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Office

S.B. 157
133rd General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Williams

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SUMMARY

- Reduces the timeframe within which a public district must contact a parent, guardian, or caretaker of a student who is absent from school without legitimate excuse from 120 to 60 minutes of the start of the school day.
- Permits the Department of Education to assess a penalty against an individual, school district, or building that fails to notify a parent, guardian, or caretaker of a student absent from school without legitimate excuse.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

The bill

The bill requires public schools (school districts, brick-and-mortar community schools, and STEM schools) to notify parents when their children do not show up for school within 60 minutes after the start of each school day, rather than 120 minutes as under current law. Under current law, a school must make at least one attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caretaker of any student who is absent without legitimate excuse.

The bill also permits the Department of Education to impose a penalty as it determines appropriate against an individual, school district, or building if an attendance officer, attendance officer's assistant, or any other person the attendance officer designates to take attendance fails to comply with the notification requirements.¹

¹ R.C. 3321.141(C).

Background

Under continuing law, a school must make at least one attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caretaker of any student who is absent without legitimate excuse, using one of the following methods:

1. An actual or automated telephone call;
2. A notification sent through the school's automated student information system;
3. A text message;
4. An email;
5. An actual visit to the student's residence; or
6. Any other method adopted by resolution of the district or school's governing board or authority.²

If a school uses an automated calling system, it must include verification that each call is actually placed, and either the call was answered by the intended recipient or the system leaves a voicemail containing notice of the student's absence.

These provisions do not apply to students participating in off-campus activities, including the College Credit Plus program. It also does not apply to those receiving home-based, online, or Internet- or computer-based instruction.

Continuing law provides a qualified immunity in a civil action for money damages to a school district or school, the members of the district board or school governing authority, or the district's or school's officers or employees for injury, death, or other loss allegedly arising from good faith compliance with the act's notification procedures.³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-29-19

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² R.C. 3321.141. Applies to community schools and STEM schools through references in R.C. 3314.03 and 3326.11, neither in the bill.

³ R.C. 3314.13, not in the bill, 3321.141(C), and 3326.90, not in the bill.