

N-3

**Elmira Heights School
District
Comprehensive
Attendance Plan**

Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive Attendance Plan

(NOTE: This section of the document was created during the 10-11 School Year)

I. OBJECTIVES

The Elmira Heights Central School District believes that regular attendance establishes a pattern for success for all students in school and in future life. To benefit from the educational programs of the District, students must be in regular attendance and participate in those programs. Parents/Guardians are expected to help their students by making certain that they are in regular attendance. Regular attendance and promptness are essential for student success. Through the implementation of this policy the District expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, lateness to school, and lateness to classes.

Definitions

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

a) Excused absences/tardies are defined as those due to personal illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, remedial or mental health treatments, or approved academic experiences. A written excuse must be submitted to school within five (5) school days of the student's return to school.

b) **ANY absence/tardy due to reasons other than the above will be considered unexcused.**

* See building schedules listed in section VII

II. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES

The administration and support staff of the Elmira Heights School District would like to work closely with parents and/or guardians to ensure regular attendance for all students. Regular participation in classroom activities fosters critical thinking, communication skills, and responsibility, all which are essential skills for future employment. Good attendance in school is also part of the self-discipline that we try to instill in our students to enable them to act as responsible members of the community. Elmira Heights School District will employ the following strategies to ensure the effectiveness of this attendance plan.

- increase awareness of policy among staff by:
 - i. including a copy of the policy in the teacher's handbook
 - ii. explaining the policy at new teacher orientation
 - iii. reviewing the policy semi-annually during staff conference days

- increase awareness of policy among students by:
 - i. including a copy of the policy in the student handbook
 - ii. requiring signatures from students in grades 4 -12 indicating that they have read and understand the plan
 - iii. discussing attendance requirements at all grade level assemblies early each year
 - iv. including a copy of the attendance policy on the district website (www.Heightsschools.com)
- increase awareness of policy among parents by:
 - i. requiring a parent signature on policy indicating that they have read and understand what is expected of his/her child
 - ii. place notification of policy on district website (www.Heightsschools.com)
 - iii. discussing the policy at Open House/ Parent Night annually
 - iv. including a summary of attendance requirements in the school district's calendar
 - v. Reminding parents of attendance requirements through ongoing contacts made with the family regarding attendance issues.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Each absence/ late arrive will be recorded through the main offices.

On the secondary level, grades 6-12, attendance will be taken during each class period and compiled in a central location within each school.

On the elementary level, grades pre-K-5, attendance will be taken once at the beginning of each day. The teacher, or adult supervisor in-charge, will know the whereabouts of each child throughout the day.

Any absence or late arrival or early dismissal must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school within 24 hours of the absence AND to provide the school with a signed ORANGE NOTE (see Appendix #1). The ORANGE NOTE should be given to office personnel in each building upon the student's return to school. Each day a child is absent a phone call from the parent is requested; however, all absences will be recorded as unexcused until an ORANGE NOTE is returned to school. At the secondary level it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation for all in-school appointments will prevent a student from attending class prior to dismissal from the class.

Parents will be notified by phone is their child is absent, late, or has an unexcused departure from school. If the absenteeism is appropriately accounted for through parent contact, the automated system contact for that student can be cancelled.

IV. POLICY

- a. *All absences from school will be covered by this policy. No distinction will be made between excused or unexcused when determining the total number of days absent from each course*
- b. Students who are absent from class for more than 20 minutes shall be considered absent. In order for students to attend a school sponsored function, the student must be signed in to the office no later than (10) minutes after the beginning of period 1 on the day of the activity. The principal may grant permission for a student to be absent under special circumstances as defined by State Education Law: illness or death in the family, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, remedial or medical health treatment or approved academic experiences. Tardiness to school for personal illness for part of the school day will render a student ineligible that day.
- c. Once in school, students shall not be considered absent when they are authorized by school officials to be somewhere other than in their regularly scheduled class. For example, if school personnel expects a student to report elsewhere during their regularly scheduled class time for such activities as meetings, conferences with school personnel, testing, physical exams within the school setting by school physician, music lessons, or field trips, the student shall not be considered absent. It is the responsibility of the student and/or the designated staff member to provide the teacher with written documentation to attend these sessions before they are permitted to leave the class. However, the student must make up all missed work.

