

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

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S3/27/13 H4/10/13*

2 89th General Assembly

# A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2013

SENATE BILL 996

4

5 By: Senator J. Key

6 By: Representative Clemmer

7

8

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9

AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE

10

CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

11

FROM SCHOOL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

12

13

14

## Subtitle

15

TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE

16

CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT

17

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL.

18

19

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

21

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

23 *6-18-209. Adoption of student attendance policies – Effect of*

24 *~~excessive~~ unexcused absences.*

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

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

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

33

34 *SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-18-220(a)(4), concerning additional*

35 *absences granted for participation in FFA, FHA, and 4-H programs, is amended*  
36 *to read as follows:*



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

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

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

12  
13           SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(4)(D)(i), concerning the  
14 revocation of driving privilege for a student with excessive absences, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

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

21  
22           SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 7-4-116(c)(1)(A), concerning the election  
23 poll workers program for high school students, is amended to read as follows:

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

26  
27           SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 7-4-116(d)(1)(D), concerning the election  
28 poll workers program for high school students, is amended to read as follows:

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

31  
32           SECTION 7. The catchline of Arkansas Code § 6-18-222 is amended to  
33 read as follows:

34           6-18-222. Penalty for ~~excessive~~ unexcused absences – Revocation of  
35 driving privilege.

36

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

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

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

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

13  
14           *SECTION 9.* Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(4)(A)(i), concerning excessive  
15 absences from school, is amended to read as follows:

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

22  
23           *SECTION 10.* Arkansas Code § 6-18-222(a)(5)(A), concerning excessive  
24 absences from school, is amended to read as follows:

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

36

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36

*/s/J. Key*