



# Administrative Council Presentation by Human Resources



# Presentation Agenda

- 2023-2024 Changes in Human Resources
- Attendance Policies
- Progressive Discipline
- Looking Forward – HR Projects in the Works



Office of Human Resources

# 2023-2024 Changes



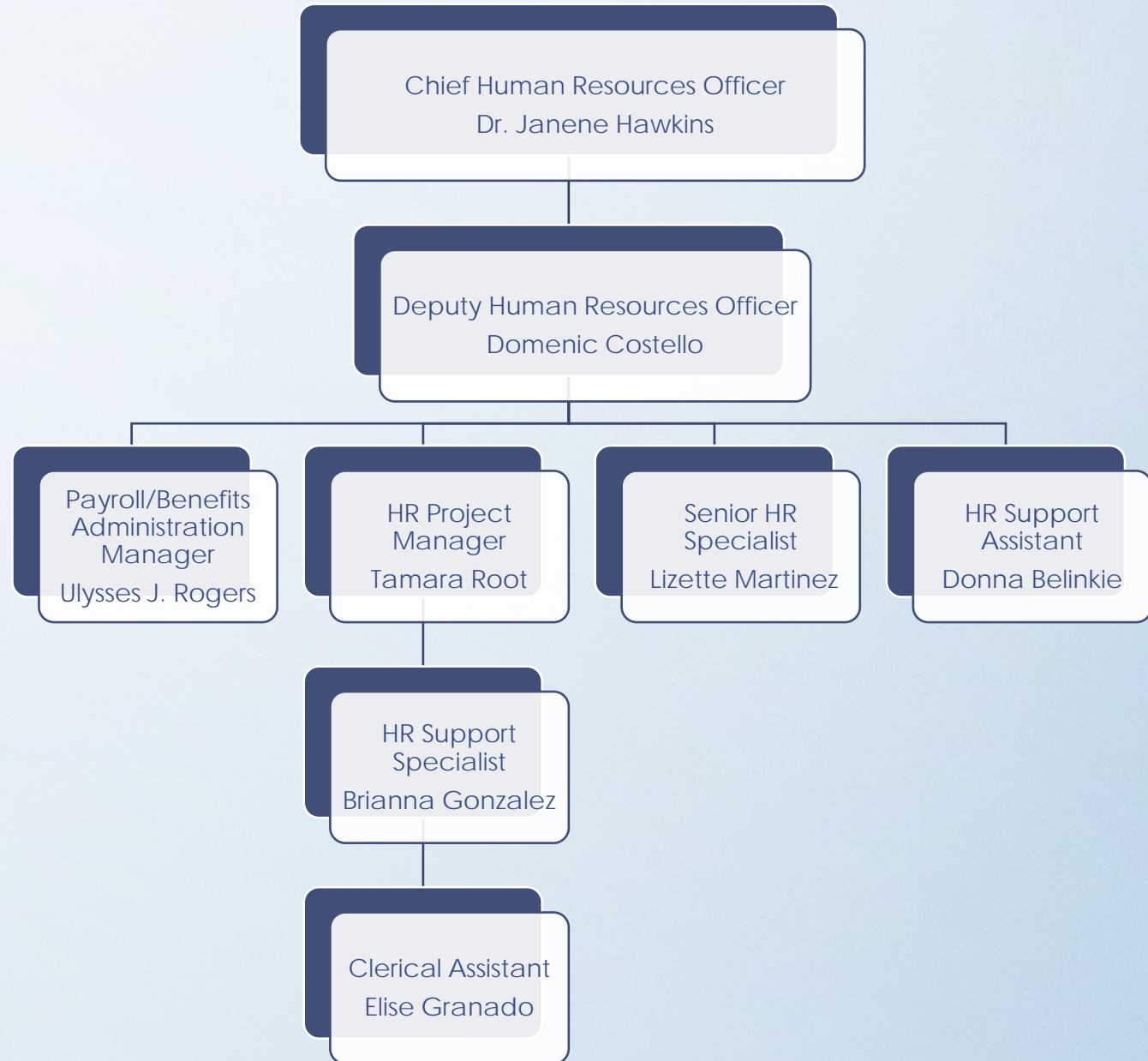




Human Resources is relocated to **Room 324** in City Hall.

