



**WINDHAM SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

NUMBER: OP-09.02 (rev. 6)

DATE: April 12, 2013

PAGE: 1 of 16

**SUPERSEDES: OP-09.02 (rev. 5)
February 6, 2013**

OPERATING PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: STUDENT ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING

AUTHORITY: *General Appropriations Bill; Texas Education Code §19.008; 19 Texas Administrative Code §129; Superintendent Directive (SD)-09.02*

APPLICABILITY: Windham School District (WSD)

POLICY:

The WSD shall establish procedures to ensure accurate student attendance accounting for all students involved in WSD educational programs.

Attendance records are among the most important records maintained by WSD. The Official Class Roster is the source document for all student attendance accounting. The need for accurate, neat, legible records is absolutely essential in reporting attendance, as contact hours are the basis of district funding.

Falsification of attendance accounting violates the Texas Education Code and WSD policy. Willful violation is cause for dismissal. Each employee is individually responsible for following this policy.

DEFINITIONS:

“Assessment Roster” is the student attendance accounting document produced for testing sessions. The Assessment Roster shall list the appropriate testing agent as the teacher of the referenced assessment period.

“Attendance Processing” includes the input of attendance data into the computer, generating the attendance data for submission to the WSD central office, and any/all records relevant to this process.

“Contact Hour” is an hour of instruction received by a student. The attendance accounting process records the number of hours that each student is present for instruction or engaged in other approved WSD educational activities.

“Official Class Roster” is a document that lists the students for each class. The Official Class Roster is generated daily prior to the beginning of each class. The teacher uses the Official Class Roster to record the number of contact hours each student receives for each day of class.

“Reconciliation” shall refer to the process of verification by comparing student attendance hours on a completed Official Class Roster to the data entered on the education security officer’s tracking roster and/or student movement log.

“Substitute” refers to a person, other than the regular WSD teacher, who is serving in the role of teacher on a temporary basis. A WSD substitute shall be a nonemployee contracted by the WSD Division of Human Resources or shall be a principal, counselor, diagnostician, or other employee approved by the superintendent to serve as a substitute teacher. Paraprofessionals (including testing specialists and library assistants) can cover classes on a very limited basis.

PROCEDURES:

Offenders who are enrolled in any academic or vocational class are required to attend school according to their school schedule as established by the unit principal or designee. The principal shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all students attend school. At no time shall the offender's school attendance be superseded by another program.

The procedures set forth are requirements for student attendance accounting. Individual campuses may institute additional measures, but shall not supersede the procedures set forth in this policy, to further ensure accurate student attendance accounting practices.

It is not possible to describe and address all issues that may arise regarding attendance. Campus personnel should seek assistance from the principal, regional office, the Division of Operational Support, or the WSD Information Technology Help Desk.

College attendance accounting procedures are addressed in the Operating Procedures for College Programs.

I. Overview

- A. The principal is the signing authority and is responsible for attendance on his/her campus. The principal’s responsibilities, as they relate to attendance, shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - 1. Ensuring the school schedule is followed;
 - 2. Ensuring that students arrive at and depart from education programs at scheduled times (individual students who do not report to their assigned

classes at the designated class start time will be considered tardy);

3. Determining if a student who reports late for school will be counted as an unexcused tardy; (If the student has a legitimate reason for being late, the tardiness will be excused.)

NOTE: For purposes of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Tracking System, a student who is more than 20 minutes tardy will be subject to the appropriate loss of good conduct time credit in accordance with TDCJ, Administrative Directive (AD)-04.80, "Good Conduct Time."

4. Establishing procedures to refer unexcused tardiness to the disciplinary process;
5. Establishing procedures to determine why students are absent from class;
6. Verifying the accuracy of attendance accounting;
7. Ensuring proper recording and maintenance of all attendance records both on the campus computer and as original hard copies;
8. Conducting and maintaining records of semiannual attendance training for all education staff and education officers;
9. Providing instructions on how, when, and where teachers are to submit attendance records locally;
10. Ensuring the proper recording of legitimate contact hours;

NOTE: This responsibility shall include, but not be limited to, the practice of "rounding up" contact hours. On occasion, reduction or extension of instructional time is required. However, the principal is responsible for ensuring that occasional, uncontrollable deviations from class schedules do not become routine.

