

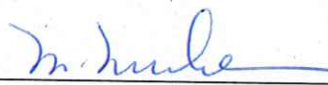
**VII.A.**

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:  
January 2, 2008

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education adopts the attached "Statewide Definition of Attendance for Public School Districts in Connecticut," and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of 5:0, this second day of January, Two Thousand Eight.

Signed:   
Mark K. McQuillan, Secretary  
State Board of Education


**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

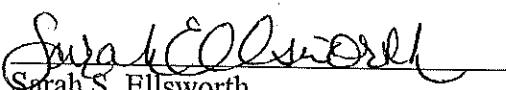
TO: State Board of Education

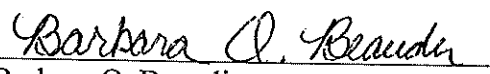
FROM: Mark K. McQuillan  
Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Adoption of a Statewide Definition of Attendance for Public  
School Districts in Connecticut

Two years ago the Connecticut State Department of Education started collecting the daily membership and days in attendance for each public school student for the purpose of calculating attendance rates that were reflective of the entire school year. The attached document summarizes the reasons for adopting a state definition of attendance. The Policy Development Committee of the State Board of Education reviewed and agreed to this proposed definition.

Prepared by:   
Robert J. Lucco  
Education Manager  
Bureau of Data Collection, Research, and  
Evaluation

Reviewed by:   
Sarah S. Ellsworth  
Acting Chief  
Bureau of Data Collection, Research, and  
Evaluation

Approved by:   
Barbara Q. Beaudin  
Acting Associate Commissioner  
Division of Assessment and Accountability

January 2, 2008

## **Connecticut State Board of Education Statewide Definition of Attendance for Public School Districts in Connecticut**

### **Background**

Prior to school year 2005-06, attendance for schools and districts was collected in the aggregate at one point in time, i.e., present on October 1. Beginning in June 2005 the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) began to collect attendance data on an individual student basis as part of the Public School Information System (PSIS). The Department presently collects the number days of membership and the number days in attendance for each public school student in the state. These figures can be used to calculate attendance rates at the student, school, and district levels.

### **Limitations**

Currently the attendance data are based on local policy. That is, there is not a standardized statewide definition of what "in attendance" means. This distinction is left to the district. This fact makes it difficult to compare attendance rates across schools and districts, since one school or district may deem a student's actions as meeting the criteria or definition for being "in attendance," while another may deem the same action as an absence. The lack of standardization regarding this indicator as it currently stands limits its use as an indicator for accountability purposes since comparisons across schools and districts are inappropriate.

### **Attendance on a National Level**

Several states require districts reporting student attendance to jury the amount of time the student spends in the instructional setting, some states prescribe a designated "roll call" time, while other states track the percent of time a student is present during the school day. In one case, a state reported having no state board policy governing student attendance, but indicated that state statute requires districts to record students who, "miss a majority of hours or courses in a day" as absent. In addition, guidance from the National Center for Educational Statistics regarding their Common Core of Data collection (now EDEN) indicates that in the absence of state law SEAs should require the collection of daily attendance rounded to the nearest half day and below 24% counted as absent.

### **Proposed Definition of Attendance**

Effective with the start of the 2008-09 school year, a student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

### **Policy Implications**

Using this definition will standardize the way in which districts submit their data, enabling the Department and others to draw meaningful conclusions. In addition, attendance rates between districts.

## **Connecticut State Board of Education State Definition of Attendance**

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### **Proposed Definition of Attendance**

The proposed CSDE definition of “in attendance” (see below), takes into account the length of time a student is present at school.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

### **Policy Implications**

The statewide definition of attendance will be implemented starting with the 2008-09 school year. Using this definition will standardize the way in which districts submit their data, enabling the Department and others to draw meaningful conclusions. In addition, having a common definition across the state will also allow for the comparison of attendance rates between districts.