

POLICYALERT



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Forethought Consulting, Inc.

POLICY UPDATE: 2010

Warming Up for Summer Chores

Although school has wrapped up for this year, and the 2010 Louisiana Legislature is still in session, we have two policies to present which need attention in the meanwhile. Consider this small update a warm-up for those biggies to follow later this summer. Enjoy!

● ATTENDANCE REPORTS FOR STUDENT DRIVERS

This new policy has been created as a result of La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §32:414 as passed by the 2009 Louisiana Legislative session, which *allows* School Boards the *option* of adopting a policy that would permit information be provided to the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles regarding a student's enrollment and attendance, thereby affecting a student's driving privileges. A student who does not meet minimum school attendance requirements would then be subject to denial or suspension of his/her driver's license or learner's permit as a result. This policy only needs adopting if the Board chooses to exercise the option.

● SCHOOL WELLNESS

Revisions to *School Wellness* policies have been made to reflect recent changes regarding the review and monitoring of the policy's provisions. Assessments of nutrition and physical activity policies and programs are now required annually, rather than every three years, using the Louisiana Department of Education *Wellness Policy Evaluation* tool. In addition, reports are to be shared with the school district's *School Health Advisory Council*, the creation of which was required last year by La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:17.1. In light of a new, rather wordy state template being disseminated, we recently reviewed the federal provisions

Policies In This Issue:

• Attendance Reports for Student Drivers

• School Wellness

requiring a *School Wellness* policy. Finding no changes to the federal requirements, we feel that the enclosed revised policy adequately addresses federal and state provisions. We do urge school systems, however, to review the various goals to make sure they are up to date.

● **ON HOLD:** **CHANGES TO ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

We are *very* aware of the recent changes made to Bulletin 741, *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, regarding student attendance. After reviewing these changes and discovering conflicts with, and omission of, statutory language, we contacted the Louisiana Department of Education and were informed that additional changes may be coming, hopefully correcting some of the problems encountered, particularly dealing with types of absences. In addition, the Louisiana Legislature is about to wrap up its 2010 session, and may prompt changes to these policies as well. So we have decided not to move forward with revisions to several student attendance related policies just yet. We understand that this may be inconvenient in light of the need to update student handbooks for the start of school.

Even though we have put on hold the changes to several policies related to attendance, one particular change BESE has made can be included in the student handbook. It is the following new language addressing minimum attendance requirements:

Compulsory attendance laws and Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) regulations require high school students to be in attendance a minimum of 30,060 minutes (equivalent to 83.5 six hour school days) per semester, or 60,120 minutes (equivalent to 167 six hour school days) a school year for schools not operating on a semester basis, in order to be eligible to receive credit for courses taken. To receive Carnegie credit for a course, students must be present ninety-four percent (94%) of the required time as listed in §907 of Bulletin 741, *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*. Elementary students shall be in attendance a minimum of 167 days (60,120 minutes) a school year in order to be eligible to receive credit for courses taken.

Section 907 of Bulletin 741 provides the required minimum minutes for several different class schedule configurations that secondary schools may be using.



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