

By Senator Rouson

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

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

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

18 1003.26 Enforcement of school attendance.—The Legislature  
19 finds that poor academic performance is associated with  
20 nonattendance and that school districts must take an active role  
21 in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving  
22 student performance. It is the policy of the state that each  
23 district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing  
24 school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory  
25 school age in the school district and supporting enforcement of  
26 school attendance by local law enforcement agencies. The  
27 responsibility includes recommending policies and procedures to  
28 the district school board that require public schools to respond  
29 in a timely manner to every unexcused absence, and every absence

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

(1) CONTACT, REFER, AND ENFORCE.—

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

(2) GIVE WRITTEN NOTICE.—

(a) Under the direction of the district school superintendent, a designated school representative must provide written notice in person or by return-receipt mail to the parent, requiring the child's enrollment or attendance within 3 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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the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period pursuant to s. 1003.26(1)(c) ~~s. 1003.26(1)(b)~~, or has had more than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-calendar-day period, the superintendent of schools or his or her designee may file a truancy petition seeking early truancy intervention.

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

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

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

(b) *Enforcement of attendance laws.*—Provide for the enforcement of all laws and rules relating to the attendance of students at school. District school boards are authorized to 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.