

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1861

H.P. 1191

House of Representatives, May 2, 2023

An Act to Reduce Chronic Student Absenteeism

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


ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ROBERTS of South Berwick.
Cosponsored by Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, MEYER of Eliot, ROEDER of Bangor, SALISBURY of Westbrook.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 211, sub-c. 6** is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 6**

4 **CHRONIC ABSENCE**

5 **§5171. Chronically absent students**

6 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
7 following terms having the following meanings.

8 A. "Absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence,
9 as those terms are defined by the state board by rule.

10 B. "Chronically absent student" means a student who is enrolled in a school under the
11 jurisdiction of a school administrative unit and whose total number of absences at any
12 time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days
13 that that student has been enrolled at that school during that school year.

14 C. "School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent
15 students for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of students
16 enrolled in that school for that school year.

17 D. "Unit chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent
18 students under the jurisdiction of a school administrative unit in the previous school
19 year divided by the total number of students under the jurisdiction of that unit for that
20 school year.

21 **2. School administrative unit.** A school administrative unit that:

22 A. Has a unit chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher shall establish an attendance
23 review team under subsection 3 or establish a committee to review chronic absence for
24 the school administrative unit;

25 B. Has under its jurisdiction a school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15% or
26 higher shall establish an attendance review team under subsection 3 at that school;

27 C. Has under its jurisdiction more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism
28 rate of 15% or higher shall establish an attendance review team under subsection 3 for
29 the school administrative unit or at each such school; or

30 D. Has a unit chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher and has one or more schools
31 under its jurisdiction with a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15% or higher shall
32 establish an attendance review team under subsection 3 for the school administrative
33 unit or at each such school.

34 **3. Attendance review teams.** An attendance review team established under this
35 subsection may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school counselors,
36 school social workers, teachers and representatives from community-based programs who
37 address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to students
38 who are truant and chronically absent students and their parents or guardians. An
39 attendance review team is responsible for reviewing the cases of students who are truant

1 and chronically absent students, discussing school interventions and community referrals
2 for such students who are truant and chronically absent students and making any additional
3 recommendations for such students who are truant and chronically absent students and their
4 parents or guardians. An attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.
5 The attendance review teams established pursuant to this subsection must be established to
6 address chronic absenteeism in the school administrative unit or at the school.

7

SUMMARY

8 This bill requires school administrative units to establish attendance review teams or
9 committees to address chronic absenteeism if chronic absenteeism rates exceed certain
10 levels. An attendance review team may consist of school administrators, guidance
11 counselors, school counselors, school social workers, teachers and representatives from
12 community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing
13 programs and services to students who are truant and chronically absent students and their
14 parents or guardians.