



## POLICY 5.09

**5-C** I recommend the Board approve development of the proposed revised Policy 5.09, entitled “Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy.”

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### Development

### CONSENT ITEM

- This revised policy is prepared in accordance with Florida laws and State Board of Education rules authorizing the School Board to adopt policies and procedures governing attendance monitoring and checks, truancy, and the enforcement of attendance laws and rules.
- The revised policy provides for:
  - A renaming of the policy from “Enforcement of School Attendance” to Attendance, Absenteeism and Truancy”.
  - A complete re-writing of the policy to include relevant portions of Policies 5.0901 (Regular School Attendance) and 5.093 (Attendance – Checking, Recording and Reporting). Policies 5.0901 and 5.093 are proposed for repeal.
- This policy is also being revised to comply with the Agreement between the United States Department of Justice and the School District entered on February 26, 2013. The agreement resolved the Justice Department’s investigation into complaints regarding the District’s policies and practices for registering and enrolling students and administering student discipline.
- Specifically, the revised policy:
  - Establishes definitions for absence, class attendance, school attendance, early dismissal, excuses absence, habitual truant, regular attendance, school day, tardy, unexcused absence, etc. (See lines 25-96.)
  - Provides for the required number of days that a student must be in attendance (180 days). (See lines 123-124.)
  - Provides for parents/guardians to give written notification to schools of the child’s absence and related reason within 24 hours. Otherwise, the student should present as written explanation upon return to school. (See lines 127-134.)
  - Requires school centers to track student attendance and absence through use of computers; and to report attendance, absences and tardiness on report cards. (See lines 135-137; lines 148-150.)

- Provides that a student is absent when the student misses fifty percent or more of the instructional day or the instructional class period, due to tardiness or early dismissal. (See lines 166-167; 174-178.)
- Provides that tardies and early dismissals will result in unexcused absences on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, etc., of such instances. (See lines 179-181.)
- Prohibits a student from being sent home or refused school admission due to tardiness. (See lines 182-185.)
- Provides for school intervention and enforcement of attendance; requiring schools to timely respond to student absences by contacting the parent/guardian (See lines 186-195); school based intervention teams to address patterns of non-attendance and implement interventions with parents/guardians (See lines 196-217); truancy interventions with area truancy liaison for unsuccessful school based interventions (See lines 218-232); and District-level intervention (See lines 233-246).
- Provides a means by which a parent/guardian may challenge intervention strategies. (See lines 247-255.)
- Requires students be afforded an opportunity to make up work, without academic penalty, for excused and unexcused absences, including suspensions. The student will be granted the same number of days as absent to make up such work. (See lines 138-145.)
- Requires principals to be responsible for the administration and implementation of laws and rules related to attendance checking, report and recordings; ensure attendance reports are accurate, timely and maintained in accordance with laws; ensure school staff are trained on the proper recordings of attendance; annually certify the completeness and accuracy of attendance records, etc. (See lines 270-300.)
- Provides responsibilities for teachers related to the checking, recording and reporting of attendance. (See lines 301-320.)
- Outlines the responsibilities of parents/guardians and students for attendance. (See lines 334-362; 363-370).
- Provides for the superintendent to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles upon a student (14 to 18 years of age) accumulation of 15 unexcused absences in a consecutive 90 calendar day period. (See lines 372-391.)

## POLICY 5.09

### ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY ENFORCEMENT OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

#### 1. Purpose

This policy is to encourage regular school attendance and punctuality by establishing requirements for student attendance, outlining guidelines or procedures for attendance monitoring and reporting, and establishing procedures supporting chronically absent and habitually truant students as required by Florida laws, rules, and regulation.

