

1002.20 - K-12 student and parent rights

Effective July 1, 2023 (Last updated 2023)

The following statutes are with regards to student and parent rights.

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1002/Sections/1002.20.html

1002.20 K-12 student and parent rights.

Parents of public school students must receive accurate and timely information regarding their child's academic progress and must be informed of ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory rights including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.—

In accordance with s. 1, Art. IX of the State Constitution, all K-12 public school students are entitled to a uniform, safe, secure, efficient, and high quality system of education, one that allows students the opportunity to obtain a high quality education. Parents are responsible to ready their children for school; however, the State of Florida cannot be the guarantor of each individual student's success.

(2) ATTENDANCE.—

(a) Compulsory school attendance.—The compulsory school attendance laws apply to all children between the ages of 6 and 16 years, as provided in s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a), and, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a):

1. A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year has the right to file a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment if the declaration is signed by the parent. The parent has the right to be notified by the school district of the district's receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.
2. Students who become or have become married or who are pregnant and parenting have the right to attend school and receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other students.

(b) Regular school attendance.—Parents of students who have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year but who have not attained the age of 16 years must comply with the compulsory school attendance laws. Parents have the option to comply with the school attendance laws by attendance of the student in a public school; a parochial, religious, or denominational school; a private school; a home education program; or a private tutoring program, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.01(16).

(c) Absence for religious purposes.—A parent of a public school student may request and be granted permission for absence of the student from school for religious instruction or religious holidays, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.21(2)(b)1.

(d) Absence for treatment of autism spectrum disorder.—A parent of a public school student may request and be granted permission for absence of the student from school for an appointment scheduled to receive a therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to s. 393.17 for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder pursuant to ss. 1003.21(2)(b)2. and 1003.24(4).

(e) Dropout prevention and academic intervention programs.—The parent of a public school student has the right to receive written notice by certified mail prior to placement of the student in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program and shall be notified in writing and entitled to an administrative review of any action by school personnel relating to the student's placement, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.53(5).

(3) HEALTH ISSUES.—

(a) School-entry health examinations.—The parent of any child attending a public or private school shall be exempt from the requirement of a health examination upon written request stating objections on religious grounds in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.22(1) and (2).

(b) Immunizations.—The parent of any child attending a public or private school shall be exempt from the school immunization requirements upon meeting any of the exemptions in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.22(5).

(c) Biological experiments.—Parents may request that their child be excused from performing surgery or dissection in biological science classes in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.47.

(d) Reproductive health and disease education.—A public school student whose parent makes written request to the school principal shall be exempted from the teaching of reproductive health or any disease, including HIV/AIDS, in accordance with s. 1003.42(5).

1. Each school district shall, on the district's website homepage, notify parents of this right and the process to request an exemption. The homepage must include a link for a student's parent to access and review the instructional materials, as defined in s. 1006.29(2), used to teach the curriculum.

2. Each school district shall annually review and confirm that the information provided on the district's website homepage under subparagraph 1. is accurate and up to date and shall notify parents by physical or electronic means any time revisions are made to such information.

(e) Contraceptive services to public school students.—In accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.062(7), students may not be referred to or offered contraceptive services at school facilities without the parent's consent.

(f) Career education courses involving hazardous substances.—High school students must be given plano safety glasses or devices in career education courses involving the use of hazardous substances likely to cause eye injury.

(g) Substance abuse reports.—The parent of a public school student must be timely notified of any verified report of a substance abuse violation by the student, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.09(8).

(h) Inhaler use.—Asthmatic students whose parent and physician provide their approval to the school principal may carry a metered dose inhaler on their person while in school. The school principal shall be provided a copy of the parent's and physician's approval.

(i) Epinephrine use and supply.—

1. A student who has experienced or is at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions may carry an epinephrine auto-injector and self-administer epinephrine by auto-injector while in school, participating in school-sponsored activities, or in transit to or from school or school-sponsored

activities if the school has been provided with parental and physician authorization. The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Health, shall adopt rules for such use of epinephrine auto-injectors that shall include provisions to protect the safety of all students from the misuse or abuse of auto-injectors. A school district, county health department, public-private partner, and their employees and volunteers shall be indemnified by the parent of a student authorized to carry an epinephrine auto-injector for any and all liability with respect to the student's use of an epinephrine auto-injector pursuant to this paragraph.

2. A public school may purchase a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors from a wholesale distributor as defined in s. 499.003 or may enter into an arrangement with a wholesale distributor or manufacturer as defined in s. 499.003 for the epinephrine auto-injectors at fair-market, free, or reduced prices for use in the event a student has an anaphylactic reaction. The epinephrine auto-injectors must be maintained in a secure location on the public school's premises. The participating school district shall adopt a protocol developed by a licensed physician for the administration by school personnel who are trained to recognize an anaphylactic reaction and to administer an epinephrine auto-injection. The supply of epinephrine auto-injectors may be provided to and used by a student authorized to self-administer epinephrine by auto-injector under subparagraph 1. or trained school personnel.

