

**East  
Hartford  
Public  
Schools**

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East Hartford, CT 06108  
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# ALL IN EVERY DAY

## K-12 STUDENT ATTENDANCE TOOL KIT



**SCHOOLS THAT ARE THE PRIDE OF OUR COMMUNITY**

**ADOPTED JULY 1, 2016**

**[WWW.EASTHARTFORD.ORG](http://WWW.EASTHARTFORD.ORG)**

# DISTRICT ATTENDANCE TASK FORCE

Charged by the priority work outlined in the East Hartford Public Schools (EHPS) Strategic Plan, the EHPS Attendance Task Force was formed to develop a system that would effectively institutionalize the beliefs and actions of regular student attendance throughout the district, to develop a system that would effectively institutionalize the beliefs and actions of regular student attendance. Inspired by a shared commitment to the power of “presence” in a student’s journey to success, this team collaboratively conducted a district audit of best practice, reviewed and identified areas of opportunity

and strength and developed this Tool Kit that captures a district approach to practice. In addition, the Task Force met with representatives from the health, judicial, housing, police and governmental communities and began the development of an intricate web of support for children that will combat the significant life, health, and social challenges of student absenteeism.

Thank you to the following individuals for their efforts toward our goal to ensure attendance for **every child, every day!**

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear East Hartford Public School Family Team,

Thank you for taking the time to review our **ALL IN Every Day**, the EHPS K-12 Student Attendance Tool Kit. This Tool Kit has been carefully crafted by the EHPS Student Attendance Task Force over the course of the 2015-2016 school year. It is written to support students, families and school staff in implementing effective systems defined by consistent district practices. It should not be seen as a rule book but rather as a guide to the institutional belief that **STUDENT ATTENDANCE MATTERS** in East Hartford Public Schools. It should be used as a part of daily practice and is intentionally designed for accessibility, relevance and resource richness. In this Tool Kit you will find clear explanations of the statutes and regulations that speak to student attendance as well as the district and school systems employed across our schools.

I hope that this Tool Kit continues to raise our shared levels of awareness around the importance of regular school attendance for students, families and staff.

Together, we can have a significant impact on the lives of the students we share—let’s be **ALL IN** for kids.



**Nathan D. Quesnel**  
Superintendent of Schools  
East Hartford Public Schools



TASK FORCE	SCHOOL/GRADES
Deb Houghton, Co-Chair <i>Assistant Principal</i>	East Hartford Middle School
Joseph LeRoy, Co-Chair <i>Assistant Principal</i>	East Hartford High School
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Sue Zingler <i>Guidance Director</i>	East Hartford Middle School

# I. ALL IN EVERY DAY

## POLICIES & DEFINITIONS

At EHPS, we believe that successful student attendance starts with a shared understanding of language, priority and expectation for families and schools. The following section of this Tool Kit provides users with a list of significant terms and definitions regarding student attendance. For further detail, please consult the legal references listed at the bottom of the segment.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DEFINITIONS	
<b>(IN) ATTENDANCE</b>	A student who is present at his/her assigned school or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day.
<b>TARDY</b>	A student who arrives after the start of the school day. Multiple tardies result in student absences.
<b>EARLY DISMISSAL</b>	A student who is released from school by the parent/guardian. Leaving early may cause a student to accumulate absences and miss valuable instructional time.
<b>ABSENCE</b>	<b>(Elementary)</b> A student is considered absent if they miss ½ of a school day. (This includes missing class for an excused absence, unexcused absence, ISS and OSS.) Field trips do NOT count as an absence. <b>(Secondary)</b> A student is considered to be absent if they miss 4 or more classes in a day. (This includes missing class for an excused absence, unexcused absence, ISS and OSS.) Field trips do NOT count as an absence.
<b>EXCUSED ABSENCE (1-9 TOTAL DAYS OF ABSENCE)</b>	Up through a student's first nine absences (including both excused and unexcused absences), a student may be considered excused for any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves. This requires documentation within 10 days in the form of a parent/guardian note.
<b>EXCUSED ABSENCE (10+ TOTAL DAYS OF ABSENCE)</b>	Beyond 10 absences, a student must provide documentation in the form of a parent/guardian note and additional documentation (see below). Acceptable reasons for an absence to be considered excused are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student illness (an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length).</li> <li>• Student's observance of a religious holiday.</li> <li>• Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.</li> <li>• The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason).</li> <li>• Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators.</li> </ul>
<b>UNEXCUSED ABSENCE</b>	A student is considered to have an unexcused absence if their absence from a regularly scheduled school day or part of a day does not fall under the excused absences as defined under "EXCUSED ABSENCE (10+ TOTAL DAYS OF ABSENCE)".
STATE LAW DEFINITIONS	
<b>TRUANT</b>	A student who has four (4) unexcused absences in one month or ten (10) in one school year. In this case, a parent/guardian must meet with school personnel no later than 10 days after the student becomes truant. If a parent/guardian fails to meet, the school personnel will file a Family With Service Needs (FWSN) within 15 calendar days.
<b>HABITUAL TRUANT</b>	A student who is absent twenty (20) days in one school year.
<b>CHRONICALLY ABSENT</b>	A student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year. This is monitored by school attendance teams through a 10% report which serves as a predictor of habitually truant students regarding absenteeism.
STATE LAW INTERVENTION DEFINITIONS	
<b>FAMILY WITH SERVICE NEEDS (DCF-FWSN)</b>	A formal request to the Department of Child and Family Services to support the needs of a child exhibiting truancy or other behaviors that are considered unlawful if committed under 17 years of age.
<b>EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT (DCF)</b>	A formal request to Department of Child and Family Services to support the needs of a child exhibiting a lack of proper care and attention educationally.
<b>PLANNING &amp; PLACEMENT TEAM (PPT)</b>	A PPT meeting conducted by a special education teacher with other school personnel when a student becomes truant.
<b>JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD (JRB)</b>	A JRB is a community-based effort that aims to divert juvenile offenders from the formal justice system.

