SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The Romulus School 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. Because the Romulus School District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, the School District has developed, will review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives. This policy is applicable to all PreK-12th grade students.

a) To increase school completion for all students

b) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;

c) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;

d) To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;

e) To verify that individual students are complying with education law relating to compulsory attendance;

f) To comply with state and federal accountability standards for student attendance.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The School District will:

a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment in the presence of supportive 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) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community. The 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 software for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.

e) Develop intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

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Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered unexcused until a parent/guardian provides documentation of the reason for the absence. Documentation is preferred as a written, dated reason for the absence.

a) **EXCUSED**: An absence, tardiness, or early departure may be excused 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, school sanctioned events (i.e., field trips, music lessons, assemblies) 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).

School staff will record absences, tardiness, and early departures in the local student data system (Schooltool) and this data will be provided to the NYS Student Information System as required by state and federal regulations. Students that are returning after being absent should bring a dated signed excuse. All medical and dental notes should indicate the name and telephone number of the doctor, as well as the time of the appointment. The main office will notify parents/guardians of absences and make requests for documentation/excuses. These notifications will be delivered to parents/guardians through the ParentSquare program.

Students must attend all scheduled classes to be present for extracurricular events that evening. This includes participants and spectators. The exception to this requirement is evidence of a scheduled appointment (medical doctor, dentist, therapist, etc.) during the school day. In this case, students are expected to miss only the portion of the school day needed for the appointment and travel time. Evidence of such an appointment may include a confirmation form or a signed excuse from a parent or guardian

Exclusion from gym will be at the discretion of the nurse and Physical Education instructor and may be made upon the presentation of a dated excuse with an explicit reason.

Permanent or long-term excuses from Physical Education classes must be signed by a doctor.

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The use of good judgment in sending a child back to school following illness is of prime importance. It is better for a child to stay home an extra day than return too soon after a long illness and become ill again or spread illness or infection.

Making up work: All work missed because of absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the teacher. It is the secondary school (6-12) student's responsibility to find out what he/she has missed during his/her absence and arrange with the teacher for the completion of this work. In elementary grades, the teacher will initiate the make-up assignments.

Truancy: Parents, having sent a child to school, expects him/her to be in attendance. If the child does not attend school and does not have a lawful reason, that child is a truant.

A student's attendance record is as important as his/her academic record. Excessive absences or repeated lateness may require a parent conference. Lateness also may result in detention for class time missed.

Although many students are excused around 2:25pm, the school day extends to approximately 3:15pm. Students requiring extra help or who have been assigned a dentation by a teacher or administrator must stay until 3:15pm

At the secondary (6-12) level, 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 be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents/guardians will be notified by designated school staff at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

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.

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

a) For students in non-departmentalized PreK, Kindergarten through Grade 5: Students' presence or absence shall be recorded daily on a per subject or class basis according to reporting requirements established for linking students to teachers through course or subject sections.

b) For students in Grades 6 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 shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.

c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall 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 Kindergarten through Grades 12 arrives late for or departs early from schedule instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall 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 such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records shall also include 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 shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District/building procedures.

Student Attendance/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 building administrator and/or classroom teacher.

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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.

Three (3) tardies within a marking period in a course/subject equals one (1) absence from that course/subject.

At the secondary (6-12) level, students with properly excused absences, tardiness and early departures for which the student has performed any assigned **make**-up work, assignments, projects, and/or tests shall **NOT** be counted as an absence **for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit**. All make-up work, assignments, projects, and/or tests must be completed by deadlines established by the teacher or principal in order to receive credit towards a passing grade in the course. Such deadline will allow for a minimum of days based upon the number of excused absences from the course. Where a student earns a passing grade, credit will not be denied for the course(s).

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

a) Physically or 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.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school sponsored activity are to 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 shall be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, 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 teacher.

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

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's implementation of specific intervention strategies to

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be employed **prior to** the denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance, the following guidelines shall be followed:

a) Copies of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be mailed to parents/guardians 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/student handbooks.

c) At periodic intervals, teachers, the guidance counselor, and/or Principal will notify, by telephone, the parent/guardian of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to receive course credit. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached by telephone, a letter shall be sent detailing this information.

d) The Principal and/or Guidance Counselor 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/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies, will be implemented **prior to** the denial of course credit for insufficient attendance by the student.

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

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

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Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, the District will develop and implement grade appropriate/building-level strategies and programs including, but not limited to:

a) Attendance honor rolls to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in District newsletters and, with parent/person in parental relation consent, in community publications;

b) Classroom acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards).

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated District personnel will 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 departure(s);

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/person in parental relation will be contacted;

c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene

d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent/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) Students will be brought to building level team meetings to further discuss situations.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

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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.

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 decline in student attendance, the Board of Education shall make any revisions to the Policy and plan 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 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 such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation through publication of s Student Handbook;

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.

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Education Law Sections 3024,3025,3202,3205,3206,3210,3211 and 3213

8New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 7/13/10
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Adopted: 8/25/20
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