V. NOTIFICATION SEQUENCE

The following refers to the notification processing pertaining to the number of absences in a single course and/or academic year. A student may be notified several different times if excessive absences exist in more than one class. *Again, no distinction will be made between excused or unexcused when notification is provided to families regarding absences from school.*

- As soon as possible after the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, & 30th weeks of school the administration in each building shall send written notification to the parents regarding a student's absences from school. The letters shall notify the parents as follows:

After the 6 th absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written Notification of absences/ encouragement of parent to support regular school attendance• Required Dean/ Student conference
After the 10 th absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written Notification of absences/ encouragement of parent to address chronic problem that seems to be

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurring Required Principal/ Student conference
After the 14 th absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of absences/ arrange required parent-school support team meeting
After the 18 th absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of absences and school's responsibility to notify county officials of chronic attendance issues for student/family

* see Appendix #2- "Written Notifications"

- As soon as possible after the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, and 30th weeks of school the administration in each building shall send written notifications to the parents documenting a student's tardiness to school/ absences from classes. The letters shall notify the parents as follows:

After the 6 th tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of tardiness will be provided to parent/ encouragement of parent to support regular school attendance Required Dean/ Student meeting
After the 10 th tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of tardiness will be provided to parent/ encouragement of parent to address chronic problem that seems to be occurring Required Principal/ Student conference
After the 14 th tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of tardy/ single class absences will be provided to parent/ arrange required parent-school support team meeting
After the 18 th tardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Notification of tardy/ single class absences and school's responsibility to notify county officials of chronic attendance issues for student/family

* see Appendix #2- "Written Notifications"

VI. INCENTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR BEHAVIORS

Each school, where administration deems appropriate, may use the following list of incentives to encourage good attendance:

- Community donated gifts are given or raffled to students who meet attendance standards
- Participation in extra curricular activities for students who meet attendance standards
- Recognition awards for students who meet attendance standards
- Attendance record used when considering issuance of working papers

Each school, in accordance with EHSD Board Policy, may use the following list of sanctions to discourage poor attendance:

- Loss of the right to play school sports
- Loss of the right to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Loss of the right to attend school-related trips

- Loss of parking privileges
- Attendance at meetings with parents, administration, and/or counselors to discuss impact of excessive absences on educational program and progress
- Repetition of course or grade level due to excessive absences which has caused a lack of completion of required course work.

In order for students to attend a school sponsored function, the student must be signed in to the office no later than (10) minutes after the beginning of period 1 on the day of the activity. The principal may grant permission for a student to be absent under special circumstances as defined by State Education Law: illness or death in the family, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, remedial or medical health treatment or approved academic experiences. Tardiness to school for personal illness for part of the school day will render a student ineligible that day.

Students who are suspended from school (ISS or OSS) on a day of an athletic game or practice session, party, school dance, or other school affair scheduled after regular school hours are not eligible for participation or attendance at such events.

VII. BUILDING SCHEDULES

Cohen Elementary School-

Start time- 7:55

Cohen Middle School-

Start time- 8:15

Edison High School-

Start time- 8:20

Students who arrive after building start times will be considered tardy to school.

(NOTE- This section of the document was created during the 11-12 school year by the Attendance Committee)

VIII. Response to Intervention Model for School Attendance

In keeping with the Elmira Heights Central School District's belief that regular attendance establishes a pattern for success for all students in school and in future life a three tiered approach to improving school attendance will be adopted. Such a Response to Intervention model (see Appendix # 3) to school attendance supports the following basic tenets:

1. Regular attendance at school is a priority. Targets for attendance are set and monitored regularly
2. Families need to understand early on why regular attendance at school is important and how inconsistent attendance affects academic success.
3. Positive supports before punitive actions are more successful at increasing school attendance rates and student engagement.

Tier I- Tier I in the three tiered RTI model would include all universal supports and services provided to 100% of the student population in order to support regular attendance at school. Tier I initiatives are low in cost and aim to be preventive in nature. Tier I interventions in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- School Attendance letters being sent on a regular basis to parents outlining student absence totals and the importance of regular school attendance on academic success.
- Use of Synervoice system to notify parents of daily absences
- Phone calls made by school staff at "Transition" years (i.e. kindergarten, 6th and 9th grades) discussing regular school attendance with parents and problem solving any barriers that may be presented
- Informational campaigns completed to ensure that all families know the value of strong school attendance and consequences of poor school attendance. All families should know about incentive programs implemented at the schools to improve school attendance.
- PBIS programming specific to buildings emphasizing regular attendance at school
 - Example: Elementary School may designate a month as "School Everyday/ Everyone" and provide incentives to classrooms who improve attendance for that month
 - Example: Middle School may have competitions between classrooms/ homerooms for best attendance for that month. A pizza party/ ice cream social could be provided to the winner
 - Example: High School teachers may provide extra points towards grades for students with fewer than 2 absences in a given time period.