11. Ensuring that college personnel comply with all attendance accounting procedures set forth in this directive as well as the procedures contained in the Operating Procedures (OP)-12.00, "College Program."

B. The teacher is the key to accurate student attendance accounting.

1. The teacher shall utilize the attendance forms, procedures, and policies established by the WSD.
2. The teacher is the final signing authority on each Official Class Roster, ensuring that all information is correct to the best of his/her knowledge.

C. WSD Central Administration

1. All official reports for the WSD regarding attendance (such as those requested by the Texas Education Agency) shall be prepared and submitted from the WSD central administration offices and not from individual campuses.
2. WSD central administration shall prepare all responses to official requests for information pertaining to student attendance. Such requests may originate from internal or external entities.

II. Class Records

A. The Official Class Roster is produced daily. It contains the following:

1. Student names and basic information for each class;
2. Space for the teacher to record contact hours; and
3. A blank for the teacher's signature.

B. Official Class Rosters for all classes shall be printed prior to the start of each class for each instructional day.

C. Only TDCJ spelling of student names and assigned TDCJ offender identification numbers shall be used on all official attendance documents.

D. Photocopies of official attendance documents shall be made only with the written approval of the director of the Division of Operational Support or his/her designee.

1. Photocopies of official attendance documents shall be produced only under the principal's direction after approval is granted.
2. All photocopies of official attendance documents shall be clearly marked by writing "copy" on the approved photocopy.
3. Photocopies of approved official attendance documents shall not be mixed with originals or used as duplicate records unless authorized by the director of the Division of Operational Support or his/her designee.
4. Approved photocopies of official attendance documents shall be shredded on the unit daily unless otherwise directed. No photocopy of an official attendance document shall leave the unit unless previously authorized by the director of the Division of Operational Support or his/her designee.
5. Any photocopy of an original attendance document used as an official attendance document shall be accompanied by written approval from the

director of the Division of Operational Support or his/her designee. These authorized photocopies shall be managed as official attendance documents as they relate to the WSD Records Retention Schedule.

6. Photocopies for internal audit purposes (ACA folders) are not considered official attendance documents. In such cases, photocopies may be made for official internal use with prior approval of the principal and shall be clearly marked by writing “copy” on the photocopy at issue.

III. Completion of Records

A. Attendance Accounting Procedures

1. The following shall be entered in the WSD attendance computer program when adding or withdrawing a student from class:

A = This entry is used for the original entry of a student in all classes on the first class day in which the student is physically present and earns contact hours.

W = This entry is used when the student has been withdrawn from, and is no longer enrolled in, any and all classes. (Numerical withdrawal codes are listed in WSD Policy OP-09.18, “Withdrawing Offenders from Education Programs” Appendix A and Appendix B.)

2. Students may not be withdrawn from classes due to routine lay-ins. However, they may be withdrawn for prolonged periods (three days or more). Daily student hours of enrollment shall not be changed due to teacher absence.
3. If a teacher is absent and no substitute is available, the letter “T” shall be entered in the WSD attendance computer to indicate no teacher or substitute was available for the day and the respective class was not held.
4. Discontinuation/Suspension of classes
 - a. Classes shall not be discontinued or suspended for individual teacher absences due to inservice or illness for less than four days.
 - b. Prolonged teacher absences may warrant suspension of classes.
 - c. Suspension of classes shall be approved by the appropriate regional administrator.
 - d. Classes shall not be suspended when a teacher takes discretionary leave.

- B. All official attendance record entries and corrections on Official Class Rosters, Monthly Attendance Summaries, etc. shall be completed and/or corrected in black, moisture proof, nonerasable ink only.
- C. Teachers are furnished an Official Class Roster each instructional day prior to the beginning of each class. The Official Class Roster is used to record each student's attendance by placing the appropriate number of contact hours (see III.G), in the blank beside each student's name.
- D. Teacher signatures shall identically match the teacher name printed on the official attendance document unless the teacher is absent and the principal or substitute is signing the official attendance document.
- E. If a student comes to class and his/her name is not on the Official Class Roster, the teacher may, with the consent of the principal, manually add the student's name and number to the bottom of the Official Class Roster.
- F. If the entire class deviates more than 10 minutes from the scheduled beginning of class and/or 10 minutes from the scheduled end of class, this deviation shall be noted on the bottom of the Official Class Roster.

