



Student Reporting During the Distance Learning Periods: March 18 through the End of the 19-20 School Year

May 1, 2020

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[ADDED: 4/27/2020] Distance Learning Planning (Closure) Period

The following provides information on what districts need to do for Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) reporting for March 18, through March 27, 2020. The following instructions are in regards to [Governor Tim Walz’s Emergency Executive Order 20-02](#) and current state statutes. These reporting directions pertain to the eight days referred to as the Distance Learning Planning Period in the executive order.

Districts can count as instructional days those days that school was scheduled to be in session between March 18 and March 27, 2020. Students who were enrolled on the school day just prior to March 18 and for whom the enrolling school has not received notice that the student has enrolled elsewhere can report those students in attendance and membership for the days that the school was originally scheduled to be in session. Students would be reported as in attendance and membership for the days and hours that they were scheduled to attend during those days.

Days that a district was not in session, for example spring break, during the Distance Learning Planning Period are considered non-school days. The executive order doesn’t allow non-school days to be counted as instructional days.

The executive order applies only to March 18-27, 2020. Under current law, days that a district canceled school prior to March 18, 2020 are considered non-school days. They are not reported as instructional days; they would be excluded from the instructional days reported on the MARSS A School file and students would not generate attendance or membership on those days.

Instructional Days

Instructional Days are the number of days based on the board approved school calendar during which all students in a particular grade and school are required to attend and participate in school activity for the school

day. The executive order allows districts to report the regularly scheduled school days as instructional days in the MARSS A School file for the Distance Learning Planning Period.

Under current law, canceled school days prior to March 18 and non-instructional (non-scheduled) days, for example spring break, are not reported as instructional days. They would be excluded from the instructional days reported on the MARSS A School file and students would not generate attendance or membership on those days.

For purposes of the Length of Day reported on the MARSS A School file, consider the instructional days the same length as originally scheduled.

Attendance and Membership Days

Attendance Days are the total number of Instructional Days students were present in a given grade for the school year or for the period covered by a unique enrollment record. Membership Days are the number of Instructional Days during which students were enrolled in the school during the current school year or for the period covered by a unique enrollment record. These two data items are reported in the MARSS B Student file. The executive order allows students who are enrolled in the school to be reported in attendance and membership during the Distance Learning Planning Period.

Students can be reported as in attendance and membership during originally scheduled school days between March 18 and March 27, 2020 unless the family had notified the school that the students were withdrawn from school or the student reaches 15 consecutive days absence prior to March 18, 2020.

The student's Status Start Date on MARSS is the first day the student began receiving instruction. For most students this will be the first day of school. Students who transfer to a school between March 18 and March 27, 2020 will have a start date of March 30 or later.

Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood special education (ECSE) students with an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be reported for the number of attendance and membership hours for which they were originally scheduled during these eight days.

Early childhood children who were scheduled to receive an evaluation during this time are ineligible to generate student membership until the actual evaluation occurs.

Early childhood special education (ECSE) students with an IFSP/IEP can be reported for the number of Special Education Service Hours (SESH) for which they were originally scheduled during these eight days.

Students Enrolled in Area Learning Centers

Students enrolled in seat-based classes in state-approved area learning centers (ALCs), alternative programs or contract alternative programs can generate attendance and membership for their scheduled classes between March 18 and March 27, 2020. If the student was scheduled for a full load of classes prior to the Distance

Learning Period, they can generate a full day of attendance and membership on the days school was scheduled to be in session. If the student was taking less than a full course load, reduce the number of attendance and membership hours proportionately. Each program and student must have a schedule available to support the hours claimed just like they would have normally.

Students enrolled in independent study classes in an ALC or alternative program will generate membership hours after the Distance Learning Period based on the credit awarded. So as not to duplicate membership hours, these students should not generate attendance and membership during the eight days.

Students who are specifically scheduled to attend a targeted services program can be claimed for attendance and membership for the dates that they are scheduled to attend as long as they have a Continual Learning Plan (CLP) and have attended the program at least once in the last three weeks of programming. Each program and student must have a schedule available to support the hours claimed.

If the targeted services program was scheduled to end prior to March 18, then participants would be withdrawn on the last scheduled program date and no further attendance or membership should be reported.

Shared-time Students

Shared time students (nonpublic and home school students who receive part-time public school instruction) who were enrolled on the school day just prior to March 18 and for whom the enrolling school has not received notice that the student has enrolled elsewhere or withdrawn from shared time instruction can be reported in attendance and membership for the hours that the school was originally scheduled to provide shared time instruction to them between March 18 and March 27.

