

By Senator Rouson

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to enforcement of school attendance; amending s. 1003.26, F.S.; requiring district school boards to implement a mandatory alert system within specified systems or platforms to notify certain persons when a student reaches the truancy threshold for absences; amending ss. 984.151 and 1003.02, F.S.; conforming cross-references to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Present paragraphs (b) through (h) of subsection (1) of section 1003.26, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (c) through (i), respectively, a new paragraph (b) is added to that subsection, and paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of that section is amended, to read:

1003.26 Enforcement of school attendance.—The Legislature finds that poor academic performance is associated with nonattendance and that school districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance. It is the policy of the state that each district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory school age in the school district and supporting enforcement of school attendance by local law enforcement agencies. The responsibility includes recommending policies and procedures to the district school board that require public schools to respond in a timely manner to every unexcused absence, and every absence

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30 for which the reason is unknown, of students enrolled in the
31 schools. District school board policies shall require the parent
32 of a student to justify each absence of the student, and that
33 justification will be evaluated based on adopted district school
34 board policies that define excused and unexcused absences. The
35 policies must provide that public schools track excused and
36 unexcused absences and contact the home in the case of an
37 unexcused absence from school, or an absence from school for
38 which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of
39 patterns of nonattendance. The Legislature finds that early
40 intervention in school attendance is the most effective way of
41 producing good attendance habits that will lead to improved
42 student learning and achievement. Each public school is required
43 to implement the following steps to promote and enforce regular
44 school attendance:

45 (1) CONTACT, REFER, AND ENFORCE.—

46 (b) To support the timely communication and intervention
47 for students with absences, each district school board shall
48 implement a mandatory electronic alert system within its data
49 management system or educational platform to notify school
50 administrators, the child study team, and a student's parent
51 when a student reaches the school district's truancy threshold
52 for absences.

53 (2) GIVE WRITTEN NOTICE.—

54 (a) Under the direction of the district school
55 superintendent, a designated school representative must provide
56 written notice in person or by return-receipt mail to the
57 parent, requiring the child's enrollment or attendance within 3
58 days after the date of notice, when no valid reason is found for

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59 a student's nonenrollment in school if the child is under
60 compulsory education requirements, and is not exempt. If the
61 child is not enrolled or in attendance in school within 3 days
62 after the notice being provided, the designated school
63 representative must report the case to the district school
64 superintendent, who must refer the case to the child study team
65 in paragraph (1)(c) ~~(1)(b)~~ at the school the student would be
66 assigned according to district school board attendance area
67 policies. In addition, the designated school representative may
68 refer the case to the Department of Juvenile Justice's
69 authorized agent for families in need of services. The child
70 study team must diligently facilitate intervention services and
71 report the case back to the district school superintendent
72 within 15 days after referral of the case if reasonable efforts
73 to resolve the nonenrollment behavior have been made and the
74 child is still not attending school. If the parent refuses to
75 cooperate or enroll the child in school within 15 days after
76 referral of the case to the child study team, the district
77 school superintendent must make a report to law enforcement and
78 refer the case to the Office of the State Attorney to bring
79 criminal prosecution against the parent.

80 Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 984.151, Florida
81 Statutes, is amended to read:

82 984.151 Early truancy intervention; truancy petition;
83 judgment.—

84 (1) If the school determines that a student subject to
85 compulsory school attendance has had at least 5 ~~five~~ unexcused
86 absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within
87 a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which

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88 the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period
89 pursuant to s. 1003.26(1)(c) ~~s. 1003.26(1)(b)~~, or has had more
90 than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-calendar-day period, the
91 superintendent of schools or his or her designee may file a
92 truancy petition seeking early truancy intervention.

93 Section 3. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section
94 1003.02, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

95 1003.02 District school board operation and control of
96 public K-12 education within the school district.—As provided in
97 part II of chapter 1001, district school boards are
98 constitutionally and statutorily charged with the operation and
99 control of public K-12 education within their school districts.
100 The district school boards must establish, organize, and operate
101 their public K-12 schools and educational programs, employees,
102 and facilities. Their responsibilities include staff
103 development, public K-12 school student education including
104 education for exceptional students and students in juvenile
105 justice programs, special programs, adult education programs,
106 and career education programs. Additionally, district school
107 boards must:

108 (1) Provide for the proper accounting for all students of
109 school age, for the attendance and control of students at
110 school, and for proper attention to health, safety, and other
111 matters relating to the welfare of students in the following
112 areas:

113 (b) *Enforcement of attendance laws.*—Provide for the
114 enforcement of all laws and rules relating to the attendance of
115 students at school. District school boards are authorized to
116 establish policies that allow accumulated unexcused tardies,

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117 regardless of when they occur during the school day, and early
118 departures from school to be recorded as unexcused absences.
119 District school boards are also authorized to establish policies
120 that require referral to a school's child study team for
121 students who have fewer absences than the number required by s.
122 1003.26(1)(c) ~~s.~~ 1003.26(1)(b).

123 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.