

Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:            PROPOSED PROMULGATION OF NEW SCHOOL BOARD RULE:  
                          INITIAL READING 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, STUDENT ATTENDANCE –  
                          SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

**PROPOSED REPEAL OF SCHOOL BOARD RULE: INITIAL READING  
6Gx13- 5A-1.04,        STUDENT        ATTENDANCE—SPECIFIC  
RESPONSIBILITIES**

**COMMITTEE:        SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**LINK TO DISTRICT**

**STRATEGIC PLAN: ENSURE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SCHEDULES MEET THE  
NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AND ENHANCE TEACHING  
AND LEARNING**

This item is being submitted for consideration by the School Board to promulgate a new School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, entitled Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities and repeal School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance—Specific Responsibilities. Raising standards and promoting high levels of student achievement are paramount in all District initiatives. Overall efforts must include an emphasis upon student ethics, appropriate transition activities, orientation and course selection. These emphases lead to a rigorous course of study which results in the improvement of graduation rates and a pathway to post-secondary options. A model student is expected to be present at school each and every day, attend class as scheduled, arrive to school and class(es) on time, and demonstrate appropriate behavior and a readiness to learn.

Student attendance is a means of improving student performance and is critical in raising student standards. The purpose of the new Board Rule is to strengthen policy and promote accountability as it relates to student attendance.

Highlights of the new *Board Rule* include:

- Strengthened accountability for parents, students and schools;
- Policy linked to a uniform process to promote equity in its application;
- Streamlined rule while adding clarity to its language;
- Notice that grades and credit for unexcused absences will be withheld pending an attendance review;
- Defined appeal process for withheld grades through the Attendance Review Committee, the principal and Regional Center;
- Delineated activities designed to mitigate the loss of instructional time; and
- Heightened role and responsibility of the Attendance Review Committee in terms of providing comprehensive supports to students with excessive absences.

**Revised  
A-4**

## Research on the Implications of Student Attendance Rates

It is well known that an important factor in students' academic achievement is having them in school on a regular basis. Poor attendance is a major indicator of gradual alienation and disengagement, and may lead to a student dropping out permanently (Lan & Lanthier, 2003; Schargel & Smink, 2001; Schwartz, 1995). Students with chronically unexcused absences are also at risk of having more serious behavioral issues such as substance abuse, involvement in criminal activity and incarceration (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001).

Procedures for increasing student attendance begin with sound and reasonable attendance policies that include consequences for missing school (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, June, 2004). Attendance policies should detail clear standards and high expectations for students and should also set limits and determine consequences for absences. Research shows that 'excessive absences' policies, in which students lose credit after a given number of absences, serve to increase attendance (Petzko, 1991).

Recent District attendance data yielded an average daily attendance rate of 94.11% for the 2005-2006 school year. Disaggregated data by school level ranged from an average high of 95.07% in elementary schools to an average of 92.11% in senior high schools. The loss of learning time for students in the 2005-2006 school year numbered over 23 million instructional hours or 3,619,845 days of learning.

Attached are the Notices of Intended Action, the proposed new School Board Rule, and the School Board Rule proposed for repeal.

Authorization of the Board is requested for the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act for the promulgation of a new School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities and repeal School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent and the School Board Attorney to initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to promulgate a new School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities and to repeal School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities.

FW/lv

## NOTICE OF INTENDED ACTION

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, announced on March 14, 2007, its intention to repeal School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities, at its meeting of April 18, 2007.

**PURPOSE AND EFFECT:** The proposed repeal of School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities is being replaced with a proposed new rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities. The new School Board Rule strengthens policy and promotes accountability as it relates to student attendance.

**SUMMARY:** School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities is proposed for repeal to align with state statute and details specific responsibilities for student attendance. It defines school and class attendance and distinguishes excused and unexcused absences. Procedures for accrued absences are detailed.

