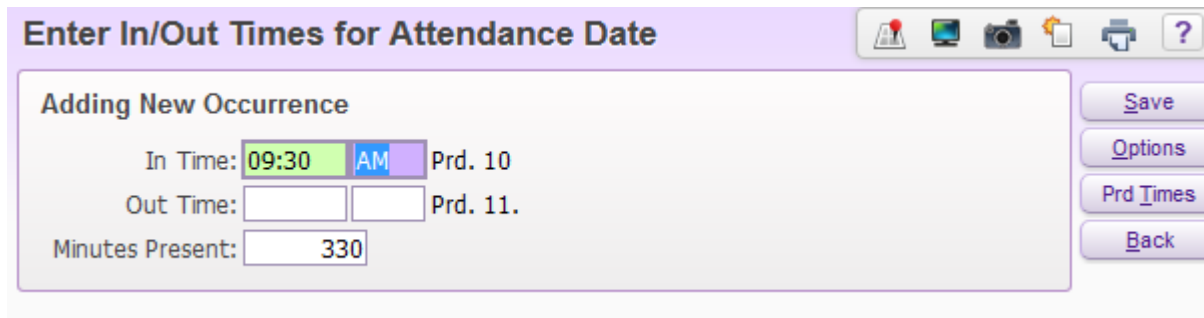
- Attendance is only taken once at the beginning of the day, but two periods are scheduled for primary schools – a morning session and an afternoon session.
- Primary Schools must keep track of the in and out time for any student so that attendance is calculated correctly.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)



# Primary Schedule Example<sup>2</sup>

- ▣ School Day is 8:30 – 3:30
- ▣ Jennifer comes in at 9:30
- ▣ The attendance that we can count for her is from 9:30 – 3:30 with the exception of a 30 minute lunch
- ▣ Claimable attendance = 330 (full day attendance)



The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Enter In/Out Times for Attendance Date". The window has a toolbar with icons for help, refresh, print, and search. The main content area is titled "Adding New Occurrence" and contains the following fields:

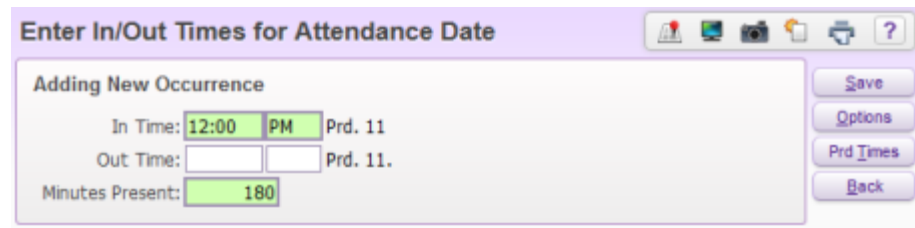
- In Time: 09:30 AM Prd. 10
- Out Time: [ ] Prd. 11.
- Minutes Present: [ 330 ]

On the right side of the window, there are four buttons: Save, Options, Prd Times, and Back.

<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# Primary Schedule Example<sup>2</sup>

- ❑ School Day is 8:30 – 3:30
- ❑ Jennifer leaves at 12:00 due to illness
- ❑ The attendance that we can count for her is from 8:30 – 12:00 with the exception of a 30 minute lunch (*if she has already had her lunch period, if not, we do not need to subtract 30 minutes*)
- ❑ Claimable attendance = 180 minutes (half day attendance)



The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Enter In/Out Times for Attendance Date". The window contains a form for "Adding New Occurrence". The form has the following fields and values:

In Time:	12:00	PM	Prd. 11
Out Time:			Prd. 11.
Minutes Present:	180		

On the right side of the form, there are four buttons: "Save", "Options", "Prd Times", and "Back".

