



Important Attendance Updates Effective for the 2026-2027 School Year

Dear Big Walnut Families,

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, Big Walnut Local Schools will implement updated attendance procedures required under Ohio law, including changes enacted through House Bill 96 and Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.191. These changes place a greater emphasis on reducing chronic absenteeism and providing earlier communication and support for families when attendance concerns arise. School districts are required to revise attendance policies, procedures, and practices by August 1, 2026.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to support positive attendance habits, student engagement, and academic success. Regular school attendance is essential to maintaining continuity of instruction and maximizing student learning opportunities.

Please review the information below so you understand how attendance is monitored and when schools are required to provide additional support and intervention.

Understanding Student Attendance

Ohio law focuses on two attendance categories:

1. **Chronic** All Absences Count

Absenteeism

A student is considered chronically absent when they miss 10% or more of the required school hours during the school year.

Chronic absenteeism includes all missed instructional time, including medically excused illnesses, medical appointments, excused and unexcused absences, out-of-school suspensions, tardies, and early dismissals.

Under updated Ohio attendance requirements, all absences, including medically excused absences, contribute to a student's total instructional hours missed. This is one of the most significant changes families should understand regarding the updated attendance requirements.

Attendance Thresholds

The information below outlines the instructional hour thresholds established for chronic absenteeism:

- Grades 7–12: Approximately 100 missed hours
 - Students are required to attend 1,001 instructional hours annually.
- Full-Day Kindergarten – Grade 6: Approximately 91 missed hours
 - Students are required to attend 910 instructional hours annually.
- Half-Day Kindergarten: Approximately 45 missed hours
 - Students are required to attend 455 instructional hours annually.

Once a student reaches the chronically absent threshold, building administration may require additional medical documentation for future absences in order for absences to remain excused, in accordance with district policy and Ohio law.

2. **Habitual** Unexcused Absences Only

Truancy

Habitual truancy applies only to unexcused absences.

A student is considered habitually truant if they accumulate:

- 30 consecutive unexcused hours, OR
- 42 unexcused hours within one month, OR
- 72 unexcused hours within one school year

If attendance does not improve following required intervention efforts, the district may be required to file a complaint with Juvenile Court.

Early Communication & Attendance Support

State law requires school districts to notify families of attendance concerns early in an effort to help prevent chronic absenteeism.

Before a student reaches the 5% chronic absenteeism threshold, school districts are required to initiate attendance monitoring, communication, and intervention efforts to address attendance concerns early and help prevent chronic absenteeism.

Big Walnut Local Schools will notify families and begin attendance intervention efforts before a student reaches the 5% chronic absenteeism threshold.

Interventions may include:

- Written notification to families
- Convening an Absence Intervention Team to identify barriers to attendance
- Providing attendance support resources
- Monitoring attendance interventions and student progress

Our focus is on prevention, support, and partnering with families to help students maintain consistent attendance and remain engaged in learning.

Our Commitment

At Big Walnut Local Schools, we value strong partnerships with families and believe consistent school attendance plays an important role in student growth and success. Our focus is on early communication, proactive support, and helping students remain connected and engaged in learning.

We understand that illnesses, emergencies, and unexpected situations occur. Our goal is not to be punitive, but to work collaboratively with families to ensure students have access to the instructional time and support needed to thrive.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Sincerely,



Ryan
Superintendent
Big Walnut Local Schools

McLane