Example 1: A class is scheduled to meet from 2:00 pm to 5:15 pm. The class does not arrive until 2:20 pm. The teacher should note at the bottom of the Official Class Roster, "Class arrived at 2:20 pm." Notation is necessary in this case since the entire class deviation is greater than 10 minutes.

Example 2: A class is scheduled to dismiss at 11:30 am. Students are called by security to leave at 11:25 am. No notation is necessary in this case since the entire class deviation in dismissal time is not greater than 10 minutes.

NOTE: The principal is responsible for ensuring that the school schedule is followed. Deviations from the school schedule greater than 10 minutes shall be kept to a minimum. Deviations that become routine shall result in contact with the unit administration to review the school schedule.

- G. Determining contact hours
 - 1. Windham attendance is maintained by recording the exact "contact hours" that students are actually present and receiving educational services related to instruction. Contact hours are "rounded off" to the nearest whole hour.
 - 2. Count 30 minutes or more as an hour, except for six and a half hour Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes, which count as six hours and may not be awarded seven hours of attendance credit without approval from the director of the Division of Operational Support or his/her designee;
 - 3. Do not count 29 minutes or less as an hour.

4. This rounding off occurs for a given class period, not for each hour.

Example 1: A three hour and 15 minute academic class meets from 7:00 am to 10:15 am. A student enters at 7:25 am and leaves at 9:50 am. The student earns a total of two attendance hours since the student attended a total of two hours and 25 minutes of the three hour and 15 minute class.

Example 2: A three hour and 15 minute academic class meets from 7:00 to 10:15. A student arrives 35 minutes late and class dismisses at 10:15. The student earns three attendance hours since the student attended a total of two hours and 40 minutes.

5. Occasionally, circumstances such as count problems, special testing, early arrivals, etc. may enable students to remain in class longer than the specified timeframe. In such cases, attendance credit may be awarded if educational services related to instruction occur during the additional time.
6. Student contact hours may be recorded on an Official Class Roster created for testing purposes (referred to as an Assessment Roster), provided students are currently enrolled in a WSD class other than the Assessment class. Contact hour credit shall not be awarded for offenders' initial intake testing. Contact hour credit shall only be awarded after enrollment in class other than the Assessment class.

H. The teacher is responsible for ensuring that the contact hours recorded on the Official Class Roster for each student are accurate according to the rounding off procedures as stipulated in this policy. For the sole purpose of contact hour calculation, the following shall be observed: All recorded contact hour(s) indicate that the student was credited with at least 30 minutes attendance for "1" contact hour, one and a half hours attendance for "2" contact hours, two and a half hours attendance for "3" contact hours, etc.

I. Class Interruptions

1. Regular interruptions for activities such as restroom visits, prison counts within the education department, interviews with college personnel, and movement between classes are considered part of the school day; therefore, students are eligible to receive contact hour credit.
2. Students shall not be awarded contact hour credit when absent from the education department programs for appointments with doctors, dentists, parole officers, classification committees, wardens, chaplains, TDCJ psychologists, or for other purposes outside the realm of education.

NOTE: Some activities, such as Peer Education and Law Library, may take place in the education building, but are not WSD education programs. Therefore, offenders shall not receive contact hour credit for these

programs.

For short duration appointments, such as parole, classification, and dental, offenders shall report to school and then be excused from school immediately prior to the appointment time. At the conclusion of the appointment, the offender shall return to the classroom if the class session is still active.

3. Class breaks are not authorized in WSD classes. Students who need to go to the bathroom may do so individually or in small groups according to procedures established by the principal.