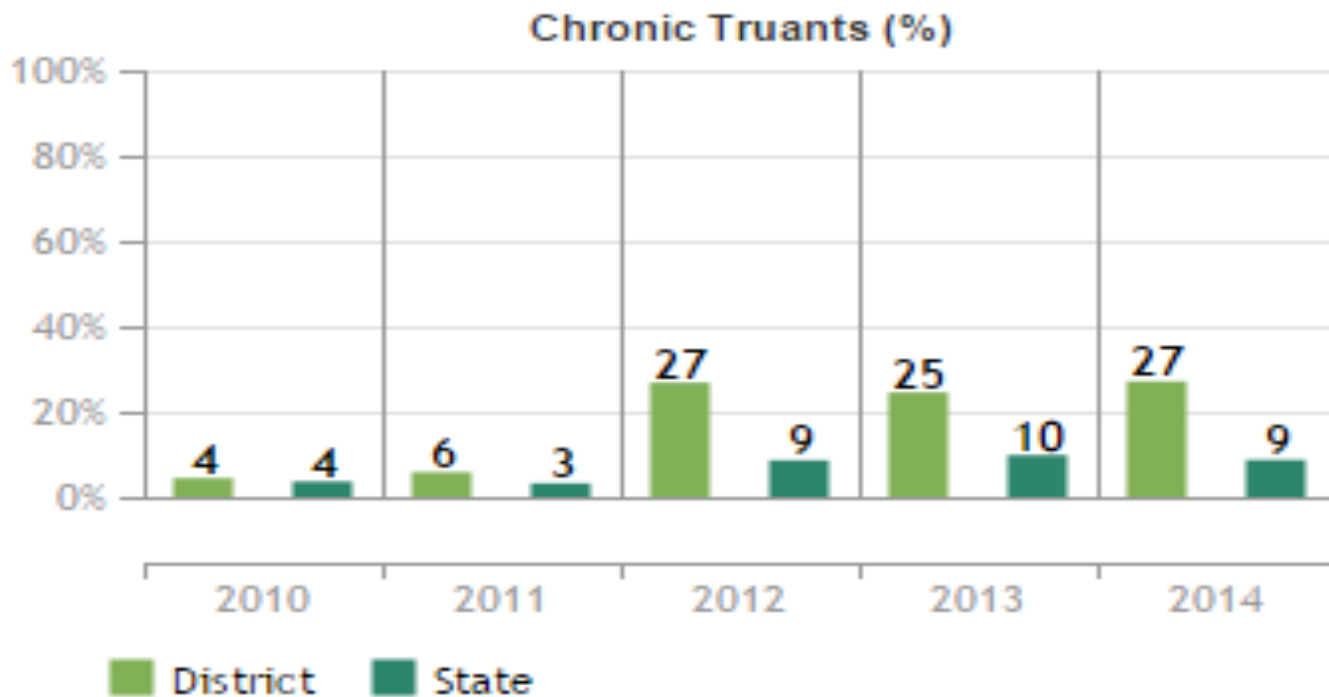
<sup>2</sup> Information provided from ISBE General State Aid (GSA)

# Where does our district stand in relations to attendance?

	Unexcused Absence	Excused Absence
<b>Students with 1 – 4 Absences</b>	4,842	5,860
<b>Students with 5 – 9 Absences</b>	1,397	1,259
<b>Students with 10+ Absences</b>	939	443