Tier II- Tier II in the three tiered RTI model would target students "at-risk" for poor attendance or those students with increasing attendance rates (approximately 15-20% of the student population). Tier II initiatives in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- All Tier I interventions and the addition of parent meeting with building administrators when attendance totals reach identified thresholds as outlined in the Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive Attendance Plan.
- When parent permission is agreed to, students identified as being in Tier II will receive Synervoice “Wake UP! Edison” phone calls at the high school level or “Wake UP! Cohen” phone calls at the middle school level.

Tier III- Tier III in the three tiered RTI model would target students who are chronically absent or habitually truant from school. This would include about 5-15% of the Elmira Heights School District student population. Tier III initiatives in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- All Tier I & Tier II interventions and the addition of student/ parent involvement in “Get to School! Stay in School” grant funded program (See Appendix B)
- Also, interventions such as referrals to Chemung County agencies such as Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) can be considered.

IX. Synervoice Applications in Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive Attendance Policy

1. Daily 10:00 phone calls home with the following announcement for those students who are recorded as absent from school at the 10:00 AM hour and no written ORANGE NOTE or parent phone call regarding the absence has been received:
 - a. [School] calling please hold...This is a message from [School]. A student in your household in grade [10] named [Ryan] is currently listed as absent from school. Please notify the school of your knowledge of this absence as soon as possible.
2. Daily evening phone calls home with the following announcement for those students who remained absent from school for the day and no written ORANGE NOTE or parent phone call regarding the absence was received by the district:
 - a. [School] calling please hold...This is a message from [School]. A student in your household in grade [3] named [Ryan] was absent [March 1st]. Please send a written note explaining the absence on the student’s return to school.
 - b. For secondary schools only a nightly Synervoice message reporting on period absences is also utilized by the Elmira Heights District. The message is as follows:
[School] calling please hold...This is a message from [School]. A student in your household in grade [8] named [Ryan] was absent [March 1st] [Period 1, period 2, period 3, etc]. Please send a written note explaining the absence on the student’s return to school.
3. Morning “Wake UP! Edison” or “Wake UP! Cohen” phone calls with the following message are made to those students in Tier II when written parent permission is obtained:

- a. To be determined
(see Appendix #4)

X. “Get to School! Stay in School!” Project Outline

1. In efforts to improve the “recovery” rate of those students who are displaying “severe chronic absences” from school, the Elmira Heights School District is in the process of requesting Grant Funding to hire two part time Attendance Outreach Workers (1 for the Cohen Campus and 1 for the Edison campus) to work with families in addressing barriers to regular school attendance and re-engaging students back into their educational program. This support will include home visits, transportation, provision of necessities such as school supplies and clothing, and linkages to community services intended to eliminate the barriers that prevent these students from attending school.
(See Appendix #5)

XI. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports related to Regular School Attendance in the Elmira Heights School District

The Elmira Heights School District believes that one effective strategy for improving attendance is engaging students, parents, educators and community members in a campaign that offers positive rewards for getting to school on-time.

- Incentives don’t need to be costly. Simple rewards including recognition from peers and the school through assemblies, free homework passes, interclass competitions, events all work as meaningful incentives in improve school attendance.
- Perfect attendance is not ALWAYS the goal being sought as students should not come to school when they are sick. Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect attendance and offering rewards on a weekly basis can allow students to earn positive rewards.
- Each building in the district is encouraged to establish a building-specific PBIS program focusing on improved attendance. (see Appendix D for supporting information from www.attendanceworks.org)

Appendices

#1 - Orange Note

#2 - Written Notification Letters

#3 - Attendance RTI Pyramid

**#4 - "Wake Up!" Edison/ Cohen Parent
Permission**

**#5 - Get to School/ Stay in School Project
Outline**



ORANGE NOTE

School: Edison H.S. Cohen Middle Cohen Elementary

Date: _____ Grade: _____

Student Name: _____

Absent

Reason: _____

Tardy (Time In): _____

Reason: _____

Early Departure (Time Out) : _____

Reason: _____

_____ *** Parent Signature ***

School start times:

Edison-	8:20 AM	733-5604
Cohen Middle-	8:20 AM	734-5078
Cohen Elementary	7:45 AM	734-7132

Daily Attendance Letter #1

(NOTE: All letters are printed on school letter head)

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:
[Student Name]
[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to notify you of the absences your child has had from school. To date, [student name] has missed the following [# of days] days of the current 2011-2012 academic year:

11/09, 12/07, 12/22, 01/04, 01/27, 02/29, 03/02, 03/28

Although it may not seem significant at this time, any absence from school regardless of the reason is detrimental to a student's educational success. Studies have shown that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. Please be sure to provide the school with appropriate ORANGE NOTE(s) corresponding to each documented absence. Also, don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about this correspondence.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]
[School name]

Daily Attendance Letter #2

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:
[Student Name]
[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is a follow up to my original letter dated 03/15/2012.

