Western Brown Local Schools

# Update: House Bill 96 Ohio Law & Attendance Guidelines

**Purpose:** According to Ohio Law, schools must track and monitor the total instructional hours missed, including full day absences, late arrivals, early dismissals, and medical visits to ensure students remain on-track academically. An early-warning check-in system required by state law (HB 96) will include a process of monitoring student attendance and series of parent notifications.

**Goal:** To emphasize that schools should provide strong attendance messaging to everyone in their school communities and then increase support and communication.

**Understanding the Terms:** To help schools and families navigate these changes, it is important to understand the distinction between missed instructional time, chronic absenteeism, and habitual truancy. The state requires schools to notify parent/guardian at each benchmark so the school can partner with the family long before a student reaches chronic absenteeism. Please note that Ohio's Law applies to absences "for any reason" - meaning both excused and unexcused hours count toward the following state-mandated benchmarks:

- 5% missed instructional time - 5% Parent Notification
- 10% missed instructional time - 10% Parent Notification & Attendance Intervention
    - Chronic absenteeism includes all absences regardless of excused or unexcused. A student is considered chronically absent once they miss 10% of the minimum number of the hours required for the school year.
    - Chronic absenteeism requires schools to implement and communicate an attendance intervention strategy as part of their support.
- Habitual Truancy - applies only to unexcused absences and any student who is absent without a legitimate excuse based on the following thresholds:
    - 30 or more consecutive hours
    - 42 or more hours in one school month
    - 72 or more hours in one school year
    - If the district/school determines that the student and student's family are making satisfactory progress in improving the student's attendance, the school will continue to monitor and track attendance.
    - However, if the student and the student's family cease to make continued progress in approving the student's attendance, a complaint in the juvenile court shall be filed.

**Continued Practices:**

- Submit notes: Parents need to report absences and provide doctor notes to keep accurate local records.
- Keep sick students home: HB 96 does not change the expectation that children should stay home when ill.
- Encourage families to reach out when facing obstacles related to health, transportation, and/or other personal circumstances.