

The Ranches Academy Student Membership Policy

Purpose

This policy is set forth to determine student membership eligibility and describe the process for calculating membership for purposes of record keeping, auditing and reporting membership to state agencies to receive public funding. Student transfer, withdrawal and unsafe school choice are also addressed.

Definitions

"Membership" means a public school student is on the current roll of a public school class or public school as of a given date.

- a. A student is a member of a class or school from the date of entrance at the school and is placed on the current roll until official removal from the class or school due to the student having more than 10 consecutive unexcused absences.
- b. Removal from the roll does not mean that an LEA should delete the student's record, only that the student should no longer be counted in membership.

"Aggregate Membership" means the sum of all days in membership during a school year for eligible students enrolled in a public school.

"Data Clearinghouse" means the electronic data collection system used by the Superintendent to collect information required by law from LEAs about individual students at certain points throughout the school year to support the allocation of funds and accountability reporting.

"ISI-1" means a student who receives 1 to 59 minutes of Youth In Custody (YIC) related services during a typical school day.

"ISI-2" means a student who receives 60 to 179 minutes of YIC related services during a typical school day.

"Self-contained" means a public school student with an IEP or YIC, who receives 180 minutes or more of special education or YIC related services during a typical school day.

"SSID" means Statewide Student Identifier.

"Unexcused absence" means an absence charged to a student when:

- a. the student was not physically present at school at any of the times attendance checks were made in accordance with R277-419-6(3); and
- b. the student's absence could not be accounted for by evidence of a legitimate or valid excuse in accordance with local board policy on truancy as defined in Section 53G-6-203.

"Year end upload" means the Data Clearinghouse file due annually by July 15 from LEAs to the Superintendent for the prior school year.

Student Membership Eligibility

A student who is enrolled in a program is considered a member of a public school. A student reported under the schools program shall be included in the LEA's Weighted Pupil Unit (WPU) and student enrollment calculations of the LEA's school of enrollment. A student may enroll in two or more LEAs at the discretion of the LEAs, except in the case of kindergarten students.

In order to generate membership for funding through the Minimum School Program for any clock hour of instruction on any school day, the LEA shall ensure that a student being counted by the LEA in membership:

1. Has not been enrolled in a Youth In Custody (YIC) program time code other than ISI-1 or ISI-2;
2. Does not have unexcused absences, which are determined using one of the continuing enrollment measurements described in R277-419-4;
3. Is a resident of Utah as defined under Sections 53G-6-302, 303, or 403.
4. Is of qualifying school age;
5. Is expected to attend a regular learning facility operated or recognized by an LEA on each regularly scheduled school day, if enrolled in a face-to-face learning program;
6. Has direct instructional contact with a licensed educator provided by an LEA at:
 - a. An LEA-sponsored center for tutorial assistance or the student's place of residence or convalescence for at least 120 minutes each week during an expected period of absence, if physically excused from such a facility for an extended period of time, due to: injury, illness, surgery, suspension, pending court investigation or action, or an LEA determination that home instruction is necessary.

The Ranches Academy shall use the following continuing enrollment measure: For a student primarily enrolled in a face-to-face learning program, The Ranches Academy may not count a student as an eligible student if the eligible student has unexcused absences during all of the prior ten consecutive days.

Reporting Requirements, Records and Audits

The Ranches Academy shall report aggregate membership for each student via the School Membership field in the S1 record and special education membership in the Self-Contained Resource Attendance Management (SCRAM) Membership field in the S2 record and YIC membership in the S3 record of the Year End upload of the Data Clearinghouse file. In the Data Clearinghouse, aggregate membership is calculated in days of membership. Student membership is determined by accurate records. The school shall ensure that records of daily

student attendance are maintained which clearly and accurately show for each student the entry date, exit date, whether or not an absence was excused, disability status (resource or self-contained, if applicable), and YIC status (ISI-1, ISI-2 or self-contained, if applicable).

The School shall ensure that a minimum of one attendance check is completed for each school day. Due to school activities requiring schedule and program modification during the first and last days of the year, membership may be reported using the aggregate days of membership equal to the number recorded for the immediately preceding five-day period and shall continue instructional activities through required calendared instruction days

The Ranches Academy shall employ an independent auditor, under contract, to annually audit student accounting records and report the findings of the audit to the governing board. Reporting dates, forms, and procedures are found in State of Utah Legal Compliance Audit Guide, provided to the School Director in cooperation with the State Auditor's Office. The Director shall review each student membership and fall enrollment audits as they relate to the allocation of state funds in accordance with R277-484-7 and 8. The Director may periodically or for cause review school records and practices for compliance with the laws and R277-419.

Student Identification and Tracking

In accordance with 53G-4-308 the School shall use the SSID system maintained by the Direct to assign every student enrolled in a program or a unique student identifier and display the SSID on student transcripts exchanged with other LEAs. The unique student identifier shall be assigned to a student upon enrollment into a public school program. It may not be the student's social security number or contain any personally identifiable information about the student.

The School requires all students to provide their legal first, middle, and last names at the time of registration to ensure that the correct SSID follows students who transfer among LEAs. The School shall transcribe the names from the student's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the student's identity and age, consistent with Section 53G-6-603. The direct transcription of student names from birth certificates or other reliable proof of student identity and age shall be the student's legal name for purposes of maintaining school records. The Ranches Academy may modify the order of student names, provide for nicknames, or allow for different surnames, consistent with court documents or parent preferences, so long as legal names are maintained on student records and used in transmitting student information. The Ranches Academy shall track students and maintain data using students' legal names. If there is a compelling need to protect a student by using an alias, discretion should be used in recording the name of the student. The School is responsible in verifying the accuracy and validity of enrollment verification data, prior to enrolling students, and provide students and their parents with notification of enrollment.

Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted for school attendance for a student in the length of the school

day or year for a student with compelling circumstances. The time an excepted student is required to attend school shall be established by the student's IEP.

In a declared State of Emergency, when state or federal authority prohibits students from being in the building, Continued Enrollment Measures will be as follows; Students must check in at least 1 time every 10 days through teacher check in, timelines for work completion, or login to school assigned programs.

Date of Withdrawal for Students – Ten-Day Rule

For proper membership accounting, the date of withdrawal must be the day after the last day of attendance or within 10 days after the last day of attendance on which it is officially known that the pupil has left school for one of the following reasons: completion, dismissal, death, transfer or administrative withdrawal. The date does not necessarily have to be the day after the last day of attendance, but in no case may it be longer than 10 days after the last day of attendance at any time during the year except in case of:

- (1) sickness,
- (2) hospitalization,*
- (3) home and hospital services being provided according to district policy,
- (4) pending court investigation and action, and
- (5) prior-approved trip.

*Home and hospital is comprised of two hours of instruction per week, with at least one contact per week and documentation of that contact on record for the auditors.

Schools must withdraw students after 10 consecutive days of absence, unless they fit one or more exceptions listed above. A letter should be sent by the school notifying the parents of the withdrawal.

Sometimes parents will attempt to get a Home School affidavit and withdraw their student after they have been referred to truancy court. The court process will continue even if they are in Home School.

Court ordered students in the truancy program must not be withdrawn from school records. The court process will continue for students who have been referred for truancy, even though they may withdraw from school in the meantime.

Ten-day Membership Rule

The following Utah State Office of Education rule applies:

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-419. Pupil Accounting.

R277-419-1. Definitions.

“Membership” means a public school student is on the current roll of a public school class or public school as of a given date:

1) a student is a member of a class or school from the date of entrance at the school and is placed on the current roll until official removal from the class or school due to the student having left the school.

“Unexcused absence” means an absence charged to a student when the student was not physically present at school at any of the times attendance checks were made in accordance with Section R277-419-4B(3) and the student’s absence could not be accounted for by evidence of a legitimate or valid excuse in accordance with local board policy on truancy as defined in Section 53A-11-Part 1-101.

R277-419-5. Student Membership.

This law states that in order to generate funding, “a student shall not have unexcused absences on all of the prior ten consecutive school days.” This law also states that in order to generate funding, “a student shall have direct instructional contact with a licensed educator provided by the LEA at an LEA-sponsored center for tutorial assistance or at the student’s place of residence or convalescence for at least 120 minutes each week during an expected period of absence if physically excused from such a facility for an extended period of time...”

Telephone calls or other efforts not involving instructional time are not sufficient to generate funding for a student who has unexcused absences for more than 10 consecutive days.

If a student is maintained in membership after 10 consecutive school days of unexcused absences, supporting documentation showing why the student has not been withdrawn must be maintained. A student may remain on the school’s rolls beyond 10 days of absence if the school is aware that they are absent due to a prior approved travel vacation, injury, illness, surgery, suspension, or pending court investigation or action.

Students in freestanding hospitals are exited out of our district if the program is 10 days or more. Many freestanding hospitals are accredited. The education staff at the hospital will teach the student.

Transfer Students/Students Admitted During the School Year

When a student transfers or is enrolled during the year, it is their previous school’s responsibility to properly exit them in ASPIRE. The Ranches Academy will check the entry/withdrawal record in ASPIRE or have the student bring in a copy of the transfer out form from the prior school.

Transferring or mid year enrolled students complicate student accounting. In order to ensure appropriate documentation and transfer codes are used, The Ranches Academy has established the following procedures:

1. Begin counting a student in membership the day he registers or first attends classes in your school.
2. Count a student in membership through the last day of attendance. When parents come to withdraw the student, identify the transfer-out date and stop counting him the first school day after his last date in attendance or the date you are informed the student has left school. If the next school day is a teacher comp day, use the school day following the teacher comp day as the exit date.
3. When a student's last attendance day is the last day of the month, the student is included in the month-end enrollment. His transfer-out status is reported the following month. The first school day of the new month is considered the check out date and no days are credited to him in the new month.

Attendance Accounting

1. The Ranches Academy utilizes ASPIRE for official student attendance accounting for every student enrolled.
 - a. Attendance will be taken by the teacher the first half hour of the morning and recorded on ASPIRE. The teacher will save the attendance within the first half hour of the morning.
 - b. When a student checks out of school, an ASPIRE record will be made by the office.
 - c. A check-in slip will be sent to the teacher when a student checks in late. The computer entry will be made by the office.
2. Absences which are reported to the office will be recorded by the office in ASPIRE.

Independent Study Contracts

A student may be allowed up to a maximum of ten (10) days for education/vacation leave if prior arrangements have been made with the school for the student to make up his/her homework. Make-up work and timelines should follow each individual teacher's disclosure statement. If the prior-approved absence will extend beyond the 10 days allowed, contact the school director.

A student may be allowed up to a maximum of ten (10) days of absence per suspension, if the school is working with the student to prepare an acceptable program for his/her return to the classroom.

The Daily Attendance Report must be marked to indicate the days students are away from school for education/vacation leave (v) or suspension (s). The Elementary Pupil Progress Report and the student's cumulative file should not show students present on days they are away from school for vacation/education leave or suspension.

If a student is not in school for reasons other than to attend a school activity, he/she is considered absent. This absence, although continued on school records,

will be considered “excused”. This procedure allows students to have the educational experience of travel without scholastic penalty; however, it does disqualify students for receipt of any awards associated with attendance (i.e., 100% attendance award, etc.)

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