



### **CT State Department of Education's Student Attendance Regulations**

In June of 2012, the Connecticut State Board of Education approved new student attendance regulations that draw upon the familiar idea that "you have to be present to win." Underscoring the direct link between school attendance and school success, the regulations define "excused" absences and distinguish them from "unexcused" absences. They also include a new verification requirement on the tenth illness absence and beyond.

For Excused Absences, the new regulations specify that:

- 1) For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the parent/guardian approves such absences, submits appropriate documentation and adheres to the school's attendance reporting policy.
- 2) For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences are considered excused for the following reasons:
  - Illness (Note new requirement: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence.)
  - Religious holiday
  - Death in the family or other emergency beyond the family's control
  - Mandated court appearances (Note: additional documentation is required)
  - Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends
  - Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators (and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.)

For Unexcused Absences, the new regulations specify that:

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless it meets the definition of an excused absence and/or unless it results from school or district disciplinary action.

[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroomldefinition\\_excused\\_unexcused\\_absences.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroomldefinition_excused_unexcused_absences.pdf)

Please be aware that the truancy law has not changed. A "truant" means a child under the age of eighteen who has four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in one academic year. A "habitual truant" means any such child who has twenty unexcused absences within a school year. Truancy will automatically result in a truancy meeting and may result in a court report of truancy.

These regulations will make no difference to the vast majority of E/R/9 students whose attendance is consistent with the idea of "being present" for teaching and learning. In those instances, however, when student absences amount to "absenteeism," we have a responsibility to work with parents/guardians to find ways of responding to the problem at hand.

Please familiarize yourself with these new regulations and the truancy law, and feel free to contact the superintendent of schools should you have any questions.