

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**Statement of Overall Objectives**

Recognizing that consistent school attendance correlates positively to academic success and school completion, the Elmira City School District has developed this Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Our objective is to accurately record and track the attendance, absence, tardiness and early departure of students to and from school for the purposes of:

- a) Knowing the whereabouts of every student for safety and other school related reasons;
- b) Raising student achievement and closing gaps in student performance;
- c) Identifying attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) Verifying that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The School District will:

- a) Encourage respectful and appropriate interactions between adults and students to promote a positive learning environment;
- b) Maintain accurate recordkeeping through a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student;
- c) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance as well as individual and group trends in student attendance problems;
- d) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students;
- e) Coordinate intervention strategies to assist district efforts to eliminate dropouts.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departure

Determination of excused and unexcused absences, tardiness and early departure as defined in this Policy represent our District's education and community needs, values and priorities.

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Whenever used within this Policy, the following terms shall mean:

- a) Excused: Any absence, tardiness, or early departure for which the pupil has valid school approved excuse. Such excused nonappearance will include: personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics or other medical visits, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, absences approved by the Principal, and other reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.
- b) Unexcused: Any absence, tardiness or early departure for which the pupil has no valid school approved excuse. Such unexcused nonappearance will include shopping, oversleeping, truancy, hunting, fishing, babysitting, hair cut, tanning and any other absence that is not excused.
- c) Tardy: The pupil arrives later than the starting time of the pupil's scheduled instruction or supervised activity.
- d) Early departure: The pupil leaves prior to the end of the pupil's scheduled instruction or supervised activity.
- e) Truancy: Truancy is the willful unexcused absence by a student from one or more scheduled classes or supervised activities.
- f) Register of attendance: Any written or electronic record maintained for the purpose of recording the attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of a pupil.

If challenged, the determination of excused and unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will be made in accordance with the administrative regulations adopted to implement this Policy.

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason. The Superintendent of Schools will establish procedures and a coding system for use throughout the District in accordance with Policy.

Commencing September 1, 2002, attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with administrative regulations implementing this Policy.

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A record shall be kept by the District of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202 (1-a)

Student Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and supervised activities. Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a) Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternative instruction, or
- d) Participating in a school sponsored activity.

It shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the administrative regulations adopted to implement this Policy.

Attendance Incentives

The District recognizes the importance of incentives to improve attendance. Buildings will develop incentive programs for excellent attendance including additional privileges and recognition in accordance with the administrative regulations implementing this Policy.

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall notify the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The administrative regulations will also address methods of follow-up contact and other actions that will help to ensure understanding and compliance with this Policy.

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If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departure occurs, designated District personnel will take action to improve a student's attendance. Strategies to improve attendance include, but are not limited to, home visits, parent conferences, phone conferences, counseling and other instructional strategies set forth in the administrative regulations adopted to implement this Policy.

Disciplinary Consequences

The pupil may be subject to disciplinary procedures for unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departure, including, but not limited to, verbal and written warnings, detentions, in-school suspensions, and loss of extra-curricular privileges, as described in the Code of Conduct and the Eligibility for Extra-Curricular Activities Policy. Nothing contained herein prevents out-of-school suspension or administrative removal from class for insubordination when there is persistent violation of this Policy.

Minimum Attendance Standards

Regular attendance in class is an important part of the learning process for any subject and can help students develop good habits for a lifetime. The superintendent shall establish through administrative regulations minimum attendance requirements for credit-bearing courses to encourage regular attendance.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record. The superintendent will develop an appeal process, which will be included in administrative regulations, for any decision made pursuant to this Policy.

Building Review of Attendance Records

Commencing with the 2002-2003 school year, the building principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk, teachers, and support services staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Annual Review by the Board of Education**

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a significant decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to this Policy deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a copy of the Policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of this Policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- b) Providing each teacher and administrator, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the Policy;
- c) Providing copies of the Policy to any other member of the community upon request, and
- d) Providing a copy of the Policy on the District website at www.elmiracityschools.com.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202,
3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations
(NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 1/12/99
Revised: 6/25/02, 6/18/08