

Revised 7/07	ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	NO. SF-1
	GUIDELINE & PROCEDURE	
SUPERSEDES		SHEET 1 of 4
SUBJECT: FIRST DAY ABSENCE Effective July 1, 2006		FILING INSTRUCTIONS (Guideline & Procedures Manual) Section: School Finance As item: SF-1

I. GUIDELINE

For the purposes of determining Average Daily Membership (ADM) for a given school year at a given public school pursuant to ARS § 15-901 (A)(2), the first day of membership for continuing or pre-enrolled students, shall be defined as either the first day a student physically attends school or the first day that classroom instruction is offered, provided that such students physically attend school within the first ten school days. For all other students, the first day of membership shall be defined as the first day a student physically attends school. The definition of the first member day shall be applied consistently throughout the district or charter holder.

II. PROCEDURE

First Ten Days of Classroom Instruction

On the first day of instruction, the class roster may consist of continuing and pre-enrolled students. Such students may be enrolled in SAIS with an enrollment date equal to the first day school is in session whether they participate in school on that day or not. However, records demonstrating that a student attended school at some point during the first ten days school was in session must exist in SAIS to justify an enrollment on the first day. Continuing students who do not attend school during the first ten days school is in session are subject to summer withdrawal. Any enrollment that exists in SAIS for students who do not attend school during the first ten days school is in session must be deleted.

III. PURPOSE

Districts and charters are required to plan for and to provide resources for all continuing and pre-enrolled students from the first day that classroom instruction is offered, whether these students are present or absent. These resources must be paid for by the schools. Since the liability for these resources is incurred no later than the first day of classroom instruction, schools believe that they should be funded by the State of Arizona for the provision of these resources as of the first day of classroom instruction.

A. FACTS/IMPACTS

The Arizona Department of Education's (ADE's) policy has been to calculate State equalization assistance for students as of the first day that the student attends classroom instruction for the following reasons:

- To minimize the expenditure of taxpayer resources for students receiving classroom instruction.
- To minimize the over-funding of students in concurrent enrollment status.

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B. CONCLUSION

As recommended by the School Finance Advisory Committee, the ADE has established a new guideline regulating the administration of students who are enrolled, but are not physically present in the classroom on the first day that classroom instruction is offered. State equalization assistance provides schools with the ability to pay for resources necessary to educate students, e.g., land, buildings, utilities, teachers, administrators, furniture, computers, software, etc. These resources are necessary to educate students as a whole whether or not an individual student is present.

The implementation of the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS) has enabled the ADE to identify students in concurrent enrollment status. This greatly reduces over-funding caused by students registering in one school who may or may not be attending that school and/or who are attending another school or schools.

Therefore, we conclude that this change in guideline would allow districts and charters to be more adequately funded.

C. BACKGROUND

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) do not provide a clear definition of how to handle cases where students are enrolled but are absent on the first day of classroom instruction. The nature of this question revolves around the notion of withdrawal of enrollment, and under what conditions it should occur. Historically, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has interpreted that a student had to be physically in attendance on the first day of classroom instruction or that student would have to be withdrawn from the enrollment. This guideline was driven by the philosophical position that served two purposes: it minimized expenditures of taxpayer resources for students not receiving classroom instruction, and it reduced over-funding of students in concurrent enrollment status.

As recommended by the School Finance Advisory Committee, the ADE has established a new guideline regulating the administration of students who are enrolled, but are not physically present in the classroom on the first day that classroom instruction is offered. This change primarily affects the point at which membership for continuing or pre-enrolled students is recognized for the purpose of calculating Average Daily Membership (ADM).

This change in guideline attempts to recognize the costs for space, teachers and other resources that are incurred by public schools when they prepare for continuing and pre-enrolled students. Those costs may not be reduced or eliminated simply because a student is not in attendance on the first day of classroom instruction. Costs for these resources are fixed in nature and are based on planned requirements that do not vary based on per capita attendance.

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Consequently, the ADE has concluded that public schools should be able to recover costs that result from planning and deploying resources for continuing and pre-enrolled students, provided that the student attends classroom instruction during the first ten days of classroom instruction.

D. DEFINITIONS

Register: A written record containing regular entries of items or details; a book or system of public records; a roster of qualified or available individuals.

ARS § 15-901(A)(10) – “Enrolled” or “enrollment” means that a pupil is currently registered in the school district.

ARS § 15-902(F) – A pupil is enrolled if the pupil is currently registered in the school district. In addition, the Uniform System of Financial Records (USFR) shall contain procedures to ensure that enrollment is determined by all school districts on a uniform basis. ARS § 15-183(E)(6) provides that, except as provided in the article, charter schools are subject to the same financial and electronic data submission requirements as a school district, including the USFR.

ARS § 15-901(A)(2) – “Average daily membership” (ADM) means the total enrollment of fractional students and full-time students, minus withdrawals, of each school day through the first one hundred days or two hundred days in session, as applicable, for the current year.

Continuing students – students enrolled through the last day of the preceding school year.

Pre-enrolled students – students who are not continuing students but who have registered prior to the first day of classroom instruction of the current school year.

