

Legislation Text

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Urging the School District of Philadelphia and the State Board of Education to temporarily suspend the requirement to provide a doctor's note after 3 days of absence during the coronavirus outbreak.

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus, a global pandemic yesterday on March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, The disease now spans 114 countries, with the United States being one of eight countries reporting over 1,000 cases; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia reported its first case of COVID-19 on March 10, 2020 and surrounding suburbs and states have reported dozens more; and

WHEREAS, The University of Pennsylvania and Temple University have announced the closure of their respective campuses for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, with all classes moving to online and alternative learning formats; and

WHEREAS, Thus far, the School District of Philadelphia and the State Board of Education have released no plan to cease operations due to the COVID-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS, During this period of heightened concern, parents should be granted greater authority to make decisions concerning their child's attendance at school; and

WHEREAS, Health officials have asked those feeling ill to be abundantly cautious and stay home for as long as necessary; and

WHEREAS, Currently, however, the School District of Philadelphia mandates a doctor's note after 3 or more consecutive absences; and

WHEREAS, Obtaining a doctor's note can be a challenge for many families in Philadelphia whether they be uninsured or working multiple jobs; and

WHEREAS, Particularly during a global pandemic, we should relax student absence requirements as to allow parents greater authority over their child's well-being without fear of penalty, and to protect students, teachers and staff from potentially infected students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the School District of Philadelphia and the State Board of Education to temporarily suspend the requirement to provide a doctor's note after 3 days of absence during the coronavirus outbreak