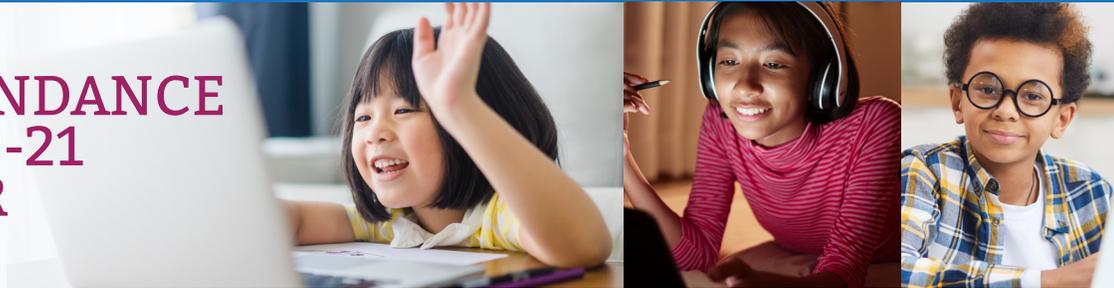




TAKING ATTENDANCE FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR



PRACTICAL TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

Maintaining contact with students is essential. Throughout Oregon's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students have had to pivot how they connect with one another. Taking attendance is one of the most important ways schools can stay connected to their students. More specifically, taking attendance allows schools to verify that students learning from home have the tools and supports needed to access instructional materials and offer a personal touch-point to account for students' mental health and well-being.

This resource promotes time-saving tips and best practices to support the requirements and recommendations laid out in [Section 2b: Attendance of Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#).

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND THE WHOLE TEAM TO TAKE ATTENDANCE AT COQUILLE VALLEY ELEMENTARY

Every morning, teachers mark each student as present in the Student Information System (SIS) if the student is either physically present or attending via Google Meet. Over the course of the day, teachers will take additional attendance in a Google Sheet, updating it throughout the day as teachers see their students attend a later Google Meet, submit work, or engage in other ways. The next morning, the attendance secretary accesses the Google Sheet and changes the attendance in the SIS as needed.



KEY CONCEPTS ON ATTENDANCE FROM READY SCHOOLS, SAFE LEARNERS

For reference, the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) guidance is below. Please note that ODE wrote the guidance to be broadly applicable statewide, and many districts have elected to put more specific policies or practices in place that this doesn't address.

For **On-Site Instructional Models**, ODE's prior attendance and reporting practices are unchanged.

For any **Hybrid Instructional Model** or **Comprehensive Distance Learning**:

- Attendance includes both participation in class activities and interaction with an educator including:
 - A licensed or registered teacher during a school day; or
 - Educational assistants, paraprofessionals, and Tribal Attendance Pilot Project (TAPP) family advocates through teacher-designed and facilitated processes.
- Interaction can be evidenced by any of the following or reasonable equivalents:
 - Participating in a video class;
 - Communication from the student to the teacher via chat, text message, communication app, or email;
 - A phone call between the teacher or educational assistants/paraprofessionals and the student, or, for younger students, with the parent or guardian of the student;
 - Posting completed coursework to a learning management system or web-based platform or via email; or
 - Turning in completed coursework on a given day.
- When there is no evidence of student interaction during a 24-hour period surrounding a scheduled school day as described, students are reported as absent for the day (grades K-5/ self-contained) or class (grades 6-12/ individual subject).

There may be unusual or unique situations where continuation of daily attendance reporting may require additional problem solving. If a district has questions or concerns, please reach out to ODE. ODE does not anticipate attendance data will be a part of the At-A-Glance School and District Profiles or Accountability Details reports.

TIPS FROM OREGON EDUCATORS

TIP 1: ESTABLISH A 24-HOUR WINDOW FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In the past, teachers marked students absent if they were not in their classroom seat when the bell rang. This year, students have 24 hours to be marked present by attending an online class with their teachers, submitting an assignment online, emailing their teacher, or other ways outlined in the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance.

Districts and schools can and should set the 24-hour window that works best for their staff and systems. For example, one school sets their attendance window from 4pm to 3:59pm-- a 24-hour period beginning on Monday at 4pm until Tuesday at 3:59pm-- in order to give teachers time at the start and end of their scheduled day to finalize their attendance records. Districts and schools should also be explicit about any weekend engagement from students counting towards being present on Mondays.

TIP 2: SET A CLEAR TIME FRAME AND PROCESS FOR EDITING AND FINALIZING ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Following the initial 24-hour window, districts and schools must determine and clearly state how long teachers have to edit their initial attendance records based on students' engagement outside of their synchronous class. For example, one school allows three days for attendance adjustments after the initial 24-hour period which gives teachers time to finalize their records during their planning blocks.

In addition, districts and schools should identify who will adjust attendance after that point. Identifying a single point person who will make these adjustments can help make the process more efficient.

TIP 3: ACCOUNT FOR ATTENDANCE AS PART OF EDUCATORS' WORK DAY

Just as adjusting instruction to an online or hybrid model has required additional planning time, attending to administrative tasks in an online or hybrid model also requires more time and planning. Districts and schools are encouraged to account for the additional time staff may need during the work day to best support educators fulfilling this important requirement.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Guidance](#)
- [ADM Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Every Day Matters](#)
- [Tribal Attendance Promising Practices](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)

TIP 4: MAKING ATTENDANCE A WHOLE TEAM EFFORT: DEPLOY STAFF TO SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

As a way to make monitoring attendance more manageable, some school leaders are engaging additional staff in the effort. Consider the workload of all staff members to determine who can assist with data collection and entry. For example, in one school, the Health and Wellness team supports teachers in the first 5-7 minutes of class to take attendance based on the students attending that synchronous opportunity.

TIP 5: USE TECHNOLOGY TO ACCELERATE TAKING ATTENDANCE

Technology can help teachers track student engagement with their courses by using support tools like Google or SmartSheet to quickly determine who can be recorded as present for the 24-hour window. Often teachers can pull analytics from meeting platforms and other online tools to see who has logged in after an online class. Districts can support this work by providing clear step-by-step guidance to teachers on how to leverage online tools.

Students can also help take their own attendance, particularly at the secondary level. Teachers can develop systems where students mark themselves present and attach a screenshot or artifact as evidence. For example, one teacher asks their students to answer a "question of the day" on a GoogleDoc and uses their students' answers as their attendance record.

Even Student Information Systems (SIS) can be reoriented to better reflect schools' reality. For example, a district can change the default in SIS so all students are automatically present, and the teachers only mark absent students.

TIP 6: NOTIFY PARENTS THOUGHTFULLY ABOUT ABSENCES

In the past few years, many districts have improved their automated family notification systems to report student absences. Those systems work well for in-person instruction but may need updating for online or hybrid instructional models. In addition to a traditional phone call, districts can also notify families by different forms of communication such as text, email, or other two-way communication tools.

Through thoughtful messaging to families that reflects the reality of our current situation, districts can reiterate what qualifies as attendance and emphasize the benefits of regular attendance. Districts can also use the outreach to share ideas for what parents can do if their student is absent, provide opportunities for parents to communicate their family's unique needs, and offer support. For example, the Every Day Matters [Sample Communication Plan](#) provides a calendar and specific examples for communicating with families.