

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**Series 1998-1999  
Circular Letter: C-4**

To: Superintendents of Schools  
From: Theodore S. Sergi Commissioner of Education  
Date: August 10, 1998  
Subject: Duties of Boards of Education and Parents to Cause Children to Attend Public School

Public Act 98-243, An Act Concerning Early Reading Success, contains a little noticed provision which changes your obligations concerning compulsory school attendance. This provision lowers the compulsory education age from age seven to age five. It also permits parents to withhold their child from a formal education program at age five for one year and then again at age six for one year. At age seven, the child must be enrolled in an education program as described in Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes and no additional delays are permitted.

The 'opt-out' process described in the statute imposes three conditions:

- The parent or person having control of the child must personally appear at the school district office;
- The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system; and
- The parent or person having control of the child must sign an option form exempting their child from attendance at the public school.

The purpose of this legislation is not to interfere with the rights of parents who choose to educate their child in a private school or teach them at home. It is directed at those few parents who do not provide a regular educational experience for their child. It is hoped that if the parent is fully apprised of the importance of providing this experience at an early age and understands the nature of the public school offerings, that they will quickly choose to enroll their child in school before reaching the age of seven.

Attached to this letter is a sample form developed by the State Department of Education, which any school district may use to document compliance with the requirements of this law. It contains all of the information, which is required by statute and serves as an appropriate record of compliance with the statute. This form or a comparable form developed by a school system should be made a part of the student's record.

If you have any questions about the new law or the sample form, please contact Attorney Ronald C. Harris, Office of Legal and Governmental Affairs, at (860) 713-6516.

TSS:rhw  
Attachment