

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4753**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

By Ms. Walz of Boston, for the committee on Education, on Senate, Nos. 245 and 270 and House, Nos. 355 and 363, a Bill Relative to High School Dropouts. June 10, 2010.

FOR THE COMMITTEE:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Martha M. Walz	8th Suffolk

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

\_\_\_\_\_  
In the Year Two Thousand and Ten  
\_\_\_\_\_

## An Act Relative to High School Dropouts.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 1B of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “attendance” in line 114 the following: ; provided, however, that all children under the age of 18 shall be required to attend school if they have not graduated from high school.

SECTION 2. The first sentence of section 1 of chapter 76 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the following words “by the board of education, except a child between fourteen and sixteen who meets the requirements for the completion of the sixth grade of the public school as established by said board and who holds a permit for employment in private domestic service or service on a farm, under section eighty-six of chapter one hundred and forty-nine, and is regularly employed thereunder for at least six hours per day, or a child between fourteen and sixteen who meets said requirements and has the written permission of the superintendent of schools of the town where he resides to engage in non-wage-earning employment at home, or a child over fourteen who holds a permit for employment in a cooperating employment, as provided in said section eighty-six”.

SECTION 3. The first sentence of said section 1 of chapter 76 is hereby further amended by striking out in line 14 the word “said” and inserting in place thereof the word “his”.

SECTION 4. The first sentence of said section 1 of said chapter 76 is hereby further amended by striking out the following words: “or of a child granted an employment permit by the superintendent of schools when such superintendent determines that the welfare of such child will be better served through the granting of such permit”.

SECTION 5. Said section 1 of said chapter 76 is hereby further amended by inserting at the end of the third paragraph the following sentence:- Notwithstanding the expectations that school districts set for student attendance and the manner in which districts hold students accountable for their attendance, each district shall ensure students have the opportunity within the same academic term to make up assignments and earn credits for assignments including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers, and projects missed due to unexcused and excused absences.

SECTION 6. Said section 1 of said chapter 76 is hereby further amended by striking the fourth paragraph.

SECTION 7. Said chapter 76 is hereby amended by adding after section 1A the following new section:-

Section 1B. The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall establish a pupil absence notification program in all schools under its control. The program shall be designed to ensure that each school notifies the parent or guardian of a student's absence if the school has not received notification of the student's absence from the student's parent or guardian within three days of said absence.

Each such school committee shall also develop a policy of notifying the parent or guardian of a student who has 5 or more unexcused absences in a school year. The district notification policy shall include measures to develop a student attendance plan with the student's parent or guardian and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies.

SECTION 8. Section 18 of said chapter 76 is hereby amended by striking out the first three sentences and inserting in place thereof the following:- No student who is 18 years of age or older and who has not graduated from high school shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the school which such student last attended has sent notice within a period of 5 days from the student's tenth consecutive absence to the student and the parent or guardian of such student in both the primary language of such parent or guardian and English, stating that such student and his parent or guardian shall meet with the superintendent or his designee prior to the student permanently leaving school, provided that the meeting shall occur within 10 days after the sending of the notice. The notice shall include information about the benefits of earning a high school diploma and non-traditional educational programs and services available to the student. The time for the meeting may be extended at the request of the parent or guardian, provided no extension shall be for longer than 14 days. The meeting shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and to consider alternative educational or other placements.

SECTION 9. Said section 18 is hereby amended in line 17 by striking "sixteen" and inserting in place thereof the word "eighteen".

SECTION 10. Said chapter 76 is hereby amended by adding after section 20 the following section:-

Section 21. Principals shall ensure that students who are suspended from school for 10 or fewer consecutive days shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during the suspension, including making up assignments and earning credits missed. Principals shall develop an education service plan for students who are suspended from school for more than 10 days and shall ensure these students have an opportunity to make academic progress during the suspension, including making up assignments and earning credits missed. Education service plans may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, alternative placement, Saturday school, and

online or distance learning. The education service plan shall be developed with input from officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies.

Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions, regardless of duration or type, and all permanent exclusions if the student's infraction is unrelated to controlled substances, violence or possession or sale of a firearm. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information.

SECTION 11. Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 12. The department of early education and care shall provide early education and care benefits to parents who are under 18 years of age and currently enrolled in a public school, an alternative education program, or a general educational development testing program and who would qualify for benefits under chapter 118 of the General Laws but for the deeming of the grandparents' income.

SECTION 13. Section 1 shall be effective as of July 1, 2013. From the effective date of this act until June 30, 2011 all children under the age of 16 ½ shall be required to attend school if they have not graduated from high school. From July 1, 2011 until June 30, 2013 all children under the age of 17 shall be required to attend school if they have not graduated from high school.