**SPECIFIC LEGAL AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH RULEMAKING IS AUTHORIZED:**  
1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(22); 1001.43(10) F.S.

**LAW IMPLEMENTED, INTERPRETED, OR MADE SPECIFIC:**  
984.151; 1001.51(6) and (26); 1003.21; 1003.23; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1003.27; 1006.07 F.S.

IF REQUESTED, A HEARING WILL BE HELD DURING THE BOARD MEETING of April 18, 2007, which begins at 1:00 p.m., in the School Board Administration Building, School Board Auditorium, 1450 N. E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132. Persons requesting such a hearing or who wish to provide information regarding the statement of estimated regulatory costs, or to provide a proposal for a lower cost regulatory alternative as provided by Section 120.541(1), F.S., were requested to do so in writing by April 9, 2007, to the Superintendent of Schools, Room 912, at the same address.

ANY PERSON WHO DECIDES TO APPEAL THE DECISION made by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, with respect to this action will need to ensure the preparation of a verbatim record of the proceedings including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. (Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes)

A COPY OF THE PROPOSED REPEALED RULE is available at cost to the public for inspection and copying in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 Northeast Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

Originator: Dr. Kathleen P. Caballero  
Supervisor: Mr. Freddie Woodson  
Date: February 28, 2007

Attendance**STUDENT ATTENDANCE--SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are probably no factors more important to successful school progress than regular and punctual school attendance. Students who are tardy or absent excessively from the instructional program will fall behind in academic achievement. Excessive school absenteeism precedes grade failure, loss of interest, and may result in students withdrawing from school.

A student accumulating ten (10) or more unexcused class absences in an annual course or five (5) or more unexcused class absences in a designated semester course will be subject to the withholding of passing final grade(s) pending a student/parent-requested administrative screening and/or review of all absences by the Attendance Review Committee.

State laws and regulations substantially control the administration of student attendance in the schools. Any supplementary rules and procedures put into effect in the school system must be consistent with State laws and rules.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has the affirmative obligation to increase student attendance through a monitoring process that will classify all absences as excused or unexcused, to inform parents of student absences, and to see that the compulsory attendance laws are enforced. This obligation will be satisfied through the implementation of an attendance review procedure, which monitors both the type and the number of student absences.

I. Attendance Defined

A. School Attendance

Students are to be counted in attendance only if they are actually present or engaged in a school-approved educational activity which constitutes a part of the instructional program for the student.

1. Excused School Absence

- a. Student illness
- b. Medical appointment
- c. Death in family
- d. Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed
- e. School-sponsored event or activity previously approved
- f. Educational or enrichment activity that is not a school-sponsored event, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee

- g. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee

2. Unexcused School Absence

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused.

- B. Tardiness

Tardiness is the absence of a student in the classroom at the time the regularly scheduled session begins (when the bell rings), provided that the student is in attendance before the close of the session.

It is a reasonable expectation that in order for a learning activity to exist, each student must arrive to class on time (punctually). A student who is tardy to class, not only places his/her own learning in jeopardy, but also interrupts the learning of other students.

Excused tardiness may not impact a student's academic grade.

1. Excused Tardiness

- a. Student illness
- b. Medical appointment
- c. Death in family
- d. Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed
- e. School-sponsored event or activity previously approved
- f. Other individual student tardiness beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee

2. Unexcused Tardiness

Any tardiness that does not fall into one of the above excused tardiness categories is to be considered unexcused.

- C. Class Attendance

Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class or have been excused by the teacher on a class-related assignment, or have been requested by a member of the school support staff. A student is tardy to class if he/she is not in his/her assigned classroom when the tardy bell rings, provided that the student is in attendance before the close of that class period.

1. Excused Class Absence/Tardiness

- a. Student illness
- b. Medical appointment
- c. Death in family
- d. Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed.
- e. School-sponsored event or activity previously approved
- f. Other individual student absences/tardinesses beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee

Students granted an excused absence/tardiness have the right to make up all classwork within a reasonable length of time. After successful completion of all make-up assignments, the student cannot be penalized for that absence/tardiness.

