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H.B. 445
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Cutrona and Click

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SUMMARY

- Requires school districts to adopt a policy authorizing students to be excused from school to attend a released time course in religious instruction.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Policy on released time courses in religious instruction

The bill *requires*, instead of *permits*, as under current law, school district boards of education to adopt a policy authorizing students to attend a released time course in religious instruction conducted by a private entity off school district property during regular school hours. The bill maintains existing requirements for such a policy.¹

Background

Current law permits a board of education to adopt a policy that authorizes students to attend a released time course in religious instruction during regular school hours. Under law unchanged by the bill, excuses from school under a released time policy are to be granted only if all of the following conditions are met:²

1. The student's parent or guardian provides written consent;
2. The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the student's school district;
3. The sponsoring entity, parent, guardian, or student, including a student with disabilities, takes complete responsibility for transportation to and from the place of instruction;

¹ R.C. 3313.6022.

² R.C. 3313.6022(B).

4. The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student;
5. No public funds are spent and no public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction; and
6. The student assumes responsibility for any missed schoolwork.

Additionally, under law unchanged by the bill, a student may not be released from a core curriculum subject course to attend a religious instruction course. Schools cannot consider students attending a released time course in religious instruction to be absent from school during such instruction.

Law unchanged by the bill also addresses the ability to earn high school credit for released time religious instruction and grants school districts, members of boards of education, and district employees immunity from liability in a civil action for injuries allegedly arising during a student's transportation to or from a place of instruction when private transportation is used under a released time policy.³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-12-24

ANHB0445IN-135/ts

³ R.C. 3313.6022(C) and (D).