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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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(X) Action Required

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BULLETIN NO. 026-21 OFFICE OF SYSTEM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
School Principals
District Attendance & Truancy Liaisons
School Counselors
Attendance Clerks

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Legislative Changes to Truancy Laws – Change Effective Immediately

CONTACT: Krissy Johnson, Attendance Program Supervisor
360-725-6045, krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

A new bill, Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 1113 – Concerning School Attendance, was signed into law on April 26, 2021. The law has immediate impacts on the truancy process. This bill was requested by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and reflects feedback and needs from Washington districts. The changes are summarized below.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Districts must now file truancy petitions no earlier than 7 unexcused absences in a month and no later than 15 unexcused absences in a school year; effective April 26, 2021.
- Community Truancy Board is renamed to Community Engagement Board; effective August 1, 2021.

Timeline for Filing a Truancy Petition is Extended

The law now requires districts to file a truancy petition no earlier than 7 unexcused absences in a month and no later than 15 unexcused absences in the school year. Previously, districts were required to file a truancy petitions either after 5 or 7 unexcused absences in a month (the

statute stated both requirements). Districts were also to file a truancy petition after 10 unexcused absences in a school year.

New Timeline is Effective Immediately

This change to file petitions no earlier than 7 unexcused absences in a month or 15 in a year is *effective immediately*, due to an emergency clause in the bill. Districts will need to change their truancy letters, data systems, and other processes that rely on specific thresholds of unexcused absences to comply with this change.

Timeline Applies to In-person Absences for 2020–21 and All Absences in 2021–22

For the remainder of the 2020–21 school year, this change in the timeline for filing truancy petitions only applies to absences from in-person learning. The non-truancy remote learning absence in OSPI emergency rule ([WAC 392-401A](#)) is still in effect for all remote learning absences through the end of the school year. Starting the 2021–22 school year, these changes to the timeline for filing will apply to all absences, remote and in-person.

Alternative Learning Experience

A definition of and a timeline for responding to truancy in Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs will take effect the beginning of the 2021–22 school year ([WAC 392-550-040](#)).

Community Truancy Board is Renamed

The Community Truancy Board has been renamed in statute and is now called a Community Engagement Board. This change is effective August 1, 2021. Districts will need to update their communications regarding Community Truancy Boards. Districts have the flexibility to call them something other than Community Engagement Boards, as long as the name maintains the intent of providing support and engaging students. One such example is Central Valley's CARES Board (Community Attendance Resources Engagement and Support Board).

Summary of Changes	
Policy Change	Effective Date
1. Truancy petitions to be filed no earlier than 7 unexcused absences in a month and no later than 15 unexcused absences in a year	April 26, 2021
2. Community Truancy Board name has been changed to Community Engagement Board	August 1, 2021

OSPI to Develop Rules & Guidance

The third change in the law directs OSPI to develop best practice guidance and adopt rules to support districts in the implementation of the law. School districts and education partners will be asked to contribute and review in that process when it begins.

RESOURCES

- [ESHB 1113 Legislative Documents](#)
- [OSPI Attendance Webpage](#)
- [OSPI Attendance Newsletter](#)
- [Attendance Works](#)

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Krissy Johnson, Attendance Program Supervisor, at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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