

By Senator Wilson

33-00083-09

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

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

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

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

18 (2) ATTENDANCE.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

44 1003.21 School attendance.—

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

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

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

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

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

81 1003.51 Other public educational services.—

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

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

99 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009.