

POLICYALERT

August, 2015

Forethought Consulting, Inc.

POLICY UPDATE: 2015

WADING INTO LEGISLATION

We dabbled our toes in the water with the revisions to Student Records earlier this summer, and now we are wading into the legislative pool before diving into the deep end. This issue of **POLICYALERT** tackles only two Acts of the 2015 Louisiana Legislature, but they effect changes to four policies.

School Bus Scheduling and Routing

The 2014 Louisiana Legislature created a dilemma for school bus routing by creating a law which required school buses to be routed so that students did not have to cross a street when boarding or departing a school bus. The supposed intent was to prevent students from crossing certain four lane highways, but the resulting legislation did not reflect that original intent. Act 421 of the 2015 Louisiana Legislature, revising La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:158, includes language which now prohibits loading and unloading in a location on a divided highway such that the student would be required to cross a roadway of the traffic is not controlled by the visual signals on the school bus. The statutory language also requires that students be loaded or unloaded on a shoulder, unless there is no shoulder or the shoulder is determined to be less safe for loading and unloading. In such cases the bus shall pull to the lane farthest to the right so that no lane of traffic is between the bus and the right side curb. The policy *School Bus Scheduling and Routing* has been revised to reflect the new statutory language.

Policies In This Issue:

- School Bus Scheduling and Routing
- Student Suspension
- Student Dress Code
- Student Expulsion

**Student Dress Code
Student Suspension
Student Expulsion**

In an effort to reduce the suspensions and expulsions for uniform violations by students in lower grades, Act 248 amended La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:416 to prohibit suspensions and expulsions for uniform violations for students in grades prekindergarten through five. However, the Act includes the caveat that the prohibition of suspension or expulsion for a uniform violation shall not be “tied to willful disregard of school policies.” Although we are not fond of including changes in three policies, in this instance we feel it is necessary, and policies *Student Dress Code*, *Suspension*, and *Expulsion* all have been revised to reflect this new legislation.

In revising the *Student Dress Code* policy, we have removed any reference to specific disciplinary measures, and instead refer to the *Student Code of Conduct*, which is the appropriate place for *all* disciplinary measures to be included. For those systems which still include them in policy, we would also suggest that the specific guidelines for uniforms and dress codes be removed as well, with a reference to the system’s student handbook. Dress code guidelines change frequently, and this would eliminate the policy being revised every time the guidelines are changed.

More fun on the way! The next newsletter will address policies revised based on BESE changes which have taken a backseat to other issues. Then more legislative updates will be in the hopper.



Thank you all for your hard work! Happy Labor Day!