[ADDED: 4/27/2020] Distance Learning Period and Extended Distance Learning Periods

The following provides information on what districts need to do for Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) reporting for March 30, through the end of the school year. The following instructions are in regards to [Governor Tim Walz's Emergency Executive Order 20-19, Executive Order 20-41](#) and current state statutes. Executive Order 20-41 extended the distance learning order. The same reporting instructions described below apply to both the Distance Learning and Extended Distance Learning Periods.

These reporting directions pertain to the **Distance Learning Period** and **Extended Distance Learning Period** in the executive order and are referred to here as the Distance Learning Periods. During the Distance Learning Periods, all public schools must provide continuous education based on the distance learning plans developed during the Distance Learning Planning Period and May 1 and 4, 2020 referred as the Extended Distance Learning planning days.

School of Enrollment

Children of workers identified in Executive Order 20-02 and others receiving childcare through the district or charter school may be physically located at other than their normal school of enrollment. For MARSS reporting, continue to report these students at the school that is providing their distance learning instruction.

Instructional Days

Instructional Days are the number of days based on the board approved school calendar during which all students in a particular grade and school are required to attend and participate in school activity for the school day. The executive order allows districts to report the regularly scheduled school days as instructional days in the MARSS A School file for the Distance Learning Period.

Under the executive order and current law, school days from March 30 through May 4 that were not scheduled to be in session are considered non-instructional (non-scheduled) days, for example spring or holiday break, are not reported as instructional days. They would be excluded from the instructional days reported on the MARSS A School file and students would not generate attendance or membership on those days.

Length of Day

Continue to report the length of day in terms of minutes on the MARSS A School file as was scheduled had instruction been provided on-site. If the length of day varied prior to the Distance Learning Planning Period, use the [Flexible Scheduling worksheet](#) to calculate the average length of day to report.

Attendance Days

Attendance Days are the total number of Instructional Days students were present in a given grade for the school year or for the period covered by a unique enrollment record. This data item is reported in the MARSS B Student file. The executive order allows students who are enrolled in the school to be reported in attendance and membership during the Distance Learning Periods as long as they are participating in daily, interactive instruction with their teachers. Districts will take attendance as laid out in their individual distance learning plans and report student attendance in MARSS accordingly.

Refer to "[School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools](#)" and "[Minnesota Distance Teaching and Learning Implementation Guidance](#)" posted to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) [COVID-19 Updates website](#) for information on developing an attendance policy.

Effective March 30, 2020 through the Distance Learning Periods, districts are expected to offer distance learning to all students, including those who are quarantined due to illness or exposure to COVID-19. Students who are too ill to participate are considered absent but in membership for up to 15 consecutive school days at which time they are withdrawn. Districts should consider these cases excused absences. Once students who have been too ill to participate in distance learning begin receiving distance learning, they are reported in attendance each day of documented participation and in membership. Districts should not wait for 15 consecutive days absence to start distance learning; distance learning should start as soon as the student is well enough to participate.

Students who are absent from school by parent's choice and are not participating in distance learning must be withdrawn after 15 consecutive days absence or upon enrollment elsewhere, whichever occurs first. Refer to the section called "15 Consecutive Days Absent" below for more information about absences beyond 15 consecutive days due to COVID-19.

Membership Days

Membership Days are the number of Instructional Days during which students were enrolled in the school during the current school year or for the period covered by a unique enrollment record. This data item is reported in the MARSS B Student file.

Students can be reported in membership during originally scheduled school days between March 30 and the end of the 2019-20 school year, as long as they are participating in distance learning and receiving daily interactive instruction from their teachers. If the family notifies the school that the student has withdrawn from school or the student reaches 15 consecutive days absence, the student must be withdrawn.

Students who are not participating in distance learning must be withdrawn after 15 consecutive days absence or upon enrollment elsewhere, whichever occurs first.

Enrollment Dates

Students who transfer to a new school during the Distance Learning Planning Period (March 18 through March 27, 2020) will have a Status Start Date of no earlier than March 30 at the new school. Students cannot attend a school or start instruction in a school while the school is closed.

Seniors

Early Graduates. Seniors who have the credits to graduate and with their school's and parent/legal guardian's approval choose to graduate prior to the end of the school year must be withdrawn. Use Status End code 08 (graduate).

Dropped Courses. Secondary students who choose to drop courses, e.g., because they are not needed for their diploma, are reported as part-time. Their Percent Enrolled is reduced to less than 100 percent.

Students Living in Minnesota in Another District

Students who have been displaced due to COVID-19 are eligible to participate in distance learning with their school of origin. Students who were enrolled with a district or charter school prior to March 30, 2020 and were forced to leave their home would be considered enrolled and reported in membership and attendance during the Distance Learning Periods as long as they are participating in distance learning with that district or charter school. This includes students who may have been displaced due to military deployment of parents or guardians or for health and safety concerns.

