
Appropriations Committee

HB 2259

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to compulsory school attendance.

Sponsors: Representatives Sommers and Fromhold.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes truancy petitions under the Becca statutes permissive rather than mandatory.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Bernard Dean (786-7130).

Background:

In accordance with the Becca statutes, if a school district is unsuccessful in reducing student absences, the district must file a truancy petition in juvenile court against a student who has seven unexcused absences in any month or 10 unexcused absences in a given school year. If a school district fails to file such a petition, the parent of a child with five or more unexcused absences in any month, or upon 10 unexcused absences in a given school year, may file a truancy petition with a juvenile court. Truancy petitions are one of three petitions that can be filed under the Becca statutes. School districts and juvenile courts are authorized to create community truancy boards to assist in improving school attendance.

The Governor's 2003-05 biennium budget proposal assumes a general fund savings of \$7.1 million from the elimination of the truancy petition requirements.

Summary of Bill:

All statutes relating to filing truancy petitions under the Becca statutes are made permissive, rather than mandatory, and the operation of community truancy boards is made subject to available funds. Additionally, school districts may file truancy petitions after five unexcused absences in any month during the school year. Mandatory truancy reporting requirements are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 2003.