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September 30, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Susan Martz, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services and Career Readiness

David Corso, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Administration and Finance

SUBJECT: Reporting Student Absences

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) would like to clarify how daily student attendance should be recorded in the school register for State and federal reporting purposes, and how student absenteeism should be addressed for purposes of district level decision-making.

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(f)*, “[a] record of the attendance of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person...” *N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h)* further explains that, “[a] student shall be recorded as absent in the school register when not in attendance at a session of the school while a member of the school, except students excused due to religious holiday who shall be recorded as excused.” In addition to absences for religious holidays, the School Register Manual clarifies that absences related to “other rule(s) issued by Commissioner,” and for college visits (limited to a maximum of three days per year for 11th and 12th graders), shall also be recorded as “excused” in the school register. “Take Our Children to Work Day” should be recorded as an “excused” absence in the school register as an “other rule issued by the Commissioner,” as confirmed by the April 8, 2014, Memorandum to Chief School Administrators, and Charter School Lead Persons.

Therefore, and for the purpose of recording daily student attendance in the school register, a student is recorded as either present, absent, or excused for religious observance, pursuant to other rule(s) issued by the Commissioner (i.e., “Take Our Children to Work Day”) or for college visits. See *N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(i)*. Other than for these enumerated absences, there is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences in the school register for State and federal reporting purposes.