The students' resident district is the Minnesota school district where students have established residence for educational purposes. Refer to Appendix K and Appendix K1 to determine a student's resident district. These documents are available under the MARSS Manual heading on the [MARSS Reporting Instructions](#) webpage.

If the students meet the McKinney-Vento homeless criteria, report them with SAC 11 ([Agreements Between Boards](#)). If the students are not homeless, and the enrolling district is aware that the family has moved, notify the new resident district that the student remains enrolled and use SAC 11 for these students. Juniors and

seniors who move within Minnesota may remain enrolled in the original district under [Enrollments Options for 11th and 12th Grade Students](#); use SAC 04. [Open enrollment application timelines are waived for students transferring to or from a district that receives integration revenue.](#)

Students No Longer Living in Minnesota

Students who have been displaced due to COVID-19 are eligible to participate in distance learning with their school of origin unless they have enrolled elsewhere. Students who were enrolled with a district prior to March 30, 2020 and were forced to leave their home would be considered enrolled and reported in membership and attendance during the Distance Learning Periods as long as they are participating in daily distance learning activities and have not enrolled elsewhere. This includes foreign exchange students who were required to return to their country of origin, and Minnesota residents displaced due to military deployment of parents or guardians or forced to move out of state for COVID health and safety concerns.

Continue to use MARSS State Aid Category (SAC 02) for foreign exchange students who were required to return to their home country due to COVID-19 and who are participating in distance learning provided by the enrolling school. The student is considered a resident of the district in which the student enrolls. If the enrolling school is a charter school, the student is considered a resident of the district in which the charter school is geographically located. The charter school can provide the distance learning and report the student with SAC 02.

Minnesota residents who have been forced to move out of Minnesota due to COVID-19 and who continue to receive distance learning from a Minnesota public school may continue to be enrolled. They are reported as residents of the district in which they last resided while living in Minnesota.

Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood special education (ECSE) students with an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be reported for the number of membership hours their IFSP/IEP requires as long as special education services are being provided in some manner during the Distance Learning Periods.

Early childhood special education (ECSE) students with an IFSP/IEP can be reported for the number of Special Education Service Hours (SESH) which the IFSP/IEP requires as long as special education services are being provided in some manner.

Early childhood children who receive an evaluation during the Distance Learning Periods generate student attendance and membership hours for the evaluation time.

Children receiving an initial evaluation that was started prior to the closure should be reported with SEES 2. Include the actual evaluation hours provided prior to the closure. If the evaluation is completed during the distance learning period, close the record when the IFSP/IEP is completed and shared with the parent. If all that's left of the initial evaluation is to write the IEP/IFSP, that can be done during the Distance Learning Planning Period or Distance Learning Periods and added to those original evaluation hours. The evaluation record can extend from prior to the closure and into the closure, depending on when the IFSP/IEP is completed and shared with parents.

Refer to [MARSS Procedure 6 - EC](#) for more information about reporting evaluation records for ECSE.

State-Approved Alternative Programs (SAAPs)

Seat-Based Classes. Students enrolled in seat-based classes in state-approved area learning centers (ALCs), public alternative programs or contract alternative programs can generate attendance and membership for their scheduled classes between March 30 and the end of the school year as long as they are participating in distance learning and receiving daily interactive instruction from their teachers. Students scheduled for a full load of classes prior to the Distance Learning Period and who continue that schedule during the Distance Learning Periods, can generate a full day of membership on the days school was scheduled to be in session. Membership and attendance hours for students taking less than a full course load should be reduced proportionately. Each program and student must have a schedule available to support the hours claimed just like they would have normally.

Independent Study Classes. Students enrolled in independent study classes in an ALC or alternative program will generate membership hours during the Distance Learning Periods based on the credit awarded and the documented instruction provided by a licensed teacher. Refer to [MARSS Procedure 8](#) for more information on computing membership hours for independent study.

[ADDED: 4/27/2020] **Targeted Services.** If targeted services programming is not being provided during the Distance Learning Periods (March 30 forward), no attendance and membership can be reported for this time period.

Contact MDE.AlternativeLearning@state.mn.us for more information about SAAP programming.

Shared-time Students

Shared time students (nonpublic and home school students who receive part-time public school instruction) who were enrolled on the school day just prior to March 18 and who receive distance learning from the public school can be reported in attendance and membership for the hours that the school provides shared time instruction to them between March 30 and the end of the school year. However, the student must be withdrawn if the enrolling school is notified that the student has enrolled elsewhere or has withdrawn from shared time instruction.

Although shared time instruction is required to be provided at a public school site to generate funding, during the Distance Learning Periods, instruction is considered to be held at a public school as long as it is provided by the public school teachers in which the student was receiving shared time instruction prior to the Distance Learning Planning Period.