**Legal reference: Connecticut General Statutes**

10-184 Duties of parents (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157); 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (Revised by PA 95-304 and PA 00-157); 10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general; 10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program; 46b-149 Family with needs; Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984); **East Hartford Board of Education Policy:** 5113 (a-f), CGS Sec. 10-198a(b), CGS Sec. 10-198a(c), CGS Sec. 46b-149

## II. ALL IN EVERY DAY AWARENESS & COMMUNICATION

At EHPS, we believe making students and families aware of district-wide attendance systems requires a detailed communication plan to be shared by all involved in a student's education. As we work together in this process, the following district-wide practices represent how we raise awareness and communicate with families individually regarding their child's attendance.



### IN AN EFFORT TO RAISE ATTENDANCE AWARENESS AND INCORPORATE ONGOING COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES:

All schools will...

- Encourage families to communicate with their child about the importance of daily attendance and contact the school if their child is absent or tardy.
- Display the EHPS Attendance welcome sign that highlights the importance of daily attendance.
- Celebrate Perfect Attendance & Outstanding Attendance awards by displaying these in visible locations.
- Make personalized or automated contact to families for absent students on a daily basis.

\* Additional samples of strategies at work can be found in section IV.

**EVERY  
SCHOOL DAY  
COUNTS**

## III. ALL IN EVERY DAY DATA ANALYSIS

At EHPS, we believe in the use of advanced data systems and processes to streamline efforts for monitoring and improving daily attendance. In order to ensure consistent practice in this area, the following district-wide protocols represent how we use data to determine the appropriate interventions regarding attendance.

### IN AN EFFORT TO EFFECTIVELY USE DATA SYSTEMS TO INFORM SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS:

All schools will...

- Establish an attendance team that monitors, establishes interventions, and analyzes attendance data.
- Use the EHPS 10% chronic attendance list for ongoing monitoring and as a basis for identifying chronically absent students.
- Establish a tracking system for absent students that will be updated with the most current intervention efforts for those students.

\* Additional samples of strategies at work can be found in section IV.

# IV. ALL IN EVERY DAY INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS

At EHPS, we believe the use of interventions and supports are critical components to effectively meet the needs of all students. The following section of this Tool Kit provides users with a list of systems, grounded in SRBI\*, that will provide an overview for schools. In addition, this section provides samples of best practices that are used above and beyond district requirements to support students and families.

**IN AN EFFORT TO ENSURE IN-CLASS ATTENDANCE FOR EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY:**

All schools will...

- Send district attendance letters to students who are exhibiting concerning patterns of absenteeism at 45-90-135-180 day intervals.
- Use the 3-tiered interventions for students when establishing plans and next steps.

*\* Additional samples of strategies at work can be found below.*



**9 OR FEWER ABSENCES**

Students with good attendance generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school more. Children benefit and make the most of their educational opportunities if they attend school regularly and on time.