# 2023-2024 Human Resources Staffing Update

*Payroll/Benefits Administration will  
be discussed at a future  
meeting.*







Bridgeport Public Schools

# Attendance Policies



# Teacher Attendance Policy

Time Frame Associated with Policy:

Any ten (10) month school calendar period.



# Attendance Policy for All Other Employees

Time frame associated with policy:

Rolling twelve (12) month period



# What constitutes an absence?

An absence is any unscheduled absence from work during scheduled working hours (including failing to report for scheduled or unscheduled overtime) or failure to remain at work as scheduled.

# Question 1:

If an employee goes home sick for the last hour of their shift is that an absence?

Answer: YES!



## Question 2:

If a staff member gets the flu and is out of work for five (5) consecutive days, how many absences is that?

Answer: One (1)

An unscheduled consecutive absence in excess of one day, shall be considered as only one absence against the employee regardless of its length.

# When is a Doctor's Note Needed?

## **Teachers**

Any absence for five (5) school days, or for three (3) days or more in a holiday or vacation week, may need to be validated by a doctor's certificate.

## **Administrators**

For an illness of five (5) consecutive days or more, or when there is a pattern of sick leave use which gives rise to a suspicion of misuse, an Administrator may be asked to furnish a certificate from a medical provider stating the nature of the illness and the need for absence from work.

## **NAGE**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the appointing authority, may be required for any absence consisting of three (3) or more consecutive working days.

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# Doctor's Note continued

## **LIUNA**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the department supervisor, may be required on the fourth day for any absence consisting of four (4) or more consecutive working days.

## **AFSCME 1522**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the appointing authority will be required for any absence of three (3) or more consecutive working days.

## **CALU**

A medical certificate acceptable to the appointing authority is required:

- i) For frequent or habitual absence from duty or when, in the opinion of the appointing authority, there is reasonable cause for requiring such a certificate
- ii) For a period of absence consisting of more than five (5) working days.

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# Doctor's Note continued

## **BCSA**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the appointing authority, may be required for any absence consisting of four (4) or more consecutive working days.

## **Building Trades**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the appointing authority, may be required for any absence consisting of four (4) or more consecutive working days.

## **Crossing Guards**

A medical certificate, acceptable to the appointing authority, may be required for any absence consisting of four (4) or more consecutive working days.



# When is Progressive Discipline Required?

When the following attendance issues occur, you must follow the progressive discipline laid out in the respective policies.

- 6-Absences in 10 or 12-month period warrants a corrective counseling.
- 7-Absences in 10 or 12-month period warrants a verbal warning.
- 8-Absences in 10 or 12-month period warrants a written warning.

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# At What Point Should the Matter be Referred to Human Resources or Labor Relations?

- AFTER 8-ABSENCES FOR NON-TEACHERS DISCIPLINE MUST COME FROM HUMAN RESOURCES OR LABOR RELATIONS.
- 9-Absences in 12-month period warrants a 5-Day Unpaid Suspension for non-teachers.
- 9-Absences in 10-month period warrants a written reprimand for teachers and Human Resources must be consulted prior to written reprimand.
- 10-Absences in 10-month period work with Human Resources to determine more stringent discipline.
- 10-Absences in 12-month period for non teachers is termination. That is done through Labor Relations and/or Human Resources.



# How to Administer Discipline

- When the employee returns to work after a 6th absence, send the employee an email with return receipt requested.
- Include Union Presidents in the email.
- The email should say the following:

“A mandatory meeting has been scheduled for [DATE] and [TIME] to discuss your attendance. You are encouraged to bring union representation”

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# What Should Occur During the Meeting?

