
HOUSE BILL 1834

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Callan, Rude, J. Johnson, Davis, Macri, Ramos, Rule, Santos, Senn, Paul, Simmons, Bergquist, Thai, Stonier, Riccelli, Frame, and Harris-Talley

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1 AN ACT Relating to student excused absences for mental health
2 reasons; amending RCW 28A.300.046; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** After hearing from youth across the state
5 of Washington, the legislature recognizes that students' mental
6 health is a component of their physical health and that students'
7 mental health can affect their ability to learn. The legislature
8 finds that school districts are not consistently recognizing student
9 absences for mental health reasons as excused absences. Therefore,
10 the legislature intends to require that student absences for mental
11 health reasons be categorized as excused absences.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.300.046 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 306 are each
13 amended to read as follows:

14 (1)(a) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules
15 establishing a standard definition of student absence from school. By
16 the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, the rules must categorize
17 an absence for a mental health reason as an excused absence due to
18 illness, health condition, or medical appointment.

19 (b) In ~~((adopting the definition))~~ developing the rules, the
20 superintendent shall review current practices in Washington school

1 districts, definitions used in other states, and any national
2 standards or definitions used by the national center for education
3 statistics or other national groups. ~~((The))~~ Prior to filing notice
4 of the rules under RCW 34.05.320, the superintendent shall ~~((also))~~
5 consult with the ~~((building bridges work group))~~ graduation: a team
6 effort partnership advisory committee established under RCW
7 28A.175.075 and a student advisory group with membership as described
8 in (c) of this subsection.

9 ~~((b))~~ (c) The superintendent shall develop and publish
10 guidelines for public schools to implement the definition of student
11 absence from school adopted under this section. The superintendent
12 must consider including guidance for schools to integrate their
13 responses to student excused absences for physical and mental health
14 into their support systems for student well-being. In developing the
15 guidelines, the superintendent shall consult with a student advisory
16 group whose members are directly impacted by student absence rules
17 and policies and who represent the diversity of the public school
18 population, including diversity in gender identity, family income,
19 race and ethnicity, and geography, among other characteristics. The
20 advisory group must also include a member of the legislative youth
21 advisory council appointed by the lieutenant governor.

22 (d) Using the definition of student absence adopted under this
23 section, the superintendent shall establish an indicator for
24 measuring student attendance in high schools for purposes of the PASS
25 program under RCW 28A.175.130.

26 (2) (a) The K-12 data governance group under RCW 28A.300.507 shall
27 establish the parameters and an implementation schedule for statewide
28 collection through the comprehensive education and data research
29 system of: (i) Student attendance data using the definitions of
30 student absence adopted under this section; and (ii) student
31 discipline data with a focus on suspensions and expulsions from
32 school.

33 (b) Student suspension and expulsion data collected for the
34 purposes of this subsection (2) must be:

35 (i) Made publicly available and easily accessible on the
36 superintendent of public instruction's website; and

37 (ii) Disaggregated and cross-tabulated as established under RCW
38 28A.300.042.

39 (c) School districts must collect and submit student attendance
40 data and student discipline data for high school students through the

1 comprehensive education and data research system for purposes of the
2 PASS program under RCW 28A.175.130 beginning in the 2012-13 school
3 year.

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