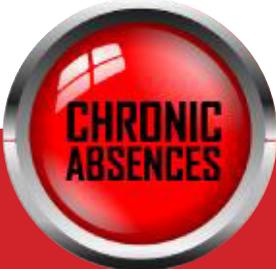
## SAMPLES OF EAST HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL STRATEGIES AT WORK INCLUDE:

TIER	TARGETED STUDENTS	INTERVENTION & SUPPORTS (A Sample Listing)
I	Students who are exhibiting acceptable levels of attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily attendance tracking</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Phone calls</li> <li>• Website/Online communication</li> <li>• Prizes &amp; awards for classroom attendance (<i>PBIS Assemblies</i>)</li> <li>• Attendance data reports</li> <li>• Classroom data wall</li> <li>• Open house &amp; parent conferences</li> <li>• Staff training</li> </ul>
II	Students who are exhibiting concerning patterns of absenteeism and are non-responsive to Tier 1 interventions and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance groups &amp; mentors</li> <li>• Attendance contracts &amp; letters</li> <li>• Attendance corrective action plans</li> <li>• Attendance luncheons &amp; breakfasts</li> <li>• Flexible class scheduling</li> <li>• Daily check-in procedures</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian meetings</li> <li>• Social work/counseling support</li> </ul>
III	Students who are identified as students who are chronically absent and are non-responsive to Tier 1 & 2 interventions and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home &amp; wellness visits</li> <li>• Engagement of outside agencies and community supports</li> <li>• DCF referral</li> <li>• PPT</li> <li>• JRB</li> </ul>



**10 TO 17 DAYS ABSENT**

Students who are absent an average of 15 days a year miss a year's worth of school before their senior year. When students miss a day of school, it actually puts them two days behind their classmates.



**18 OR MORE DAYS ABSENT**

Excused and unexcused absences represent lost time in the classroom and lost opportunities to learn. Missing just one day every two weeks can add up to 18 days in a year. Absences add up before you know it.

*\*Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) emphasize successful instruction for all students through high-quality core general education practices, as well as targeted interventions for students experiencing learning, attendance, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties.*

# V. ALL IN EVERY DAY

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

At EHPS, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Our community partners and organizations are vital components to a student’s success. Within this vision, district schools have established a network of local agencies to collectively ensure student attendance and provide necessary supports.

### IN AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO SUPPORT ATTENDANCE EFFORTS:

All East Hartford Public Schools will...

- Identify and work collaboratively with community partners and organizations, as needed, to meet the needs of **every child every day.**



**The Children’s Clinic** provides an extensive array of services, including diagnostic evaluations, individuals/group/ family therapy and medication management services. The program also provides consultation to schools and other agencies involved with the child and family as well as trainings and workshops for schools and other agencies upon request. The clinic celebrates the cultural diversity of all children and now has three bilingual clinicians available. The Agency now offers Primary Health Care services to children and also has an on-site Pharmacy. **Call (860) 291-1341**



**The Department of Youth Services** provides positive learning experiences for youth that promote a sense of self-worth and community involvement. The Department also advocates for youth state-wide and provides therapeutic counseling, several positive youth development programs and outreach services to help meet the needs of East Hartford’s youth and their families. **Call (860) 291-7181**



Working together with families and communities to improve child safety, ensure that more children have permanent families, and advance the overall well-being of children is the central focus of the **Department of Children and Families (DCF)**. DCF protects children who are being abused or neglected, strengthens families through support and advocacy, and builds on existing family and community strengths to help children who are facing emotional and behavioral challenges, including those committed to the Department by the juvenile justice system. **Call (860) 533-3600**



The **Social Services Division** strives to promote the well-being, self-sufficiency and quality of life among East Hartford residents by administering and developing programs and initiatives which provide individuals and families with the necessary support and opportunities to realize their fullest potential. **Call (860) 291-7248**



**Integrated Health Services, Inc.** provides comprehensive medical, behavioral, and dental services to children in grades PreK-12 through their School Based Health Centers (SBHCs), located in 7 East Hartford schools. Staffed by nurse practitioners, social workers, and dentists/hygienists, the SBHCs provide access to immediate on site care. The goal is to minimize children/parent’s time lost from school/work to travel to appointments to maximize their academic success as “Healthy Children Make Better Learners.” Contact us at **www.integratedhealthservices.org** or **Call (860) 291-9154.**



**First Choice Health Centers** is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides integrated primary care including family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology. Additionally, the Center offers behavioral health, psychiatry and substance abuse services along with dental, nutrition, podiatry, optometry and fitness center/trainer services to area residents. The Center is a 340B participating pharmacy provider offering prescription medications at reduced costs to patients. Services are offered on a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines and we accept most major insurances. The Center will expand to include infectious disease and gerontology services in the Spring of 2016.



**The East Hartford Police Department** School Resource officer program places two full time officers at the high school and middle school. The Program’s objectives include the prevention of juvenile delinquency and maintaining a positive climate within schools rather than involving students in the criminal justice community. **Call (860) 528-4401**