- Remain non-confrontational.
- The reason we are having this meeting is because in a 10/12 month time period you have had 6-absences. Per policy, this is a level that calls for corrective counseling.
- Please be advised that if you need EAP services or to request FMLA, those services are available to you.
- Inform them that you will be sending an email just to confirm that they were given corrective counseling.



# Implementation Best Practice

The attendance policy needs to be applied fairly and uniformly to ALL employees.



Bridgeport Public Schools

# Progressive Discipline





# What We Will Be Covering:

- The progressive disciplinary process.
- The principles of disciplinary action.
- When to take disciplinary action.
- Documenting disciplinary action.
- The five W's of documentation.
- Examples for Consideration of Immediate Termination – HR/Labor Referral.
- Pre-Discipline Checklist.
- Checklist for Progressive Discipline.
- Sample documentation.
- Summary.

# The Progressive Disciplinary Process

Progressive discipline is a method of discipline that uses graduated steps for dealing with problems related to an employee's conduct or performance that do not meet clearly defined standards and policies.

The ultimate objective of progressive discipline is to help employees correct conduct problems and resolve performance issues in the earliest stages.



# The Principles of Disciplinary Action

- Make sure discipline is the appropriate tool. Consider coaching or performance appraisal as a first step whenever possible.
- Be honest, frank, fair and precise regarding your reasons for dissatisfaction and your future expectations for the employee.
- Maintain a professional manner by keeping the disciplinary process confidential between you and the employee and, when necessary, with HR.
- Keep your criticism free of nonwork-related matters and personal judgement.

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# Principles of Disciplinary Action continued

- Provide specific examples of performance discrepancies or work rule violations so the employee fully understands what needs improvement.
- Allow the employee ample opportunity to respond.
- Help the employee improve performance by providing specific recommendations and requirements.
- Communicate clearly so the employee understands the consequences if performance or conduct does not improve.

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# Principles of Disciplinary Action continued

If employees believe they are being treated fairly, they are much more likely to accept the consequences of their actions. Consistent and fair discipline will also help to prevent successful claims of discrimination or other unlawful conduct.

- Thoroughly investigate the circumstances.
- Allow the employee an opportunity to respond to the allegation(s).
- Ensure the "punishment fits the crime" and consequences are applied consistently.
- Allow for an appeal process to a manager above the rank of the supervisor issuing the discipline and who was not involved in the initial decision.

