



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 163

January Session, 2021

Substitute House Bill No. 6508

House of Representatives, March 29, 2021

The Committee on Children reported through REP. LINEHAN of the 103rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING REMOTE LEARNING ATTENDANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) For the school year
2 commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter, a local or
3 regional board of education may authorize the provision of instruction
4 to students in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, to be conducted on a
5 virtual platform or as part of a remote learning model, provided such
6 board specifies the requirements for what constitutes student
7 attendance during such instruction.

8 Sec. 2. Section 10-16 of the general statutes is repealed and the
9 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

10 Each school district shall provide in each school year no less than one
11 hundred and eighty days of actual school sessions for grades
12 kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, nine hundred hours of actual school
13 work for full-day kindergarten and grades one to twelve, inclusive, and
14 four hundred and fifty hours of half-day kindergarten, provided school

15 districts shall not count more than seven hours of actual school work in
 16 any school day towards the total required for the school year.
 17 Instruction that is conducted on a virtual platform or as part of a remote
 18 learning model in any school district shall be considered an actual
 19 school session for purposes of this section, provided the local or regional
 20 board of education has authorized such instruction. If weather
 21 conditions result in an early dismissal or a delayed opening of school, a
 22 school district which maintains separate morning and afternoon half-
 23 day kindergarten sessions may provide either a morning or afternoon
 24 half-day kindergarten session on such day.

25 Sec. 3. Section 10-198b of the general statutes is repealed and the
 26 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

27 On or before July 1, 2012, the State Board of Education shall define
 28 "excused absence" and "unexcused absence". [, and on] On or before
 29 January 1, 2016, the State Board of Education shall define "disciplinary
 30 absence" for use by local and regional boards of education for the
 31 purposes of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a, reporting
 32 truancy, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-220, and calculating the
 33 district chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic absenteeism
 34 rate pursuant to section 10-198c. On or before July 1, 2021, the State
 35 Board of Education shall amend the definition of "excused absence" and
 36 "unexcused absence" to exclude school sessions that are conducted on a
 37 virtual platform or as part of a remote learning model pursuant to
 38 section 10-16, as amended by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	10-16
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	10-198b

KID Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Various Local and Regional School Districts	Potential Cost	Potential	Potential

Explanation

The bill allows, beginning in FY 22, students in grades nine through twelve to attend class on-line or as part of a remote learning model. This could result in a potential cost to local and regional school districts if additional virtual or on-line materials and equipment must be purchased to accommodate students opting to participate in a remote learning model. However, the bill is permissive, and local and regional school districts are not mandated to participate. The bill also requires that students will not be considered absent on virtual or remote learning days, which is a technical change.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

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)