2. Unexcused Class Absence

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused. All unexcused absences will result in a failing grade being issued for any work missed on the day(s) in question. A student accumulating ten (10) or more unexcused class absences in an annual course or five (5) or more unexcused class absences in a designated semester course will be subject to the withholding of passing final grade(s) pending a student/-parent-requested administrative screening and/or review of all absences by the attendance review committee.

II. Responsibilities Defined

A. The principal is expected to see that:

1. Attendance/tardiness is taken and recorded by duly

authorized persons at a designated time(s) every official school day.

2. Students, parents/guardians and staff are provided with the opportunity to participate in the development of the school site tardy policy.
3. Students, parents/guardians and staff are informed early in the school year, in writing, of the school's tardy policy.
4. A review of classes that have excessive absences is made in order to determine if the quality of instruction is a factor in the failure of students to attend class on a regular basis. Should this be the case, appropriate action will take place to upgrade the quality of instruction in the classroom(s) in question.
5. A good faith effort is made to contact the parents of students absent from school each day.
6. A determination is made by duly authorized persons as to the excused or unexcused status of each absence/tardiness.
7. Students and parents are notified annually that unexcused absences in excess of ten (10) or more days in an annual course or five (5) or more days during a designated semester course may result in the withholding of credit.
8. Parents are notified by telephone, U. S. Mail, or by home visitation upon each consecutive third (3rd) absence or fifth (5th) aggregate absence. The school may request computer-generated letters for this purpose.
9. An advisory notice is sent to parents after the third (3rd) unexcused absence in a 90 calendar day period or in a designated semester course and after the fifth (5th) unexcused absence in an annual course informing them that the final grade(s) for their child may be withheld resulting in the loss of credit. A parent conference shall be requested to resolve the problem of unexcused absences.
10. Upon the accumulation of ten (10) or more unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) or more unexcused absences in a designated semester course, the parents are informed of the withholding of final passing grades and credit, and advised of the student/parent-initiated appeal procedures.
11. Any serious non-attendance case is recorded and given to the school social worker. The principal is responsible for

providing a plan for follow-up services for all cases referred to the school social worker.

12. The daily attendance bulletin indicates the aggregate number of days each student has been absent. The principal shall determine the extent of follow-up on any record discrepancy.
13. A screening procedure is established to be used as necessary and during the last week of each school year or semester when applicable to review all student/parent attendance petitions, prior to forwarding the petitions to the attendance review committee. This procedure is designed to grant the issuing of final grades to those obvious cases that have extenuating circumstances.
14. An Attendance Review Committee is organized consisting of three or more school staff personnel.
15. The Attendance Review Committee recommendation is personally reviewed for one of the following decisions:
  - a. Issuing of final grades.
  - b. Temporary withholding of final grades. The following are among possible options:
    - (1) Make up assignments
    - (2) Attendance probation for the following grading period(s)
    - (3) Completion of a school service project
  - c. Permanent withholding of final grades and credit. The student is to be informed of his/her right of final appeal to the region superintendent or designee.

**B. The classroom teacher is expected to:**

1. Encourage good class and school attendance with quality instruction and curriculum and by demonstrating an interest in the welfare of students.
2. Take and record attendance/tardiness for the students enrolled in each class. The record should reflect excused or unexcused absences/tardinesses.
3. Check the daily attendance bulletin for students' third (3rd) and fifth (5th) day accumulated absences and report any discrepancies to the attendance office. The



principal shall determine the extent of follow-up on any reported discrepancies.

4. Upon request of the student or the parent, provide make-up assignments for excused absences/tardinesses.
5. Notify the principal and student as to the number and types of absences when the accumulation of such absences may result in the withholding of the passing final grade(s). Where feasible, this notification should occur at a time which would permit the parent to take corrective action.
6. Withhold the issuance of a passing final grade by recording an "NG" when the student has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) unexcused absences in a designated semester course, unless directed to do otherwise by the principal or designee.