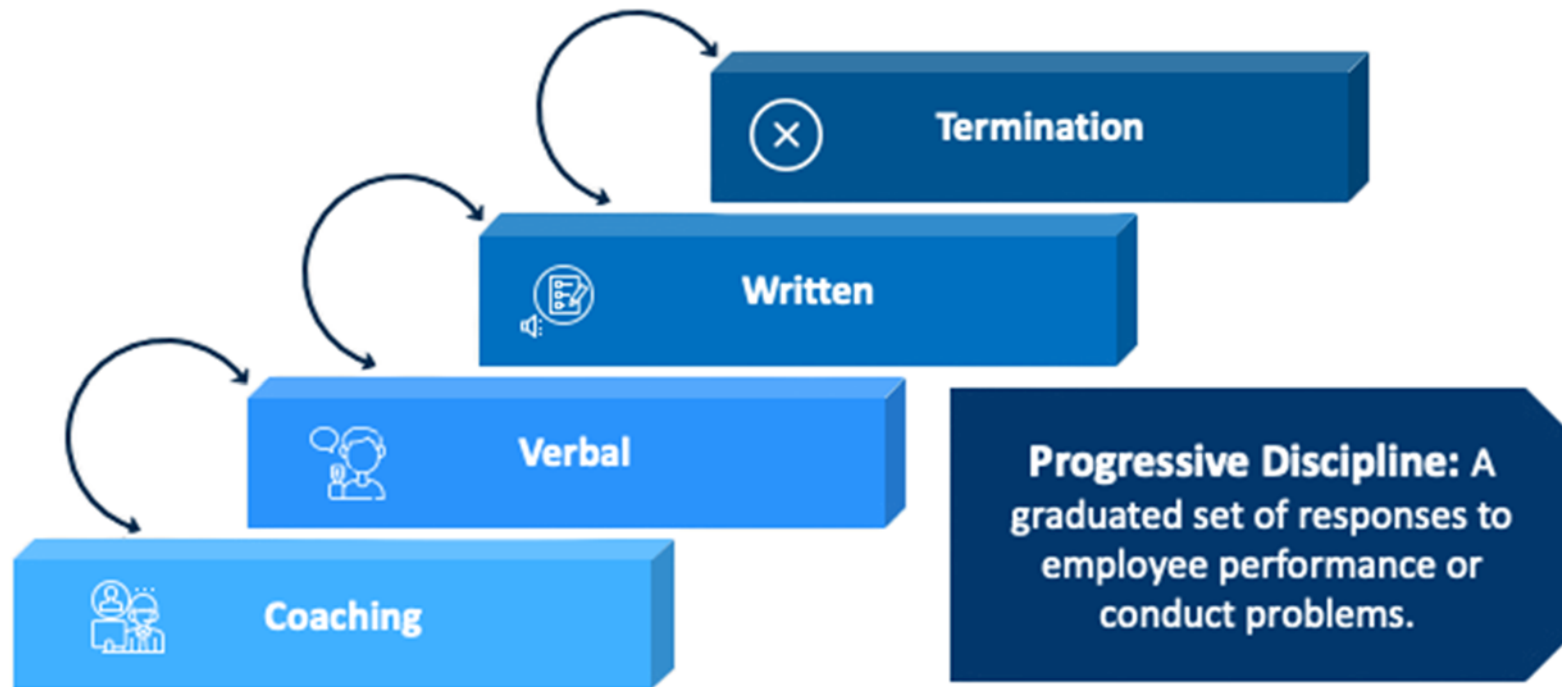
# When to Take Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action should be taken when:

- The employee has recurring issues such as absenteeism or tardiness.
- The employee has continuing problems following management instructions or company policies despite additional training, coaching or counseling.
- The employee engages in serious misconduct such as drug or alcohol abuse or workplace safety violations.



# What are the Steps of Progressive Discipline?



# The 4-Steps of Progressive Discipline

1. Verbal warning.
2. Written reprimand.
3. Final warning or performance improvement plan  
(may include suspension).
4. Termination.



# Documenting Disciplinary Actions

The following elements should be included in the documentation:

- The name of the person who is writing the warning, the date, the name of the person receiving the warning and anyone else who gets a copy of it (e.g., HR, Labor Relations), and where it is located (e.g., the personnel file).
- A description of the performance issue or conduct that warranted the warning, with specific examples.
- A summary of prior discussions regarding the issue, with specific dates if available.
- A summary of prior related disciplinary or performance issues.
- An explanation of why the issue is important.

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# Documenting Disciplinary Actions continued

- A description of the policies that were violated.
- An outline of the employer's expectations.
- A description of potential consequences for failing to meet those expectations (e.g., a statement that "sustained performance improvement is critical and a failure to improve may result in further action, up to and including termination of employment").
- A place for signatures acknowledging that the employee received the warning.
- A notation that the warning will be included in the employee's personnel file.



# The Five W's of Documentation

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why (only include when the employee gives his or her own explanation)

# Who?

- Who was or is involved?
  - What is the person's position within the Board of Education?
- Who has first-hand knowledge?
  - Are there known or potential witnesses?



# What?

- Describe the incident or recurring issue.
- Describe the specific behavior or actions.
- Use verbs.
- Do not add your comments, insights or interpretations

# Where?

- Describe the location of the incident.
  - Was it at a school, office or on school property?
  - Was it off-site?