Research indicates that students miss school for many reasons, which can be divided into three broad categories (*The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Robert Balfanz & Vaughn Byrnes, John Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools, May 2012):

- Students who *cannot attend* school due to illness, family responsibilities, housing instability, the need to work or involvement with the juvenile justice system.
- Students who *will not attend* school due to bullying, unsafe conditions, harassment, and embarrassment.
- Students who *do not attend* school because they or their parents do not see the value in being there, they have something else they would rather do, or nothing stops them from skipping school.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to District students enrolled in grades Pre-K to 12.

#### 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- Absence* means not being actually present when attendance is checked, unless the student arrives within time to be marked "tardy" instead of absent. Students may not be counted in attendance while away from the school on a school day unless they are engaged in an educational activity which constitutes part of the school-approved instructional program.

- 32 b. Class Attendance is the physical presence of a student in class for at least half  
33 of the period, or a student who has been excused by the teacher on a class-  
34 related assignment, or a student who has been requested by a member of the  
35 support staff for an approved school activity.
- 36 c. School Attendance is the presence of student on days school is in session.  
37 The student must be actually at the school to which he or she has been  
38 assigned or present at an education activity which constitutes part of the  
39 approved school program for that student.
- 40 d. Early dismissal means leaving school/class before the day/period ends.
- 41 e. Excused Absence is an allowable absence in accordance with this and other  
42 Board policies. Students must be in school unless the absence has been  
43 permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below.
- 44 i. Student illness. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from  
45 school, he or she must be under the supervision of physician in order to  
46 receive an excuse from attendance.
- 47 ii. Medical appointment.
- 48 iii. Death in the family.
- 49 iv. Observance of a religious holiday or service that is recognized as such by  
50 all members of the faith.
- 51 v. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance.
- 52 vi. Extreme weather conditions such as, but not limited to, floods, hurricanes,  
53 tornadoes, or other acts of God which make it impractical or inadvisable  
54 for the safety of the student to attend school.
- 55 vii. Suspension. Suspension, in-school and out-of-school, is the temporary  
56 removal of the student from his or her regular school program or all  
57 classes of instruction on public school grounds and all other school-  
58 sponsored activities, except as authorized by the Principal or designee,  
59 as defined by Fla. Stat. § 1003.01(5)(a),(b), and provided for in the  
60 Student Conduct Codes, Policies 5.1812 and 5.1813.
- 61 viii. Students on field trips which are authorized by the principal are not  
62 considered absent. The school related trips should be those which  
63 related to the curriculum.
- 64 ix. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or  
65 student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's  
66 designee.
- 67 f. Habitual Truant means a student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences  
68 with ninety (90) calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the  
69 student's parent/guardian, is subject to compulsory school attendance, and is  
70 not exempted from compulsory attendance under state laws and regulations.  
71 Such a student must have been the subject of the activities specified in Fla.

72 Stat. §§ 1003.26 and 1003.27(3), without resultant successful remediation of  
73 the truancy problem before being dealt with as a child in need of services  
74 according to the provisions of Chapter 984, Fla. Stat.

- 75 g. Regularly or regular attendance means attending school every school day,  
76 including every school period, for the entire class period, of each course or  
77 class in which a student is enrolled (or the equivalent of such class periods in  
78 schools with block scheduling).
- 79 h. School day for a given student is that portion of the day in which school is  
80 actually in session for the group of students of which the student is a part.  
81 Students may not be counted in attendance while away from the school on a  
82 school day unless they are engaged in an educational activity which  
83 constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program.
- 84 i. Subject to compulsory attendance refers to minors who have attained at least  
85 the age of six years (or who will have attained the age of six by February 1 of  
86 that school year), who are required by law to attend school regularly unless an  
87 exemption or exception is applicable under Chapter 1003, Fla. Stat.
- 88 j. Tardy is a student reporting late to school or class after the school day or class  
89 has begun, consistent with the provisions of section 4(B)(1) of this policy.  
90 Tardies may be excused or unexcused according to this policy and the  
91 definitions for excused and unexcused absences.
- 92 k. Unexcused absence is an absence which is not in accord with this policy and  
93 other Board policy. An unexcused absence is any absence that does not fall  
94 into one of the designated excused absence categories, as provided in  
95 subparagraph 2(e) herein. Each school in the District must determine if an  
96 absence or tardiness is excused or unexcused in accordance with this policy.

