NJDOE releases broadcast with updated Guidance on Student Absences and Chronic Absenteeism Calculations

On Feb. 3, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released updated guidance on the School Register Summary, reporting student absences, and calculating chronic absenteeism.

The School Register Summary
The School Register Summary (SMS) allows districts to comply with the requirement to “carefully and accurately track enrollment and attendance for all students” under N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.1. The updates made to the reporting requirements reflect the various reopening approaches being implemented throughout the state to ensure accurate categorizations. The updated guidance is located here.

Reporting Student Absences
In May 2017, the NJDOE identified chronic absenteeism as an accountability indicator of school quality under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Gov. Murphy’s Executive Order no. 175 has resulted in required updates to be made to the process of reporting and calculating. The guidance states,

“The guidance for recording daily attendance during the declared state of emergency due to COVID-19 has shifted from March 2020 to the present. The guidance provided in the spring should not be applied to attendance in school year 2020-2021. The current guidance is governed by Executive Order (E.O.) No. 175.”

A summary of the requirements / changes may be found below:

- Districts can count days of remote instruction due to a declared state of emergency toward the 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. Remote instruction must follow requirements laid out in N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-10.1.
- Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates were not used for accountability purposes in 2019-2020. At this time, the NJDOE has not yet requested this accountability waiver, under ESSA.
- In May 2020, districts were required to determine attendance policies related to the various approaches to instruction (remote, hybrid, in-person, etc.).
- In addition to the general data fields, districts must now also collect the following on every student:
  - Student Learning Environment -
    - Full Time on school premises
    - Hybrid, meaning partially on school premises and partially remote
- Full Time remote due to the district offering only remote option
- Full Time remote due to parental/guardian choice
  - **Remote Days in Membership** - “represents the number of school days in session from July 1 to June 30 that the student was enrolled and scheduled to receive instruction from a remote learning environment.”
  - **Remote Days Present** - “Remote Days Present is the number of Remote Days in Membership in which a student was marked as present during the annual reporting period.”
  - **If a district utilizes remote instruction at any point, for any length of time, over the course of the school year, the student learning environment, remote days in membership and remote days present fields must reflect that usage.”

The full guidance on recording, calculating, and reporting chronic absenteeism is found [here](#).

As further guidance from the NJDOE becomes available, we will update our resources for members. If you have any questions about this field advisory, please reach out to your UniServ Field Representative and the Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division.