We continue to be concerned regarding [Student name] absences from school. [Student name] has missed the following 10 days of the current 2011-12 academic year:

09/13, 10/03, 10/04, 11/01, 11/15, 11/17, 12/01, 12/21, 03/12, 03/13

This amount of absences is becoming significant and can have detrimental effects on any child's academic success. Research shows high absenteeism can lead to significant academic struggles as well as higher dropout rates.

Please be sure to provide the school with appropriate "ORANGE NOTE(s)" corresponding to each documented absence. We again encourage you to address this issue with your student and to call us with any questions that you may have about this correspondence or for any supports or services that the school may offer you and your student.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]
[School name]

Daily Attendance Letter #3

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:

[Student Name]

[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We continue to have deep concerns regarding [Student name]'s significant absences from school. [Student name] has missed the following 17 days of the current 2011-12 academic year:

09/20, 10/12, 10/13, 10/14, 10/17, 10/18, 10/20, 12/22, 01/27, 02/06, 02/07, 02/14, 02/27, 02/28, 02/29, 03/01, 03/02

We have scheduled an appointment for you with our Edison team at the following date and time:

Date of Meeting:

Time of Meeting:

Place of Meeting: [School name] Conference Room

If this meeting time is not convenient for you please call to reschedule. Also, please be sure to provide "ORANGE NOTES" for all days absent for your student at the time of this meeting. We look forward to seeing you on the above mentioned date to discuss this issue in detail.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

[School name]

Daily Attendance Letter #4

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:

[Student Name]

[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We continue to have deep concerns regarding [Student name]'s significant absences from school. [Student name] has missed the following 37 days of the current 2011-12 academic year:

09/26, 10/03, 10/07, 11/01, 11/08, 11/09, 11/10, 11/15, 11/21, 11/28, 12/02, 12/08, 01/03, 01/05, 01/09, 01/11, 01/23, 01/24, 01/26, 02/08, 02/09, 02/10, 02/13, 02/14, 02/24, 02/27, 02/28, 02/29, 03/01, 03/02, 03/06, 03/07, 03/12, 03/26, 03/27, 03/28, 04/02

We again have scheduled an appointment for you with our Edison team at the following date and time to discuss this matter in detail.

Date of Meeting:

Time of Meeting:

Place of Meeting: [School name]Conference Room

Also, if this attendance issue is not resolved immediately for Holden we will have to notify the proper county agencies to help us address your child's educational needs. Finally, as outlined in previous correspondences regarding this issue, "ORANGE NOTE(s) are necessary for each absence that [Student name] has had. We look forward to seeing you on the above mentioned date to discuss this issue in detail.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

[School name]

Tardy Attendance Letter #1

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:

[Student Name]

[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to notify you that your child [Student name] has been tardy to school on the following 8 days:

11/18, 01/18, 01/23, 02/02, 02/06, 02/10, 02/15, 02/28

The school day at [School name] starts promptly at [School start time]. We encourage you to discuss this issue of tardiness with your [School name] student so that it may be addressed. Numerous studies show the link between consistent attendance and school success. Also, don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about his correspondence, and be sure to provide the school with necessary "ORANGE NOTE(s)" for school documentation.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

[School name]

Tardy Attendance Letter #2

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:

[Student Name]

[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is a follow up to my original letter dated 12/16/2011. We continue to be concerned regarding [Student name]'s tardiness to school. [Student name] has been late to school on the following 13 days during the current 2011-2012 academic year:

09/21, 09/30, 10/17, 10/18, 10/21, 10/26, 10/31, 11/04, 11/09, 11/10, 11/21,
11/22, 02/08

This excessive tardiness is becoming significant and can have detrimental effects on any child's academic success.

We again encourage you to address this issue with your student and to call us with any questions that you may have about this correspondence or for any supports or services that the school may offer to you and your student. Also, please be sure to provide the school with necessary "ORANGE NOTE(s)".

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

[School name]

Tardy Attendance Letter #3

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:

[Student Name]

[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We continue to have deep concerns regarding [Student name]'s significant tardiness to school at [School name]. [Student name] has been tardy on the following 14 days of the current 2011-2012 academic year:

09/23, 10/17, 10/20, 10/26, 11/01, 11/04, 11/21, 12/06, 12/13, 12/14, 12/16,
01/19, 02/09, 02/22

We have scheduled an appointment for you with our Edison team at the following date and time:

Date of Meeting:

Time of Meeting:

Place of Meeting: [School name] Conference Room

If this meeting time is not convenient for you please call to reschedule. We look forward to seeing you on the above mentioned date to discuss this issue in detail. Again, you are reminded to provide appropriate "ORANGE NOTE(s)" for each documented tardy date.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]

