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LAW/RWH

P.L.2012, CHAPTER 74, *approved December 3, 2012*
Assembly, No. 1902

1 **AN ACT** concerning communication between parents and school
2 administrators on pupil absences and supplementing chapter 36
3 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as "Tabitha's
9 Law."

10
11 2. The Legislature finds and declares that when a child is
12 abducted, the first few hours are absolutely critical in the recovery
13 process; that the unexplained absence of a pupil from school can be
14 a significant early warning sign of abduction; that although stranger
15 abductions are rare, an efficient system of communication between
16 school administrators and parents regarding a student's unexplained
17 absence must be incorporated by our public school districts into
18 their attendance systems; and that the benefits of this requirement
19 will be realized even if only one child is saved as a result.

20
21 3. a. Whenever a pupil enrolled in a public school district will
22 be absent from school, the pupil's parent or guardian shall notify the
23 principal or the principal's designee.

24 b. If a pupil is determined to be absent without valid excuse
25 from a public school, and if the reason for the student's absence is
26 unknown to school personnel, the principal or the principal's
27 designee shall immediately attempt to contact the pupil's parent or
28 guardian to notify the parent or guardian of the absence and to
29 determine the reason for the absence.

30
31 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

32
33
34 _____
35
36 "Tabitha's Law"; requires parent or guardian to notify school
37 administrators if pupil will be absent; requires school to notify
38 parent in event of unexcused pupil absence.

ASSEMBLY, No. 1902

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 215th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2012 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman SCOTT T. RUMANA

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Assemblyman PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Caputo

SYNOPSIS

"Tabitha's Law"; requires parent or guardian to notify school administrators if pupil will be absent; requires school to notify parent in event of unexcused pupil absence.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



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34 STATEMENT
35

36 On the morning of April 29, 2003, 13-year-old Nashville,
37 Tennessee student, Tabitha Tudor, did not show up for school.
38 Although school administrators had received no notification from
39 Tabitha's parents that she would be absent that day, the school
40 failed to alert the Tudors of their daughter's unexplained absence.
41 As a result, her parents did not learn that Tabitha was missing until
42 after her father arrived home at 4:45 p.m. Due to the delay, law
43 enforcement officials and Tabitha's parents lost an entire day before
44 their search could begin. Tabitha is still missing.

45 This bill requires parents to notify school administrators
46 whenever their child will be absent from school, and requires
47 administrators to contact parents whenever a pupil is absent without
48 the parent's having provided prior notice. The first few hours of a

- 1 child abduction are the most vital to the recovery process. Tabitha's
- 2 Law is intended to help provide an early warning trigger during that
- 3 critical time.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1902

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 14, 2012

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1902.

This bill requires parents to notify school administrators whenever their child will be absent from school, and requires administrators to contact parents whenever a pupil is absent without the parent's having provided prior notice.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1902

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 24, 2012

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 1902.

This bill requires parents to notify school administrators whenever their child will be absent from school, and requires administrators to contact parents whenever a pupil is absent without the parent's having provided prior notice.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 721, which also was reported by the committee on this same date.

SENATE, No. 721

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 215th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2012 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator KEVIN J. O'TOOLE

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator A.R.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

"Tabitha's Law"; requires parent or guardian to notify school administrators if pupil will be absent; requires school to notify parent in event of unexcused pupil absence.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/29/2012)

S721 O'TOOLE

2

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S721 O'TOOLE

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SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 721

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 24, 2012

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 721.

This bill requires parents to notify school administrators whenever their child will be absent from school, and requires administrators to contact parents whenever a pupil is absent without the parent's having provided prior notice.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 1902, which also was reported by the committee on this same date.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2012-2013 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.