

American Legion Auxiliary
New Mexico Girls State
2017 Bill/Resolution



Committee: _____ EDUCATION _____

Principal Author: Dominica Chavez

Bill No.: S20

Delegation: Education 1

Title of Bill: _____ Attendance Matters _____

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An Act

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Relating to attendance; Increasing the accountability of a parent and student regarding the unexcused absences of a truant student during a grading period; revising the attendance policy of the New Mexico Public Education Department; Implementing a student attendance based evaluation; Providing incentives for parents who prioritize education.

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Be It Enacted By The American Legion Auxiliary New Mexico Girls State 2017

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Section 1 – Definitions

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- A. Absence- Not being present
- B. Attendance- Being present
- C. Attendance policy- The set of rules related to the attendance of students and the number of absences allowed
- D. Excused absence- not being present but having a valid reason fro the absence
- E. Grading period- The period of time in which a student is evaluated
- F. Incentives- The reward that encourages parents to stimulate greater output or investment
- G. Parents- the legal guardian/s who are responsible for the student enrolled in the educational institution.
- H. Truant- a student who does not attend school without a reason for leave or explanation
- I. Unexcused absence- not being present without a valid reason for the absence

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Section 2- Accountability

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Despite continued efforts for improvement, New Mexico continues to fall short ranking in at 49th in child well being and 50th in education. This comes as a result of low test scores and the lack of prioritizing education and attendance. Across New Mexico, teachers and administrators have cited that inconsistencies in attendance lead to a poor academic performance negatively affecting not only the evaluation of a teacher and grading of a school but also the investment of money from tax payers. This leads to the need for a revision of the attendance policy of the New Mexico Public Education Department, the involvement of a parent in their child's education, and the creation of an attendance based student evaluation.

1 **Section 3. Attendance Policy-**

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3 Currently the NMPED Compulsory Attendance Policy strives to correct the ways of a
4 truant student by providing general guidelines for remediation but does not hold parent
5 and students accountable for inconsistent attendance. If the evaluation of a teacher is
6 greatly influenced by the days he/she is present in the classroom so shall be the
7 students'. The flawed policy of the NMPED also fails to address what is considered to be
8 an excused and unexcused absence, allowing the student to attend school at their own
9 convenience. Therefore, it is deemed appropriate that by the creation of this law,
10 Attendance Matters, that all absences except for illness or death in the family require
11 advance approval by the principle of counselor of the designated school.

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13 **Section 4. Parental Involvement-**

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15 Under the NMPED Compulsory Attendance policy, it is only recommended that parent
16 are contacted to be informed of intervention option. Law enforcement is only contacted
17 after a student has missed 10 consecutive days of school. However, this policy is yet
18 again flawed as the problem isn't addressed until after the long period of 10 consecutive
19 days. If enacted, Attendance Matters will require law enforcement to be contacted after
20 the second unexcused absence. Students at the end
21 Of the year with unexcused absences will pay it off through require and supervised
22 community services. For each period missed, a set amount of time will be added.

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24 **Appropriation:**

25 All Laws, acts, provisions, or parts of laws contained in the Constitution of New Mexico in
26 conflict with any provisions of this act are declared null and void.

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28 **Effective Date:**

29 This act shall become effective 90 days after it's passage and approval by the American
30 Legion Auxiliary New Mexico Girls State Governor or otherwise becoming a law.

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