97  
98 **4. Policy Statement**

99 The Board believes that regular and punctual school attendance play important  
100 roles in a student's achievement, as there is a strong correlation among regular  
101 school attendance, academic achievement, and the completion of school.  
102 Although school attendance is the responsibility of the parents or guardians and  
103 students, the District is dedicated to increasing the meaningful involvement of  
104 parents and guardians in all aspects of their students' lives, including the reduction  
105 of chronic absences and truancy.

106  
107 To combat unexcused absences and truancy, all District schools are dedicated to  
108 providing culturally, linguistically, fair and age-appropriate interventions. District  
109 students shall not be treated differently with regard to attendance, absence or  
110 truancy on the basis of their race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual

111 orientation, marital status, age, religion, disability, genetic information, gender  
112 identity or expression.

113 The superintendent is responsible for enforcing school attendance of all children  
114 and youth subject to the compulsory school age in the District's schools and  
115 supporting enforcement of school attendance by local law enforcement agencies.  
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117 5. **Attendance and Absences**

118 a. **Attendance, Absence, and Excuse Requirements**

119 i. *In General.* Except as provided in Fla. Stat. § 1003.24 and State Board  
120 of Education Rule 6A-1.09513, all students are expected to attend school  
121 regularly and to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the  
122 instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline,  
123 and responsibility. Each student is required to attend classes one  
124 hundred and eighty (180) days each school year. To be in compliance  
125 with these attendance requirements, students must not accumulate fifteen  
126 (15) unexcused absences in a period of ninety (90) calendar days.

127 ii. *Parental Notification of Absence to School.* Parents and guardians are  
128 responsible for notifying the school when a child will be absent and for  
129 informing the school of the reason for the absence. Thus, parent and  
130 guardians are expected to notify the school when their child is absent and  
131 inform the school of the reason for the absence within twenty-four (24)  
132 hours by a written note. Otherwise, students returning from an absence  
133 shall be required to present a written explanatory excuse from their  
134 parents or guardians stating the cause for the absence.

135 iii. *Tracking of Absences.* The school centers shall track the students'  
136 excused and unexcused absences and attendance in the District's  
137 computer system.

138 iv. *Makeup of Assignments.* For excused and unexcused absences,  
139 including suspensions, the student will be afforded the opportunity to  
140 make up work without academic penalty.

141 (a) *Excused or Unexcused Absences.* The number of days allowed to  
142 make up the work shall be the same as the number of days the  
143 students was absent. It is the student's responsibility to contact his  
144 or her teacher(s) about the makeup assignments and to complete all  
145 makeup work timely.

146 (b) *Suspensions.* For in-school and out-of-school suspensions, all  
147 work is due on the day of return from the suspension.

148 v. *Reporting on Student Report Cards.* Attendance, including absences  
149 and tardiness, shall be reported on student report cards, as required by  
150 Fla. Stat. § 1003.33(1)(c) and (2).

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b. **Late Arrival and Early Dismissal**

The Board recognizes that from time-to-time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day. Parents or guardians must follow the same process to obtain an excuse for tardiness or to obtain permission for early dismissal, as they do to obtain an excuse for an absence. A pattern of non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day.

