

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
89th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2013

As Engrossed: S3/27/13 H4/10/13

A Bill

SENATE BILL 996

By: Senator J. Key

By: Representative Clemmer

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT EXCESSIVE ABSENCES
FROM SCHOOL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT
EXCESSIVE ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-18-209 is amended to read as follows:

*6-18-209. Adoption of student attendance policies – Effect of
~~excessive~~ unexcused absences.*

*(a) The board of directors of each school district in this state shall
adopt student attendance policies.*

*(b) Each school district, as a part of its six-year educational plan,
shall develop strategies for promoting maximum student attendance, including,
but not limited to, the use of alternative classrooms and in-school
suspensions in lieu of suspension from school.*

*(c) A student attendance policy may include ~~excessive~~ unexcused
absences as a mandatory basis for denial of promotion or graduation.*

*SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-18-220(a)(4), concerning additional
absences granted for participation in FFA, FHA, and 4-H programs, is amended
to read as follows:*



(4) One method of encouraging participation in such programs is to grant additional excused absences to students who participate in officially sanctioned activities of those organizations.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-18-220(c), concerning additional absences granted for participation in FFA, FHA, and 4-H programs, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Any school district that grants additional excused absences of FFA member students who attend officially sanctioned FFA activities shall afford equal treatment to FHA and 4-H member students who attend the same or similar officially sanctioned activities.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(4)(D)(i), concerning the revocation of driving privilege for a student with excessive absences, is amended to read as follows:

(D)(i) Before a student accumulates the maximum number of unexcused absences allowed in a school district's student attendance policy, the student or the student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis may petition the school administration or school district administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 7-4-116(c)(1)(A), concerning the election poll workers program for high school students, is amended to read as follows:

(A) Be granted an additional excused absence from school while working as an election page;

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 7-4-116(d)(1)(D), concerning the election poll workers program for high school students, is amended to read as follows:

(D) Be granted an additional excused absence from school while working as an election official.

SECTION 7. The catchline of Arkansas Code § 6-18-222 is amended to read as follows:

6-18-222. Penalty for ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences – Revocation of driving privilege.

SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(1), concerning excessive absences from school, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A)(i) The board of directors of each school district in this state shall adopt a student attendance policy, as provided for in § 6-18-209, which shall include a certain number of ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences that may be used as a basis for denial of course credit, promotion, or graduation.

(ii) However, ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences shall not be a basis for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

(B) The legislative intent is that a student having ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences because of illness, accident, or other unavoidable reasons should be given assistance in obtaining credit for the courses.

SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(4)(A)(i), concerning excessive absences from school, is amended to read as follows:

(4)(A)(i) A student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis and the community truancy board, if the community truancy board has been created, shall be notified when the student has accumulated ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences equal to one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) the total number of absences permitted per semester under the school district's or the State Board of Career Education's student attendance policy.

SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(5)(A), concerning excessive absences from school, is amended to read as follows:

(5)(A) When a student exceeds the number of ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences provided for in the district's or the State Board of Career Education's student attendance policy, or when a student has violated the conditions of an agreement granting special arrangements under subdivision (a)(4)(D) of this section, the school district or the adult education program shall notify the prosecuting authority and the community truancy board, if a community truancy board has been created, and the student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty through a family in need of services action in circuit court, as authorized under subdivision (a)(6)(A) of this section, but not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) plus costs of court and any reasonable fees assessed by the court.

/s/J. Key