

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- I **Purpose/Statement of Objectives:** Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon student presence and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. This Board of Education attendance policy has been developed and implemented to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law §3205 and §3210 and establishes a mechanism by which the patterns of pupil absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

- II **Strategies to Be Employed:** The District will employ the following strategies to ensure good attendance of all of its students:
 - A. Appropriate record-keeping mechanisms to ensure that the attendance of all students is tracked and analyzed.
 - B. Specific mechanisms to intervene on the individual student level when a student’s attendance record demonstrates a need for improvement.
 - C. District-wide program to encourage good attendance and improve the attendance of all District students.
 - D. Implementation of an appeal process in cases where course credit has been denied.

- III **Excused and Unexcused Absences:**
 - A. Appropriate Grounds for Excused Absences or Tardiness. The student and his/her parent or person in parental relation are responsible for providing written notification of the reason for such absences upon the student’s return to school. Whenever possible, parents or persons in parental relation are encouraged to contact the school in writing or by telephone prior to the absence. The following list represents legal and appropriate bases for being absent from school or tardy:
 - 1. Personal Illness
 - 2. Illness or Death in Family
 - 3. Medical Appointments
 - 4. Court Appearance
 - 5. Religious Observance
 - 6. Quarantine
 - 7. Approved and Supervised Project Work
 - 8. Approved Cooperative Work Program
 - 9. Impassable Roads
 - 10. Military Obligation
 - 11. Pre-Approved College Visits for Purposes of Possible Admission
 - 12. Exchange Programs
 - 13. School Planned Activities such (such as but not limited to Scheduled Music Lessons, Performing Arts Rehearsals and Performances, training

sessions for students, guidance appointments, scheduled visits to the health office and visits in time of illnesses, field trips and assemblies, CSECST meetings, scheduled assessments, approved athletic trips, approved appointments with administration/counseling or staff.

14. Approved Appointments with Administration/Counseling Staff/Specialized Services
 15. Pre-Approved Driver's Testing
 16. Out-of-School Suspension
 17. In-School Suspension
- B. Grounds for Unexcused Absences or Tardiness. Absence for any reason not included in the list set forth in Section A is an unexcused absence. Absences for reason set forth in Section A for which a student does not have pre-approval from the District or for which the student does not provide an appropriate note or documentation within three (3) school days of his/her return to school will also be recorded as an unexcused absence. Parents and/or students may appeal extenuating circumstances to the building principal.

Parental requests excusing their child from school for reasons not included above (i.e. to get a haircut, to go shopping, to go on a family trip, or not stating a specific reason) are unexcused absences under state law. Excuses that a student "overslept" or had "car trouble" are also unacceptable and will constitute an unexcused absence or tardy.

IV Record Keeping

- A. When Attendance will be Taken:
1. Elementary Buildings (non-departmentalized). Attendance shall be taken each morning at the beginning of the school day. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office.
 2. Middle School/High School Buildings (departmentalized). Attendance shall be taken at the beginning of each period of scheduled instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office. ***Parents will be notified of class absences through a procedure to be developed at the building level.***
- B. Content/Form of District Attendance Records. The District maintains a permanent record of attendance for all students enrolled in instruction. The attendance record will be prepared by teachers and maintained on a building-level basis by the building principal or another employee designated by the Board of Education. A District-wide record shall also be compiled by the Superintendent from the building-level records. The record shall include the following information for each student: name, date of birth, names of parents or persons in parental relation; address where student resides, phone numbers where parents or persons in parental relation can be reached, date of enrollment, a record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction recorded in conformity with the chart below, a record of each scheduled day of

instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances.

Code	Title	Status	Excused
UA	Unexcused Absence	Absence	No
UT	Unexcused Tardy	Tardiness	No
EA	Excused Absence	Absence	Yes
ET	Excused Tardy	Tardiness	Yes
OS	Out-of-School Suspension (without tutoring)	Absence	Yes
IS	In-school Suspension	Present	Yes
SP	Suspended (Out-of-school with tutoring)	Present	Yes
TR	Truancy	Absence	No
ED	Educational Absence	Absence	Yes
RA	Religious Absence	Absence	Yes
EP	Educational Program	Present	Yes
OT	Other (with explanation)	Absence	No
SC	School Closed (extraordinary circumstance)	Present	Yes
TU	Homebound Instruction	Present	Yes

Entries on the attendance record shall be made by a teacher, the building principal, *or an employee designated by the Board of Education*, and shall be verified as accurate under oath or affirmation.

- C. Contacting parents. In the event that a student is absent from school without a previous notification to the teacher or building principal, the school will call the student's home to confirm the student's absence. If no parent or person in parental relation is home, the District will contact a parent or person in parental relationship at their place of employment or number listed on the student's emergency contact form. In both situations, if contact is not made with a parent or person in parental relation, *and if possible*, a message will be left for the parent or person in parental relation to call the school immediately.

V Student's Attendance Requirements and Receipt of Course Credit:

Students Enrolled K-12

- 1.) At a minimum, after missing ten (10) days of school (or after missing ten (10) days of the same class at the High School or five (5) days of the same class for a semester course) for any combination of excused and/or unexcused absences, the Building Principal will send a letter by registered mail to inform the parent/student noting the number of days missed along with information about the steps the district will take if the student continues to miss additional days.

