

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

The District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. The District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation, and therefore has developed, and, if necessary, will revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) Increase school completion for all students;
- b) Raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) Identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) Know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) Verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) Determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.

Under State law, schools must be in session for at least 180 days each year. However, it is our policy to have a minimum of 180 days and to have scheduled extra days to allow time for snow days and other emergencies if necessary. It should be noted that the Commissioner of Education is not empowered under law to grant relief from the minimum requirement for occasions such as days of special significance. Regular attendance for instruction is a privilege and a responsibility to be taken very seriously. It is the position of this Board that all students should attend schools as scheduled and the schools remain open except on days declared to be holidays by legislative action or by declaration of the Governor.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The District will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Maintain this Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that may include representation from the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community. The

(Continued)

Students

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)

District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness, or early departure of each student.
- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures

Based upon the District's education and community needs, values, and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness, and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

- a) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, medical or dental appointments, or administrative approval/emergency situations which prevent a student from attendance, or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.
- b) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

A written excuse, signed by a parent or person in parental relation should be presented by the student when returning to school following each absence.

Extended Illness

Students who have extended illness will be provided with tutoring as per district tutoring regulations, and will not be counted as absent during the extended illness providing alternative instruction was received.

Truancy and Tardiness

Any student not in his/her assigned homeroom or first period class within five minutes after the start of the scheduled school day is considered either absent or tardy. Furthermore, for grades 6-12, attendance is taken in each class period. Students absent without prior knowledge and consent of a parent or person in parental authority is considered truancy, an unexcused absence. Truancy will be dealt with as outlined in the District's Code of Conduct.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**Early Dismissal of Students**

The School District is responsible for the safety of each student during the school day; therefore, no student without parental and school administrator or designee's permission may leave the school during the student school day.

Permission to leave early is granted under the following circumstances:

- a) Illness during the school day;
- b) Prior parental permission (a note must be provided to the homeroom teacher and/or school's main office);
- c) Participation by seniors in the Parental Exit Privilege.

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure will 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.

Attendance will be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade 8 (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), the student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence will also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch. For purposes of APPR and Teacher-Student Data Linkages (TSDL), classroom attendance for all students in grades K through 12 must be recorded on a subject by subject basis for Teacher of Record Determinations.
- b) For students in grades 9 through 12 or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from grades K through 12 arrives late for, or departs early from, scheduled instruction, the tardiness or early departure will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

(Continued)

Students

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)

A record will be kept 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 other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

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

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness, or early departure will be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District or building procedures.

Student Attendance and Course Credit

The District believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, for each marking period a certain percentage of a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the school administrator and/or classroom teacher.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures may affect a student's grade for classroom participation, for the marking period. However, the District may not deny course credit to a student who has exceeded the allowable number of absences but taken all tests, completed missed class work, and secured a passing grade.

It is Board policy that students with properly excused absences, tardiness and early departures for which the student has performed any assigned make-up work, assignments and/or tests shall not effect a student's grade for classroom participation for the marking period.

For summer school and courses meeting 1/2 year or 1/4 year, the same policy will apply and a calculation of the absences will be prorated accordingly.

Transfer students and students re-enrolling after having dropped out will be expected to attend a prorated minimum number of the scheduled class meetings during their time of enrollment.

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

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)

- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity must arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at school-sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction which was missed will be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness, or early departure, it will be the responsibility of the student to consult with his or her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments, and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher.

Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies Prior to the Denial of Course Credit

In order to ensure that parents or persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding minimum attendance and course credit, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed prior to the denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance, the following guidelines will be followed:

- a) Copies of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be available to parents or persons in parental relation and provided to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the District.
- b) School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent or student handbooks or posted on the District website.
- c) At periodic intervals, a designated staff member(s) will notify, by telephone, the parent or person in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his or her ability to receive course credit. If the parent or person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, a letter will be sent detailing this information.
- d) A designated staff member will review the District's Attendance Policy with students who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures. Further, appropriate student support services within the District, as well as the possible collaboration or referral to community support services and agencies, will be implemented prior to the denial of course credit for insufficient attendance by the student.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**Absence Reporting Procedures**

It is important that students are punctual and attend school daily. If, under certain circumstances, students are not able to attend school for the day, a parent or person in parental relation are expected to call the attendance office prior to first period class and report the absence and the reason.