[School name]

Tardy Attendance Letter #4

May 7, 2012

To the Parent/Guardian of:
[Student Name]
[Student address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We continue to have deep concerns regarding [Student name]'s significant tardiness to school at [School name]. [Student name] has been tardy on the following 29 days of the current 2011-2012 academic year:

09/26, 09/28, 09/29, 09/30, 10/03, 10/17, 10/18, 10/20, 10/21, 10/24, 10/25,
10/28, 10/31, 11/01, 11/07, 11/08, 11/09, 11/14, 11/15, 11/16, 11/28, 12/08,
01/09, 01/24, 02/02, 02/14, 02/16, 03/02, 03/05

We again have scheduled an appointment for you with our [School name] team at the following date and time to discuss this matter in detail.

Date of Meeting:

Time of Meeting:

Place of Meeting: [School name] Conference Room

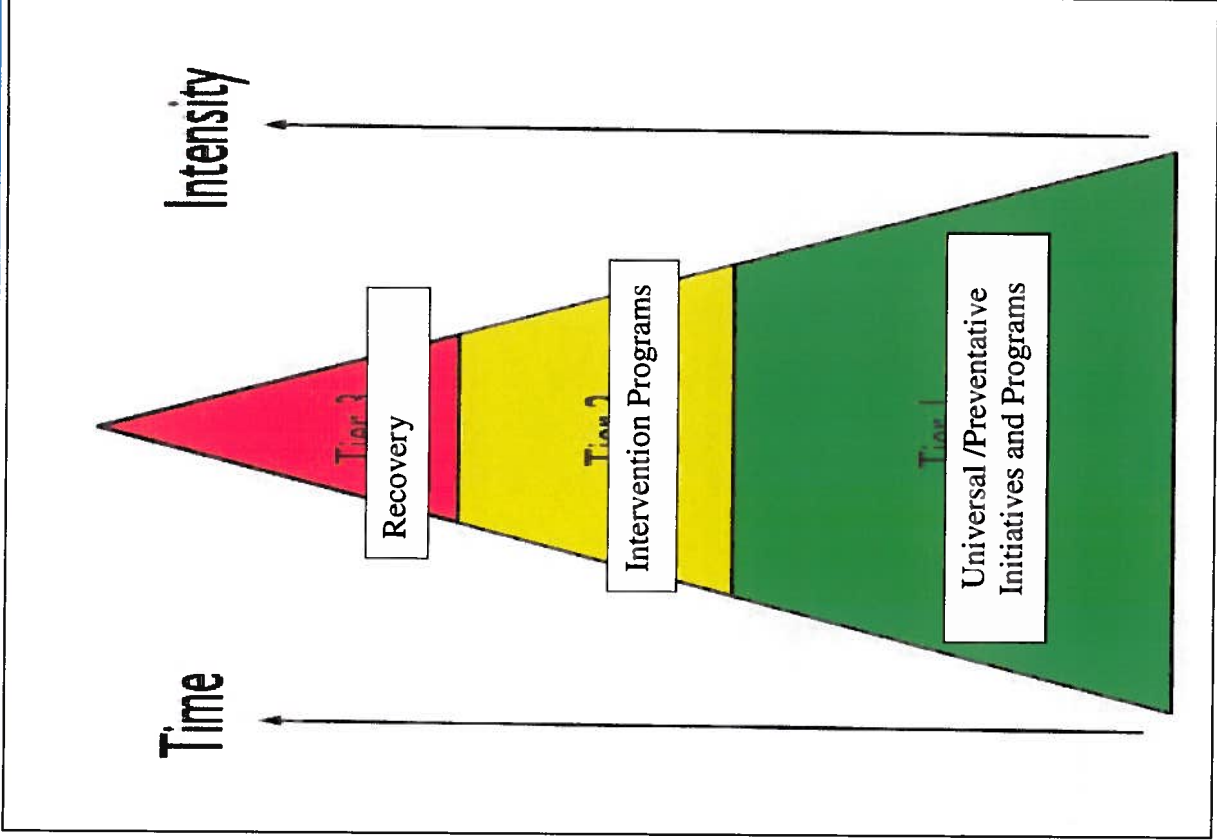
Also, if this tardiness issue is not resolved immediately for [%StudentFirstName%] we will have to notify the proper county agencies to help us address your child's educational needs. We look forward to seeing you on the above mentioned date to discuss this issue in detail. As noted in previous correspondences regarding this issue, please be sure to provide "ORANGE NOTE(s)" for each documented tardy date.

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]
[School name]

RTI Attendance Initiatives: Elmira Heights School District

<p>Tier III Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance visitor- "Attend School, Stay in School" • Possible referrals to CIS, CPS • Synervoice "WAKE UP! EDISON, COHEN" PC's • Home Visits • School Tool Attendance letters/parent meetings on regular basis to notify parents of attendance totals • PBIS programming / school wide attendance campaigns • Synervoice daily absent PC's at 10:00 am and in evening • Summer PC's at transition years 	<p>Tier II Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synervoice "WAKE UP! EDISON, COHEN" PC's • Home Visits • School Tool Attendance letters / parent meetings on regular basis to notify parents of attendance totals • PBIS programming / school wide attendance campaigns • Synervoice daily absent PC's at 10:00 am and in evening • Summer PC's at transition years 	<p>Tier I Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Tool Attendance letters sent on regular basis to notify parents of attendance totals • PBIS programming / school wide attendance campaigns • Synervoice daily absent PC's at 10:00 am and in evening • Summer PC's at transition years
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**Parent Permission for
“Wake UP! Edison” “Wake UP! Cohen”
A.M. Phone call**

As the parent of Edison student/ Cohen Student _____
(circle one)

I agree to enroll my student in the “Wake UP! Edison”/ “Wake UP! Cohen” program for approximately 5 weeks in efforts to improve my student’s consistent attendance at school. As part of this program our home will be registered to receive an early morning SYNERVOICE phone call (approximately 6:00 AM-6:30 AM) to help wake my child and have him/ her arrive to school on time.

Parent Signature: _____

Dates of Program Involvement: _____

Date of Agreement: _____

Appendix #5

Get to School! Stay in School! Grant Application/ Outline



Community Grant Program Data Intake Sheet

Date: 3/30/2012

Agency: Elmira Heights Central School District

Name/Title of Administrator: Mary Beth Fiore, Superintendent of Schools

Mailing Address: 2083 College Ave.

City/State/Zip Elmira Heights, NY 14903

Agency Phone: (607) 734-7114 Fax: (607) 734-7134

Email: mbfiore@gstbooces.org Website: www.heightsschools.com

Contact Person

Name/Title: Lori Andreine, School Psychologist

Email: landreine@gstbooces.org Phone: (607) 734-5078

Program Name: Get to School, Stay in School Project

Amount Requested (round up to the nearest \$50): \$9,800

Program Description (150 words or less. This section is required.)

The Elmira Heights Central School District is requesting \$9,800 from the Community Foundation to pilot the "Get to School, Stay in School" project, which will motivate all 1,013 students in the district to improve their school attendance. The project will use a three-tiered intervention model that will: create a school environment in which good attendance is expected and valued; educate parents about the importance of regular school attendance; and provide positive support to address the barriers that are preventing students from attending school. Grant funds will be used to support two part-time Attendance Outreach Workers who will provide one-on-one intervention for students who are chronically absent. The success of the project, as documented by student attendance data, will guide future applications for funding to support replication and expansion of the project.

1. A description of the activity or service and how it relates to the organization's mission.

The Elmira Heights Central School District is requesting \$9,800 from the Community Foundation to pilot the "Get to School, Stay in School" project. The project will use a three-tiered intervention model to motivate all 1,013 students in the district to improve their attendance and inform parents about the importance of regular attendance in school. Grant funds will be used to support two part-time Attendance Outreach Workers who will work with students and their families to identify barriers to regular school attendance and provide positive support to alleviate those barriers. The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will serve as a demonstration project, providing data that will show the impact of the program on student absentee rates. Data collected will be used in future applications for federal and state grant programs to support continuation and expansion of the project.

The mission of the Elmira Heights Central School District is to meet the needs of individual students in becoming contributing citizens by setting high expectations, promoting life-long learning and pursuing excellence in a safe and mutually respectful environment. School officials have become increasingly challenged in achieving this mission due to excessive student absenteeism. Year-to-date attendance figures (through the end of February) show that 163 students already have nine or more absences, and 55 of those students have 14 or more absences. Research has shown that chronic absenteeism is a chief indicator of academic failure and subsequent dropping out of school. Chronic absenteeism negatively impacts students at all grade levels as shown by the following:

- Nearly 20% of kindergarten students in Elmira Heights have nine or more absences in the current school year. Students who are chronically absent in the early grades fall behind academically and most will never catch up. A recent study showed that only 17% of students who were chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade were reading at a proficient level by the end of third grade, compared to 64% of students with satisfactory attendance.¹
- Over 15% of sixth grade students have nine or more absences, which at the sixth grade level is considered an early warning sign that a student will eventually drop out of school.
- In ninth grade, 19% of students have nine or more absences. Chronic absence during the first year of high school has been shown to be a more significant risk factor for students dropping out than poor academic performance.²

These facts are particularly troubling to Elmira Heights' school officials as the district failed to make adequate yearly progress for its graduation rate in the 2009-10 school year, graduating only 70% of the students from the 2005 student cohort.³ In addition, Cohen Middle School was recently identified as a School in Need of Improvement by the New York State Education Department for failure to make adequate yearly progress in English Language Arts.⁴

Schools typically focus on improving the academic performance of students through the implementation of new instructional strategies. However, improvements in instructional practices can only be effective if students are actually in class.⁵ The goal of the "Get to School, Stay in School" project is to improve

¹ Applied Survey Research (ASR). 2011. *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*. Watsonville and San Jose, CA.