C. The student is expected to:

1. Take advantage of his/her educational opportunity by attending all classes punctually on a daily basis.
2. Provide the school with a written explanation for any absence/tardiness.
3. Request the make-up assignment for all excused absences/tardinesses from his/her teachers upon his/her return to school or class. It should be noted that all classwork, due to the nature of instruction, is not readily subject to make-up work.
4. Complete the make-up assignments for classes missed within a reasonable time. Failure to make up all assignments will result in lower assessment of the student's academic and/or effort grade.
5. Submit a completed "Petition to Appeal Withholding of Final Passing Grades" to the individual responsible for the screening process:
  - a. Provide written documentation for all absences to the Attendance Review Committee.
  - b. Appear before the committee at the scheduled time with a parent or guardian.

D. The parent is expected to:

1. Report and explain an absence or tardiness to the school.

2. Be responsible for his/her child's school attendance as required by law.
3. Be aware that tardiness places his/her child's own learning in jeopardy and interrupts the learning of other students.
4. Stress the importance of regular and punctual school attendance with his/her child.
5. Personally contact the school after his/her child's fifth (5th) aggregate absence.
6. Assist his/her child with the completion of the "Petition to Appeal Withholding of Final Grades."
7. Appear before the Attendance Review Committee at the scheduled time to provide information relating to his/her child's absences.

**E. The Attendance Review Committee is expected to:**

1. Convene, as necessary, and during the final week of each school year or semester when applicable.
2. Schedule appointments for all student petitioners.
3. Give consideration to all extenuating circumstances surrounding student absences.
4. Grant permission for the issuing of final grades after the review of all absences, when appropriate.
5. Submit an impartial written recommendation to the principal, after the review of all absences, for the withholding of final grades, when appropriate.

**III. Absence/Tardiness Must Be Explained**

Whenever a child of compulsory school attendance age is absent/tardy without the permission of the person in charge of the school, the parent of the child shall, as soon as practicable after learning of the absence/tardiness, report and explain the cause of such absence/tardiness to the teacher or principal of the school. If the parent of the child knows of the absence/tardiness, failure to make such report and explanation shall be prima facie evidence of the child's being absent/tardy with the consent or connivance of the parent.

**IV. Parents Responsible for Attendance of Children**

"Each parent and legal guardian of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law. The absence of a child from school is prima facie

evidence of a violation of this section; however, criminal prosecution may not be brought against a parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child until the provisions of s. ~~232.17~~ §1003.26 have been complied with. A parent or guardian of a child is not responsible for the child's nonattendance at school under any of the following conditions:

1. **WITH PERMISSION.** - The absence was with permission of the head of the school; or
2. **WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE.** - The absence was without the parent's knowledge, consent, or connivance; in which cases the child shall be dealt with as a dependent child; or
3. **FINANCIAL INABILITY** - The parent was unable financially to provide necessary clothes for the child, which inability was reported in writing to the superintendent prior to the opening of school or immediately after the beginning of such inability; provided, that the validity of any claim for exemption under this subsection shall be determined by the superintendent subject to appeal to the school board;
4. **SICKNESS, INJURY, OR OTHER INSURMOUNTABLE CONDITION** - Attendance was impracticable or inadvisable on account of sickness or injury, attested to by a written statement of a licensed practicing physician, or was impracticable because of some other stated insurmountable condition as defined by rules of the state board. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance. Such excuse provides that a student's condition justifies absence for more than the number of days permitted by the district school board." (~~232.09~~ §1003.24 F.S.)