- i. *Late Arrivals or Tardiness.* Students reporting late to school/class when the day/class period begins are considered tardy. Excessive tardiness shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated tardiness will be recorded as unexcused absences consistent with Fla. Stat. § 1003.02(1)(b) and this policy. When an elementary or secondary student misses fifty (50) percent or more of the instructional day or of the identified instructional class period, due to late arrival or tardiness, the student shall be considered absent.
- ii. *Early Dismissal.* Excessive early sign-outs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated early dismissals will be recorded as unexcused absences consistent with Fla. Stat. § 1003.02(1)(b) and this policy. When an elementary or secondary student misses fifty (50) percent or more of the instructional day or of the identified instructional period, due to early dismissals, the student shall be considered absent. Schools shall establish procedures for early checkouts that ensure students are treated consistently.
- iii. *Accumulated Tardiness and Accumulated Early Dismissals* will result in a documented unexcused absence on the 5<sup>th</sup> (10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, etc.) instance of being tardy or early dismissal.
- iv. *Academic Time.* Students are not to be sent home or refused admission to school due to tardiness. Students who arrive late for any class period must be allowed to proceed to their classes after obtaining proper documentation of their tardiness.

c. **School Level Interventions and Enforcement**

Each school shall implement the following steps to enforce regular school attendance of the students enrolled in their schools.

- i. *Timely Actions Required for Absences.* To prevent the development of patterns of non-attendance, the principal or designee at each school

191 center shall respond in a timely manner to unexcused absences, or every  
192 absence for which the reason is unknown, by contacting the student's  
193 parents/guardians to determine the reason for the absence as required by  
194 Fla. Stat. § 1003.26(1)(a). Every effort must be made to telephone the  
195 parent/guardian on the first day of a student's absence.

- 196 ii. Implementing Interventions/School-Based Teams. If a student has  
197 accumulated five (5) days of unexcused absences, or absences for which  
198 the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused  
199 absences within a ninety (90) calendar day period, or an equivalent  
200 combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies, the  
201 student's primary teacher shall report such information to the principal or  
202 designee. If there is a pattern of non-attendance, the principal or  
203 designee shall refer the student to the school-based team. If the school-  
204 based team finds a pattern of non-attendance, a letter is sent to the  
205 parents/guardians requesting a meeting in accordance with Fla. Stat. §  
206 1003.26.

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208 The school-based team, after meeting with the parents/guardians,  
209 shall implement interventions, including but not limited to:

- 210 • frequent communications with the teacher and family;
- 211 • attendance contracts for students;
- 212 • changes in the learning environment;
- 213 • mentoring, counseling, and tutoring, including peer tutoring;
- 214 • placement into different classes;
- 215 • referral to other agencies for family services; and
- 216 • Information about alternative methods of education, such as  
217 virtual, home, or charter schooling.

- 218 iii. Area Interventions. If the student interventions are working  
219 successfully, the school center need not take any further actions. If  
220 unexcused attendance concerns continue and the student has  
221 accumulated up to fifteen (15) absences, the school-based team will  
222 complete [PBSD Form 1462](#) (Student Truancy Referral) and refer the  
223 matter to the appropriate area truancy liaison. Interventions to be  
224 undertaken by an area truancy liaison shall include, but not be limited to:

- 225 • conference with referring principal or designee;
- 226 • conference with student, and parent/guardian;
- 227 • agency referral, if appropriate;
- 228 • notice of non-attendance letter from the District office sent to  
229 parent/guardian;



