Policy 5113.2 – Truancy

DATE: November 6, 2017

PREVIOUS ITEM: None

ENCLOSURES: Adopted Policy 5113.2
CABE’s August 10, 2017 Policy Update

REASON: To Remove from Table and Approve Policy 5113.2

BACKGROUND: This policy was tabled at the October 2, 2017 Board of Education Meeting.

The adopted policy was reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent and revised to reflect updated state laws.

ACTION: Accept or Reject
Students

Truancy

Introduction and Definitions

The district’s policy on student truancy shall stress early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students. Referral to legal authorities normally shall be made only when local resources are exhausted. For purposes of implementing this policy and for reporting purposes regarding truancy, the District will utilize the State Board of Education approved definitions of “excused,” “unexcused,” and “disciplinary” absences.

“Truant” shall mean a student age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten unexcused absences in one school year.

“In attendance” shall mean a student if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

“Chronically absent child” is an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

“Absence” means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day pursuant to C.G.S. 10-198b.

“District chronic absenteeism rate” means the total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year.

“School chronic absenteeism rate” means the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

Remediation of Truancy

School personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or other persons having control of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations which will detail the following school district obligations under the district’s truancy policy.
Students

Truancy (continued)

Remediation of Truancy (continued)

1. Notify parents annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.

2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency record cards or other means of contacting parents or other persons having control of the child during the school day.

3. Establish a system to monitor student attendance.

4. Make a reasonable effort by telephone and by mail to notify parents or other persons having control of the child, enrolled in grades one through eight, inclusive, when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previously approval or other indication which indicates parents are aware of the absence. (Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.)

The required mailed notice shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in one month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child’s family is a family with service needs.

5. Identify a student as “truant” when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.

6. Identify a student as “chronically absent” when the student accumulates a total number of absences at any time during a school year that is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at the school during the school year.

7. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant or chronically absent to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of such designation. Such meeting may involve the school or District Attendance Team.

Students so identified may be subject to:

(a) retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion or retention.
(b) a requirement to complete a summer school program successfully before being promoted to the next grade.
Students

Truancy (continued)

Remediation of Truancy (continued)

8. When a petition is filed, an educational evaluation of the truant student shall be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.

9. Provide coordination of services and refer “truants” to community agencies which provide child and family services.

10. If in existence, refer the child to the children’s probate court truancy clinic.

The Board, on or before 8/15/18, shall implement a truancy intervention model identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as identified by the Commissioner of Education. Parents or other persons having control of each child shall be notified of such truancy model. (Note: The SDE is required to identify these effective truancy intervention models by 8/15/17.)

Chronic Absenteeism

The Board of Education, in compliance with statute, requires the establishment of attendance review teams when chronic absenteeism rates in the District or at individual schools in the District meet the following circumstances:

1. A District team must be established when the District’s chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.

2. A school team must be established when the school chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.

3. A team for either the District or each school must be established when (a) more than one school in the District has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) a District has a District chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher and one or more schools in the District have a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher.
Students

Truancy (continued)

Chronic Absenteeism (continued)

The membership of attendance review teams may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, chronically absent children, parents or guardians of chronically absent children, and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants.

Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available.

The District shall annually include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

The Principal or his/her designee of any elementary or middle school located in a town/city designated as an alliance district may refer to the children’s truancy clinic established by the Probate Court serving the town/city, a parent/guardian with a child defined as a truant or who is at risk of becoming a truant. (An attendance officer or a police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.)

(cf. 5113 – Attendance and Excuses)
(cf. 5142.1 – Relations with Noncustodial Parents)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-184 Duties of parents. (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)
10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 0 0-157, PA 11-136 and PA 16-147)
10-198b State Board of Education to define “excused absence”, “unexcused absence”, and “disciplinary absences”
10-198c Attendance review teams (as amended by PA 17-14
10-198d Chronic absenteeism
Students

Truancy (continued)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised, 1995, PA 95-304)

(as amended by PA 15-225)

10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)

10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.


Action taken by the State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define “attendance.”

Action taken by the State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define “excused and “unexcused” absences.

PA 15-225, An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism.
This Act makes several changes to the education statutes, including the following:

1. removes any in-school suspension of a half day or more from the calculations of student absences done by local and regional boards of education (§1);

2. removes certain requirements for cooperative regional special education facilities to be eligible for state school construction grants (§2);

3. allows teacher preparation program students to avoid taking the state competency examination if they have qualified for a waiver based on criteria established by the State Board of Education (SBE) (§3);

4. removes obsolete language from the law allowing SBE to issue certificates of qualification and requiring temporary 90-day teaching certificate holders to attend a defunct teacher mentoring program (§§4 & 9);

5. changes the requirements that applicants must meet in order to qualify for the entry-level initial educator certificate (§8);

6. removes an annual April 15 reporting date requiring regional education service centers (RESCs) to submit Open Choice seat availability to SDE (§10);

7. continues an existing two-phase supplemental magnet transportation grant to the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) RESC with some payment adjustments in comparison to previous fiscal years (§11); and

8. moves administration of the statewide science mastery exam from grade 10 to 11 beginning in the 2018-19 school year (§12).

The legislation also makes technical and conforming changes (§§5-7).

The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 2017, except the provisions addressing supplemental magnet transportation grants for CREC (§11) take effect upon passage.

The portions of this legislation which have policy implications are the following:

§1 – Calculation of Student Absences

By law, boards of education that face district or school chronic absenteeism must form attendance review teams to address this issue. The law establishes the manner in which boards should calculate chronic absenteeism. Under the Act, a student who serves an in-school suspension that is a half day or longer would no longer be considered absent for purposes of this calculation.
§12 – State-wide Mastery Examination in Science

This section moves the administration of the statewide science mastery examination, currently in grade 10, to grade 11 beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.

Policy Implications

The policies impacted by this legislation are:

1. Policy #5113 – Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal
2. Policy #5113.2 – Truancy
3. Policy #6146.2 – Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations (Statewide Summative Assessments)

There are several versions of these policies. Not all are included here because the changes shown in those included in this publication are indicative of the changes made to all of the samples.

Districts are mandated to adopt a policy pertaining to truancy. Policy #5113 or #5113.2 can fulfill this requirement if it contains the language pertaining to truancy issues.

Policy #6146.2 is considered a recommended policy for inclusion in a district’s policy manual.

August 2017