² Chang, Hedy and Phyllis Jordan. *Accountable for Absenteeism: 4 Ways that States Can Use Chronic Absence in NCLB Waiver Applications*. A policy brief from Attendance Works, January 2012.

³ New York State District Report Card, Accountability and Overview Report, 2009-2010. Accessed at <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2009-10/AOR-2010-070902060000.pdf>.

⁴ School Accountability Status for the 2011-2012 School Year. Accessed at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/accountability/2011-12/November2011SchoolsNewlyIdentified.pdf>.

⁵ Chang, Hedy and Phyllis Jordan. *Accountable for Absenteeism: 4 Ways that States Can Use Chronic Absence in NCLB Waiver Applications*. A policy brief from Attendance Works, January 2012.

school attendance district-wide. This goal will be achieved through the implementation of a three-tiered intervention plan that will: 1) create a school climate in which good attendance is expected and valued; 2) offer positive support instead of punitive action to students at risk for chronic absenteeism; 3) educate parents about the importance of regular school attendance; and 4) provide one-on-one intervention for students identified as being chronically absent in order to address the issues that are preventing these students from attending school regularly. The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will implement the following activities in a three-tiered approach to support the goal of improved school attendance:

◆ **Tier 1** – First-tier activities will impact all students and will be focused on creating a school environment that expects and values good attendance. The first-tier intervention will involve school-wide initiatives in each of the district's three schools. These initiatives will be preventative in nature and will involve assemblies and classroom activities which will create a school climate that emphasizes the importance of regular attendance at school. Some examples of activities are poster-making contests based on the theme of good attendance, best attendance contests between classes, and recognition of good attendance in school newsletters, on school signs, and posted on school bulletin boards. First-tier activities will also include the distribution of parent information materials concerning the importance of regular school attendance. The parent information will be included in welcome packets and distributed at open houses and parent information nights.

◆ **Tier 2** – Second-tier activities will target students who are at-risk for becoming chronically absent or who experience a sudden decline in school attendance. Students will be identified for second-tier intervention once they reach nine absences, or have a sudden decline in their attendance. Second-tier activities include letters from the principal to the parents, letters of encouragement to the students, peer-to-peer messages letting absent students know they are missed and valued, and a "check-in" contact by the Attendance Outreach Worker to encourage the student to come to school and determine if there are any immediate needs that can be addressed. Parent workshops will be given to address common challenges to getting kids to school, such as strategies to get kids on proper sleep schedules. Parents will also learn how to reinforce the message at home that good school attendance is important.

◆ **Tier 3** – Third-tier activities will be focused on students who are determined to be chronically absent. Students will be identified for third-tier intervention when they have fourteen absences or a high absence rate early in the school year. Tier 3 students will be assigned to an Attendance Outreach Worker who will work with each student individually to provide the supports the student needs to get to school. Supports will include home visits, transportation, provision of necessities such as alarm clocks, personal care supplies, school supplies and clothing, and linkages to community services intended to eliminate the barriers that prevent these students from attending school. The Attendance Outreach Worker will serve as a liaison between students, families, teachers, the building Principal and the School Psychologist to ensure that intervention services are coordinated and not duplicated.

Each building Principal will collaborate with the School Psychologist to monitor student absentee rates and identify students who are in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention. The School Psychologist will work closely with the Attendance Outreach Workers to provide information about the students they will be interacting with and making suggestions as to effective strategies to use in dealing with the students. The School Psychologist will collect and analyze data, including absences, discipline referrals, and academic progress of the students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention, in order to assess the effectiveness of the "Get to School, Stay in School" project. Data collected as a result of the project will be used by the district in future grant applications (such as the New York State Education Department's School District Performance Improvement grant) to sustain, replicate and expand the project.

