

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6472

BILL NUMBER: SB 338

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 27, 2012

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Chronic School Absenteeism.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Kruse

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill has the following provisions:

Absenteeism: The bill makes changes to the definition of: (1) chronic absenteeism; and (2) habitual truant. It requires school corporations and schools to identify contributing factors to absenteeism and to develop chronic absence reduction plans. It provides that a school corporation's strategic and continuous school improvement plan must include objectives relating to the educational needs of students who are chronically absent or habitually truant from school.

Reporting: The bill provides that a school corporation must include the number of students who are habitually truant in the school corporation's annual performance report.

Information Sharing: The bill requires school corporations to share data on high chronic absence schools with the Department of Education (DOE) and with the Office of the Secretary of Family and Social Services for (FSSA) the purpose of targeting allocation of resources and identifying or developing programs to improve student attendance.

Graduation Waivers: The bill provides that a student may not receive a graduation waiver unless the student has at least a 95% attendance rate. (Current law provides that a student must have at least a 95% attendance rate, excluding excused absences.)

Excused Absences: The bill provides that out-of-school suspension is an excused absence. It also provides that a student participating in a court-assisted resolution of a suspension or an expulsion case is not considered absent from school if the student is present for court-supervised educational services or making up classroom

assignments.

Attendance Record: The bill requires a public and nonpublic school to make its daily attendance record open to inspection to enable timely reporting and monitoring of chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy.

Juvenile Jurisdiction: The bill provides that a superintendent and a court having juvenile jurisdiction may enter into a voluntary agreement for a court-assisted resolution of chronic absenteeism.

The bill also makes conforming amendments.

Effective Date: July 1, 2013.

Explanation of State Expenditures: *Summary: Absenteeism; Information Sharing.* The bill's requirements are within DOE's and FSSA's routine administrative functions and should be able to be implemented with no additional appropriations, assuming near customary agency staffing and resource levels.

Additional Information:

Absenteeism: This bill requires DOE to make absenteeism a priority and to direct school corporations and schools to develop programs to combat chronic absenteeism.

Information Sharing: FSSA and DOE would have to coordinate with school corporations to develop a strategy to improve student attendance.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *Summary:*

(1) *Absenteeism:* School corporations and schools should be able to accomplish this task within existing resources.

(2) *Information Sharing; Reporting:* The bill's requirements are within school corporations' routine administrative functions and should be able to be implemented with no additional appropriations, assuming near customary agency staffing and resource levels.

(3) *Graduation Waivers:* This may decrease the number of students obtaining graduation waivers. If this leads to students not graduating, the school's academic performance rating may be lowered.

(4) *Excused Absences:* Under this provision, excused absences are counted against a student's attendance. This may result in an increase in the number of students labeled as being chronically absent. Chronically absent students could be referred to court supervision, thereby increasing the cost to the school corporation.

(5) *Attendance Record:* The fiscal impact should be minimal.

(6) *Juvenile Jurisdiction:* The fiscal impact would depend on local action. The cost of this provision

would depend on the number of chronically absent students the courts would have to supervise. The current statute stipulates that any agreement between the school and the courts must establish how expenses are funded. Current law also sets the maximum level of funding per student to what the state allocates to the school corporation.

Additional Information:

Absenteeism: Current law defines both chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy as being absent from school for more than 10 days within a school year without being excused. This bill, however, redefines both conditions and has a more stringent standard for chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as being absent from school for 10% or more of the school year (18 days minimum for a 180-day school year) for any reason; habitual truancy, under the bill, is defined as being absent 10 days or more within a school year without being excused.

Graduation Waivers: Under current law, based on a school year of 180 days, a student is allowed to miss 9 days of school plus excused absences before being denied a graduation waiver. Under this bill, the student would only be allowed to miss a maximum of 9 days total.

Excused Absences: Excused absences as outlined in this bill (e.g., funeral, maternity, military service) would be counted against the student's attendance. The student would be credited for attendance if the student is present for court-supervised educational services or making up classroom assignments.

Juvenile Jurisdiction: Under current law, a superintendent and a court having juvenile jurisdiction in the county may enter into a voluntary agreement to permit the court to supervise a student who has been suspended or expelled. This bill extends this agreement to include students who are chronically absent from school.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: DOE, FSSA.

Local Agencies Affected: School corporations; Public and nonpublic schools; Local courts.

Information Sources: DOE website: <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/attendance.aspx?type=state>

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