

Senate Study Bill 1077 - Introduced

SENATE FILE _____
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION BILL BY CHAIRPERSON
EVANS)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act modifying provisions related to compulsory education,
2 truancy, and chronic absenteeism.
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. Section 256.9, Code 2025, is amended by adding the
2 following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 69. In consultation with the Iowa county
4 attorneys association, develop and distribute to county
5 attorneys, school districts, and accredited nonpublic schools a
6 model policy that county attorneys may reference when determining
7 whether and to what extent to enforce the provisions of chapter
8 299.

9 Sec. 2. Section 299.1, subsection 4, paragraph b, Code 2025,
10 is amended by adding the following new subparagraphs:

11 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (7) Who is a military applicant undergoing
12 military entrance processing.

13 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (8) Who is engaged in military service.

14 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (9) Who is traveling to attend a funeral.

15 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (10) Who is traveling to attend a wedding.

16 Sec. 3. Section 299.1, subsection 4, Code 2025, is amended by
17 adding the following new paragraph:

18 NEW PARAGRAPH. c. The policy or rules adopted by the board
19 of directors of a public school district pursuant to paragraph
20 "a" must describe how the exceptions described in paragraph "b"
21 may be met by a child and must give reasonable consideration to
22 travel time.

23 Sec. 4. Section 299.12, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2025,
24 is amended to read as follows:

25 a. When a child becomes chronically absent, a school official
26 shall send a notice by ordinary mail or electronic mail to
27 the county attorney of the county in which the public school's
28 central administrative office is located, and a notice by
29 ~~certified mail~~ to the child's parent, guardian, or legal or
30 actual custodian of the child, if the child is not an emancipated
31 minor, or to the child, if the child is an emancipated minor,
32 that includes information related to the child's absences from
33 school and the policies and disciplinary processes associated
34 with additional absences. The notice the school official sends
35 to the child's parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian

1 of the child, if the child is not an emancipated minor, or to
2 the child, if the child is an emancipated minor, may be sent by
3 ordinary mail, electronic mail, or electronic message, or may be
4 delivered in person. The school shall maintain a copy of the
5 notice until the child graduates, turns twenty-one years of age,
6 or is no longer enrolled in the school, whichever occurs first.

7 Sec. 5. Section 299.12, subsection 3, paragraph a,
8 subparagraph (1), Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

9 (1) If a child is absent from school for greater than or
10 equal to fifteen percent of the days or hours in the grading
11 period, a school official shall attempt to find the cause for the
12 child's absences and. If the school official determines that the
13 child's absences are negatively affecting the child's academic
14 progress, the school official shall initiate and participate in a
15 school engagement meeting. The purpose of the school engagement
16 meeting is to identify the child's barriers to attendance and the
17 interventions that may be used to improve the child's attendance.

18 EXPLANATION

19 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
20 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

21 This bill modifies provisions related to compulsory education,
22 truancy, and chronic absenteeism.

23 The bill requires the director of the department of education
24 to develop, in consultation with the Iowa county attorneys
25 association, a model policy that county attorneys may reference
26 when determining whether and to what extent to enforce the
27 provisions of Code chapter 299 (compulsory education). The
28 bill also requires the director to distribute the model policy
29 to county attorneys, school districts, and accredited nonpublic
30 schools.

31 Current law requires the board of directors of a public
32 school district to adopt a policy or rules relating to children
33 who are chronically absent. Current law establishes exceptions
34 to the policy or rules for children taking part in certain
35 specified activities. The bill adds undergoing military entrance

1 processing, engaging in military service, traveling to attend
2 a funeral, and traveling to attend a wedding to the list of
3 specified activities. Absences related to such activities are
4 not included when determining whether a child of compulsory
5 attendance age is deemed to be a truant. The bill provides the
6 policy or rules must describe how the exceptions may be met by a
7 child and must give reasonable consideration to travel time.

8 Current law requires that when a child becomes chronically
9 absent, a school official is required to send a notice by
10 certified mail to the child's parent, guardian, or legal or
11 actual custodian of the child, if the child is not an emancipated
12 minor, or to the child, if the child is an emancipated minor,
13 that includes information related to the child's absences from
14 school and the policies and disciplinary processes associated
15 with additional absences. The bill provides that a school
16 official may send such notice by ordinary mail, electronic mail,
17 or electronic message, or may deliver the notice in person. The
18 bill requires the public school to maintain a copy of the notice.

19 Current law provides that if a child is absent from school for
20 greater than or equal to 15 percent of the days or hours in the
21 grading period, a school official is required to attempt to find
22 the cause for the child's absences and initiate and participate
23 in a school engagement meeting. The bill provides that a school
24 official is only required to initiate and participate in a school
25 engagement meeting if the school official determines that the
26 child's absences are negatively affecting the child's academic
27 progress.