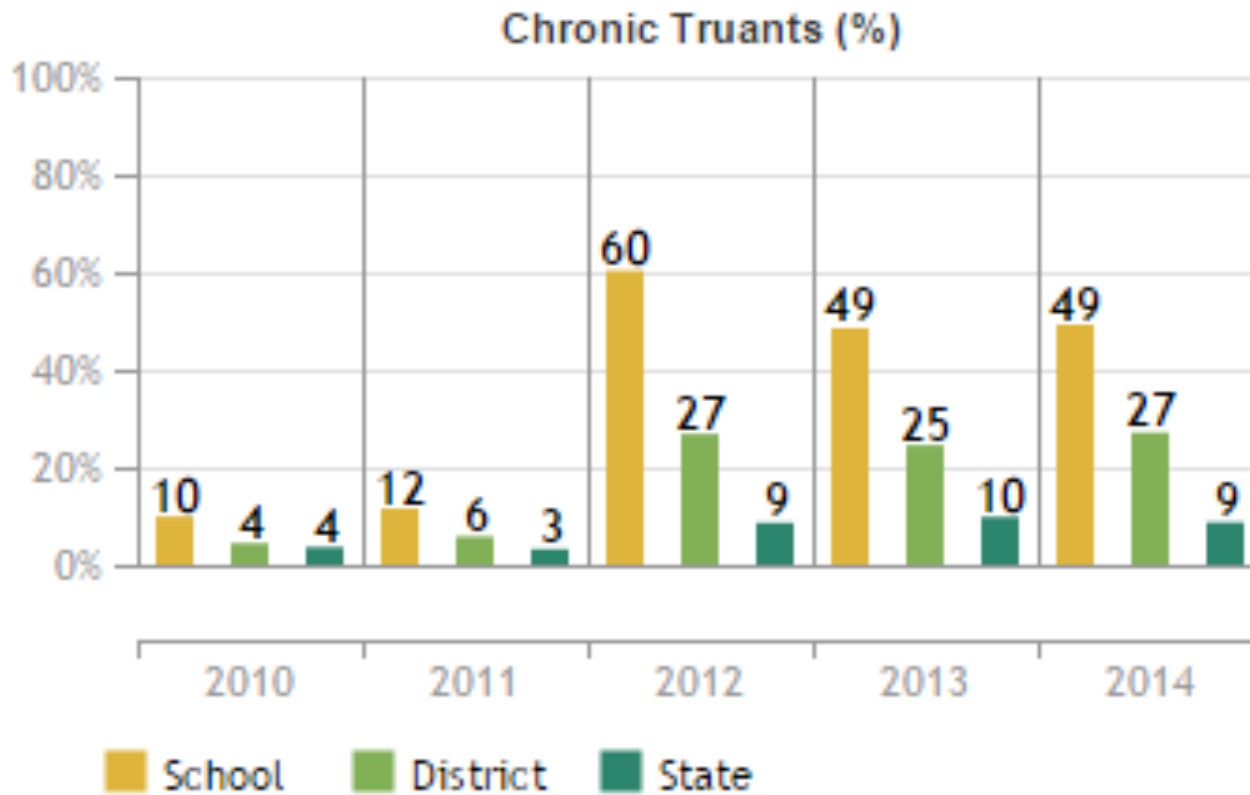
Semester 1 data provided (08/18/2014 – 12/19/2014)

# District Chronic Truancy Trend



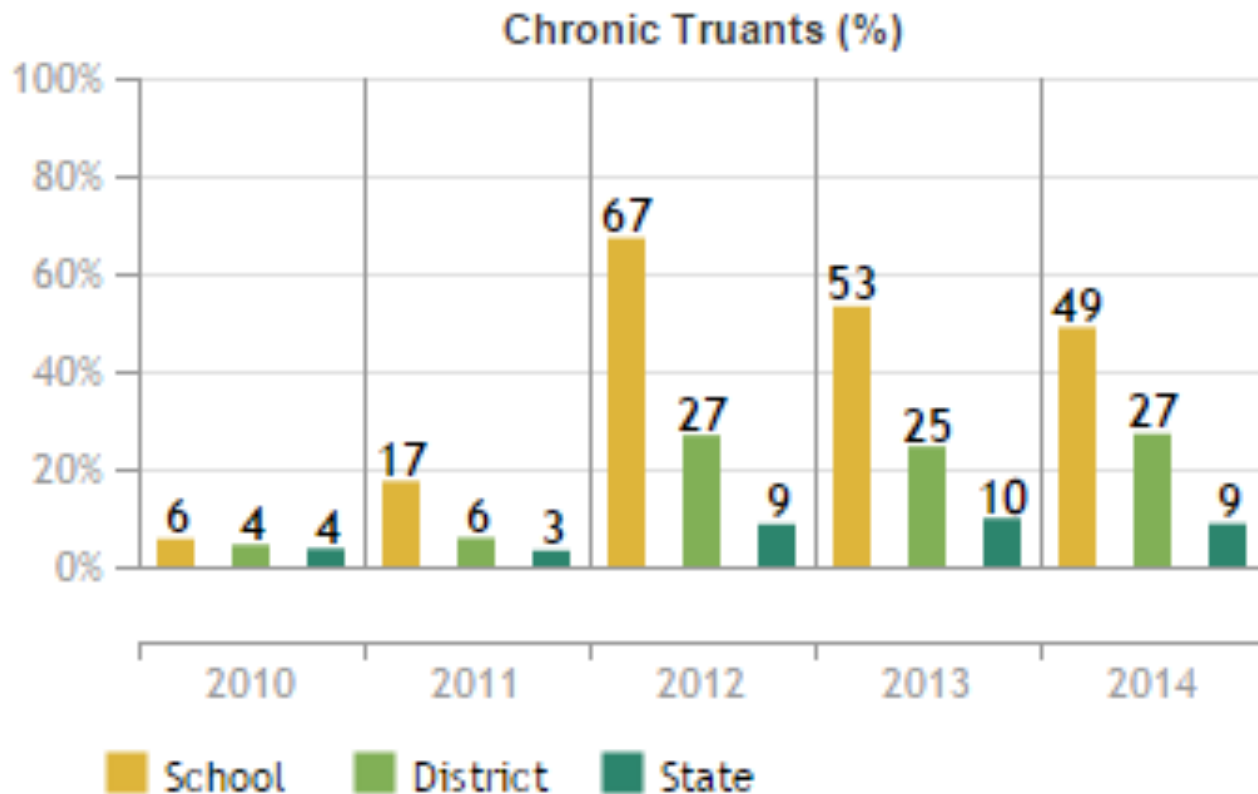
Formula change in 2011-12 school year from 10% to 5%

