
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6508

AN ACT CONCERNING REMOTE LEARNING ATTENDANCE.

SUMMARY

This bill allows local and regional school boards, starting with the 2021-2022 school year, to authorize schools to instruct students in grades nine to 12 on a virtual platform or as part of a remote learning model, provided the board specifies the requirements for student attendance during this instruction.

Under the bill, this type of instruction must be considered an actual school session, so long as the school board authorized its use. It requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to change its definitions of “excused absence” and “unexcused absence” to exclude school sessions conducted in this manner.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provision requiring remote instruction to be considered an actual school session takes effect July 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Under current SBE policy, the following absences are considered excused:

1. for absences one through nine, when the student provides written documentation (i.e., a signed note from a parent or guardian) of the reason for the absence within 10 school days of the student’s return to school.
2. for the tenth and all further absences, the same written documentation is needed and only the following reasons suffice: (a) student illness (with appropriate verification from a medical professional), (b) observance of a religious holiday, (c)

family death or other emergency beyond the family's control, (d) mandated court appearance, (e) lack of transportation normally provided by the district, or (f) extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district in accordance with SBE guidance.

An absence is considered unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria of an excused absence or is a disciplinary absence (i.e., the result of school or district disciplinary action).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 0 (03/11/2021)