

Tac Titooqan Article

March 2015

I would like to thank those families who attended the first Lapwai School District Attendance Court hearings in January. The Lapwai School District would also like to celebrate the dedication and support of Anne Kelleher from the Nez Perce Tribe Prosecutor's office. Anne has donated time and energy to successful implementation of this new attendance resource in Lapwai with plans to replicate the program in Kamiah. The purpose of the Lapwai School District Attendance Court is not punitive. It is actually a resource surrounding families with systems of support to improve regular and punctual attendance. The hearings result in an action plan to leverage all of the available resources within the school, Tribe, and community to ensure students reach their full potential.

Idaho state law and the Nez Perce Tribal code require attendance at school. Students who do not comply with this regulation may be subject to school discipline and/or court action and referral to Child Protective Services including:

1. When a student has three (3) absences in a semester, a letter will be sent home. The letter will include the number of school days missed.
2. When a student reaches five (5) days of absences in a month or six (6) days of absences in a semester, the principal will notify the superintendent. The principal will contact the parent/guardian to develop a plan to assure regular attendance to minimize further absences and explain policies for attendance.
3. If attendance fails to immediately improve, the superintendent may contact the parent/guardian to arrange a referral to the Lapwai School District Attendance Court.
4. If such action is not successful, the student and/or parent may be charged with a violation of the Truancy Code in the appropriate jurisdiction.
5. When a student has missed ten (10) days in a semester, the student may be referred to Child Protective Services for educational neglect.
6. Exclusive of school-scheduled activities, a student may only miss twelve (12) days per semester. Failure to meet this standard will result in "no credit" or "withdrawal" on the student transcript.
7. If the above efforts fail to improve attendance, the principal will refer the student to the superintendent. After reviewing the student's attendance record, the superintendent may arrange a hearing before the Board of Trustees in accordance with Idaho Code 33-205, Denial of School Attendance, for habitual truancy. This hearing may lead to an expulsion for one calendar year, 365 days.

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure students attend school regularly and on time, yet please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide support. If you have questions regarding the policy changes described above, please contact Dr. David M. Aiken, superintendent, at 843-2622 ext 202. Together, we ensure all students will reach their full potential.