J. Noting Student Movement

1. Contact hours shall not be awarded and recorded on the Official Class Roster until the end of a scheduled class period.
2. Each teacher shall note student movement in or out of the scheduled class period in order to determine the exact minutes for which a student can receive contact hour credit.
 - a. The teacher may use the Official Class Roster for such notes, or other means as determined suitable by the principal.
 - b. If means other than the Official Class Roster are used for noting student movement, these alternative methods shall not be retained as official attendance records. These supplemental class records may be destroyed when the end of month attendance processing is complete.
3. Student sign in sheets shall not be used as a method of determining a student's presence in a class.
4. Duplicate attendance records (including, but not limited to Class Lists) shall not be used or maintained for attendance purposes.
5. Any teacher notes on the Official Class Roster shall be consistent with the contact hours awarded and must not hinder review of essential information.
6. Clean up time in CTE shops can be counted for attendance purposes, if this clean up is supervised by the WSD CTE instructor.
7. In the event student movement is significantly affected by events such as partial lockdown, delayed counts, restricted and/or controlled offender movement, etc., the principal shall document events, date, and time and include this information as special correspondence in the respective

monthly attendance file.

K. Unavailable Official Class Rosters

1. In the event Official Class Rosters cannot be produced each day, the principal may authorize the use of the columns (Day 2, Day 3, etc.) on the right side of the Official Class Roster for the recording of attendance hours.
2. The teacher shall record the students' contact hours in the USE ONLY WHEN DIRECTED column.
3. After each day of use, the teacher shall sign the Official Class Roster on the appropriate line.

L. Completion of Official Class Roster

1. The teacher shall make an entry for each student on the Official Class Roster in the "Hours" column.
2. The teacher shall total the hours of all students and place the total in the "Hours Total" field at the bottom of the column.
3. If a student is absent, a "0" shall be entered for the student in the Hours column.
4. There shall be no blank student fields on the Official Class Roster for the day.
5. Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing policy for campus testing requires a teacher to administer the TABE test to classes other than those regularly assigned to him/her. In such case, the testing teacher shall sign the roster of the class he/she is testing on the TEACHER NAME line and write EA TESTING following his/her signature. If a teacher returns to his/her regular assignment prior to the end of the scheduled class period, and the awarding of a contact hour is involved, both teachers shall sign the Official Class Roster indicating both teachers can verify the offenders' presence in the classroom during the scheduled class period.
6. When students are supervised by more than one teacher, or other approved supervising employee, during a class period, and the awarding of at least one contact hour is affected, each of the approved supervising employees shall make appropriate notations on the Official Class Roster for the time period in which he/she supervised the students.

Example 1: Students #12, #14, and #22 on the Official Class Roster were TABE testing during the regular class time. The regular teacher would

make a note at the bottom of the Official Class Roster that these students were testing and provide the necessary hours for the affected students, and the tester signs at the bottom of the Official Class Roster by the entries verifying the presence of the students during the testing session.

Example 2: Student #5, #19, and #25 on the Official Class Roster were in an interview with college personnel. College personnel would make a note at the bottom of the Official Class Roster that these students were present and provide the necessary hours for the affected students and sign at the bottom of the Official Class Roster by the entries verifying the presence of the students during the college interview.

NOTE: Testing specialists/clerks are not authorized to sign an Official Class Roster as the teacher. However, in cases as the aforementioned, the testing specialist/clerk and college personnel are not signing the Official Class Roster as the teacher; they are signing as a supplement to verify that the students were engaged in WSD educational activities, but in a different location other than the assigned classroom. This process shall be used if Assessment Rosters are not produced for a testing session.

7. Substitute Teachers

- a. Substitute teachers are authorized to sign the Official Class Roster during the regular teacher's absence.
- b. The word "substitute" shall be printed to the right of the substitute's signature.
- c. The teacher, or substitute, may sign the Official Class Roster; the principal, or designee, is authorized to sign should the substitute be unavailable.
- d. Paraprofessionals, (including testing specialists and library assistants) who cover a class until a substitute is available, are not authorized to sign the Official Class Roster.
- e. In the event that a teacher's class is cancelled for the day so that the teacher may cover an absent teacher's class, a notation should be made at the bottom of the teacher's official roster indicating the teacher was substituting for another teacher. The notation on the roster should include the name of the absent teacher and the name of the class which was covered.
- f. If a substitute teacher is teaching class until a full-time teacher is hired, the unit principal's name shall appear on the computer as the Teacher Name and the substitute teacher shall sign the Official Class Roster as stated above.

