TO: Education Interim Committee Members
FROM: Laura Sankey Keip, Staff Attorney
DATE: September 31, 2018
RE: Definitions related to chronic absenteeism

The Office of Public Instruction has posted on its website guidance from the US Department of Education containing definitions of terms related to the ESSA Chronic Absenteeism reporting requirement.

Absenteeism: In accordance with the Office for Civil Rights’ guidance, a student is absent if he or she is not physically on school grounds and is not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for the school day. Chronically absent students include students who are absent for any reason (e.g., illness, suspension, the need to care for a family member), regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.

Tardies: A student who is absent for less than 50 percent of the school day. Note from OPI: if the student is absent for 50% or more of the day, the student is considered to be ESSA absent for the full day.

Source: Chronic Absenteeism Data as Required by the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), December 2017.