#### V. Certificates of Exemption Authorized in Certain Cases

Children within the compulsory attendance age limits who hold valid certificates of exemption which have been issued by the superintendent shall be exempt from attending school. A certificate of exemption shall cease to be valid at the end of the school year in which it is issued. Children entitled to such certificates and the conditions upon which they may be issued are as follows:

1. **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISABILITY** - Any child whose physical, mental, or emotional condition is such as to prevent his successful participation in regular or special education programs for exceptional children; provided, that before issuing a certificate of exemption for physical, mental, or emotional disability, the superintendent shall require the submission of a statement from the county health officer, if a licensed physician, in counties having such an officer, and in other counties from a licensed practicing physician or qualified psychological examiner

designated by the district certifying that the child is physically or mentally incapacitated for school attendance; provided, further that if appropriate programs are not available within the school system, arrangements shall be made with adjoining districts or other appropriate agencies, residential schools, or approved non-public schools providing appropriate programs and services as determined by the Department of Education under regulations prescribed by the state board. Any child so exempt from educational provisions shall be immediately reported to the department.

2. **EMPLOYMENT EXEMPTION** - Children who have reached 14 years of age who hold employment certificates and are employed under provisions of the Child Labor Law.
3. **JUDICIAL EXEMPTIONS** - Upon the recommendation of a circuit judge and the agreement of the superintendent, any child within the compulsory attendance age limit may be granted a certificate of exemption.
4. **CHILD CARE EXEMPTION.** - A parent who does not have access to child care.

#### VI. Procedures for Release From Compulsory School Attendance

The Administrative Director, Division of Attendance Services has the responsibility for approving the joint request of the principal and the region superintendent for withdrawal from school of a student of compulsory attendance age.

When it becomes necessary to consider the withdrawal of a student of compulsory school attendance age, including those in the Exceptional Student Education Program, and the parent or guardian is in agreement with this action, a request by the principal for the withdrawal is made to the region superintendent.

This request includes:

- A. The principal's signed statement of the problem, including procedures taken by the school to improve the situation. The statement shall be co-signed by the school social worker.
- B. A copy of any available psychological or medical evaluation and recommendations.
- C. A written request or agreement for the withdrawal signed by the parent or guardian.
- D. A statement from any school support-service or non-school professional(s) familiar with the case.

- E. Recommended plans for the student's early return to an educational program.
- F. When family financial hardship exists, an explicit statement showing income and expenses of the family, as well as the contribution which the student will make toward relieving the situation.

If the student's withdrawal appears warranted, the region superintendent shall forward the request with an appropriate cover letter to the Administrative Director, Division of Attendance Services, for approval.

The Administrative Director, Division of Attendance Services, shall notify the principal by letter regarding the disposition of the request, with a copy of the letter to the region superintendent. The principal shall then notify the parent or guardian of the action taken. The letter of notification from the Administrative Director, Division of Attendance Services, shall be filed in the student's Cumulative Record. The permanent record shall indicate withdrawal on a specific date.

Specific Authority: 1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(22); 1001.43(10) F.S.  
Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 1001.51(6) and (26); 1003.21; 1003.23;  
1003.24; 1003.26; 1003.27; 1006.07 F.S.

**History:** THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Repromulgated: 12-11-74  
Amended: 11-25-75; 11-28-76; 9-2-80; 8-19-81; 8-24-83; 6-10-98; 6-20-01; 12-14-05

## NOTICE OF INTENDED ACTION

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, announced on March 14, 2007, its intention to promulgate new School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities, at its meeting of April 18, 2007.

**PURPOSE AND EFFECT:** The new School Board Rule strengthens policy and promotes accountability as it relates to student attendance.

**SUMMARY:** To repeal School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.04, Student Attendance--Specific Responsibilities, and to promulgate new School Board Rule 6Gx13- 5A-1.041, Student Attendance – Specific Responsibilities. This rule is aligned with state statute, district initiatives, and details specific responsibilities for student attendance. It defines school and class attendance and distinguishes excused and unexcused absences. Procedures for accrued absences are detailed.

