

Superintendent Procedure 5203SP Employee Assistance Program

Approved by: s/S. Enfield Date: 10/19/11

Dr. Susan Enfield, Interim Superintendent



The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service to help employees and their family members with personal concerns that may affect work performance. These services are offered at no cost to employees.

1. EAP Services

- a. Seattle Public Schools' EAP assists employees and their family members in resolving personal or job-related problems affecting job performance and/or personal well-being. The confidential program is designed to deal with a broad range of problems such as mental or emotional illness, family or marital difficulties, alcoholism or other substance abuse, financial stress, legal problems, workplace conflict or other concerns. The program provides problem assessment, education, short-term intervention, and referral to appropriate resources.
- b. EAP provides consultation and support to building and central leadership:
 - i. When an employee's personal difficulties appear to be affecting job performance;
 - ii. When there is a conflict to be mediated;
 - iii. When group dynamics are interfering with departmental or building performance;
 - iv. When a critical incident occurs such as a death in the school community, a staff member with a life-threatening illness, a staff member threatening suicide, or with a psychiatric illness;
 - v. EAP provides consultation, training, information, and workshops organizationally regarding issues such as managing layoffs, managing change, diffusing anger, addictions, grief, and loss.
- c. EAP provides on-site mediation to assist employees in resolving workplace based conflict as follows:
 - i. Mediation between two employees is always voluntary on the part of both employees – and can be initiated by the employees, the supervisor, manager, or principal;
 - ii. Conflict within a work group can be mediated and can be initiated directly by employees or by the supervisor/manager.

2. Confidentiality

- a. Seattle Public Schools' EAP respects the privacy of all individuals who contact EAP and recognizes that confidentiality is a key element of a successful program. Employees are assured that when they seek assistance, personal information about them will be treated in a professional and confidential manner. No information is shared about an

individual who has contact with EAP without their express consent EXCEPT under the following circumstances:

- i. If required by law, such as government statute or regulation, subpoena, or court order;
- ii. If there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse of a child, dependent adult, or developmentally disabled person;
- iii. If there is reasonable cause to suspect sexual misconduct involving a student; or
- iv. If there is a threat of suicide or homicide.

3. Referral procedures

a. Self-referral

- i. An employee may recognize that a personal problem is causing progressive distress in his/her life long before it affects job performance and comes to the attention of the supervisor. Early recognition and treatment of such problems are major goals of a successful EAP. It is the EAP Counselor's role to assess the problem with the employee and to suggest options for treatment and/or resolution of the problem.
- ii. The employee or family member contacts the EAP to arrange a confidential appointment with an EAP counselor. Appointments will be scheduled as soon as possible, usually within three business days, and whenever possible, outside the regular working hours of the employee.
- iii. Employees will only access EAP services during their work day with approval of their supervisor.

b. Supervisory referral

- i. The Employee Assistance Program is a valuable tool for the supervisor in dealing with employees experiencing job performance problems. A supervisory referral can be made when a work performance or work site problem exists. The supervisor is expected to discuss performance problems or work place behavior with the employee. It is not the supervisor's job to attempt to diagnose personal problems that the employee may be having. However, a reminder of the availability of the EAP and encouragement to take advantage of the services may be appropriate.
- ii. It is recommended that the supervisor consult with EAP prior to making the supervisory referral.
- iii. A supervisory referral is a strong recommendation that the employee utilize all available means to correct his/her performance, however, the final decision to use the services of EAP remains with the employee.
- iv. Appropriate performance improvement plans or disciplinary action will proceed whether or not the employee makes contact with EAP.
- v. The employee may authorize release of information so that the supervisor is informed that the employee followed through on the referral to EAP and the recommendations of the EAP counselor. No information regarding EAP contact is released without specific authorization of the employee.

- vi. The employee contacts the EAP to arrange a confidential appointment with an EAP counselor. Appointments will be scheduled as soon as possible, usually within three business days and, whenever possible, outside the regular working hours of the employee.
- vii. Employees will only access EAP services during their work day with approval of their supervisor.

4. Responsibilities

- a. Employee's responsibility: It is the employee's responsibility to recognize that personal problems may be the cause of performance problems at work. The employee has the choice of making a self-referral or accepting a supervisory referral to EAP. If the referral is made or accepted, it is the individual's responsibility to make appointments and to pursue the counselor's recommended course of treatment. Employees must understand, however, that if job performance is not improved, normal disciplinary or performance improvement procedures will be followed.
- b. Supervisor's responsibility: It is the supervisor's responsibility to recognize that an individual's work performance can be affected by personal problems and to effectively use the EAP when performance problems are not corrected through normal supervisory attention. Supervisors should make sure employees are aware of the services provided by the EAP. Supervisors are not expected to diagnose or treat the personal problems of their employees. If performance problems are corrected, no further action is taken. If problems arise, normal disciplinary procedures will be followed.

5. Records and Data Management

- a. All records are owned by Seattle Public Schools' EAP and shall be maintained in a highly secure and confidential manner at all times.
- b. Client records shall be destroyed after eight years in accordance with Washington State Archives Common Records Retention Schedule guidelines.
- c. Non-identifying, statistical data shall be collected, analyzed, and reported on regularly to demonstrate program effectiveness, identify workplace trends, and inform program development.

Approved: October 2011

Revised:

Cross Reference: Policy No. 5203