

By Senator Soto

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school attendance; amending s.
3 1002.20, F.S.; providing that compulsory school
4 attendance laws apply to all children between the ages
5 of 6 and 18 years; providing that a student who
6 attains the dropout age does not need a parent's
7 signature to file a declaration of intent to terminate
8 school; removing the requirement that a school notify
9 the student's parent of such declaration; amending s.
10 1003.21, F.S.; requiring students to attend school
11 until the age of 18 years; amending s. 1003.435, F.S.;
12 providing that a candidate for a high school
13 equivalency diploma must be at least 18 years of age
14 on the date of the examination; repealing s.
15 1003.51(4), F.S., relating to a requirement that
16 district school boards make available a GED program to
17 students in juvenile justice facilities who attain the
18 age of 16 years or notify such students that they are
19 no longer required to attend school; providing an
20 effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

23
24 Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) of
25 section 1002.20, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

26 1002.20 K-12 student and parent rights.—Parents of public
27 school students must receive accurate and timely information
28 regarding their child's academic progress and must be informed
29 of ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12

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30 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory
31 rights including, but not limited to, the following:

32 (2) ATTENDANCE.—

33 (a) *Compulsory school attendance.*—The compulsory school
34 attendance laws apply to all children between the ages of 6 and
35 18 ~~16~~ years, as provided in s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a), and, in
36 accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a):

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

43 2. Students who become or have become married or who are
44 pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and
45 receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other
46 students.

47 (b) *Regular school attendance.*—Parents of students who have
48 attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year but
49 who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years must comply with
50 the compulsory school attendance laws. Parents have the option
51 to comply with the school attendance laws by attendance of the
52 student in a public school; a parochial, religious, or
53 denominational school; a private school; a home education
54 program; or a private tutoring program, in accordance with the
55 provisions of s. 1003.01(13).

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

58 1003.21 School attendance.—

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59 (1) (a) 1. All children who have attained the age of 6 years
60 or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of
61 any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who
62 have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years, except as otherwise
63 provided, are required to attend school regularly during the
64 entire school term.

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

69 (c) A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years during the
70 school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance
71 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the
72 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school
73 enrollment with the district school board. Public school
74 students who have attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years and who have
75 not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until
76 the formal declaration of intent is filed with the district
77 school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating
78 school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning
79 potential and must be signed by the student ~~and the student's~~
80 ~~parent. The school district shall notify the student's parent of~~
81 ~~receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate~~
82 ~~school enrollment.~~ The student's certified school counselor or
83 other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the
84 student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to
85 terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to
86 keep the student in school. The student's certified school
87 counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of

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88 opportunities to continue his or her education in a different
89 environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and
90 GED test preparation. Additionally, the student shall complete a
91 survey in a format prescribed by the Department of Education to
92 provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and
93 actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

94 Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 1003.435, Florida
95 Statutes, is amended to read:

96 1003.435 High school equivalency diploma program.—

97 (4) A candidate for a high school equivalency diploma must
98 ~~shall~~ be at least 18 years of age on the date of the
99 examination, ~~except that in extraordinary circumstances, as~~
100 ~~provided for in rules of the district school board of the~~
101 ~~district in which the candidate resides or attends school, a~~
102 ~~candidate may take the examination after reaching the age of 16.~~

103 Section 4. Subsection (4) of section 1003.51, Florida
104 Statutes, is repealed.

105 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.