**SPECIFIC LEGAL AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH RULEMAKING IS AUTHORIZED:**  
1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(22); 1001.43(10) F.S

**LAW IMPLEMENTED, INTERPRETED, OR MADE SPECIFIC:**  
984.151; 1001.51(6) and (26); 1003.21; 1003.23; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1003.27; 1006.07 F.S.

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ANY PERSON WHO DECIDES TO APPEAL THE DECISION made by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, with respect to this action will need to ensure the preparation of a verbatim record of the proceedings including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. (Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes)

A COPY OF THE PROPOSED NEW RULE is available at cost to the public for inspection and copying in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 Northeast Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

Originator: Dr. Kathleen P. Caballero  
Supervisor: Mr. Freddie Woodson  
Date: February 28, 2007

Attendance**STUDENT ATTENDANCE--SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are probably no factors more important to a student's progress in school than regular and punctual attendance. Miami-Dade County Public Schools has a vision whereby each student engages in a rigorous course of study which prepares him/her for a myriad of successful post-secondary options. Students are expected to:

- be present at school each and every day;
- attend class as scheduled;
- arrive to school and class(es) on time; and
- demonstrate appropriate behavior and a readiness to learn.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has the affirmative obligation to increase student attendance through a monitoring process that will classify all absences as excused or unexcused, to inform parent/guardians of student absences, and to see that the compulsory attendance laws are enforced as mandated by Florida Statutes. This obligation will be satisfied through the implementation of an attendance review procedure, which monitors the type and number of student absences as well as the impact of these absences on learning.

## I. Attendance Defined

- A. School Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance only if they are actually present or engaged in a school-approved educational activity which constitutes a part of the instructional program for the student.
- B. Class Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class or have been excused by the teacher on a class-related assignment, or have been requested by a member of the school support staff for an approved school activity.
- C. Tardiness - It is a reasonable expectation that in order for a learning activity to exist, each student must arrive to class on time (punctually). Accumulated unexcused tardies will be counted towards the threshold for initiating attendance review.
- D. Early Sign-outs – The early release of students causes disruption to the academic performance of all students and may create safety and security concerns. No students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless authorized by the principal or principal's designee (i.e., emergency, sickness).

## II. Absences Defined

## A. Excused School and Class Absences and Tardies

1. Student illness: Students missing 5 or more consecutive days of school due to illness or injury are required to provide a written statement from a medical provider. The written statement must

include all days the student has been absent from school. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school due to a specific medical condition, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive excused absences from school.

2. **Medical appointment:** If a student is absent from school due to a medical appointment a written statement from a medical provider indicating the date and time of the appointment must be submitted to the principal.
3. **Death in family**
4. **Observance of a religious holiday or service** when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed.
5. **School-sponsored event or educational enrichment activity** that is not a school-sponsored event, as determined and approved by the principal or principal's designee: The student must receive advance written permission from the principal or the principal's designee. Examples of special events include: public functions, conferences, and regional, state and national competitions.
6. **Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance.**
7. **Outdoor suspensions**
8. **Other individual student absences** beyond the control of the parent/guardian or student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee. The principal shall require documentation related to the condition.

#### **B. Unexcused School Absence**

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused. Any student who has been absent from school will be marked unexcused absent until he/she submits required documentation as specified above. Failure to provide required documentation within three school days upon the return to school will result in an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences include:



1. Absences due to vacations, personal services, local non-school event, program or sporting activity
2. Absences due to older students providing day care services for siblings
3. Absences due to illness of others
4. Absences due to non-compliance with immunization requirements (unless lawfully exempted)

A student accumulating ten (10) or more class unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) or more class unexcused absences in a designated semester course will have quarterly, semester and final grade(s) withheld pending an administrative screening and completion of assigned interventions by the Attendance Review Committee. Unexcused absences do not require that the teacher provide make-up work for the student. However, the Attendance Review Committee may assign educationally-related activities to mitigate the loss of instructional time.

