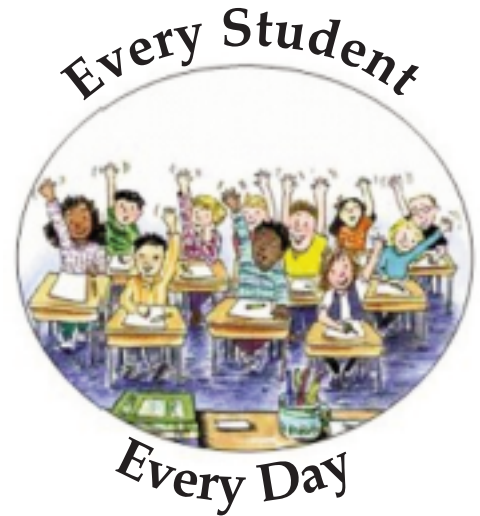


Learning is Cumulative!

Dear Washington Township Parent/Guardian:

What I have learned as a lifelong educator and advocate for children is that the old adage “Miss a Day. Miss a Lot” is most applicable to the young. As an educational leader who is charged with the responsibility of enforcing state mandates, it is my obligation to stress the importance of daily attendance in school. As a proponent for children, it is a policy that I am most passionate about.

Missing a few days of school may seem insignificant or inconsequential to some parents. This cannot be further from the truth. In fact, beginning in 2012, the New Jersey Department of Education began allocating state funding based on an average rate of daily attendance. With a target rate of 96.5 percent average daily attendance across our 11 schools, **any child who accumulates more than six (6) absences (excused and unexcused) falls below this desired attendance rate. In addition to the disservice that we are doing to our children by not requiring daily attendance, the state will withhold valuable funding dollars that we rely on to deliver superior instruction and support services.**



Learning is cumulative. It is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class. The teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Each lesson presented to students is based upon or related to those that preceded it. Just as we can never regain a moment of time wasted, the child who misses a day of school also misses a day of education which cannot be retrieved. Indeed, research shows that those children who attend school regularly are more likely to be successful during their school years and beyond. If students don't develop the habits of good attendance and prompt completion of assignments when they are in school, when will they learn these values? Success in their chosen occupations is dependent upon these habits.

In Washington Township, we pride ourselves on employing the best and brightest teachers and staff to deliver daily, high-quality instruction to your children. Students who miss school miss out on active learning experiences, class participation, and the ability to ask questions and experience “teachable moments” that arise within the course of a day. They are more likely to fall behind and subsequently, they are more likely to disengage and even drop out.

Teaching our children to value education is essential. If parents believe that consistent attendance is important and communicate that belief to their children regularly, unnecessary absences from school can be dramatically reduced. In an ever-challenging world, having **every student every day** in their assigned seat is an important step to provide them with the skills and knowledge (and now state funding) that they will need to thrive and flourish beyond graduation.

I appreciate your assistance as parents in placing value in our District attendance policy and your ongoing support of our schools and educational mission.

Sincerely,

Joseph Bollendorf, Superintendent of Schools