- g. When the classroom teacher is absent and no substitute is employed, the principal shall print the words, "Teacher Absent," on the Official Class Roster and initial; each student shall receive "0" hours credit, and "0" shall also be recorded for total hours.
- h. In the event a teacher is absent and no substitute is employed, the principal may disperse the affected students to other similar classes. In such case, the principal shall write TEACHER ABSENT on the signature line. All teachers who supervise the affected students(s) resultant of this reassignment of students shall:
 - (1) Notate the affected students at the bottom of the Official Class Roster of the teacher who is absent;
 - (2) Record the appropriate contact hour in the student field of the affected students; and
 - (3) Sign at the bottom of the Official Class Roster of the teacher who is absent.

The principal shall total the hours after all entries are made by the teacher(s).

Example: Students #1, #6, and #22 on an Official Class Roster of a teacher who was absent were assigned to a different teacher for the class period. The teacher to whom the offenders were assigned would note at the bottom of the Official Class Roster that Students #1, #6, and #22 were present in his/her class, provide the necessary hours for the affected students, and sign at the bottom of the Official Class Roster by the notation, thereby verifying the presence of the students during the class period in question.

M. Corrections

- 1. All corrections to official attendance records shall be made both on originals and approved photocopies.
- 2. The teacher shall make corrections to the daily Official Class Roster. No erasures, whiteout, strikeovers, ink eradicator, or any other correction method shall be used. All corrections to official attendance documents shall be made by drawing a single line through each error, placing the correct data near each mistake, and initialing each correction.
- 3. The principal, or designee, is authorized to make corrections to the Official Class Roster if the teacher is unavailable for signature due to circumstances such as no longer being employed by WSD, having transferred to another unit, or being absent on extended leave). The

principal shall make and initial all corrections on the Official Class Roster when the substitute is not available.

4. The principal, or designee, may make corrections as needed to other official attendance documents, including summaries and computer records.
5. Secretaries and/or clerks are not authorized to initial corrections to official attendance records.

N. Reconciliation, Submission, and Maintenance of Unit Records

1. Official Attendance Record (OAR)

- a. The OAR is printed each month.
- b. The teacher shall check the OAR against all completed daily Official Class Rosters for the month and affix his/her signature and date verifying the accuracy of the OAR.
- c. The principal shall verify accuracy and affix his/her signature and date should the teacher be unavailable.
- d. The OAR shall be filed with the respective monthly attendance data and retained on the unit in accordance with the WSD Records Retention Schedule.

2. Monthly Attendance Summary (MAS)

- a. The MAS, which is generated each month, consists of an Official Class Roster and a summary of all attendance data for each class.
- b. The MAS shall be filed with the respective monthly attendance data and retained on the unit in accordance with the WSD Records Retention Schedule.
- c. The MAS shall be signed by the principal, or designee, upon verification of all records contained therein.
- d. Calendar Change Notification

- (1) Campus staff shall notify the regional administrator/regional office and the Division of Operational Support when a deviation in the school calendar is necessary due to unforeseen circumstances (which may include, but not be limited to natural disasters, inclement weather conditions, lockdowns, etc.). A copy of the email shall be included in the attendance folder for the

month affected. Notification regarding school closures should adhere to OP-07.23, "Lost Instructional Days."

- (2) Campus staff shall notify the regional administrator/regional office and the Division of Operational Support when a unit planning day/staff development day is taken. A copy of the email, with approval from the regional office, shall be included in the attendance folder for the month affected.

3. Reconciliation of Records

- a. Attendance and tracking records shall be reconciled daily by the principal, or designee, to alleviate inconsistencies between school attendance reported by teachers on WSD Official Class Rosters and data reported by the education security officer.
- b. Tracking data is submitted to the unit offender tracking system to enable calculation of offender good time and parole eligibility.
- c. Attendance records and tracking records must be accurate, concise, and separate.
- d. Reconciliation is not required on facilities that do not do tracking.
- e. Teachers and officers shall keep separate records; teachers record attendance data on the Official Class Roster, and the education officers record data on the unit tracking rosters. If tracking is done, by education security officers, then reconciliation shall occur.
- f. Education security officers shall complete tracking rosters, if required, in accordance with Unit Tracking Reporting Procedures.
- g. At the end of each day, teachers shall submit completed Official Class Rosters and education officers will submit completed tracking rosters to the principal, or designee, for reconciliation of any discrepancies.
- h. Any discrepancies in the records shall be brought to the attention of the teacher and/or officer. The teacher is the final signing authority in the determination of the number of attendance hours students earn in his/her class.
- i. The reconciliation process verifies that both sets of records are accurate, even when there appears to be contradiction. Reconciliation does not necessarily result in both sets of information being identical; rather, that both meet the requirements

for WSD attendance policy and tracking procedures, respectively.

