

By Senator Jones

35-00553-22

2022616\_\_

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to compulsory school attendance;  
3           amending s. 1003.21, F.S.; revising the required age  
4           for compulsory school attendance from 16 to 18 years  
5           of age; deleting a requirement that a student's parent  
6           sign a declaration of intent to terminate school  
7           enrollment; deleting a requirement that the school  
8           district notify a student's parent upon receipt of  
9           such declaration; amending ss. 1002.20 and 1003.51,  
10          F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the  
11          act; providing an effective date.

12  
13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

17           1003.21 School attendance.—

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

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

28           (c) A student who attains the age of 18 ~~16~~ years during the  
29          school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance

35-00553-22

2022616\_\_

30 beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the  
31 student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school  
32 enrollment with the district school board. Public school  
33 students who have attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years and who have  
34 not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until  
35 the formal declaration of intent is filed with the district  
36 school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating  
37 school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning  
38 potential and must be signed by the student ~~and the student's~~  
39 ~~parent. The school district shall notify the student's parent of~~  
40 ~~receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate~~  
41 ~~school enrollment.~~ The student's certified school counselor or  
42 other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the  
43 student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to  
44 terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to  
45 keep the student in school. The student's certified school  
46 counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of  
47 opportunities to continue his or her education in a different  
48 environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and  
49 high school equivalency examination preparation. Additionally,  
50 the student shall complete a survey in a format prescribed by  
51 the Department of Education to provide data on student reasons  
52 for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep  
53 students enrolled.

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

56 1002.20 K-12 student and parent rights.—Parents of public  
57 school students must receive accurate and timely information  
58 regarding their child's academic progress and must be informed

35-00553-22

2022616\_\_

59 of ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12  
60 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory  
61 rights including, but not limited to, the following:

62 (2) ATTENDANCE.—

63 (a) *Compulsory school attendance.*—The compulsory school  
64 attendance laws apply to all children between the ages of 6 and  
65 18 ~~16~~ years, as provided in s. 1003.21(1) and (2) (a), and, in  
66 accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.21(1) and (2) (a):

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

73 2. Students who become or have become married or who are  
74 pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and  
75 receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other  
76 students.

77 (b) *Regular school attendance.*—Parents of students who have  
78 attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year but  
79 who have not attained the age of 18 ~~16~~ years must comply with  
80 the compulsory school attendance laws. Parents have the option  
81 to comply with the school attendance laws by attendance of the  
82 student in a public school; a parochial, religious, or  
83 denominational school; a private school; a home education  
84 program; or a private tutoring program, in accordance with the  
85 provisions of s. 1003.01(13).

86 Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section  
87 1003.51, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

35-00553-22

2022616\_\_

88 1003.51 Other public educational services.-

89 (4) Each district school board shall:

90 ~~(a) Notify students in juvenile justice education programs~~  
91 ~~who attain the age of 16 years of the law regarding compulsory~~  
92 ~~school attendance and make available the option of enrolling in~~  
93 ~~an education program to attain a Florida high school diploma by~~  
94 ~~taking the high school equivalency examination before release~~  
95 ~~from the program. The Department of Education shall assist~~  
96 ~~juvenile justice education programs with becoming high school~~  
97 ~~equivalency examination centers.~~

98 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.