

## Section 1 Overview

Under state law<sup>1</sup>, every Texas school district is required to adopt an attendance accounting system, whether manual or automated, that includes procedures that ensure the accurate taking, recording, and reporting of attendance accounting data. District staff members must report attendance information through the Texas Student Data System Public Education Information Management System (TSDS PEIMS) to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TEA then uses these attendance data to determine the allocation of Foundation School Program (FSP) funds (state funding) to your district.

The *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook* (handbook) contains the official attendance accounting rules and regulations for all public school districts in Texas, including open-enrollment charter schools, unless otherwise specified in this document. **This handbook is the official standard of required information for all attendance accounting systems.** Unless a distinction is made between manual and automated systems, all standards described in this handbook apply to all attendance accounting systems.

No school district official (or any other person in your school district) has the authority, either implied or actual, to change or alter any rules, regulations, or reporting requirements specified in this handbook.

The handbook incorporates the same codes that are defined in the TSDS PEIMS *Data Standards*, as they relate to attendance, and requires all attendance accounting systems to follow the same coding structure. State law requires Texas public schools to use the TSDS PEIMS.<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** Starting in the 2016–2017 school year, school districts and charter schools are required to submit attendance reporting through the Texas Student Data Systems (TSDS). The Texas Education Data Standards (TEDS) are XML-based standards for TSDS and TSDS PEIMS data collections. TEDS includes all the data elements, code tables, business rules, and data validation needed to load local education agency (LEA—Texas school district or charter school) education data. TSDS PEIMS has replaced PEIMS through out the handbook.

**Notes on Terminology:** In this handbook, the term “school district” or “district” includes an open-enrollment charter school and district of innovation, except where the handbook notes that different requirements apply to open-enrollment charter schools or districts of innovation. Also, in this handbook, the term “instructional setting” means the same as the term “instructional arrangement/setting.”

**Notes on Terminology:** In this handbook, the term “minutes” is interchangeable with “days” in accordance with the program type listed on the chart in 3.8 Calendar.

**Note:** Throughout the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook, references to school days have been converted to minutes in accordance with House Bill 2610 of the 84th Texas Legislature, 2015.

**Note:** Starting in the 2018–2019 school year, HB 2442 of the 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, repealed the seven-hour school day requirement from the Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.082.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Education Code (TEC), [§42.006\(b\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> TEC, [§42.006\(a\)](#)

**Note:** Due to the flexibilities provided by 75,600 minutes of operation and the repeal of the seven-hour school day requirement by HB 2442, school districts and charter schools that meet certain requirements may release their student early from school and still receive full funding. Therefore, early release waivers for the 2018–2019 school year are rescinded.

## 1.1 Student Attendance and FSP Funding

The primary purpose for the TEA’s collection of student attendance data is to ensure that FSP funds can be allocated to Texas’s public schools. All public schools in Texas must maintain records to reflect the average daily attendance (ADA) for the allocation of these and other funds by the TEA<sup>3</sup>.

**Note:** An **inherent difference exists between being permitted to serve a student** in a particular program and **being entitled to funding** for the service provided to the student. For example, depending on local policy, your school district may serve virtually any student in virtually any capacity or setting as long as serving the student does not interfere with the education of funding-eligible students. However, the only circumstance in which a student may be coded as an eligible participant in a program or setting, thereby generating state funding, is one in which the student meets all eligibility requirements and all documentation is complete and on file.

All eligible students are entitled to the benefits of the FSP. However, for your district to claim a student for funding purposes, complete documentation that proves the eligibility of the student for the FSP must first be on file. Furthermore, your district must report all eligible attendance according to provisions established by the TEA. For these reasons, the TEA has developed both a standardized attendance accounting system (described in this handbook) and a standardized reporting system (TSDS PEIMS)<sup>4</sup>.

The funding formula for the FSP, as well as the requirements for a student’s eligibility to participate in this program, is mandated by the Texas Education Code and the Texas Administrative Code. All students must meet the requirements for **membership**, defined in Section 3 of this handbook, before they are eligible for FSP funds for attendance and special programs. Districts must retain all records proving such eligibility for the required length of time for audit purposes (see Section 2).

For your district to receive the maximum amount of funding for all its students, the following personnel must be aware of their individual responsibilities and must work together to assemble required documentation as early as possible: administrators, special program staffs, teachers, and attendance personnel.

**Note:** Waivers of program requirements do not alter rules associated with eligibility for funding purposes unless the waiver specifically states that funding regulations are altered.

<sup>3</sup> 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§129.21\(a\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> TEC, [§42.006](#)

## 1.2 Taking and Recording Student Attendance

It is your district's responsibility to ensure that the basis used to record and process attendance accounting data meets the standards in this *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook*<sup>5</sup>.

District personnel must create the original documentation of attendance at the time of attendance. Original documentation must not be created after the fact. Original documentation that is not created at the time of attendance will not be accepted by agency auditors. **If auditors determine that original documentation was not created at the time of the attendance it is intended to support, the TEA will retain 100% of your district's FSP allotment for the inappropriately documented attendance for the school year(s) for which records have been requested.** The TEA will either assess an adjustment to subsequent allocations of state funds or require your district to refund the total amount of the adjustment when the audit is finalized.

