



OCTOBER 2016

"Change your thinking, change your life."

– Ernest Holmes

October Count Day (Oct. 5): Count Day this year is on Wednesday, October 5th. The very best thing a building administrator can do is to make sure your teachers are taking accurate attendance each and every day. Your local ISD may also have some helpful documents on their website to assist you with the process. The MPAAA (Michigan Pupil Accounting and Attendance Association) is also a great resource. In preparation for count day, here are some suggestions:

- Counselors should double check schedules to ensure all students have the classes you think they have.
- Class changes should be over and done with, finished and completed, by the week before count day.
- If you have a homecoming assembly on the count day, everybody (the homecoming court, the band, the gym set-up people, everybody) reports to that period class for attendance before headed to the gym. If you have a two period assembly, have the students report to the second class for attendance after the assembly is out.
- If a student is waiting to see a counselor, make sure the student has gone to class first for attendance. If the counselor is working with a student and not finished when the bell rings to end a class, have the student leave the counselor's office and report to the class for attendance, then go back to the counselor. (if this is possible)
- Have you begun services to home-bound students? How are you accounting for your online students?
- Reduced schedule paperwork all submitted?
- Ensure that teachers are taking attendance every period, every day.
- Suspensions that have a student out on count day are excused absences.
- If you have a policy in which a student is considered absent if the student shows up for class 10 minutes late, then relax that tardy policy a bit on the count day - a tardy student is considered in attendance with no follow-up necessary.
- Count day is not a particularly good day for fire drills or lock-downs.
- Have any substitute teachers sign something to indicate that they verify that their attendance that day was to the best of their knowledge.
- Schools with block schedules should schedule every class to meet on count day, even if just to take attendance. That would save a lot of work.

If you get a field audit (the auditors come to your building), have a place set aside for them to work. Not a coat room, copy room, or next to the band room. A place with sufficient space within a reasonable distance to a restroom. A place that can be locked when they leave for lunch. Provide access to beverages (coffee, tea, water, and some light snacks (donuts, bagels, etc) Designate a person who is familiar with your attendance program to be their contact person.



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Give the auditors a number to use to contact them during the day when needed and, for that day, make responding a priority. Have what is required ready. Things like teaching schedules, signed attendance reports, student schedules, etc should have been gathered the day before and there when the auditors arrive. If you are scrambling to get these things when the auditors arrive, you are sending a message that student count is not a priority. And while your plate is full of many, many things that are truly more important than counting students, your funding, for now, is based on your school's ability to count students successfully.

You will not lose money if a student is marked absent on the count day. The student has a number of days to show up after the count and when the student does, you mark them in attendance and qualify for the money. You do the things above to reduce the work load on your support staff in tracking students marked absent and, the less students absent, the less chance of mistakes. The less mistakes, the less you get a field audit.

Auditors want you to get the money to which you are entitled. It never hurts to contact them to introduce yourself and ask them for suggestions for a successful audit. That gesture will mean a lot.

Academic Progress Tests: Remember that state law requires that student growth must be established and measured by each certified staff member. In many districts teachers are creating pre- and post-tests for the content standards covered in the first semester (or trimester) to establish baseline data. Once this data is gathered, teachers can begin their instructional planning and set intervention goals accordingly. Because this is a new process for many teachers they may need your assistance with interpreting test results and goal setting. (PWS)

Goal-Setting Meetings: October is a critical month to meet with teachers and establish goals for the school year. One easy way to do this is by scheduling meetings with your teachers based on who is evaluating them. This will make the number somewhat manageable and also provide some important insights that will help you work with those teachers throughout the year as you give them feedback. (PWS)

With student growth in Michigan being a significant portion of a teacher's evaluation, you should make sure that their goals are aligned to the district policy with regard to evaluation and how their growth goals are established. Finally, make it a point to connect their student growth goals to some instructional goals. Help teachers make clear connections between their instructional practice and what happens with student growth data.

High-Visibility Supervision: Put a student desk and chair in each hallway for doing paperwork – like reading lesson plans. Students and teachers will appreciate your being visible and accessible. Be purposeful about your hall walks during passing periods – visit the classrooms of substitute teachers and hit each area of the building during the course of the day.

Student Activities: Band and Choir concerts join athletics on the school calendar for the month of October. Make sure that facilities are reserved and ready for concerts. It is impossible to attend every event at the school, so be deliberate about attending at least one event for each activity. Look for nights on the calendar where three events are going on at one time – choir concert, volleyball game and football game...stop in for a trifecta! Don't just blend in at events or stand in a corner. Meet and greet parents/students and remember to take pictures for your Facebook page, Twitter, website and hallway bulletin boards. Pictures will attract people to your communications.



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Activity Advisers: Encourage your activity advisers (student council, honor society, leadership class, or other activities) to send students who are new to involvement to a [Leadership Training Institute](#) hosted by MASC/MAHS Michigan Student Leadership. These regionally located conferences offer a great opportunity for your students to learn best practices, network with other new leaders and motivate them to action for the remainder of the year. And don't forget PD for your Advisers! MASC/MAHS Michigan Student Leadership provides an excellent way to train a new or veteran adviser in best practices. ([MASC/MAHS](#))

National Bullying Prevention Month: Every October, schools and organizations across the country join in observing National Bullying Prevention Month. This effort encourages everyone to take an active role in the bullying prevention movement – including Unity Day (wear orange!) on Wednesday, Oct. 19. Check out all of the different events, activities and make plans to get involved – pacer.org/bullying/nbpm.

Connected Educator Month (CEM): This initiative networks educators and education stakeholders through connected professional learning experiences worldwide. Over the past few years, millions of educators and others around the world have participated in hundreds of professional development and other educational opportunities, offering highly distributed, diverse, and engaging activities to all stakeholders at all levels. To find ways to participate and get involved, check out connectededucators.org.

Organize This Month's Meetings: Here are two items you should consider adding to your staff meeting agenda this month.

- **Staff Meeting Icebreaker of the Month: Common Ground** - In small groups, have participants come up with six things they have in common and have them share these with the large group.

New Teacher Meeting Topics of the Month and Mentor Teacher Checklist: E-mail the mentor checklist to your mentor teachers each month to encourage conversation with untenured teacher mentees. ([PHD](#))

Upcoming MASSP Events: Consider attending or sending staff to these upcoming MASSP workshop and conference opportunities.

- **Principals Summit** | October 10-11 @ Detroit Marriott
- **Observation Best Practices** | October 17 @ MASSP
- **Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)** | October 18 @ MASSP
- **Classroom Discipline** | October 25 @ MASSP

For more information or to register, visit mymassp.com/eventlist.