**Employee Drug Screening Position Paper**

Earlier identification of drug use and resolution of drug problems affecting job performance in the Henderson County Schools will benefit our children and families, reduce legal costs and costs of hiring new employees. The high expectations set for students should be a reflection of the expectations demonstrated daily by Henderson County Schools’ employees.

Drug testing has become an important safety tool in the workplace by Human Resources and safety professionals. The purpose is to lessen the impact from drug abuse in the workplace, including tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, attitude problems, theft, decreased productivity, crime and violence. For Henderson County Schools our main priority is to provide for the safety of our children and to avoid the compromise of highly effective daily instruction.

The US Department of Labor estimates that drug use in the workplace costs employers $75 to $100 billion dollars annually in lost time, accidents, health care and workers compensation costs. Sixty-five percent of all accidents on the job are related to drug or alcohol, and substance abusers utilize 16 times as many health care benefits and are six times more likely to file workers’ compensation claims then non-abusers.

Employee drug screening is divided into four categories: pre-employment, random, accidental, and reasonable suspicion. All categories would play an essential role in policy development for the Henderson County Schools.

* Pre-employment screening is considered a best practice for any private business, public school, and government entity. It is performed for every new employee at the same time as their criminal background checks and screenings are completed.
* Random screening is recommended on at least 25% of the workforce in the organization throughout a fiscal year. Drug screening can reduce the costs of insurance and medical support needed by employees.
* Accidental drug screening occurs at the time of an on-the-job accident. Drug users are 6 times more likely to file a workers’ compensation insurance claim.
* Reasonable suspicion screening occurs when there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is using or has been under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Two types of cases for which reasonable suspicion procedures may be invoked are chronic cases and acute cases.
	+ *Chronic cases* are defined as *“*deteriorating in job performance or changes in personal traits or characteristics where use of alcohol or drugs may be reasonably suspected.” These cases develop over a period of time.
	+ *Acute cases* are defined as “appearing in a specific incident or observation to then be under the present influence of alcohol and/or drugs or an investigation of an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected to be a contributing cause.” Regardless of the employee’s previous history, immediate action is necessary.

**Why would Henderson County Schools move forward to implement employee drug screening?** Policy goals and objectives would include:

1. To establish, promote, and maintain a safe, healthy working and learning environment for employees and students
2. To aid the affected employee in locating a rehabilitation program for employees with a self-admitted or detected substance abuse problem
3. To promote the reputation of the District and its employees as responsible citizens of public trust and employment
4. To eliminate substance abuse problems in the workforce
5. To aid in the reduction of absenteeism, tardiness, and apathetic job performance
6. To provide a clear standard of job performance for District employees
7. To provide a consistent model of substance-free behavior for students