November 5, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

 I wanted to reach out to parents/guardians and explain the effects of chronic absenteeism. First, let me start off by defining what chronic absenteeism actually is. Chronic absenteeism is being absent from school more than 10% of the school days. Children attend 180 days each school year, so being chronically absent means a child has missed more than 18 days of school. Let me be clear, these days are missed for excused and unexcused reasons. This is not simply a truancy issue as truancy deals only with unexcused absences.

 The State of West Virginia publishes a scorecard for every school, rating the school in the areas of student academic achievement, behavior, and attendance. The attendance portion requires that the school have at least 90% of its students attending at least 90% of the time in order to meet the standard required. In a 180-day school year, 90% of the students must not miss more than 18 days of school. Last year, we only partially met the standard.

 Individual students who are chronically absent suffer the most. Missing 10% or more of the school year puts a student at risk for poor grades, falling behind, and eventually not graduating from high school. Though assignments can be made up, there is no substitute for the experience and knowledge gained in the classroom. Allowing your child to be absent from school more than what’s absolutely necessary is setting them up for failure in the near and long-term. Of course, there are situations when an absence is necessary. Children do get sick and, at times, things such as the weather require other absences. However, missing more than 18 days is excessive and should be avoided.

 I ask you to do what you can to help end chronic absenteeism. Schools are held accountable for this problem. More importantly, our children’s education is at risk. Let’s all work together to get kids to school regularly.

 Thank you,

 Timothy M. Via

 Attendance Director