

Attendance Guidance for 2020-21 School Year

The disruption the COVID-19 pandemic caused in spring 2020 illustrated the need to build resilient educational systems that provide continued learning for students during unforeseen circumstances. Because students deserve a high-quality education with meaningful instruction and teacher feedback, local school systems are working to develop alternative learning schedules and unique patterns of instruction for the 2020-21 school year. Developing these plans gives schools flexibility to pivot to different plans that accommodate a future disruption while ensuring students continue to learn.

To support these efforts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has developed ways to make payments to school districts for onsite instruction, and a combination of those learning models. Schools may choose to offer multiple patterns of instruction to address their local circumstances.

The chart on page two details the various patterns of instruction schools may choose. The first three columns (blue) describe planned patterns of instruction. The last two columns (green) describe alterations to the planned pattern(s) of instruction, as a reaction to local conditions and individual student situations.

[Section 171.033, RSMo](#), enables schools to claim up to 36 hours of attendance each year if they have an Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) Plan approved by DESE. This statute was designed to support continued instruction during sudden, unexpected short-term closures. COVID-19 forced school closures during spring 2020, and it is possible the pandemic could lead to similar closures in the coming school year; therefore, this kind of alternate approach to attendance may need to be available on an extended basis during the 2020-21 school year. For 2020-21, DESE will use an enhanced AMI plan, referred to as the Alternative Methods of Instruction - Extended (AMI-X) Plan. This new plan differs from the existing AMI plan because it sustains instruction over a longer period of time by ensuring that the regularly planned content is delivered and that teachers provide both instruction and feedback to students. Put simply, AMI Plans will be used as provided in statute. AMI-X Plans, as set forth in 5 CSR 20-30-660.085, effective August 1, 2020, will be used for closures related to COVID-19.

Because a number of LEAs already have approved AMI plans, DESE will facilitate the transition to AMI-X Plans in the following ways:

- If an LEA has an approved AMI plan that qualifies as an AMI-X Plan, they will be notified.
- If an LEA has submitted an AMI Plan that does not qualify as an AMI-X Plan, the LEA will be notified and may submit an AMI-X enhancement so that the plan qualifies.
- Any LEA that has not submitted an AMI plan may do so and may also wish to consider submitting both an AMI application and AMI-X enhancement.

Definitions

- **Distanced Instruction:** Students are offsite and receive instruction through online means or through the use of physical materials. Instruction includes teacher interaction as approved by the department in the LEA’s AMI-X plan.
- **Fixed Blended Instruction:** Students receive instruction under a planned pattern of onsite and distanced instruction that includes a minimum equivalent of two (2) full days of onsite instruction per week. For the purpose of this rule, fixed-blended calendars are designed to support social distancing.
- **Virtual Instruction:** Students receive all instruction through technology-based delivery that meets the requirements of Sections 161.670 and/or 162.1250, RSMo.
- **Instruction during Quarantine:** A group of students, such as a classroom or bus roster, receive distanced instruction for an identified period of time to protect public health.
- **Intermittent Blended Instruction:** Students in an entire school building or LEA receive distanced instruction during a period of interruption to the planned pattern. The planned pattern of onsite or fixed blended instruction is interrupted by local conditions that prevent any onsite instruction.
- **Onsite Instruction:** Students are physically present at the school under the guidance and direction of teachers in the teaching process.

Explanation of fixed blended calculation

Average daily attendance for Fixed Blended Instructional schedules will be calculated using the individual student actual onsite rate for the year. The Onsite Instruction attendance rate will be applied to the entire academic calendar to generate an average daily attendance rate for each student in the Foundation Formula calculation.

	Onsite Instruction	Fixed Blended Instruction	Virtual Instruction	Intermittent Blended Instruction	Instruction during Quarantine
Schedule	4-5 days per week in accordance with board approved 4- or 5-day school week	Pattern of days alternating onsite and distanced instruction. School buildings are still open. Students are divided into groups so that alternating pattern reduces the number of students present at the school at any given time.	N/A	Buildings or LEA closed for a period of time due to COVID-19	One or more classrooms of students able to engage in instruction but not physically present at school
Minimum Onsite Time	4-5 days per week per calendar	2 days per week	N/A	Board-approved calendar, modified by disruption	N/A
Instruction	Face-to-face	Face-to-face and distanced instruction	Technology-based delivery in accordance with Sections 161.670 and/or 162.1250, RSMo.	Distanced instruction during time of building closure	Distanced instruction for identified students
Attendance Calculation	Actual onsite	Actual onsite rate applied to all days	94%	Actual onsite rate applied to all days	Actual onsite rate applied to all days
Approval Needed	Calendar	AMI-X	Calendar	AMI-X	AMI-X