

STATE OF NEW YORK

8543--A

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

August 23, 2019

Introduced by M. of A. FERNANDEZ -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to providing for absence from school for the mental or behavioral health of the minor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 3210 of the education law, subdivision 1 as amended
2 by chapter 821 of the laws of 1947, paragraph b of subdivision 1 as
3 amended by chapter 491 of the laws of 2014 and paragraph c of subdivi-
4 sion 1 as added by chapter 549 of the laws of 1986, is amended to read
5 as follows:

6 § 3210. Amount and character of required attendance. 1. Regularity and
7 conduct. a. A minor required by the provisions of this part [~~one of this~~
8 ~~article~~] to attend upon instruction shall attend regularly as prescribed
9 where he resides or is employed, for the entire time the appropriate
10 public schools or classes are in session and shall be subordinate and
11 orderly while so attending.

12 b. (i) Absence for religious observance and education shall be permit-
13 ted under rules that the commissioner shall establish.

14 (ii) In addition, the board of education or trustees shall determine
15 whether school session should not be held at an individual public
16 school, or district-wide, on a day where, if school were in session,
17 absenteeism may result in the waste of educational resources because a
18 considerable proportion of the student population is unlikely to attend
19 because of a religious or cultural day of observance.

20 (iii) Absence due to the mental or behavioral health of the minor
21 shall be permitted under rules that the commissioner shall establish.

22 c. In the event that a person requests the release of a minor required
23 by the provisions of this part [~~one of this article~~] to attend upon
24 instruction, the identity of such person shall be verified against a

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 list of names provided by the person or persons in parental relation to
2 the minor, as defined in section two of this chapter, at the time of
3 such minor's enrollment. The school district may adopt appropriate
4 procedures for the purpose of submitting a list of names at a later date
5 or updating the list of names provided by the person or persons in
6 parental relation. If such person is identified as one of those persons
7 included on such list, such minor may be released from attendance. If
8 such person is identified as a person not included on such list, such
9 minor may not be released except in the event of an emergency as deter-
10 mined in the sole discretion of the principal of the school, or his
11 designee, provided that the person or persons in parental relation to
12 the minor have been contacted and have agreed to such release. A school
13 district may presume that either parent of the student has authority to
14 obtain the release of said minor unless the school district has been
15 provided with a certified copy of the legally binding instrument such as
16 the court order or decree of divorce, separation or custody which
17 provides evidence to the contrary. No situation shall be deemed an emer-
18 gency until the facts of such situation have been verified by such prin-
19 cipal or his designee. No civil or criminal liability shall arise or
20 attach to any school district or employee thereof for any act or omis-
21 sion to act as a result of, or in connection with, the duties or activ-
22 ities authorized or directed by this paragraph. The foregoing procedure
23 shall not apply to release of a minor pursuant to the protective custody
24 provisions of the social services law and the family court act.

25 2. Attendance elsewhere than at a public school. a. Hours of attend-
26 ance. If a minor included by the provisions of this part [~~one of this~~
27 ~~article~~] attends upon instruction elsewhere than at a public school, he
28 shall attend for at least as many hours, and within the hours specified
29 therefor.

30 b. Absence. Absence from required attendance shall be permitted only
31 for causes allowed by the general rules and practices of the public
32 schools. Absence for religious observance and education shall be
33 permitted under rules that the commissioner shall establish. Absence
34 due to the mental or behavioral health of the minor shall be permitted
35 under rules that the commissioner shall establish.

36 c. Holidays and vacations. Holidays and vacations shall not exceed in
37 total amount and number those allowed by the public schools.

38 d. Exception. In applying the foregoing requirements a minor required
39 to attend upon full time day instruction by the provisions of this part
40 [~~one of this article~~] may be permitted to attend for a shorter school
41 day or for a shorter school year or for both, provided, in accordance
42 with the regulations of the state education department, the instruction
43 he receives has been approved by the school authorities as being
44 substantially equivalent in amount and quality to that required by the
45 provisions of this part [~~one of this article~~].

46 § 2. This act shall take effect on the first of July next succeeding
47 the date on which it shall have become a law. Effective immediately the
48 addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary
49 for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized
50 to be made and completed on or before such date.