



NEOED

5 Significant

POLICY CHANGES

EDUCATION HR LEADERS
ARE MAKING IN 2021

“We’ve made five years of policy changes in five months!”



We have heard it many times and phrased many ways, but it remains to be true - 2020 was a year for the books. With the upheaval and uncertainty that came with the COVID-19 pandemic and the renewed focus on the steps that need to be taken to ensure equality, policies had to be created and updated on the fly throughout the year.

When we surveyed hundreds of HR leaders about how 2020 events have informed their initiatives, one survey respondent declared that they “made five years of policy changes in five months!” Owing to new learnings and the long-term effects of the past year, many of these new policies are here to stay.

Here are five of the most significant updates and additions that HR leaders agree will inform institution policies and employee handbooks in 2021 and beyond.

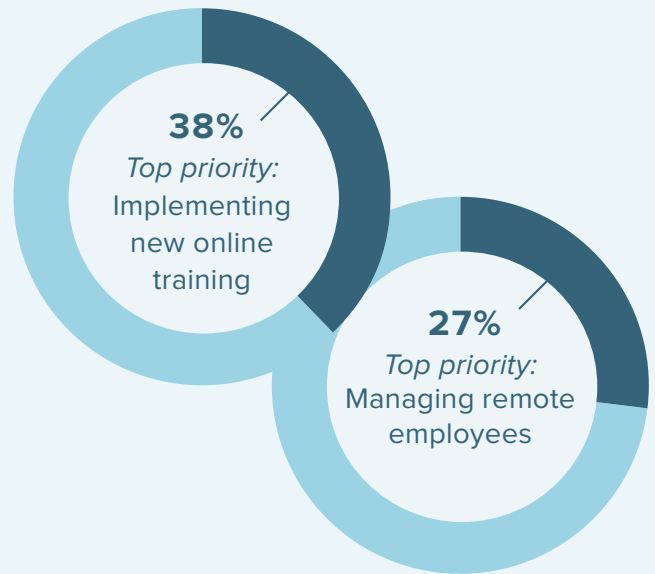
1

ATTITUDE TOWARDS REMOTE & FLEXIBLE WORKERS

The sudden move from in-office to remote working that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated in 2020 will inform many organizations' policies going forward. Without structures and procedures in place for remote working, the transition was initially frenzied and stressful for many. However, for some educational institutions, the necessity of teleworking has led to the realization that employees can be productive without the discomfort of commuting.

In fact, when we surveyed HR leaders about their primary initiatives around employee development and administration in 2021, the leading responses all related to implementing technologies to allow for more flexible working practices. **38% of respondents reported that implementing new online training technology was their top priority** for employee development, with **managing remote employees following closely behind at 27%**. One survey respondent stated, “[due to the pandemic] our technology needs were pushed to the forefront by approximately 3 to 5 years.”

PRIMARY HR INITIATIVES AROUND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN 2021



2

WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY AND ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

2020 events amplified the awareness of unconscious bias and inequality in the workplace. 43% of survey respondents said Diversity and Inclusion was their top recruiting priority for 2021. As a result, HR leaders are updating their company policies to drive diversity and inclusivity throughout the organization to ensure all employees are treated equally.

Many educational institutions are taking the necessary steps to reduce bias and drive organization-wide initiatives and policies to eliminate bias. For example, some organizations are considering requiring personally identifiable information (PII) to be blinded during the recruiting process while others are looking at adding more comprehensive sensitivity training as a requirement for employees across the organization.

“We have a new consciousness and lens for systemic racism, equity and inclusion. This initiative has been significantly magnified.”

– HR Survey Respondent



3

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND BEHAVIOR POLICIES

As many teams become more flexible around their remote working policies, many organizations will plan engagement events to keep their teams connected while physically apart. As a result, employee handbooks will be updated to include acceptable behaviors for activities such as virtual trivia nights, happy hours, or other social events where alcohol use or appropriate attire may come into question.

4

DIGITAL-ONLY HR FORMS

According to Gartner, 85% of business processes rely on forms. As educational institutions modernize their processes to keep up with the need for remote work, they are also expanding the use of digital forms and electronic form submission. One survey respondent said 2021 will see their organization “provide electronic processes to replace past paper or manual processes” while another commented that “we are increasing access to tools to support more self-sufficiency on HR related information.”

By switching to paperless form collection and e-signatures through secure, compliant systems, organizations are eliminating manual data entry, improving data accuracy, and reducing the time it takes to route forms for approvals. Simultaneously, the use of electronic forms means fewer in-person interactions are needed, thereby reducing the spread of germs, which will be a continued concern in 2021.

