

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 26, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1014**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Thurmond**

February 26, 2015

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*An act to add Section 48270 to the Education Code, relating to pupils, and making an appropriation therefor.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1014, as amended, Thurmond. Pupils: ~~truancy.~~ *truancy: Our Children's Success—The Early Intervention Attendance Grant Program.*

Existing law requires a pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse 3 full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the schoolday without a valid excuse on 3 occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, to be classified as a truant. Existing law requires, upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, a school district to notify the pupil's parent or guardian of specified information using the most cost-effective method possible.

This bill would ~~state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would recognize and resolve the current school truancy crisis, help facilitate the return of chronically absent children to consistent and enduring school attendance, and recognize the importance of foundational education in the early years. The bill would also make various findings and declarations regarding truancy. The bill would establish~~ *Our Children's Success—The Early Intervention Attendance Grant Program under the administration of the State Department of Education. The program would provide grants to applicant public*

*schools seeking to resolve the attendance problems of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive. The bill would provide that public schools maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 3, inclusive, could apply for grants under the program. The bill would require the applications for grants submitted by schools to the department to reflect a plan including specified components.*

*The bill would require the department to give priority to applicant schools that have prioritized pupil engagement in their local control and accountability plans. The bill would appropriate an unspecified sum from an unspecified source to the department for purposes of implementing the bill.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: ~~no~~-yes. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~ yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the of
- 2 the following:
- 3 (a) Only 17 percent of chronically absent kindergartners and
- 4 first graders in California read proficiently by grade 3 and pupils
- 5 who do not read proficiently by grade 3 are four times more likely
- 6 to drop out of school. Children who drop out of school cost the
- 7 state more than \$46 billion each year, including more than \$1
- 8 billion in juvenile crime costs alone.
- 9 (b) Ninety percent of elementary school pupils with severe
- 10 attendance problems, missing 36 or more days in the school year,
- 11 are estimated to be from low-income families.
- 12 (c) In the 2013–14 school year, 250,000 elementary school
- 13 pupils and 1 in 10 pupils from low-income families were
- 14 chronically absent, missing 10 percent or more of the school year.
- 15 (d) In the 2013–14 school year, African American elementary
- 16 school pupils were the highest subgroup, including homeless pupils,
- 17 to be truant and these pupils are chronically truant at four times
- 18 the rate of all other pupils.
- 19 (e) In the 2012–13 school year, one in five, or 744,085,
- 20 elementary school pupils were truant, an increase of 1.2 percent
- 21 from the 2011–12 school year.
- 22 (f) In the 2010–11 school year, California schools lost \$1.4
- 23 billion in average daily attendance funding due to pupil absences

1 and California school districts have lost over \$3.5 billion between  
2 the 2010–11 and 2013–14 school years.

3 ~~SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation~~  
4 ~~that would do both of the following:~~

5 ~~(a) Recognize and resolve the current school truancy crisis and~~  
6 ~~help facilitate the return of chronically absent children to consistent~~  
7 ~~and enduring school attendance.~~

8 ~~(b) Recognize the importance of foundational education in the~~  
9 ~~early years by focusing on the chronically absent kindergarten and~~  
10 ~~grades 1 to 3, inclusive, aged children.~~

11 *SEC. 2. Section 48270 is added to the Education Code, to read:*

12 *48270. (a) Our Children’s Success—The Early Intervention*  
13 *Attendance Grant Program is hereby established under the*  
14 *administration of the department. This grant program is established*  
15 *for the purpose of helping public schools resolve the attendance*  
16 *problems of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.*  
17 *This grant program shall be implemented upon the appropriation*  
18 *of sufficient funding under Section 3 of the act that added this*  
19 *section.*

20 *(b) A public school maintaining kindergarten or any of grades*  
21 *1 to 3, inclusive, seeking to participate in the grant program*  
22 *established by this section may apply to the department for a grant*  
23 *pursuant to this section. An application submitted by a public*  
24 *school to the department under this subdivision shall reflect a plan*  
25 *that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all of the following*  
26 *components:*

27 *(1) Establishment of a training program for key school officials*  
28 *and attendance staff to identify pupils with chronic attendance*  
29 *problems upon their second occurrence of tardiness or absence*  
30 *in a school year, and the mailing of attendance letters to the pupil’s*  
31 *home in a timely manner.*

32 *(2) Establishment of a phone call outreach program, including*  
33 *a minimum of two calls from a school official, not limited to a*  
34 *recording, to follow up on those pupils whose attendance problems*  
35 *continue during that school year after the attendance letters are*  
36 *mailed.*

37 *(3) Establishment of a parent advocate position or positions,*  
38 *designated for ongoing follow-up with the pupil and the parent*  
39 *throughout the school year to ensure the pupil’s continued*  
40 *consistent school attendance. The number of these parent advocate*

1 *positions may vary according to the school's needs, resources,*  
2 *and the parent advocate's ability to manage the workload.*

3 *(4) Establishment of an outreach worker position or positions*  
4 *whose primary job is assisting families with a child or children*  
5 *who have ongoing chronic attendance problems. The duties of an*  
6 *outreach worker include sending letters, making phone calls and*  
7 *home visits, and helping to connect the family to the appropriate*  
8 *local, state, or federal programs in order to resolve issues that*  
9 *are creating impediments to the child's consistent attendance in*  
10 *school. The number of these outreach worker positions can vary*  
11 *according to the school's needs, resources, and the outreach*  
12 *worker's ability to manage the workload.*

13 *(5) Determining that the applicant school's plan is instituted,*  
14 *to the best of the school's ability, before a pupil enters the school*  
15 *attendance review board process.*

16 *(6) Establishment of a plan for teacher follow-up with pupils*  
17 *with chronic attendance problems to make up for lost instructional*  
18 *time.*

19 *(7) Establishment of a plan to track pupil attendance and*  
20 *aggregate data on tardiness and attendance throughout the school*  
21 *year to determine whether improvement has been made.*

22 *(c) In evaluating applications for grants under this section, the*  
23 *department shall give priority to applicant schools that have*  
24 *prioritized pupil engagement in their local control and*  
25 *accountability plans adopted pursuant to Section 52060.*

26 *(d) The grant program established by this section shall not be*  
27 *construed as a replacement of, or a substitution for, the school*  
28 *attendance review board process as described in this article.*

29 *SEC. 3. The sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$\_\_\_\_\_) is hereby*  
30 *appropriated to the State Department of Education for purposes*  
31 *of implementing Our Children's Success--The Early Intervention*  
32 *Attendance Grant Program, as established in Section 48270 of the*  
33 *Education Code. It is the intent of the Legislature that the funds*  
34 *appropriated under this section be drawn from sources that may*  
35 *include, but are not necessarily limited to, the General Fund, the*  
36 *Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund established by Proposition*  
37 *47 on the November 2014 statewide general election ballot, federal*

- 1 *and local government funds, and contributions from nonprofit*
- 2 *organizations and other private entities.*

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