For Immediate Release
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New attendance protocol will crack down on truancy

At their July 11 meeting, members of the Board of Education approved a new attendance policy for students. A result of a state law passed in 2004, a new attendance protocol was formulated by a task force of judges, educators, public safety officials, juvenile court representatives, and community agency officials over the past year. The purpose of the protocol is to reduce truancy in public schools.

A truant is defined as any child under the age of 16 who has more than five days of unexcused absences during the school year. The new protocol will implement a structured follow-up plan for students with unexcused absences. Parents of students with chronic unexcused absences and the student must attend a conference with school personnel to discuss attendance issues and to sign an attendance contract. If the attendance contract is violated by more unexcused absences, the student and parents will be referred to the school’s Social Worker and the District Attorney’s office.

School attendance has always been important, however since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), attendance has become a top priority. In Georgia, school attendance affects a school’s and school system’s ability to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In some cases, poor attendance can put a school on the Needs Improvement List, even though the school meets all academic goals and other criteria.

Students and parents will be alerted to changes in the attendance protocol through notices in the student handbooks and acknowledgement forms when school beings in August.

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