

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 151
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/5/19
Third Edition Engrossed 4/16/19

Short Title: Katelyn's Law.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 25, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT RULES
EXCUSING ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING A LEGISLATIVE EVENT OR
VISITING THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ENSURING THAT
CERTAIN EXCUSED ABSENCES DO NOT AFFECT A STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION
IN AN APPROVED ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as "Katelyn's Law" and may be cited by that name.

SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-379 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-379. Method of enforcement.

(a) Rules. – It shall be the duty of the State Board of Education to formulate the rules that may be necessary for the proper enforcement of the provisions of this Part. The Board shall prescribe (i) what shall constitute unlawful absence, (ii) what causes may constitute legitimate excuses for temporary nonattendance due to a student's physical or mental inability to attend or a student's participation in a valid educational opportunity such as service as a legislative page or a Governor's page, opportunity, and (iii) under what circumstances teachers, principals, or superintendents may excuse pupils for nonattendance due to immediate demands of the farm or the home in certain seasons of the year in the several sections of the State.

(b) Excused Absences. – The rules shall at least require school principals to authorize excused absences as follows:

(1) ~~a~~ A minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of a student or the student's parents.

(2) For attending a legislative event or visiting the North Carolina General Assembly for any purpose, including service as a legislative page.

(c) Advance Notice and Missed Work. – The rules may require that the student's parents give the principal written notice of the request for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to ~~the religious observance.~~ the absence. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused ~~absence for a religious observance.~~ absence.

(d) Duties of School Officials. – It shall be the duty of all school officials to carry out such instructions from the State Board of Education, and any school official failing to carry out such instructions shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor: Provided, that the compulsory attendance law herein prescribed shall not be in force in any local school administrative unit that has a higher compulsory attendance feature than that provided herein."

SECTION 3. G.S. 115C-382.5 reads as rewritten:



1 **"§ 115C-382.5. Student attendance recognition programs.**

2 Local boards of education are encouraged to adopt a student attendance recognition program
3 within the local school administrative unit to promote student attendance in school and
4 participation in class as an integral part of academic achievement and the learning process. If the
5 local board of education adopts a student attendance recognition program, a student with an
6 absence resulting from service as a ~~legislative page~~ or a Governor's page or because of an excused
7 absence identified in G.S. 115C-379(b)(2) shall be eligible for participation in the program and
8 the student's absence shall not be included as part of the student's record of attendance for the
9 purposes of the program."

10 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
11 the 2019-2020 school year.