

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2304

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 21, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Zwicker

SYNOPSIS

Permits excused absences for students who attend civic events.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on May 9, 2022, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/9/2022)

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

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. As used in this act, “civic event” means an event sponsored
9 by a government entity, ¹**the community** a community-based
10 organization¹, or a ¹**local** nonprofit organization ¹**to address**
11 that incorporates elements of service learning whereby students
12 learn and develop through organized service. A civic event shall
13 address¹ an issue of public concern such as community health and
14 safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

15
16 2. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the
17 contrary, a pupil of a public school in grades six through 12 who is
18 absent from school to attend a civic event shall have one ¹State-
19 excused¹ absence each school year for that purpose recorded as an
20 excused absence on the pupil’s attendance record or on that of any
21 group or class of which the pupil is a member ¹, provided that a
22 written notice signed by a parent or guardian of the pupil is
23 presented to the proper school authority pursuant to subsection b. of
24 this section¹. A board of education may permit additional excused
25 absences for such purposes. Any transcript, application,
26 employment form, or any similar form on which information
27 concerning a pupil’s attendance record is requested shall show, with
28 respect to absences, only absences other than excused absences
29 authorized pursuant to this subsection.

30 b. The parent or guardian of a pupil shall provide ¹**at least five**
31 **school days’ notice** a signed written notice of an intended excused
32 absence to attend a civic event at least five school days¹ in advance
33 of the intended excused absence and such ¹other¹ documentation as
34 the superintendent or administrative principal of the school district
35 deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for
36 an excused absence pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

37
38 3. ¹a.¹ The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of
39 the State Board of Education, shall ¹**prescribe rules** provide
40 guidance to school districts¹ relative to ¹excused¹ absences for civic
41 events ¹**including**, but not limited to, a list of civic events where it
42 shall be mandatory to excuse a pupil. Nothing in this section shall
43 be construed to limit the right of a board of education, in its

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **thus** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 9, 2022.

1 discretion, to excuse absences for civic events not included on the
2 list¹.

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

7

8 4. This act shall take effect immediately ¹and shall first apply
9 to the 2023-2024 school year¹.