# When?

- Did the incident occur during:
  - Regular work hours?
  - Off-duty time?

# Why?

- Do not guess or speculate.
- Investigate and gather information.
- Include knowledge or information to support your findings/conclusions.
- Allow employees to present their version of events/infraction.



# Pre-Discipline Checklist

Use the following checklist as a guide prior to taking disciplinary action against an employee.

- ☐ Have you clearly communicated performance goals or behavioral standards to the employee?
- ☐ Have you talked to the employee to see if there is a performance deficiency that requires additional training?
- ☐ Is the employee aware of the policy or rule or regulation?
- ☐ Is the discipline based on a legitimate complaint/concern?
- ☐ Can you give specific examples of how the employee has failed to meet performance or behavior standards?

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# Pre-Discipline Checklist continued

- ☐ Are you clearly documenting every incident in writing?
- ☐ Have you given an opportunity for questions and problem solving?
- ☐ Are you prepared to meet with the employee in a calm, friendly manner?
- ☐ Have you arranged to meet with the employee and Union representatives (if Unionized employee)?
- ☐ Are you thoroughly prepared to discuss the problem with the employee and arrive at a solution?

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# Pre-Discipline Checklist continued

- ☐ Have your actions been consistent with BOE policies?
- ☐ Is there a workplace violence issue?
- ☐ Is there a need to consult with Human Resources, legal counsel or law enforcement?

# Checklist for Progressive Discipline

## Preparation

- ☐ Record Employee Details.
- ☐ Do you have the relevant Policies & Procedures?
- ☐ Job Description.
- ☐ Applicable union contract ([Collective Bargaining Agreement HR Website](#)).
- ☐ Identify the type of problem.
- ☐ Gather employee records and any other relevant information.
- ☐ Did you complete your Pre-Discipline Checklist.



# Checklist for Progressive Discipline continued

## Coach & Counseling

- ☐ Schedule a meeting.
- ☐ Clearly articulate expectations.
- ☐ Set specific measurable goals, actions and timeline.
- ☐ Get the employee's buy in and commitment.
- ☐ Schedule a follow up meeting.

# Checklist for Progressive Discipline continued

## Verbal Warning

- ☐ Schedule a Meeting.
- ☐ Clearly describe the performance deficiency.
- ☐ Clearly describe the behavioral deficiency.
- ☐ Reiterate requirements and expectation.
- ☐ Review the consequences of future occurrences.
- ☐ Schedule a date to follow up.
- ☐ Document the discussion.
- ☐ Send documentation to the employee.
- ☐ Evaluate if a written warning is necessary.



# Checklist for Progressive Discipline continued

## Written Warning

- ☐ Schedule a Meeting.
- ☐ State what the issue is.
- ☐ Clarify expectations moving forward.
- ☐ State possible consequences of inaction.
- ☐ Provide a clear timeline for meeting expectations.
- ☐ Consolidate the information into a formal document.
- ☐ Send a copy to HR for approval.
- ☐ Obtain approval from HR.
- ☐ Present the document to the employee.
- ☐ Sign and date the document.
- ☐ Determine if further disciplinary action is necessary.

# Checklist for Progressive Discipline continued

## Suspension & Termination

- ☐ Consult the HR/Labor department
- ☐ Ensure you have all proper documentation to submit to the HR department



# Examples for Consideration of Immediate Termination – HR/Labor Referral

- Refusal or failure to follow directions from management or insubordination.
- Breach of confidentiality relating to employer, employee, customer or vendor information.
- Altering, damaging or destroying school property, its records, or another employee's property.
- Dishonesty or theft.

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# Examples for Consideration of Immediate Termination continued

- Falsification of records, including employment application, benefits forms, timekeeping, expense reimbursement forms and similar records.
- Providing false or misleading information to any BOE representative.
- Fighting or engaging in disorderly conduct during working hours.
- Threatening violence in the workplace.
- Violations of any of the Board's employment policies including, but not limited to, confidentiality, security, solicitation, insider trading, conflict of interest and code of conduct.

