

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section
5 26-1 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/26-1) (from Ch. 122, par. 26-1)

7 Sec. 26-1. Compulsory school age; exemptions.

8 (a) Whoever has custody or control of any child (i)
9 between the ages of 7 and 17 years (unless the child has
10 already graduated from high school) for school years before
11 the 2014-2015 school year or (ii) between the ages of 6 (on or
12 before September 1) and 17 years (unless the child has already
13 graduated from high school) beginning with the 2014-2015
14 school year shall cause such child to attend some public
15 school in the district wherein the child resides the entire
16 time it is in session during the regular school term, except as
17 provided in Section 10-19.1, and during a required summer
18 school program established under Section 10-22.33B; provided,
19 that the following children shall not be required to attend
20 the public schools:

21 1. Any child attending a private or a parochial school
22 where children are taught the branches of education taught
23 to children of corresponding age and grade in the public

1 schools, and where the instruction of the child in the
2 branches of education is in the English language;

3 2. Any child who is physically or mentally unable to
4 attend school, such disability being certified to the
5 county or district truant officer by a competent physician
6 licensed in Illinois to practice medicine and surgery in
7 all its branches, a chiropractic physician licensed under
8 the Medical Practice Act of 1987, a licensed advanced
9 practice registered nurse, a licensed physician assistant,
10 or a Christian Science practitioner residing in this State
11 and listed in the Christian Science Journal; or who is
12 excused for temporary absence for cause by the principal
13 or teacher of the school which the child attends, with
14 absence for cause by illness being required to include the
15 mental or behavioral health of the child for up to 5 days
16 for which the child need not provide a medical note, in
17 which case the child shall be given the opportunity to
18 make up any school work missed during the mental or
19 behavioral health absence and, after the second mental
20 health day used, may be referred to the appropriate school
21 support personnel; the exemptions in this paragraph (2) do
22 not apply to any female who is pregnant or the mother of
23 one or more children, except where a female is unable to
24 attend school due to a complication arising from her
25 pregnancy and the existence of such complication is
26 certified to the county or district truant officer by a

1 competent physician;

2 3. Any child necessarily and lawfully employed
3 according to the provisions of the Child Labor Law of 2024
4 may be excused from attendance at school by the county
5 superintendent of schools or the superintendent of the
6 public school which the child should be attending, on
7 certification of the facts by and the recommendation of
8 the school board of the public school district in which
9 the child resides. In districts having part-time
10 continuation schools, children so excused shall attend
11 such schools at least 8 hours each week;

12 4. Any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in
13 attendance at confirmation classes;

14 5. Any child absent from a public school on a
15 particular day or days or at a particular time of day for
16 the reason that he is unable to attend classes or to
17 participate in any examination, study, or work
18 requirements on a particular day or days or at a
19 particular time of day because of religious reasons,
20 including the observance of a religious holiday or
21 participation in religious instruction, or because the
22 tenets of his religion forbid secular activity on a
23 particular day or days or at a particular time of day. A
24 school board may require the parent or guardian of a child
25 who is to be excused from attending school because of
26 religious reasons to give notice, not exceeding 5 days, of

1 the child's absence to the school principal or other
2 school personnel. Any child excused from attending school
3 under this paragraph 5 shall not be required to submit a
4 written excuse for such absence after returning to school.
5 A district superintendent shall develop and distribute to
6 schools appropriate procedures regarding a student's
7 absence for religious reasons, how schools are notified of
8 a student's impending absence for religious reasons, and
9 the requirements of Section 26-2b of this Code;

10 6. Any child 16 years of age or older who (i) submits
11 to a school district evidence of necessary and lawful
12 employment pursuant to paragraph 3 of this Section and
13 (ii) is enrolled in a graduation incentives program
14 pursuant to Section 26-16 of this Code or an alternative
15 learning opportunities program established pursuant to
16 Article 13B of this Code;

17 7. A child in any of grades 6 through 12 absent from a
18 public school on a particular day or days or at a
19 particular time of day for the purpose of sounding "Taps"
20 at a military honors funeral held in this State for a
21 deceased veteran. In order to be excused under this
22 paragraph 7, the student shall notify the school's
23 administration at least 2 days prior to the date of the
24 absence and shall provide the school's administration with
25 the date, time, and location of the military honors
26 funeral. The school's administration may waive this 2-day

1 notification requirement if the student did not receive at
2 least 2 days advance notice, but the student shall notify
3 the school's administration as soon as possible of the
4 absence. A student whose absence is excused under this
5 paragraph 7 shall be counted as if the student attended
6 school for purposes of calculating the average daily
7 attendance of students in the school district. A student
8 whose absence is excused under this paragraph 7 must be
9 allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed
10 during the absence. If the student satisfactorily
11 completes the school work, the day of absence shall be
12 counted as a day of compulsory attendance and he or she may
13 not be penalized for that absence; and

14 8. Any child absent from a public school on a
15 particular day or days or at a particular time of day for
16 the reason that his or her parent or legal guardian is an
17 active duty member of the uniformed services and has been
18 called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately
19 returned from deployment to a combat zone or
20 combat-support postings. Such a student shall be granted 5
21 days of excused absences in any school year and, at the
22 discretion of the school board, additional excused
23 absences to visit the student's parent or legal guardian
24 relative to such leave or deployment of the parent or
25 legal guardian. In the case of excused absences pursuant
26 to this paragraph 8, the student and parent or legal

1 guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments
2 from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused
3 absence and for ensuring that such assignments are
4 completed by the student prior to his or her return to
5 school from such period of excused absence.

6 (b) As used in this subsection (b), "civic event" means an
7 event sponsored by a nonprofit organization or governmental
8 entity that is open to the public. "Civic event" includes, but
9 is not limited to, an inauguration or an artistic or cultural
10 performance or educational gathering that supports the mission
11 of the sponsoring nonprofit organization. The State Board of
12 Education may adopt rules to further define "civic event". Any
13 child from a public middle school or high school, subject to
14 guidelines established by the State Board of Education, shall
15 be permitted by a school board one school day-long excused
16 absence per school year for the child who is absent from school
17 to engage in a civic event. The school board may require that
18 the student provide reasonable advance notice of the intended
19 absence to the appropriate school administrator and require
20 that the student provide documentation of participation in a
21 civic event to the appropriate school administrator.

22 (Source: P.A. 102-266, eff. 1-1-22; 102-321, eff. 1-1-22;
23 102-406, eff. 8-19-21; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22; 102-981, eff.
24 1-1-23; 103-721, eff. 1-1-25.)