

## CHAPTER 274

**AN ACT** concerning excused absences from public school for civic events and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.18A:36-33.1 Civic event, defined.

1. As used in this act, “civic event” means an event sponsored by a government entity, a community-based organization, or a nonprofit organization that incorporates elements of service learning whereby students learn and develop through organized service. A civic event shall address an issue of public concern such as community health and safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

C.18A:36-33.2 Public school students attending civic events, one State-excused absence each school year.

2. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, a pupil of a public school in grades six through 12 who is absent from school to attend a civic event shall have one State-excused absence each school year for that purpose recorded as an excused absence on the pupil’s attendance record or on that of any group or class of which the pupil is a member, provided that a written notice signed by a parent or guardian of the pupil is presented to the proper school authority pursuant to subsection b. of this section. A board of education may permit additional excused absences for such purposes. Any transcript, application, employment form, or any similar form on which information concerning a pupil's attendance record is requested shall show, with respect to absences, only absences other than excused absences authorized pursuant to this subsection.

b. The parent or guardian of a pupil shall provide a signed written notice of an intended excused absence to attend a civic event at least five school days in advance of the intended excused absence and such other documentation as the superintendent or administrative principal of the school district deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

C.18A:36-33.3 Commissioner of Education, guidance, excused absences for civic events.

3. a. The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall provide guidance to school districts relative to excused absences for civic events.

b. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 16, 2024.