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

A designated staff member will notify by telephone the parent or person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy, or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member will explain the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the District's or building level intervention procedures, and, if appropriate, the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent or person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide the notification by mail. Further, the District's Attendance Policy will be mailed to the parent or person in parental relation to promote awareness and help ensure compliance with the policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent or person in parental relation, a school conference will be scheduled between the parent or person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of enrolled school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism differs from truancy because it emphasizes missed instructional time rather than unexcused absences. Missed instructional time can increase a student's risk for disengagement, low achievement, and dropping out, among other things.

Students who miss at least 5% of enrolled school days in a year are at risk of becoming chronically absent. In light of this, the District will implement intervention strategies for students who miss 5% or more of the enrolled school days in a year.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, the District shall honor and recognize excellent school attendance through a variety of school activities such as certificates of recognition. A student will have perfect attendance when she/he is present for each and every day of school and has no instances of unexcused tardiness or dismissals from school. A student who is on an approved educational field trip will be considered in attendance for the purpose of determining perfect attendance awards.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**Disciplinary Consequences**

Unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's *Code of Conduct*. Negative consequences will not be imposed, however, where the absence, tardiness, or early departure is related to homelessness. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention, and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents or persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness, or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings and grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent or person in parental relation.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures occur, designated District personnel may pursue the following:

- a) Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures);
- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent or person in parental relation will be contacted;
- c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific element;
- d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent or designee if it relates to change in District policy or procedure;
- e) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures;
- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Attendance Committee and Interventions

Each school will have an Attendance Committee. The school administrator will appoint the members of the committee. This committee meets at least once per attendance period to review student attendance and plan for interventions.

Appeal Process

A parent or person in parental relation may request a building level review of his or her child's attendance record.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**Building Review of Attendance Records**

The building principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated 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.

Attendance at Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES Regional Summer School**A. High School Program**

During the school year, the Spencerport Central School District and the other component districts in the Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES award course credit based on criteria that includes certain attendance requirements. As a result, each school district applies its own attendance requirements necessary for receipt of course credit during the September to June academic school year. During the Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES Regional Summer School program, all districts participating in the program agree that the Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES requirements of attendance governs, and not the Spencerport Central School District's requirements. This means that students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and after a certain number of absences, the student will be dropped from the Regional Summer School program jeopardizing the receipt of course credit.

The following is the minimum attendance requirement for the Regional Summer School program, and a student will be considered in attendance if:

- a) physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher;
or
- b) working pursuant to an approved independent student program, or
- c) receiving approved alternate instruction.

Students are expected to attend all classes. Students taking credit-bearing courses must not exceed three (3) absences, otherwise the student will be dropped from enrollment and no course credit will be awarded. However, the Spencerport Central School District reserves the right to make an exception to the minimum requirement based on extenuating circumstances. An excused absence where the student successfully makes up work will still be recorded as an absence and will not affect the student's opportunity to be eligible for course credit.

B. Middle School Program

All districts participating in the Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES Regional Summer School programs agree that the Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES requirements of attendance governs, not the home districts. Students are expected to attend all classes. A student will be considered in attendance if:

- a) physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher;
or
- d) working pursuant to an approved independent student program, or
- e) receiving approved alternate instruction.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)

An excused absence where the student successfully makes up work will still be recorded as an absence.

Annual Review by the Board

The Board will annually review the building level student attendance records and if those records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

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

- a) Providing a plain language summary 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 or persons in parental relation;
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law §§ 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213
8 NYCRR §§ 104.1, 109.2, and 175.6

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #7131 -- Education of Students in Temporary Housing

Adopted: 6/25/02
Revised: 6/20/06, 5/26/09, 2/28/23