

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to mandatory school attendance; amending
 3 ss. 1002.20, 1003.21, and 1003.51, F.S.; changing the age
 4 for mandatory school attendance from 16 to 18; providing
 5 an effective date.

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 7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 9 Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) of
 10 section 1002.20, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

11 1002.20 K-12 student and parent rights.--Parents of public
 12 school students must receive accurate and timely information
 13 regarding their child's academic progress and must be informed
 14 of ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12
 15 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory
 16 rights including, but not limited to, the following:

17 (2) ATTENDANCE.--

18 (a) Compulsory school attendance.--The compulsory school
 19 attendance laws apply to all children between the ages of 6 and
 20 18 ~~16~~ years, as provided in s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a), and, in
 21 accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a):

22 1. A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years during the
 23 school year has the right to file a formal declaration of intent
 24 to terminate school enrollment if the declaration is signed by
 25 the parent. The parent has the right to be notified by the
 26 school district of the district's receipt of the student's
 27 declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.

28 2. Students who become or have become married or who are

29 pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and
 30 receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other
 31 students.

32 (b) Regular school attendance.--Parents of students who
 33 have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school
 34 year but who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years must
 35 comply with the compulsory school attendance laws. Parents have
 36 the option to comply with the school attendance laws by
 37 attendance of the student in a public school; a parochial,
 38 religious, or denominational school; a private school; a home
 39 education program; or a private tutoring program, in accordance
 40 with the provisions of s. 1003.01(13).

41 Section 2. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (1) of
 42 section 1003.21, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

43 1003.21 School attendance.--

44 (1)(a)1. All children who have attained the age of 6 years
 45 or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of
 46 any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who
 47 have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years, except as otherwise
 48 provided, are required to attend school regularly during the
 49 entire school term.

50 2. Children who will have attained the age of 5 years on
 51 or before September 1 of the school year are eligible for
 52 admission to public kindergartens during that school year under
 53 rules adopted by the district school board.

54 (c) A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years during
 55 the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance
 56 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the

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57 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
58 enrollment with the district school board. The declaration must
59 acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to
60 reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the
61 student and the student's parent. The school district must
62 notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's
63 declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.

64 Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 1003.51, Florida
65 Statutes, is amended to read:

66 1003.51 Other public educational services.--

67 (4) The Department of Education shall ensure that district
68 school boards notify students in juvenile justice residential or
69 nonresidential facilities who attain the age of 18 ~~16~~ years of
70 the provisions of law regarding compulsory school attendance and
71 make available the option of enrolling in a program to attain a
72 Florida high school diploma by taking the general educational
73 development test prior to release from the facility. District
74 school boards or community colleges, or both, shall waive GED
75 testing fees for youth in Department of Juvenile Justice
76 residential programs and shall, upon request, designate schools
77 operating for the purpose of providing educational services to
78 youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs as GED testing
79 centers, subject to GED testing center requirements. The
80 administrative fees for the general education development test
81 required by the Department of Education are the responsibility
82 of district school boards and may be required of providers by
83 contractual agreement.

84 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2005.