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rely on forms*

- Gartner

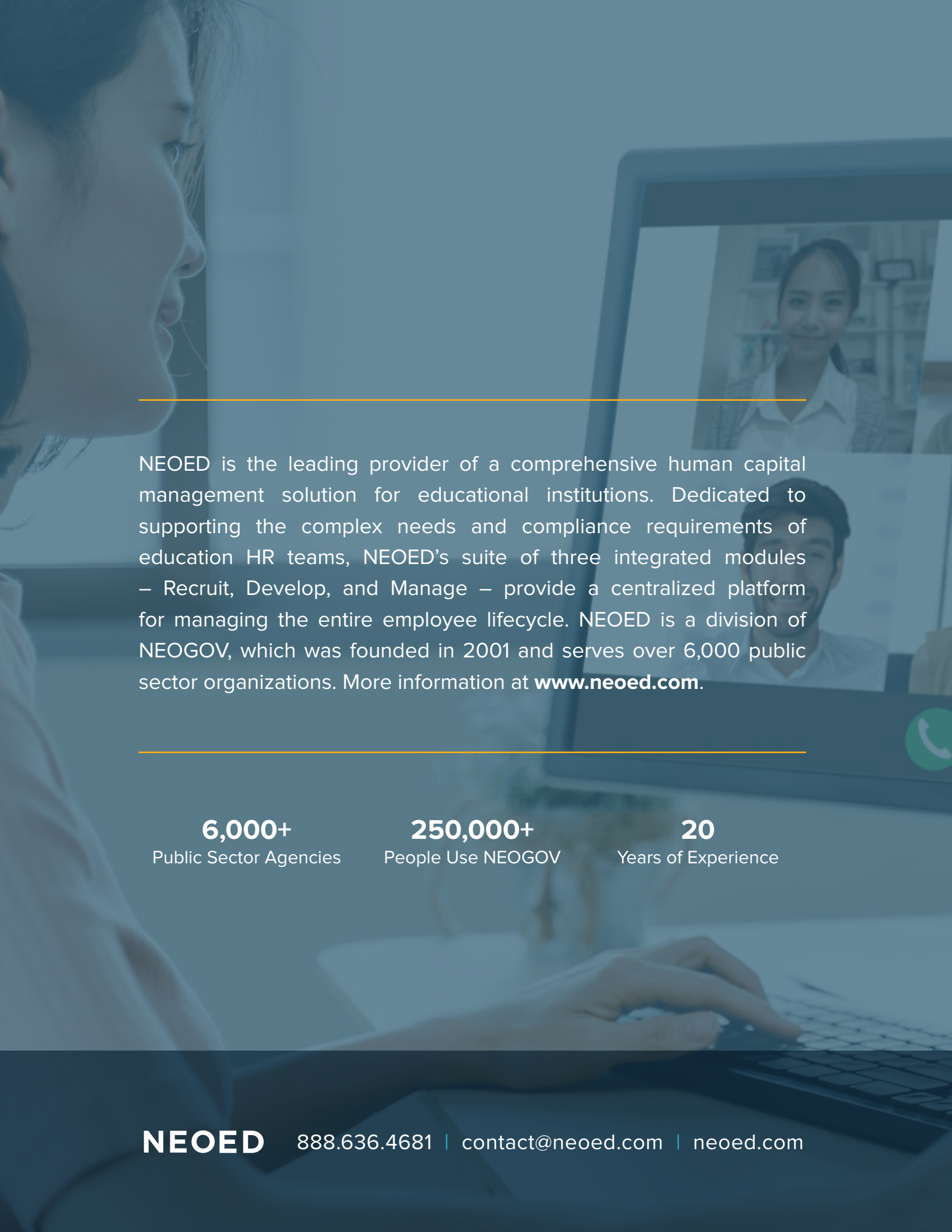
5

INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AROUND PAID SICK LEAVE

As organizations try to minimize spread of the disease by taking stock of their office layouts, cleaning supplies, and policies around wearing masks and social distancing, they are also taking a look at their paid sick leave policies. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic's spread in the United States, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) advised employers to "ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance" because of a concern that employees might show up for work to avoid missing out on pay.

In fact, there is a phenomenon known as "contagious presenteeism" with evidence to support that employees who do not have paid sick leave often report to work despite being sick (The Washington Post). To avoid this, organizations are working diligently to put policies in place that are more flexible around sick leave and paid time off.





NEOED is the leading provider of a comprehensive human capital management solution for educational institutions. Dedicated to supporting the complex needs and compliance requirements of education HR teams, NEOED's suite of three integrated modules – Recruit, Develop, and Manage – provide a centralized platform for managing the entire employee lifecycle. NEOED is a division of NEOGOV, which was founded in 2001 and serves over 6,000 public sector organizations. More information at www.neosed.com.

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