

Mission Statement for Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES Employee Attendance

The education and safety of our students constitute the most important mission with which each staff member of the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES is entrusted. The roles and expertise that administrators, teachers, teaching assistants and all other school related professionals bring to the educational system are interrelated and critical to the success of our students. To ensure that students are given an equal opportunity to learn and to achieve their potential in a safe and orderly environment, we believe it is paramount that each member of our staff be present for students each day. In keeping with the spirit of the negotiated agreements, all Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES employees should hold sacred the times that our students are in our care.

PRINCIPLES

- All Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES employees will work within the spirit of the negotiated contracts regarding absences. Individuals who use contractually-provided leave days for the purpose for which they were intended are working within the spirit of the contract.
- Staff members are encouraged to speak to their immediate supervisor about individual absence circumstances.
- Absences will be reviewed by the employees' immediate supervisor on an individual basis.
- Administrators are expected to address attendance issues.

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PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE STAFF ATTENDANCE

1. Make staff attendance a priority, in concert with student attendance; increase visibility within buildings/programs and contact with classes/teachers in off campus sites. In person, phone, and e-mail contacts are all recognized as appropriate means or methods.
2. Identify attendance issues:
 - a. All performance reviews and staff evaluations conducted during the 2000-2003 school years will not include written statements about staff attendance. However, a staff member's past attendance is a matter of record and may be considered in future performance reviews and staff evaluations and formal and informal procedures.
 - b. Identify specific staff who have a demonstrated history of poor attendance since September 1, 2003 and gather data from Human Resource Services.
 - c. Review attendance reports daily; know which staff are working, and which staff are replaced by substitutes.
 - d. Review staff attendance for all employees on a weekly, monthly, semester and annual basis, looking for patterns. Number of sick/personal days per month, Friday-Monday patterns, days taken around recess periods, and days taken without authorization serve as examples of such patterns.
 - e. Monitor activities for staff arrival and departure times, including but not limited to late arrival, early departure, and leaving mid-day.
3. Informal and formal progressive discipline procedures will be used to address staff attendance. Staff members should be made aware of attendance issues prior to having them noted at the time of evaluation. If excessive absenteeism is identified or if patterns emerge, a progressive approach should be initiated. Should the attendance issue be particularly egregious, the appropriate action may be to go directly to a memorandum or some other formal form of intervention. For each intervention, supervisors and coordinators will be expected to notify their program director and the Director of Human Resource Services.
 - a. Approach staff in a supportive manner to acknowledge/inquire about recent absences on a daily basis, as staff return to work; likewise, commend excellent staff attendance. In person, by phone, and email are all recognized as appropriate means or methods.
 - b. Meet with staff and union representative without taking meeting notes.
 - c. Meet with staff and union representative and take meeting notes.
 - d. Meet with staff member and union representative, with meeting notes leading to a regular memo. Allow opportunity for staff explanation.
 - e. Document repeated attendance issues on the evaluation form when attendance impacts the individual's performance.
 - f. Meet with staff member and union representative, with meeting and other notes, resulting in a memorandum.
 - g. Prepare a formal memorandum.
 - h. Initiate formal disciplinary procedures.
4. Probationary and Non-Permanent Staff exhibiting poor attendance may not be recommended for tenure or permanent status in addition to having the above delineated progressive measures.
5. Attendance concerns will be noted on the appropriate evaluation form. The administrators will note ways in which attendance impacts staff and student performance.

Examples of attendance concerns:

- a. Patterns of consecutive days
- b. Patterns of days attached to week-ends, recess periods
- c. More than one day a month over a series of months (personal, family ill, personal ill)
- d. Annual patterns (hunting season, Superintendent Conference days)

Examples of staff/student performance impacts:

- a. Consistency of instruction
- b. Implementation of Behavior Management Plans
- c. Safety
- d. Production (completion of work)
- e. Advocacy for children