



September 6, 2018

*Serving With Pride The*  
**Township of Manalapan**  
*and the*  
**Borough of Englishtown**

**John J. Marciante, Jr., Ph.D.**

*Superintendent of Schools*

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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a significant change in the district's attendance policy. This past year, as part of the NJ School Performance Report, chronic absenteeism was used as a measure to rate schools. Chronic absenteeism is defined as a child not being present for 10% of the school days in which the child is enrolled at the school during the school year. For example, if a child was enrolled for the entire school year this would mean being absent for 18 days, including both excused and unexcused absences.

While the vast majority of students have demonstrated good attendance, nine percent of the students in the districts were absent over 15 days. Three out of the nine student groups, in our district, did not meet state expectations on the NJ School Performance Report. Continuity of instruction is important for student achievement and chronic absenteeism can have a negative impact on a student's overall success in school.

To address this concern the following change in the *District Policy 5200- ATTENDANCE (M)* will be implemented for the 2018-2019 academic year:

- *A pupil must be in attendance for one hundred sixty-five or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course of which he/she is assigned.*
- *A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the school Principal upon recommendation of a review committee, appointed by him/her, and consisting of representative staff, including pupil service personnel and classroom teachers.*
- *In recommending the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the review committee shall consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess of the one hundred sixty-five days. Documentation of the nature and cause of these absences shall be the responsibility of the pupil and parent(s) or legal guardian(s).*
- *All decisions of the review committee will be submitted to the Superintendent for his/her final approval.*

It should also be noted that the district will be requiring a doctor's note for medically excused absences after the fifth absence.

If you have questions regarding this policy, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

John J. Marciante, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools