

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**

<b>Staff Proposal</b>	<b>School Request</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Approval (Full)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Ceiling Increase
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Approval (Conditional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in LEA Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Denial	<input type="checkbox"/> Lift Board Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Continuance	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve Accountability Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Revocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Operate in a New Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Revocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Amendment
<input type="checkbox"/> Lift Board Action	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve E-Rate Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Charter Warning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Concern	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Deficiency	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Probation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposed Revisions to PCSB Existing Policy	
<input type="checkbox"/> New PCSB Policy—Open for Public Comment	
<input type="checkbox"/> New PCSB Policy—Vote	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

**PREPARED BY:** Rashida Kennedy and Tim Harwood – Equity & Fidelity Team

**SUBJECT:** Revisions to the PCSB Attendance and Truancy Policy

**DATE:** November 19, 2012

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**Proposal/Request**

PCSB staff requests the Board to approve revisions to the Attendance and Truancy Policy based on new local laws that require LEAs to report truant students ages 5 to 13 at 10 or more unexcused absences. These revisions would include the following provisions:

- Truancy is defined as the percentage of students with 10 or more unexcused absences (ages 5-13 for ES/MS students) or 25 or more unexcused absences (ages 14-17 for HS students).
- Traditional local education agencies (LEAs) must maintain a truancy rate at or below 20% on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Officially designated alternative LEAs must maintain a truancy rate at or below 25% on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Based on quarterly reports to the board, schools that do not meet these attendance and truancy requirements will receive Board action.
- Factors such as documented due diligence in the legally-required areas of school-parent communication, interventions, best practices, etc. may be taken into consideration at the discretion of the board.
- A Board notice of concern will be lifted based upon a designated percentage of improvement in attendance for students that have been defined as truant in the previous

quarter(s). (This designated percentage will be based upon baseline data of truancy rates from SY 2011-2012, and may be amended based upon attendance trends.)

- It is at the Board’s discretion to determine whether a notice of concern will be lifted if a schools’s truancy rate decreases only due to truant students being expelled.

Proposed language	Current language from the Board-approved 2008 Attendance and Truancy Policy	Reason for change
Truancy is defined as the percentage of students with 10 or more unexcused absences (ages 5-13 for ES/MS students) or 25 or more unexcused absences (ages 14-17 for HS students).	Truancy is defined as the percentage of students with 15 or more unexcused absences during the academic year in Washington D.C.	New city-wide definition of truancy
Traditional local education agencies (LEAs) must maintain a truancy rate at or below 20% on a quarterly and annual basis	Traditional local education agencies (LEAs) must maintain an attendance rate at or above 85% and a truancy rate at or below 20% on a quarterly and annual basis.	When this policy was first introduced, the PMF did not yet exist. Attendance rate was removed so schools would not be double-penalized for a low attendance rate on the PMF and with a Notice of Concern.
Officially designated alternative LEAs must maintain a truancy rate at or below 25% on a quarterly and annual basis.	Officially designated alternative LEAs must maintain an attendance rate of at or above 69% and a truancy rate at or below 25% on a quarterly and annual basis.	When this policy was first introduced, the PMF did not yet exist. Attendance rate was removed so schools would not be double-penalized for a low attendance rate on the PMF and with a Notice of Concern.
A Board notice of Concern will be lifted based upon a designated percentage of improvement in attendance for students that have been defined as truant in the previous quarter(s). (This designated percentage will be based upon baseline data of truancy rates from SY 2011-2012, and may be amended based upon attendance trends.)	There was no provision built into the policy that described how a Notice of Concern could be lifted. Notices were lifted when a school’s truancy rate decreased to under the 20% threshold in the subsequent quarter.	The truancy rate is cumulative. Schools voiced concern over the inability to have a Notice of Concern lifted without actually increasing the number of students in the building.

**Background**

In 2008 the PCSB began implementation of the Attendance and Truancy Policy. Truancy was defined as defined as the percentage of students with 15 or more *unexcused absences* during the academic year in Washington, D.C. Schools submit attendance data based on the board-approved data submission policy on a weekly basis and must have at least 90% of their previous month's attendance data complete at all times.

Date: _____
PCSB Action: _____ Approved _____ Approved with Changes _____ Rejected
Changes to the Original Proposal/Request: _____
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_____
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_____

Staff Proposal  
Corrective Action  
PCSB Policy

  
  
  
  
  
  
  

School Request  
Enrollment Ceiling Increase  
Change in LEA Status  
Lift Board Action  
Approve Accountability Plan  
Operate in a New Location  
Charter Amendment  
Approve E-Rate Plan

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**

**PREPARED BY: Robert V. Mayo, Ph.D. (Staff)**

**SUBJECT: Decision Memo for Attendance and Truancy Policy**

**DATE: August 8, 2008**

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**BACKGROUND**

In light of recent events and trends, attendance and truancy policy and procedural reform have been citywide imperatives culminating in: a) draft legislation outlining revised citywide truancy regulations (i.e., tracking, documented interventions, referrals, reporting, etc.) for all schools and b) a citywide multi-agency truancy reduction plan. Research has shown that there are strong correlations between high attendance and: higher measurable academic achievement, higher graduation rates, higher reenrollment rates, lower failure rates, lower drop-out rates, lower suspension/expulsion rates and decreased delinquency across all demographic groups.

Reliable local and national attendance data are difficult to find for a number of reasons. For the 2007-2008 academic year, the average attendance rate for all public charters was 92% (including both *excused* and *unexcused* absences). The PCSB Charter Review Framework states the school must attain the attendance targets set forth in its accountability plan. If the plan does not specifically address attendance rates, the school must meet the following targets:

<u>DCPCSB Required Att. Rates</u>	<u>Actual '08-'09 Att. Rates</u>
Elementary Schools: 92%	93%
Middle/Jr. High Schools: 90%	93%
Senior High Schools: 87%	89%
Alternative Schools: 69%	90%

National truancy rates are said to *average* between 10%-15% according to recent studies on urban education. Last year, the overall truancy rate for DCPCSB schools was 19%

(defined as the percentage of students with 15 or more *unexcused absences* during the academic year in D.C.). The elementary school truancy rate was negatively affected by high rates at the K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade levels (each at 24%). The middle/junior high school rates were about average. The high school rates were relatively high across the four grade levels with 10<sup>th</sup> grade being particularly high at 30%.

<u>Actual '08-'09 Truancy Rates (K-12)</u>	
Elementary Schools:	21%
Middle/Junior High Schools:	16%
High Schools:	25%
Alternative Schools:	32%

**PROPOSAL**

In light of all of the above, staff recommends that the Board establish a policy that will allow it to better: track, report, support and hold schools accountable for their respective attendance and truancy trends and related legally-required interventions. Specifically, staff recommends that:

- Traditional local education agencies (LEAs) must maintain an attendance rate at or above 85% and a truancy rate at or below 20% on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Officially designated alternative LEAs must maintain an attendance rate of at or above 69% and a truancy rate at or below 25% on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Based on quarterly reports to the board, schools that do not meet these attendance and truancy requirements will receive Board action.
- Factors such as documented due diligence in the legally-required areas of school-parent communication, interventions, best practices, etc. may be taken into consideration at the discretion of the board.
- PCSB staff will continue to provide truancy prevention technical assistance to schools

Date: _____ PCSB Action: _____ Approved _____ Approved with Changes _____ Rejected Changes to the Original Proposal: _____ _____ _____ _____
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