2. The process and timeframe for developing the project/program or purchasing the equipment.

The proposed "Get to School, Stay in School" project is a one-year demonstration project which will take place throughout the 2012-13 school year. The Attendance Outreach Workers will work 2 hours per day,

every school day, for 35 weeks. They will each have an active caseload of approximately 20-25 students. The following chart outlines the steps and corresponding timeline for implementing the program:

Project Activity	Time Frame
Two part-time Attendance Outreach Workers are hired.	Early September 2012
The Attendance Outreach Workers will receive training from the School Psychologist and building Principals. Workers will learn the program parameters, expected job duties, and how to effectively deal with students exhibiting poor attendance.	Mid to Late September 2012
Building Principals will provide the School Psychologist with attendance reports for the first month of school. The School Psychologist will identify students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention and assign them to an Attendance Outreach Worker.	October 2012
The Attendance Outreach Workers will have direct contact with each student assigned to them at least once a week. Workers may conduct home visits, have face-to-face contact with the student at school, or have phone/email/mail contact with the student and/or parents. The Attendance Outreach Workers will monitor the attendance of the students in their caseloads on a daily basis. Each morning the worker will ascertain which students in their caseloads are absent that day and will make contact with that student or make a home visit. The caseloads will be revolving as students who show improvement in their attendance may no longer need direct services while other students are identified as needing intervention. The workers will arrange any necessary supports that may be accessed through the school or outside agencies and will serve as a liaison between students, parents, teachers, and Principals as needed. The workers will report progress/challenges to the School Psychologist.	October 2012 - ongoing
Each Building Principal will identify one month that their building will focus their character education/Positive Behavior supports on the theme of good attendance. Each building will have activities such as assemblies, good attendance contests, poster contests, and recognition events for good attendance. Each building will also host a parent workshop focused on ways to support good school attendance at home.	TBD
The School Psychologist will work with GST BOCES Data Services to access, report and analyze attendance data for students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 services. A monthly report will be generated showing the impact of project activities.	October 2012 and monthly thereafter
The School Psychologist will collect and analyze student report card data and State assessment data for students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 services to measure the impact of the program on academic achievement.	June 2013
The School Psychologist will present her findings to the Board of Education, building and district administrators, teachers and parents.	June 2013

3. A list of the key staff, board members, consultants, and service providers involved in the project. Briefly describe their roles.

Name	Title	Role/Responsibility
Lori Andreine	School Psychologist	The School Psychologist will serve as the Project Director and will coordinate all project activities. The School Psychologist will: work with building Principals to identify the students most in need of intervention; consult with the Attendance Outreach Workers on student progress; collect, analyze and report student data; complete final reports; and disseminate information regarding the impact of the program.

Andy Lutz	Principal, Cohen Elementary School	Each building Principal will provide the School Psychologist with monthly attendance reports and will consult with the School Psychologist to determine which students are most in need of services from the Attendance Outreach Workers. The building Principals will also be responsible for implementing Tier 1 activities in their respective buildings, including scheduling of assemblies, contests, student recognitions for good attendance, and parent workshops.
Dawn Hanrahan	Principal, Cohen Middle School	
Joe Robinson	Principal, Edison High School	

4. Identify external support from the community. Include any in-kind support related to this application.

The district will contribute significant in-kind support to the "Get to School, Stay in School" project. The district will provide the School Psychologist's time to oversee the project and will provide a district vehicle for the Attendance Outreach Workers to use for home visits and transportation of students. The Parent Faculty Organization and local businesses will be approached by the building Principals for donations to supplement the grant funds and will be used to provide such items as alarm clocks, school supplies, personal care supplies, and clothing for students whose need for these items affects their school attendance.

5. If applicable, identify target audiences and special populations to be served.

The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will impact all students and parents in the Elmira Heights Central School District. Intervention services provided through the project will target those students most at risk for chronic absenteeism.

6. A description of how the project/program will be announced to the community.

The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will be announced by the Superintendent, Mary Beth Fiore, to the Board of Education, the Elmira Heights Parent Faculty Organizations, and community agencies such as the Elmira Heights Rotary. Articles will be included in the district newsletter and information will be available on the district's website. Information about the program will be distributed at school open houses and parent night events.

7. Evidence that the program/project or technology purchase will be evaluated and measurable outcomes will be set.

The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will be evaluated by the School Psychologist for its effectiveness in improving student attendance rates in the Elmira Heights Central School District. Both the overall attendance rates and the attendance rates of the students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention services will be tracked. The "Get to School, Stay in School" project will be used as a demonstration project to measure the effect of a three-tiered intervention model on student attendance. The results of the "Get to School, Stay in School" project will be shared with the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the building Principals, teachers, staff, parents and the community.

In addition, the School Psychologist will track student report card grades and State assessment scores for students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 services in order to evaluate the project's impact on academic achievement. The success of the project, as documented by student attendance data, student report card grades, and State assessment results, will serve as the basis to replicate and expand this project in the future.