- 230                   •     monitor attendance and parent's/guardian's compliance with  
231                   recommendations and/or interventions; and  
232                   •     Recommend an educational alternative.
- 233     iv.   District Interventions.     After the school has complied with the  
234           intervention requirements of Fla. Stat. § 1003.26(1)(b) and the student  
235           continues to not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the  
236           superintendent/designee shall take one of the following actions in all  
237           cases of habitual truancy, in accordance with Fla. Stat. § 1003.27(3).  
238           (a)   File a truancy petition using the procedures outlined in Fla. Stat. §  
239                984.151; or  
240           (b)   File a child-in-need-of-services petition using the procedures outlined  
241                in Chapter 984, Fla. Stat., and refer the habitually truant student and  
242                the student's family to the children-in-need-of-services and families-  
243                in-need-of-services provider or case staffing committee as  
244                determined by a cooperative agreement between the School Board,  
245                the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Children  
246                and Families, as provided in Fla. Stat. § 1003.27(4).
- 247     v.   Parental Challenge to Intervention.     If the parent/guardian refuses to  
248           participate in the intervention strategies because he/she believes that  
249           those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent/guardian  
250           may appeal to the Board. The Board may provide a hearing officer to  
251           make recommendations for its final action. If the Board's final  
252           determination is that the strategies are appropriate, and the  
253           parent/guardian still refuses to participate or cooperate, the  
254           superintendent may seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with the  
255           compulsory school attendance laws as provided in Fla. Stat. § 1003.26.
- 256     d.   **Discipline and Attendance Violations.**  
257           In accordance with Fla. Stat. § 1006.09(1)(b), no student is to be suspended  
258           for having unexcused tardiness, lateness, absences, or truancy. However,  
259           other discipline and/or other interventions besides suspension may be  
260           imposed for unauthorized attendance related actions of students such as:  
261                   •     being out of the assigned area;  
262                   •     leaving the class or school grounds without authorization;  
263                   •     being temporarily absent from class without appropriate permission;  
264                   or  
265                   •     failing to attend assigned classes.
- 266     e.   **Responsibility of School Centers and School Employees**

- 267 i. Attendance Records and Reporting. Accurate attendance records shall  
268 be kept at each District school in accordance with state law, School  
269 Board of Education rules, and Board policies and procedures.
- 270 (a) Principal's Responsibility. The Principal shall:
- 271 (i) Be responsible for the administration and implementation of all  
272 Florida laws, State Board of Education Rules, and Board  
273 policies pertaining to the checking, recording, and reporting of  
274 student attendance. Each principal must make the necessary  
275 provisions to ensure that all school attendance reports are  
276 accurate, timely, and maintained so as to show the absence or  
277 attendance of each student enrolled for each school day of the  
278 year, in accordance with Fla. Stat. § 1003.23 and State Board of  
279 Education Rule 6A-01.044, F.A.C.
- 280 (ii) Ensure that all classroom teachers and other necessary school  
281 employees are trained and instructed in the proper recording of  
282 attendance and may periodically determine whether instructions  
283 are being followed.
- 284 (iii) Inspect and determine the completeness, accuracy, and  
285 timeliness of all school attendance records contained in the  
286 recordkeeping system for students.
- 287 (iv) At the end of each year, certify the completeness and  
288 accuracy of attendance records indicating such records have  
289 been kept in accordance with state laws and rules, as  
290 required by Rule 6A-1.044, F.A.C.
- 291 (v) Determine, or cause his or her designee to determine,  
292 whether an absence or tardiness is excused or unexcused  
293 according to the provisions of this policy.
- 294 (vi) Be familiar with state laws and Board policies and procedures  
295 governing attendance and apply them uniformly to all students.
- 296 (vii) Implement the steps enumerated in Fla. State. § 1003.26 to  
297 promote and enforce regular school attendance of its students.
- 298 (viii) Notify the Board, through the superintendent, of each minor  
299 students who accumulates fifteen (15) or more unexcused  
300 absences within a period of ninety (90) calendar days.
- 301 (b) Teacher's Responsibility and Certification. Each classroom teacher  
302 shall:
- 303 (i) Implement the school's plan for checking, recording, and  
304 reporting student attendance as prescribed by law, State rules,  
305 and Board policies.
- 306 (ii) On a daily basis, perform the official attendance check and

307 recording for each classroom and/or for each class period at the  
308 designated time in the school's plan, and shall report such  
309 attendance findings by the prescribed method to the school  
310 office. The records shall include a register of enrollment and  
311 attendance, showing the absence or attendance of each child  
312 enrolled for each school day or class in a manner as prescribed  
313 by the State Board of Education. A teacher's submission of  
314 daily attendance records to the principal is a certification by the  
315 teacher that the daily attendance records are complete and  
316 accurate, and have been kept as prescribed by state laws and  
317 rules, and policies of the Board.