- 2.) After missing eighteen (18) days of school (or after missing eighteen (18) days of the same class at the High School or nine (9) days of the same class at the High School for semester courses) for any combination of excused and/or unexcused absences, the Building Principal or designee will request a meeting with the parents/guardians and the student (as appropriate). At the meeting, the Principal or designee and other staff as deemed appropriate by the Principal will review the attendance records with the parents/students and will discuss the implications of missing additional days. At this meeting, the parent/guardian and student will have an opportunity to discuss any information that might be applicable to the situation and/or to address any alleged inaccuracies in the attendance records.
- 3.) After missing eighteen (18) or more days of instruction, High School students may lose parking privileges. The decision to remove parking privileges is at the discretion of the High School Principal. Note: Nothing in this policy prohibits the Building Principal for suspending or terminating parking privileges for other reasons at any time.
- 4.) After missing 24 or more days, the Building Principal or designee may choose to take one of the following actions: make a referral to Child Protective Services for educational neglect, submission of *a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) petition*, or to make recommendations about the involvement of “outside” agencies to work with a family. **Note: Nothing in this policy limits the obligations for school officials to notify Child Protective Services for any reason as provided by law.**

Students Enrolled in Grades 9-12

Receipt of Course Credit for High School Students (Grades 9-12)

- 1.) Students in grades 9-12 enrolled in a full-year course and who have more than twenty-four (24) absences from a class will not receive course credit.
- 2.) Students in grades 9-12 enrolled in a semester course and who have more than twelve (12) absences from a class will not receive course credit.

For the purpose of the awarding of credit an absence is defined as an unexcused **or** excused absence. Absences from school or class due to **school planned** activities (such as, but not limited to the following: field trips related services, music lessons, CSE, meetings, physicals etc.) **will not** constitute an absence from class as it relates to the awarding of credit.

Students who are denied credit will remain in the class unless removed by the Principal pursuant to existing policy and procedures regarding the removal from a class.

Students who are denied credit may attend summer school so long as they meet the existing eligibility requirements and so long as the course is offered.

Appeal Process

Based upon extraordinary circumstances or due to an alleged procedural error, a parent or student may appeal a decision to deny credit to the Appeal Committee for Attendance. **Note: Parents and/or students may be asked for specific documentation regarding absences at any point during the appeal process.**

The Appeal Committee for Attendance will consist of the following members:

- Building Principal or Assistant Principal as determined by the building principal.
- Two Teachers, as determined by the Building Principal. One Teacher to be from a course in which credit has been denied, the other teacher is “at large”
- Guidance Counselor or School Psychologist as determined by the Building Principal
- School Nurse

Based upon the evidence provided to the Appeal Committee for Attendance, the committee may do one of the following:

- Grant Credit for the Course
- Provide for any number of “buy back days”. Buy back days are defined as a given number of days that the student may miss above and beyond the days as stipulated above.
- Sustain the appeal with provisions (ie, student may receive a certain number of buy back days so long as they attend Homework Center or make-up work after school)

The Appeal Committee for Attendance will make a binding determination by vote. The Building Administrator on the committee will inform the parent and/or student in writing of the committee’s decision. The decision will be sent no later than one business day after the committee’s determination.

The decision of the Appeal Committee for Attendance may be further appealed to the Superintendent of Schools and subsequently to the Board of Education, however, only for alleged procedural errors.

VI Make-up Work

Make-up or homework will generally not be offered for students who miss school for an unexcused absence.

Requests for work in advance of an unexcused absence may not be honored.

VII Good Attendance Incentive Program

Each building will implement an incentive program for attendance: At a minimum, each building will recognize the following categories:

Perfect Attendance

Students who do not miss any school, and who have zero unexcused tardies from school will receive a certificate for Perfect Attendance.

Exemplary Attendance

Students who incur a combination of four or fewer days absent or unexcused tardies from school will receive a certificate for Exemplary Attendance.

Each school is authorized to develop additional “prizes and/or rewards” for perfect or exemplary attendance.

The Building Principal may allow a student to qualify for a Perfect Attendance or Exemplary Attendance Award in certain cases, when an absence(s) can be attributed to a religious holiday or tradition. Said religious event must be noted on a religious calendar, and must be recognized as such by a religious body or institution. To be eligible for the Perfect Attendance or Exemplary Attendance Award, the child’s parent must make a request to the building principal in writing to discount the absence(s) in the Principal’s calculation for the recognition.

VIII Participation in After School or Evening Activities

Students absent from school may not participate in after school or evening activities. This clause does not apply to absences due to a religious observance. Exceptional cases may be appealed to the building Principal. The Principal has the authority to allow participation upon appeal.

IX Policy Review and Assessment:

This policy shall be annually reviewed by the Board of Education annually at the same time that year-end building level attendance records are reviewed. If the attendance records show a decline in attendance, the Board shall revise this policy as is necessary to improve attendance.

Effective: 7/1/02

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Revised and Effective Date: 06/23/04

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Revised and Effective Date: 08/05/08

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