

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 1318

S.P. 402

In Senate, March 5, 2001

An Act to Improve the Academic Climate in Schools.

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MITCHELL of Penobscot.
Cosponsored by Senators: CARPENTER of York, LEMONT of York, NUTTING of
Androscoggin, Representatives: ESTES of Kittery, FULLER of Manchester, STEDMAN of
Hartland.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

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Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §5001-A, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1983, c. 806, §49, is amended to read:

1. Requirement. Persons ~~7~~ 6 years of age or older and under ~~17~~ 15 years shall attend a public day school during the time it is in regular session.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §5001-A, sub-§2, as amended by PL 1989, c. 415, §13, is further amended to read:

2. Exceptions. Attendance at school ~~shall~~ is not be required of the following:

~~A. A person who graduates from high school before that person's 17th birthday;~~

B. A person who has:

(1) Reached the age of 15 years or completed the 9th grade;

(2) Permission to leave school from that person's parent;

(3) Been approved by the principal for a suitable program of work and study or training;

(4) Permission to leave school from the school board or its designee; and

(5) Agreed in writing with that person's parent and the school board or its designee to meet annually until that person's ~~17th~~ 16th birthday to review that person's educational needs. When the request to be excused from school has been denied pursuant to this paragraph, the student's parent may appeal to the commissioner;

C. A person whose absence is excused under section 5051. The parent of an habitual truant who has been denied a waiver of this paragraph, may appeal to the commissioner in accordance with section 5051, subsection 2, paragraph E; or

D. A person who has matriculated and is attending an accredited, post-secondary, degree-granting institution as a full-time student. An exception to attendance in public school under this paragraph must be approved by the commissioner.

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SUMMARY

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6 This bill changes the compulsory school attendance
6 requirement from 7 years of age or older and under 17 years of
age to 6 years of age or older and under 16 years of age.

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10 This bill improves the academic focus of schools by
10 requiring earlier entry to school. It removes the negativity
associated with the truancy issues of older teens who often
12 detract from the academic atmosphere of the school.