# Manual Chronic Truancy Trend



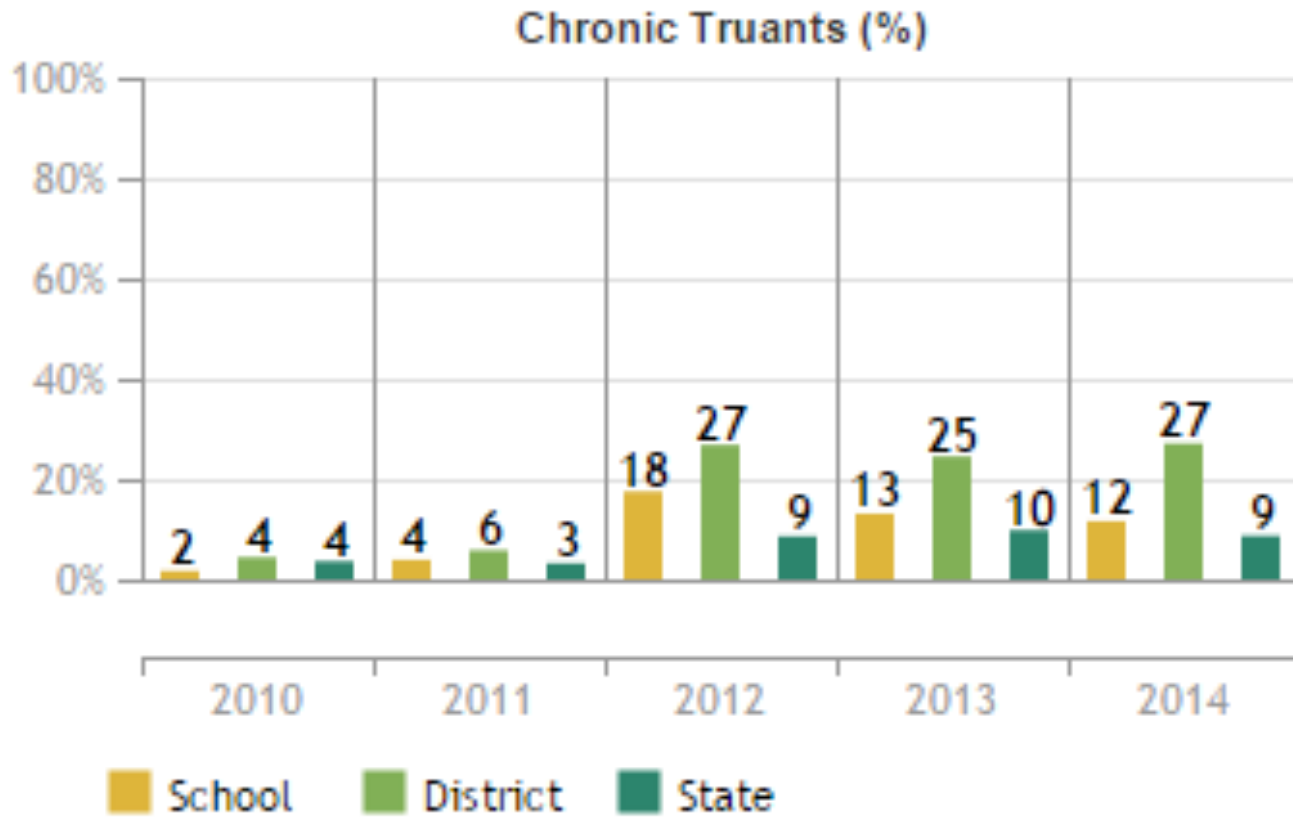
Formula change in 2011-12 school year from 10% to 5%

