

By Senator Wilson

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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
4 ending age for mandatory school attendance from 16 years
5 to 18 years; providing an effective date.
6

7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
8

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 of
14 ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12
15 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory rights
16 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 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 school
26 district of the district's receipt of the student's declaration
27 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

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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 year
34 but who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years must comply with
35 the compulsory school attendance laws. Parents have the option to
36 comply with the school attendance laws by attendance of the
37 student in a public school; a parochial, religious, or
38 denominational school; a private school; a home education
39 program; or a private tutoring program, in accordance with ~~the~~
40 ~~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 any
46 school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not
47 attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years, except as otherwise provided,
48 are required to attend school regularly during the entire school
49 term.

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

54 (c) A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years during the
55 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond
56 the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student
57 files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
58 enrollment with the district school board. Public school students

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59 | who have attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years and who have not
60 | graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the
61 | formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school
62 | board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school
63 | enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential
64 | and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The
65 | school district must notify the student's parent of receipt of
66 | the student's declaration of intent to terminate school
67 | enrollment. The student's guidance counselor or other school
68 | personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to
69 | determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate
70 | school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the
71 | student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities
72 | to continue his or her education in a different environment,
73 | including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test
74 | preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in
75 | a format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide
76 | data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions
77 | taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

78 | Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 1003.51, Florida
79 | Statutes, is amended to read:

80 | 1003.51 Other public educational services.--

81 | (4) The Department of Education shall ensure that district
82 | school boards notify students in juvenile justice residential or
83 | nonresidential facilities who attain the age of 18 ~~16~~ years of
84 | the ~~provisions of~~ law regarding compulsory school attendance and
85 | make available the option of enrolling in a program to attain a
86 | Florida high school diploma by taking the general educational
87 | development test prior to release from the facility. District

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88 | school boards or community colleges, or both, shall waive GED
89 | testing fees for youth in Department of Juvenile Justice
90 | residential programs and shall, upon request, designate schools
91 | operating for the purpose of providing educational services to
92 | youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs as GED testing
93 | centers, subject to GED testing center requirements. The
94 | administrative fees for the general education development test
95 | required by the Department of Education are the responsibility of
96 | district school boards and may be required of providers by
97 | contractual agreement.

98 | Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.