

1 AN ACT

2 relating to public school attendance requirements for students
3 diagnosed with or undergoing related treatment for severe or
4 life-threatening illnesses.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as Riley's Rule.

7 SECTION 2. Section 25.087(b), Education Code, is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 (b) A school district shall excuse a student from attending
10 school for:

11 (1) the following purposes, including travel for those
12 purposes:

13 (A) observing religious holy days;

14 (B) attending a required court appearance;

15 (C) appearing at a governmental office to
16 complete paperwork required in connection with the student's
17 application for United States citizenship;

18 (D) taking part in a United States naturalization
19 oath ceremony;

20 (E) serving as an election clerk; or

21 (F) if the student is in the conservatorship of
22 the Department of Family and Protective Services, participating, as
23 determined and documented by the department, in an activity:

24 (i) ordered by a court under Chapter 262 or

1 263, Family Code, provided that it is not practicable to schedule
2 the participation outside of school hours; or

3 (ii) required under a service plan under
4 Subchapter B, Chapter 263, Family Code; ~~or~~

5 (2) a temporary absence resulting from an appointment
6 with health care professionals for the student or the student's
7 child if the student commences classes or returns to school on the
8 same day of the appointment; or

9 (3) an absence resulting from a serious or
10 life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the
11 student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's
12 parent or guardian provides a certification from a physician
13 licensed to practice medicine in this state specifying the
14 student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's
15 absence relating to the illness or related treatment.

16 SECTION 3. Section 25.0915(a-3), Education Code, is amended
17 to read as follows:

18 (a-3) A school district shall offer additional counseling
19 to a student and may not refer the student to truancy court under
20 this section, Section 25.0951, or any other provision if the school
21 determines that the student's truancy is the result of:

22 (1) pregnancy;

23 (2) being in the state foster program;

24 (3) homelessness; ~~or~~

25 (4) severe or life-threatening illness or related
26 treatment; or

27 (5) being the principal income earner for the

1 student's family.

2 SECTION 4. Section 25.092, Education Code, is amended by
3 adding Subsection (a-3) to read as follows:

4 (a-3) A student's excused absence under Section
5 25.087(b)(3) may not be considered in determining whether the
6 student has satisfied the attendance requirement under Subsection
7 (a) or (a-1).

8 SECTION 5. This Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022
9 school year.

10 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 699 was passed by the House on April 7, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 147, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 699 on May 20, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 699 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 17, 2021, by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor