

By Senator Wilson

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to mandatory school attendance;
amending ss. 1002.20, 1003.21 and 1003.51,
F.S.; changing the age for mandatory school
attendance from 16 to 18; providing an
effective date.

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

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

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

(2) ATTENDANCE.--

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

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

1 2. Students who become or have become married or who
2 are pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and
3 receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as
4 other students.

5 (b) Regular school attendance.--Parents of students
6 who have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any
7 school year but who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years
8 must comply with the compulsory school attendance laws.

9 Parents have the option to comply with the school attendance
10 laws by attendance of the student in a public school; a
11 parochial, religious, or denominational school; a private
12 school; a home education program; or a private tutoring
13 program, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.01(13).

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

16 1003.21 School attendance.--

17 (1)(a)1. All children who have attained the age of 6
18 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February
19 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but
20 who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years, except as
21 otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly
22 during the entire school term.

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

27 (c) A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years
28 during the school year is not subject to compulsory school
29 attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that
30 age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to
31 terminate school enrollment with the district school board.

1 The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
2 enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential
3 and must be signed by the student and the student's parent.
4 The school district must notify the student's parent of
5 receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate
6 school enrollment.

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

9 1003.51 Other public educational services.--

10 (4) The Department of Education shall ensure that
11 district school boards notify students in juvenile justice
12 residential or nonresidential facilities who attain the age of
13 18 ~~16~~ years of the provisions of law regarding compulsory
14 school attendance and make available the option of enrolling
15 in a program to attain a Florida high school diploma by taking
16 the general educational development test prior to release from
17 the facility. District school boards or community colleges, or
18 both, shall waive GED testing fees for youth in Department of
19 Juvenile Justice residential programs and shall, upon request,
20 designate schools operating for the purpose of providing
21 educational services to youth in Department of Juvenile
22 Justice programs as GED testing centers, subject to GED
23 testing center requirements. The administrative fees for the
24 general education development test required by the Department
25 of Education are the responsibility of district school boards
26 and may be required of providers by contractual agreement.

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

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30 SENATE SUMMARY

31 Changes the age for mandatory school attendance from 16
to 18.