



Senate Education Committee

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House Bill 158

Printer's No. 692

Prime Sponsor: Peifer
Committee: Education

SYNOPSIS:

Permits the Secretary of Education to issue an emergency declaration for a school entity under certain circumstances.

SUMMARY:

Amends the School Code to create a new section which provides that for the 2015-2016 school year and each school year thereafter, the Secretary of Education may issue a weather-related, safety-related, or health-related emergency declaration, on a school entity, charter school entity, county, or statewide basis, under which:

A school entity (school district, AVTS, or IU) may satisfy the 180 instructional day requirement by one or more of the following options:

Approving, by majority vote of the governing board, a school year with 900 hours of instruction at the elementary level and 990 hours of instruction at the secondary level in lieu of 180 instructional days.

Approving, by majority vote of the governing board, the scheduling of additional instructional days on Saturdays to complete 180 instructional days or 900 hours at the elementary level and 990 hours at the secondary level. The following shall apply:

- A school entity shall not schedule more than one Saturday per month, and shall not schedule tests on a Saturday.
- A school entity may schedule a regular instructional day on the following Monday.

The school entity shall, upon a written request, excuse a student from attendance if the student has the opportunity to receive a program of advanced instruction, or to participate in academic or skills competition or leadership development activities.

The written request shall identify and describe the instruction, completion or activities and the dates and hours.

Following an absence, a parent or guardian shall provide a written statement attesting to the student's participation and the dates and hours.

The school entity shall, upon a written notification, excuse a student from attendance to observe or participate in a religious activity or function.

Requires that an absence under this provision shall be considered an instructional day and shall not be recorded as an absence, nor shall any penalty be incurred.

Permits a charter school entity (charter school, regional charter school, or cyber charter school) may satisfy the 180 instructional day per school year or 900 hours of instruction at the elementary level or 990 hours of instruction at the secondary level per school year charter school requirement in law by approving, by majority vote of the governing board, the scheduling of additional instructional days on Saturdays; subject to the same requirements applicable to school entities which use this option.

Requires a school entity or charter school entity to notify PDE, on a form to be developed by PDE, of any decision to use the options allowable under the Secretary's emergency declaration.

No school entity or charter school entity shall receive a smaller subsidy payment or lower reimbursements than it would otherwise be entitled to receive because of its decision to use the options allowable under the Secretary's emergency declaration.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede or preempt any provisions of a collective bargaining agreement.

Effective Date: 60 days

BILL HISTORY:

Passed House (198-0) 2/25/15

Prepared by: Phenicie 12/3/2015