15 Consecutive Days Absent

Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.05, subdivision 8 requires students to be withdrawn after 15 consecutive days absent unless instruction is being provided in the home, e.g., homebound instruction. Days on which school is not scheduled, e.g., spring break, or canceled by the district/charter school, e.g., March 17, and the Distance Learning Period, i.e., March 18 through March 26, 2020 do not count as part of the 15 consecutive days.

When schools cancel instruction, those days are considered non-school days. Students are not absent because they are not membership days.

During the Distance Learning Planning Period, Governor Walz closed schools. Students are reported in attendance and membership during the days that a school was scheduled to be in session between March 18 and March 27, 2020. Those days do not count toward the 15 consecutive days absent but they also do not break the 15 consecutive days absent.

To determine a student's consecutive days absence, look for students who were consecutively absent prior to the first day that school was canceled whether by the district or by Governor Walz. Exclude the days that the district may have closed between (a) March 13 and March 17, 2020 or have been on spring break and (b) the days Governor Walz closed schools between March 18 and March 27, 2020. For schools who started distance learning on March 30, any absences from that day forward would be considered part of the string of absences that started prior to the Distance Learning Planning Period.

For example, if the school was closed only between March 18 and March 27, a student's consecutive days absent would consist of the school days immediately prior to March 18 and the school days starting March 30. A student who was absent the 10 consecutive days prior to March 18 and the first five days starting March 30 would reach 15 consecutive days absent and be withdrawn on April 3, 2020.

The commissioner may allow students who are absent for more than 15 consecutive days absent due to COVID-19 and who are unable to participate in distance learning to be kept on the roles. The district or charter school would apply for a waiver from the commissioner by completing [Excessive Absences: Application for Individual Students](#).

Special Education Instructional Settings

Students' Primary Disability and Instructional Setting during the Distance Learning Periods can continue to be reported as indicated on the IEP/IFSP in place at the time of the Distance Learning Planning Period as long as the district or charter school is providing special education services. A new enrollment record would not be necessary to indicate distance learning. However, if an IEP team meeting occurs during which the disability or setting changes, a new enrollment record reflecting the change(s) is needed. If the student's record requires Special Education Service Hours to be reported, e.g., ECSE, care and treatment, independent study at a SAAP, etc., the service hours in the new enrollment record reflect those required by the new IEP/IFSP.

Part C (age 2) to Part B (age 3) Transitions: Refer to Special Education COVID-19 Resources, question 34 for guidance on updating the disability and setting for a student who turns age 3 during the Distance Learning Period.

Developmental Delay, Age 7: Refer to Special Education COVID-19 Resources, question 35 for guidance on updating the disability and setting for a student with a developmental delay disability who turns age 7 during the Distance Learning Period.

Special Education Service Hours

Special Education Service Hours are used for Tuition Billing. Not all students with an IEP are required to have Service Hours reported. For those students who are required to have Service Hours and who are receiving special education services, calculate and report them the same as you would have if the students were receiving services on-site. However, if the IEP team has met and changed the services required by the IEP/IFSP, use the current IEP/IFSP to calculate the service hours from that day forward.

Transportation Category

During the Distance Learning Planning Period and the Distance Learning Periods students' Transportation Category can remain the same category as it was immediately prior to the Distance Learning Planning Period. Even though most students are not receiving daily to and from transportation to access their instruction, do not create a new enrollment record to indicate lack of transportation. When MDE calculates transportation expenses and the number of students in the various transportation categories, it will be important that the information remain as it would have been reported in the absence of distance learning.

[ADDED 4/27/2020] May 1, 2020 and May 4, 2020

The executive order 20-41 requires district staff to plan and prepare for the Extended Distance Learning Period.

School districts and charter schools must use May 1, 2020 and May 4, 2020 to plan for the Extended Distance Learning Period, which will begin on May 5, 2020. To the extent possible, school districts and charter schools must provide accommodations for staff to work remotely. If staff must report to their respective buildings during this Extended Distance Learning Period, planning activities must be performed in accordance with Public Health Guidelines. This provision supersedes paragraph 12 of Executive Order 20-19.

Schools may count the May 1 and May 4 staff prep days as instructional days. Students who are enrolled on April 30 may be counted in attendance and membership on May 1 and May 4. If April 30 was the 15th consecutive day of absence, the student should be withdrawn on April 30 and no further membership claimed until the student participates in extended distance learning.

MDE Resources

The resources are updated continuously, as new information comes in and as we find answers to the most frequently asked questions.

[We ask that you check the COVID-19 Updates page daily.](#)

[Kelly Wosika](#), 651-582-8855 or MARSS@state.mn.us for assistance in reporting COVID-19 enrollment records.