318 (iii) Be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and apply  
319 the procedures uniformly in classroom assignments for all  
320 assigned students.

321 ii. Interventions or Enforcement of Attendance. Each school shall  
322 implement intervention and enforcement measures consistent with Fla.  
323 Stat. § 1003.26 and this policy.

324 iii. Academic Performance Does Not Excuse Absences. Pursuant to Fla.  
325 Stat. § 1003.33(2), schools shall not:

326 (a) exempt students from any examinations, papers, or other academic  
327 performance requirements based on practices or policies designed  
328 to encourage student attendance; or

329 (b) use a student's attendance record, in whole or in part, to provide an  
330 exemption from any academic performance requirement. The  
331 Student Progression Plan under Policy 8.01 shall be interpreted  
332 consistent with this Policy.

333 f. **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities or Rights**

334 It is the responsibility or right of the student's parent/guardian (or student of  
335 legal age as defined by Policy 5.072) to:

336 i. Ensure the student is attending school.

337 ii. Report absences to the school as soon as practical or to explain the  
338 student's absence upon return to school by providing a statement of the  
339 cause of such absence. A justification for absence by a parent/guardian  
340 or student of legal age shall be evaluated consistent with this policy's  
341 definition of excused and unexcused absences.

342 iii. Notify the principal or designee as to the reason for any tardiness or  
343 request for early dismissal. Justifiable reasons shall be determined by  
344 the Principal or designee consistent with this policy.

- 345 iv. Be notified if their child misses school and the parents/guardians have not  
346 reported the absence to the school, consistent with Fla. Stat. §  
347 1003.26(1):
- 348 v. Work cooperatively with the school and the student to resolve any  
349 attendance issues that may arise.
- 350 vi. Request a hearing if they refuse to participate in the interventions  
351 developed by the school-based team because they believe that those  
352 interventions are unnecessary or inappropriate.
- 353 vii. Continue to perform the parental functions of a dependent student when a  
354 student reaches the age of majority, including but not limited to, providing  
355 excuses for absences and tardiness, permission slips for early release,  
356 field trips, other activities, as necessary, and to register or terminate  
357 school enrollment until the student graduates, except under the following  
358 circumstances.
- 359 (a) The student has become a student of legal age as provided in Policy  
360 5.072.
- 361 (b). The student has no parent and this fact is verified by school  
362 administration.

363 g. **Responsibility of Students**

364 It is the student's responsibility to:

- 365 i. Attend all assigned classes and other instructional activities on time every  
366 day that the school is in session.
- 367 ii. Be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an  
368 assigned class or other instructional activity.
- 369 iii. Request any missed assignments due to an absence.
- 370 iv. Complete assigned work in a timely manner.

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372 6. **Driving Privileges and Attendance: Report to Department of Highway Safety**  
373 **and Motor Vehicles**

374 Pursuant to Fla. Stat. §§ 322.091 and 1003.27, the District is required to report to  
375 the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) the  
376 names, dates of birth, sex and social security numbers of students ages 14- 18 who  
377 accumulates fifteen (15) unexcused absences in any consecutive 90-calendar-day  
378 period. Whenever any student has a total of fifteen (15) days of unexcused  
379 absence from school during any semester, the student will be considered habitually  
380 absent. The Board authorizes the superintendent to inform the student and  
381 parents/guardians of the record of excessive absences as well as the District's  
382 intent to notify the DHSMV of the student's excessive absences.

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384 In accordance with law, the District shall hold a hardship hearing upon the request  
385 of any student whose license has been suspended pursuant to this section. The  
386 board hereby authorizes the superintendent to develop administrative procedures  
387 to implement administrative procedures for such hearing, consistent with state laws  
388 and technical assistance from Florida Department of Education.  
389 The principal or designee will conduct the hardship hearing within thirty (40)  
390 calendar days of receiving the request in accordance with the procedures  
391 established by the superintendent.