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# Examples for Consideration of Immediate Termination continued

- Conduct or performance issues of a serious nature.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment or touching.
- Possession, manufacture, sale, transfer, distribution or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Failure a drug or alcohol test.

Bridgeport Public Schools  
Human Resources  
Violation of Work Rules & Regulations  
Form



# Bridgeport Public Schools

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

**CARMELA M. LEVY-DAVID, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools



**Dr. Janene Hawkins**  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
**Domenic Costello**  
Deputy Human Resources Officer

Date:  
To:  
From:  
Cc:  
Subject: **Violations of Work Rules & Regulations**

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**Check one.**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Corrective Counseling</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Verbal Warning</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Written Warning</i>              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Suspension</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Termination</i>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Written Reprimand (BEA only)</i> |

**Type of Offense (check all that apply):**

- ☐ Unauthorized possession of or, willful destruction of BOE/School property or personal property of another employee.
- ☐ Falsifying a timecard or having your timecard filled or punched out by another employee.
- ☐ Possession of, or under the influence of narcotics, illegal drugs or alcohol on BOE/School property without specific work-related authorization.
- ☐ Possession of firearms or lethal weapons on BOE/School premises without the proper authorization and permit.
- ☐ Physical violence, fighting or promoting a fight on BOE/School property.
- ☐ Unauthorized selling, soliciting, or collecting contributions for any purposes during working time in a work area.
- ☐ Leaving work area or premises during working hours without authorization.
- ☐ Disregard of safety rules and unsafe work habits.
- ☐ Behavior that disrupts the work environment to include indecent, inappropriate, or immoral conduct.
- ☐ Insubordination – Refusal to obey a lawful assignment or instruction.
- ☐ Wasting time, energy or supplies during course of shift.
- ☐ Inability to properly perform job functions as outlined on job description.
- ☐ Sleeping on duty.
- ☐ Foul or abusive language directed at co-workers, students or visitors.
- ☐ Neglect or mishandling of equipment or supplies.
- ☐ Violation of policies on absenteeism, tardiness and attendance.

- ☐ Dishonesty, including falsification of employment application forms, or other records and omission of pertinent information, or giving false testimony.
- ☐ Theft.
- ☐ Failure to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- ☐ Malicious gossip that is disruptive to the efficient operation of the BOE/School or harmful to a fellow employee.
- ☐ Violation of City's Sexual-Harassment Policy.

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**Details:**

*Description of Infraction(s):*

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*Plan for Improvement:*

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*Consequences of Further Infractions:*

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**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you understand the information in this warning. You also acknowledge that you and your supervisor have discussed the warning and a plan for improvement. Signing this form does not necessarily indicate that you agree with this warning.

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Employee's Signature

Date

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Supervisor's Signature

Date



# Summary

Follow the principles of discipline including being honest, frank, fair and precise regarding your reasons for dissatisfaction, your future expectations for the employee, and providing the employee with an opportunity to respond.

It is important to consider how and when to discipline. Use the five W's of documentation (who, what, where, when and why) to document disciplinary actions.

For additional information on our progressive disciplinary process and documentation, contact us.

# How to Contact Human Resources

Dr. Janene W. Hawkins

Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)

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Domenic Costello

Deputy Human Resources Officer

[dcostello@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:dcostello@bridgeportedu.net)

203-275-1042



# Questions & Answers



Bridgeport Public Schools

# Looking Forward





# Future HR Projects in the Works

- Trainings
  - Title IX
  - Investigations
  - New Job Posting & Onboarding Software
- Non-Renewals
- Staffing Guidelines
- Benefits & Payroll Administration
- Updated Handbooks
- Updated Website
- New Employee Orientation



Bridgeport Public Schools

Thank you for your time!

