

Four Bills Affecting Student Attendance Requirements

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In October 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom signed four new bills into law that amend existing sections of the Education Code to extend excused absences related to attending religious retreats (AB 1503) and funeral services of immediate family members (SB 350), extend the time to determine an interdistrict transfer appeal (SB 413), and grant homeless and foster youth priority access to intersession programs (AB 373).

Assembly Bill 1503 – Excused Absences for Religious Retreats

Existing law permits excused absences to attend a religious retreat for up to four hours per semester. Assembly Bill (AB) 1503 amends Education Code section 48205 to expand a student’s allowed excused absence to attend a religious retreat to one full day per semester. The student’s parent or guardian must request the excused absence in writing, and the principal or designated representative must approve.

Senate Bill 350 – Excused Absences for Funeral and Grief Support Services

Similarly, Senate Bill (SB) 350 extends a student’s permitted absence to attend the funeral services of an immediate family member from one day for an in-state service and three days for an out-of-state service to no more than five days regardless of the location of the funeral. This expansion aims to give students additional time to grieve. In addition, SB 350 allows for excused absences of up to three days for a student to access victim or grief support services or participate in safety planning as it relates to the death of the student’s immediate family member.

Senate Bill 413 – Interdistrict Attendance Appeals

SB 413 amends Education Code section 46601 to authorize county boards of education in Class 1 or Class 2 counties, in certain circumstances, to extend the time to determine a parent’s interdistrict transfer appeal from 30 days to up to 60 days. Class 1 and 2 counties are counties with 1994/95 countywide ADA of 180,000 or more. This change provides parents more time to prepare for the complex appeals process, while also providing county boards more flexibility in scheduling appeals hearings.

Assembly Bill 373 – Priority Access to Intersession Programs for Foster and Homeless Youth

AB 373 amends Education Code section 48850 to grant homeless and foster children priority access to school intersession programs. This bill extends the existing priority enrollment for homeless and foster youth for after school programs to intersession programs.

Intersession programs are expanded learning programs offered on non-school days to provide academic remediation, enrichment, and engaging activities. Intersession programs do not include extended school year programs for individuals with exceptional needs. If a homeless or foster child moves during an intersession, the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder determines which school the student will attend for the intersession.

Takeaways

AB 1503, SB 350, SB 413, and AB 373 went into effect on January 1, 2024. School districts and county boards should review and update existing board policies and administrative regulations to reflect the changes made by these attendance bills.

If you have any questions regarding these four bills or student attendance in general, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also subscribe to our [podcasts](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or download our [mobile app](#).

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