The TEA does not formally approve or certify attendance accounting systems of any organization, public or private, that is in the business of providing services to Texas public schools. The TEA cautions districts to be sure the software they purchase meets the requirements for attendance accounting described in this handbook before contracting with a vendor. Your district may use a locally designed system, provided the system includes the instructions and information requirements prescribed by this handbook<sup>6</sup>.

Regardless of the accounting system your school district uses, the minimum requirements established in this handbook must be incorporated. These standards are the **minimum** requirements for all attendance accounting systems. Your district may wish to adopt **additional** codes and documentation requirements for local purposes.

## 1.3 Reporting of Attendance Information to the TEA

District staff members report attendance and contact hours at the student level for the entire school year through the TSDS PEIMS.

See [Section 3 General Attendance Requirements](#) for additional information.

## 1.4 Storage of Attendance Information

Your district's superintendent of schools is responsible for the safekeeping of all attendance records and reports. The superintendent may determine whether the properly certified attendance records or reports for the school year are to be filed in the central office or properly stored on the respective school campuses of your district or at a secure offsite location.

Information for all FSP attendance reports must be available for audit purposes for 5 years from the completion of the school year. Superintendents, principals, and teachers are responsible to their school

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<sup>5</sup> 19 TAC [§129.21\(f\)](#) and [§129.1025](#)

<sup>6</sup> 19 TAC [§129.21\(f\)](#)

board and to the state for maintaining accurate and current attendance records, regardless of the attendance accounting system in use<sup>7</sup>.

## 1.5 Auditing of Attendance Information

Regardless of where attendance records are filed or stored, they must be readily available for audit by the Financial Compliance Division of the TEA.<sup>8</sup> Auditors have the authority to examine attendance records for any year for which your district is required to retain records (see Section 2). **If auditors detect errors during an audit, the TEA will either assess an adjustment to subsequent allocations of state funds or require your district to refund the total amount of the adjustment when the audit is finalized.**

## 1.6 How to Use This Handbook

This handbook contains all the information and the mandated coding structure that each attendance accounting system must follow. Each section of this handbook, where practical, is organized using the same headings for each subsection. Each subsection contains the same general types of information.

Each section specifies the coding structure and lists all the documentation required to verify student eligibility in the subject area defined by the section title.

Although limited by the complicated nature of attendance accounting, each section is designed to present all essential information about the subject area defined by the section title. The essential information provided includes student eligibility, mandated coding structure, and documentation required for audit purposes. Each section also contains the responsibilities of district personnel and examples of how to code students in the accounting system.

The following table briefly describes the subject matter contained in each section.

Handbook Section(s)	Description
Section 1 Overview	The <b>Overview</b> section describes the importance of attendance accounting, how funding and attendance are related, the organization of this handbook, and significant changes from the prior year.
Section 2 Audit Requirements	<b>Audit Requirements</b> establishes minimum standards for all required documentation, sets the time limit for record retention, and discusses areas of attendance accounting that deserve particular attention.
Section 3 General Attendance Requirements	<b>General Attendance Requirements</b> discusses the responsibilities of district personnel, enrollment and withdrawal procedures, basic rules of attendance accounting for all attendance systems, ADA eligibility codes and general eligibility requirements, the school calendar, data submission, documentation required to prove FSP eligibility, tips for quality control of attendance data, and examples.

<sup>7</sup> 19 TAC [§129.21\(a\)](#)

<sup>8</sup>19 TAC [§129.21\(d\)](#)

Handbook Section(s)	Description
Sections 4–9	These sections address each of the special program areas under the FSP. Each section discusses the responsibilities of district personnel, enrollment and withdrawal procedures, special rules, documentation to prove special program eligibility, tips for quality control of special program attendance data, and examples.
Section 10 Alternative Education Programs and Disciplinary Removals	<b>Alternative Education Programs and Disciplinary Removals</b> discusses various alternative education programs, in-school suspension programs, and education programs for incarcerated youth, as well as disciplinary removals.
Section 11 Nontraditional Programs	<b>Nontraditional Programs</b> discusses education programs that have alternative methods of funding or are provided in alternative settings.
Section 12 Virtual, Remote, and Electronic Instruction	<b>Virtual, Remote, and Electronic Instruction</b> discusses Texas Virtual School Network programs and courses, other online courses, remote instruction, and self-paced computer courses.
Section 13 Appendix	The <b>Appendix</b> section explains how ADA is calculated and provides information on weighting of ADA.
Section 14 Glossary	The <b>Glossary</b> section defines terms used in the handbook.

In the electronic Word version of this handbook, the entries in the table of contents and the boldfaced cross-references that appear throughout the handbook (for example, **3.2.2 Funding Eligibility**) are hyperlinked. If you place your cursor over the entry or cross-reference and then press CTRL and click, you will be taken to the section of the handbook specified in the entry or cross-reference. To return to the original location, press ALT + the left arrow key.

**Note:** The web addresses provided throughout the handbook are subject to change. If a particular TEA web address is no longer working, please search for the topic you are interested in using the TEA website’s Google **Search** function or using the TEA **A–Z Index** page at <http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=25769815059>. You can also access this page from the TEA website’s home page by clicking on the **A–Z Index** link at the top of that page.

## 1.7 Significant Changes

The change document describes the significant changes from the 2018-2019 handbook. For a comprehensive list of changes, see the Change Document at [http://tea.texas.gov/Finance\\_and\\_Grants/Financial\\_Compliance/Student\\_Attendance\\_Accounting\\_Handbook/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Financial_Compliance/Student_Attendance_Accounting_Handbook/).