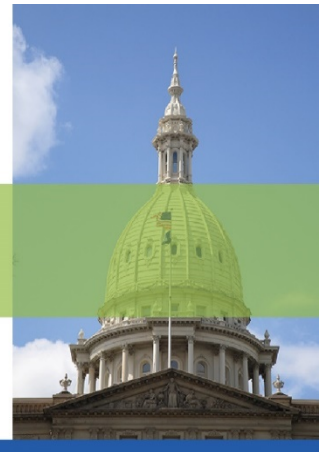




Policy Brief



Aug. 6, 2018

Truancy Policy

Bill Number(s): Senate Bills 103-106

Status: House Judiciary Committee

MASB Position: Oppose

What does it do? [Senate Bills 103-106](#) implement a statewide truancy policy. [SB 103 \(S-2\)](#) creates multiple statewide definitions including for chronically absent, truant and in attendance. Truant is defined as 10 or more unexcused absences, and chronically absent means a pupil who is absent for 10% or more of the school year. To be considered in attendance, a pupil must be present for at least 90% of the school day. The legislation will also prohibit suspension or expulsion for truancy or chronic absenteeism. [SB 104 \(S-1\)](#) would require notification of the student's parent/guardian when the student is truant or chronically absent, and then school officials would offer an attendance agreement requiring regular attendance and discuss consequences for ongoing attendance issues. If problems persist, the pupil would be referred to the local prosecutor for truancy.

[SB 105 \(S-1\)](#) requires school boards to provide information to the state superintendent pertaining to the number of pupils who were truant, chronically absent, or had a disciplinary absence and contain sufficient data that establishes the pupil's attendance status. [SB 106](#) amends the probate code to specify that the family division of the circuit court has jurisdiction over juvenile truancy cases.

How does it affect public schools? This package will create a statewide definition of truant and chronically absent, as well as establish parental notification procedures and attendance agreements when a pupil is found to be truant or chronically absent. This will replace procedures many districts currently have in place, no matter their success.

Why is MASB opposed? [MASB testified opposed to](#) SBs 103-106 in House Committee. We acknowledge the need for a more standard definition for truancy and/or chronic absenteeism, but believe the current proposal has multiple issues that should be resolved prior to enactment. This includes how to enforce the policies with online learners and home school students, as well as how it impact counties and districts that currently have absentee programs that operate with success. Finally, the "in attendance" definition's current strictness, requiring being present for 90% of a day to be counted as present, will be extremely difficult for many districts to implement at both the elementary and secondary levels. We continue to try to address these concerns.