# Peoria High Chronic Truancy Trend



Formula change in 2011-12 school year from 10% to 5%

# Richwoods Chronic Truancy Trend



Formula change in 2011-12 school year from 10% to 5%

# Why is the truancy rate so high?

- ❑ Formula change from 10% to 5% on how chronic truancy is calculated in 2011-12
- ❑ Different methods in which schools are using to report absences (inconsistencies between districts across the state)
- ❑ Our district has a 48 hour policy on attendance changes – some districts will make changes at any time
- ❑ Our district does not employ a truancy officer(s)
- ❑ Our district has chosen not to drop students
- ❑ Students cut classes



# Truancy & Dropout Comparison

	Chronic Truancy Rate	Dropout Rate
<b>PEORIA SD 150</b>	27.1%	2%
<b>CITY OF CHICAGO SD 299</b>	27.8%	4%
<b>EAST ST LOUIS SD 189</b>	9%	7%
<b>DANVILLE CCSD 118</b>	10.1%	6%
<b>ROCKFORD SD 205</b>	5%	8%

# Preventing Chronic Truants

- ❑ To decrease the truancy rate, we could start expelling students after a specific amount of unexcused absences
- ❑ We could hire truancy officers
- ❑ Conduct district wide attendance push with incentives
- ❑ Continually utilize the Attendance Intervention Log
- ❑ Training for clerical staff has been provided since 2013 & last year an attendance manual was created for staff
- ❑ These are just some suggestions, and the list is not exhaustive.

# What are schools doing to prevent truancy?

- ▣ Incorporating attendance expectations in PBIS and have established criteria for giving incentives (rewards, eligibility, boosters, recognition and incentives)
- ▣ Uses communications such as attendance contracts, announcements, parent letters, newsletters, and Skylert messages
- ▣ Utilizes staff such as counselors, social workers, home school facilitators, and Family Core staff make home visits and build rapport with students and parents
- ▣ Makes referrals to Project Target to follow up on unexcused absences
- ▣ Posts attendance data to promote reaching school wide targets for attendance

# What are schools doing to prevent truancy?

- Utilizing Check and Connect and Check in/Check out to meet with students about challenges and through adult encouragement attendance improves
- Utilizing advisory times to review student data so that students set their own goals for improvement and monitor their progress
- Having increased the amount of communication between teachers, administrators and the clerical staff regarding student absences
- Using Leadership teams to review student absence and tardy data on a monthly and quarterly basis

# Does attendance affect grades?

- Yes, if a student accumulates more than 5 unexcused absences in a grading period, they fail that grading period.
- If a student failed due to excessive absences only, teachers were instructed to use a 199 comment code.
- If a student failed due to excessive absences and failing grades, teachers were instructed to use a 200 comment code.
- Parents can appeal grade changes within 10 school days

# Attendance and Grade Statistics

	<b>Comment Code 199</b>	<b>Comment Code 200</b>	<b>Comment Code 199 &amp; 200</b>
<b>Student Count</b>	634	557	325

# Grade Appeals

- We allow 10 school days for parents to appeal grades given on a report card.
- Of the students that received a 199 or 200 code, there were 90 that were approved and 43 that were denied.

# Key Points

- ▣ Formula Change in 2011-12 from 10% to 5%
- ▣ Board can expel chronic truants
- ▣ Continue utilizing the Attendance Intervention Log
- ▣ Central Office provides weekly attendance and grade reports to schools
- ▣ Central Office provides monthly discipline reports to schools