### III. Responsibilities Defined

#### A. The principal is expected to ensure that:

1. Attendance/tardiness is taken and recorded by duly authorized persons at a designated time(s) every official school day.
2. A review of classes that have excessive absences is made in order to determine if the quality of instruction is a factor in the failure of students to attend class on a regular basis. Should this be the case, he/she will initiate appropriate action to upgrade the quality of instruction in the classroom(s) in question.
3. A duly authorized person(s) determines the status of each absence/tardiness.
4. The steps outlined in Section 1003.26, Florida Statutes to ensure regular school attendance are implemented.
5. An Attendance Review Committee is established and convened a minimum of six (6) times per year.
6. Provide consideration to appeals made by students and/or parents regarding recommendations of the Attendance Review Committee.

#### B. The classroom teacher is expected to:

1. Encourage good school and class attendance with challenging and rigorous instruction and curriculum and by demonstrating an interest in the welfare of students.
2. Take and record attendance/tardiness for the students enrolled in each class. The record should reflect excused or unexcused absences/tardinesses.
3. Upon request of the student or the parent/guardian, provide make-up assignments for excused absences/tardinesses.
4. Make recommendations to the Attendance Review Committee regarding quarterly, semester and final grades when the student has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) unexcused absences in a designated grading period or semester course.

C. The student is expected to:

1. Attend classes one hundred and eighty (180) days each school year.
2. Request the make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from his/her teachers upon his/her return to school or class. It should be noted that all classwork, due to the nature of instruction, is not readily subject to make-up work.
3. Complete the make-up assignments for classes missed within three days of the return to school. Failure to make up all assignments will result in the lower assessment of the student's academic and/or effort grade.
4. Be reported as present for the school day in order to participate in athletic and extracurricular activities.

D. The parent/guardian is expected to:

1. Be responsible for his/her child's school attendance as required by law and stress the importance of regular and punctual school attendance with his/her child.
2. Report and explain an absence or tardiness to the school.
3. Ensure that the child has requested and completes make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from his/her teachers upon his/her return to school or class.
4. Appear before the Attendance Review Committee at the scheduled time to provide information relating to his/her child's absences and to support prescribed activities.

- E. The Attendance Review Committee is comprised of a minimum of a student services representative and an administrator or administrative designee and will provide guidance and support to students with significant absences. They are expected to:
  - 1. Provide early intervention by convening when students reach an accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences in a semester or ten (10) unexcused absences in an annual course.
  - 2. Convene a minimum of six (6) designated times per year.
  - 3. Give consideration to all extenuating circumstances surrounding student absences. The Attendance Review Committee is charged with the responsibility of prescribing activities designed to mitigate the loss of instructional time and has the authority to recommend the following:
    - a. Issuing of quarterly, semester or final grades.
    - b. Temporary withholding of quarterly, semester or final grades. The following are among possible options:
      - (1) Make-up assignments
      - (2) Attendance probation for the following grading period(s)
      - (3) Completion of a school service project
    - c. Permanent withholding of quarterly, semester or final grades and credit. The student is to be informed of his/her right of final appeal to the regional superintendent or designee.
  - 4. Review attendance history for student exhibiting patterns of excused and/or unexcused absences and provide appropriate referrals and counseling support.

IV. Appeal Process

The parent or guardian who does not concur with decisions made by the Attendance Review Committee may petition to the principal or principal's designee. The final level of appeal will be processed by the Regional Superintendent or designee.

V. Truancy petition; prosecution; disposition

If a child does not comply with efforts to enforce school attendance, the Superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.

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Specific Authority: 1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(22); 1001.43(10) F.S.  
Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 984.151; 1001.51(6) and (26); 1003.21;  
1003.23; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1003.27; 1006.07 F.S.

**History:** THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Repromulgated:  
Amended:

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