Example 1: A class meets from 7:00-10:15 and the student arrives at 7:25; the student stays the rest of the class, receives no tracking credit, and is listed as tardy at 7:25 on the tracking roster. The teacher gives “3” contact hours. The principal, or designee, determines that both sets of records are correct and no further reconciliation is needed.

Example 2: A class meets from 7:00-10:15 and the student arrives on time, but leaves at 7:25. The student receives credit on the tracking roster, but does not receive any contact hour credit from the teacher. The principal, or designee, checks with the teacher about the apparent discrepancy and is informed that the student left the class before 7:30 and did not earn any contact hour credit. The principal concludes that both sets of records are accurate and no further reconciliation is needed.

- j. Errors noted in the reconciliation process shall be corrected. Notification of corrections involving tracking records shall be forwarded to the unit count room, as needed.

4. Submission of Records

a. Daily Processing

- (1) Campuses are required to process attendance daily.
- (2) Exceptions shall be considered for multiple unit assignments. These exceptions shall be addressed through the regional office.
- (3) In cases where daily processing is not possible due to computer problems, absence, etc., the campus shall notify the regional office.
- (4) Alphabetical characters on the calendar shall be defined as:
 - (a) P - Planning Day
 - (b) I - Inservice/Staff Development
 - (c) H - Holiday (predetermined by WSD master calendar)
 - (d) W - Weekend

- (e) A - Administrative (shall be granted only by superintendent and must be input by Division of Operational Support)
- (f) Q - Weather Day
- (g) L - Lockdown (used only if entire campus is affected and no class is held)

b. Monthly Processing

- (1) All attendance reports and summaries shall be printed, reconciled, and all corrections made on the original hard copy documents and computer files by the end of the 6th day or by the 4th working day (for 220 day personnel) of the following month, whichever is later. Notice of any exceptions to these dates due to vacation or other occurrences shall be provided by the WSD Division of Operational Support.
- (2) Campuses unable to meet the specified due date for submitting Monthly Attendance Records shall notify the Division of Operational Support by email no later than the due date, explaining the reason for the delay and the anticipated arrival date of the relevant attendance records.

5. Maintenance of Records

- a. It is the unit principal's responsibility to ensure that attendance records documentation (hard copy only) is safely and securely stored in a monthly attendance portfolio.
- b. These documents must be available for audit and inspection as required since they are the original, official attendance records.
- c. The attendance records portfolio is retained at the unit level, and shall be assembled and filed in a special accordion style portfolio in the following order from the front of the folder to the back of the folder:
 - (1) Monthly Attendance Summary;
 - (2) Any correspondence or special reports concerning this month's attendance, including Official Class Rosters and official attendance records for "Special" classes and/or "College" classes;

- (3) OAR records (arranged by page number); and
 - (4) Official Class Rosters (stapled together by teacher, first date of month on top, arranged alphabetically by teacher's last name). Official Class Rosters shall be stapled at top center to enable reviewing information at top page left.
- d. Each portfolio will contain one month's attendance records; on large units, two portfolios may be required.
 - e. A label shall be attached to the portfolio closure flap, containing black printed letters with the unit name, month, and year of the attendance records enclosed. Larger units needing two portfolios will add "Part A" to one label and "Part B" to the other label.
 - f. Attendance documentation is stored on the unit for two years, after which the Division of Operational Support will notify regional offices to request units to send the attendance documentation to the regional office in legal size, perma-file boxes. The region will forward the attendance documentation to WSD central administration, where it is retained in accordance with the WSD Records Retention Schedule.

Signature on file _____
Sandra Nash
Director, Division of Operational Support