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393 7. **Delegation of Authority**

394 The superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures for the  
395 implementation of this policy.

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397 8. **Students with Disabilities**

398 This Policy shall be construed in harmony with the IDEA and Section 504 of the  
399 Rehabilitation Act and their federal implementing regulations and parallel state laws  
400 and an IEP or 504 Plan implementing such laws.

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402 9. **Publication of Policies**

403 This policy shall be made available in English, Spanish, Creole, Portuguese, and  
404 any other language as determined by the superintendent as necessary to facilitate  
405 the policy's understanding by parents/guardians and students whose primary  
406 language is not English.

407

408 ~~1. School attendance is the direct responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) and students.~~  
409 ~~— Except as provided in Section 1003.24, Fla. Stat. and State Board of Education Rule~~  
410 ~~— 6A-1.09513, all students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for~~  
411 ~~— classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of~~  
412 ~~— punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.~~

413 ~~2. It is the policy of the School Board that schools respond in a timely manner to~~  
414 ~~— unexcused absences through a letter mailed to the home and/or telephone calls.~~

415 ~~3. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student to justify the~~  
416 ~~— absence of the student. The justification will be evaluated based on the adopted School~~  
417 ~~— Board definition that defines "excused" and "unexcused" absences.~~

418 ~~a. An "excused" absence is~~

419 ~~— i. Student illness— If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent~~  
420 ~~— from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in~~  
421 ~~— order to receive an excuse from attendance.~~

422 ~~— ii. Medical appointment~~

423 ~~— iii. Death in the family~~

- 424           ~~iv. Observance of a religious holiday or service that is recognized as such by~~  
425           ~~all members of the faith.~~
- 426           ~~v. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance.~~
- 427           ~~vi. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or~~  
428           ~~student, as determined and approved by the Principal or the Principal's~~  
429           ~~designee.~~
- 430           ~~b. An "unexcused" absence is any absence that does not fall into one of the above~~  
431           ~~excused absence categories. Each school in the District must determine if an~~  
432           ~~absence or tardiness is excused or unexcused according to the criteria established~~  
433           ~~by the Board, within this Policy.~~
- 434           ~~4. The school centers shall track the excused and unexcused absences in the District's~~  
435           ~~computer system.~~
- 436           ~~5. In the case of an unexcused absence from school or an absence for which the reason~~  
437           ~~is unknown, the Principal (or designee) must contact the home in a timely manner to~~  
438           ~~prevent the development of a pattern of non-attendance.~~
- 439           ~~6. Each school Principal shall implement the steps enumerated in Section 1003.23(1),~~  
440           ~~Fla. Stat. to ensure regular school attendance. If the child does not comply with efforts~~  
441           ~~to enforce school attendance, the Superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to~~  
442           ~~Section 984.151., Fla. Stat.~~
- 443           ~~7. Each student will be required to attend classes one hundred and eighty (180) days~~  
444           ~~each school year.~~
- 445           ~~8. All school related trips which are authorized by the principal are not considered~~  
446           ~~absences under this Policy. The school related trips should be those which relate to~~  
447           ~~the curriculum.~~

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STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 1001.32(2); 1001.41(2);1001.42(8),(26);  
1001.43(8); 1003.02 (1)(b); 1003.24, 1003.26;  
LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 1003.02; 1003.21; 1003.23; 1003.24; 1003.26;  
1003.27; 322.091; 984.151  
STATE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION RULES: 6A-1.09513, 6A-1.044, FAC  
HISTORY: 6/18/97; 11/3/99; 10/22/08; \_\_/\_\_/13

Legal Signoff:

The Legal Department has reviewed proposed Policy 5.09 and finds it legally sufficient for development by the Board.

Elizabeth McBride  
Attorney

June 6, 2013  
Date