3. The school district and its employees, agents, and the physician who provides the standing protocol for school epinephrine auto-injectors are not liable for any injury arising from the use of an epinephrine auto-injector administered by trained school personnel who follow the adopted protocol and whose professional opinion is that the student is having an anaphylactic reaction:

a. Unless the trained school personnel's action is willful and wanton;

b. Notwithstanding that the parents or guardians of the student to whom the epinephrine is administered have not been provided notice or have not signed a statement acknowledging that the school district is not liable; and

c. Regardless of whether authorization has been given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

(j) Diabetes management.—A school district may not restrict the assignment of a student who has diabetes to a particular school on the basis that the student has diabetes, that the school does not have a full-time school nurse, or that the school does not have trained diabetes personnel. Diabetic students whose parent and physician provide their written authorization to the school principal may carry diabetic supplies and equipment on their person and attend to the management and care of their diabetes while in school, participating in school-sponsored activities, or in transit to or from school or school-sponsored activities to the extent authorized by the parent and physician and within the parameters set forth by State Board of Education rule. The written authorization shall identify the diabetic supplies and equipment that the student is authorized to carry and shall describe the activities the child is capable of performing without assistance, such as performing blood-glucose level checks and urine ketone testing, administering insulin through the insulin-delivery system used by the student, and treating hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia. The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Health, shall adopt rules to encourage every school in which a student with diabetes is enrolled to have personnel trained in routine and emergency diabetes care. The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Health, shall also adopt rules for the management and care of diabetes by students in schools that include provisions to protect the safety of all students from the misuse or abuse of diabetic supplies or equipment. A school district, county health department, and public-private partner, and the employees and volunteers of those entities, shall be indemnified by the parent of a student authorized to carry diabetic supplies or equipment for any and all liability with respect to the student's use of such supplies and equipment pursuant to this paragraph.

(k) Use of prescribed pancreatic enzyme supplements.—A student who has experienced or is at risk for pancreatic insufficiency or who has been diagnosed as having cystic fibrosis may carry and self-administer a prescribed pancreatic enzyme supplement while in school, participating in school-sponsored activities, or

in transit to or from school or school-sponsored activities if the school has been provided with authorization from the student's parent and prescribing practitioner. The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Health, shall adopt rules for the use of prescribed pancreatic enzyme supplements which shall include provisions to protect the safety of all students from the misuse or abuse of the supplements. A school district, county health department, public-private partner, and their employees and volunteers shall be indemnified by the parent of a student authorized to use prescribed pancreatic enzyme supplements for any and all liability with respect to the student's use of the supplements under this paragraph.

(l) Notification of involuntary examinations.—

1. Except as provided in subparagraph 2., the public school principal or the principal's designee shall make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of a student before the student is removed from school, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity to be taken to a receiving facility for an involuntary examination pursuant to s. 394.463. For purposes of this subparagraph, "a reasonable attempt to notify" means the exercise of reasonable diligence and care by the principal or the principal's designee to make contact with the student's parent, guardian, or other known emergency contact whom the student's parent or guardian has authorized to receive notification of an involuntary examination. At a minimum, the principal or the principal's designee must take the following actions:

a. Use available methods of communication to contact the student's parent, guardian, or other known emergency contact, including, but not limited to, telephone calls, text messages, e-mails, and voice mail messages following the decision to initiate an involuntary examination of the student.

b. Document the method and number of attempts made to contact the student's parent, guardian, or other known emergency contact, and the outcome of each attempt.

A principal or his or her designee who successfully notifies any other known emergency contact may share only the information necessary to alert such contact that the parent or caregiver must be contacted. All such information must be in compliance with federal and state law.

2. The principal or the principal's designee may delay the required notification for no more than 24 hours after the student is removed if:

a. The principal or the principal's designee deems the delay to be in the student's best interest and a report has been submitted to the central abuse hotline, pursuant to s. 39.201, based upon knowledge or suspicion of abuse, abandonment, or neglect; or

b. The principal or principal's designee reasonably believes that such delay is necessary to avoid jeopardizing the health and safety of the student.

3. Before a principal or his or her designee contacts a law enforcement officer, he or she must verify that de-escalation strategies have been utilized and outreach to a mobile response team has been initiated unless the principal or the principal's designee reasonably believes that any delay in removing the student will increase the likelihood of harm to the student or others. This requirement does not supersede the authority of a law enforcement officer to act under s. 394.463.

Each district school board shall develop a policy and procedures for notification under this paragraph.

(m) Sun-protective measures in school.—A student may possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the product is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-

counter use to limit ultraviolet light-induced skin damage.

(n) Face covering mandates and quarantine mandates in response to COVID-19.—

1. A district school board, a district school superintendent, an elected or appointed local official, or any district school board employee may not:

a. Require a student to wear a face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that fits over the mouth or nose. However, a parent, at the parent's sole discretion, may allow his or her child to wear a face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that fits over the mouth or nose. This prohibition does not apply to safety equipment required as part of a course of study consistent with occupational or laboratory safety requirements.

b. Prohibit a student from attending school or school-sponsored activities, prohibit a student from being on school property, or subject a student to restrictions or disparate treatment, based on an exposure to COVID-19, so long as the student remains asymptomatic and has not received a positive test for COVID-19 as defined in s. 381.00319(1).

A parent of a student, a student who is an emancipated minor, or a student who is 18 years of age or older may bring an action against the school district to obtain a declaratory judgment that an act or practice violates this subparagraph and to seek injunctive relief. A prevailing parent or student, as applicable, must be awarded reasonable attorney fees and court costs.

2. A district school board, a district school superintendent, an elected or appointed local official, or any school district employee may not prohibit an employee from returning to work or subject an employee to restrictions or disparate treatment based on an exposure to COVID-19 so long as the employee remains asymptomatic and has not received a positive test for COVID-19 as defined in s. 381.00319(1).

(o) Naloxone use and supply.—

1. A public school may purchase a supply of the opioid antagonist naloxone from a wholesale distributor as defined in s. 499.003 or may enter into an arrangement with a wholesale distributor or manufacturer as defined in s. 499.003 for naloxone at fair-market, free, or reduced prices for use in the event that a student has an opioid overdose. The naloxone must be maintained in a secure location on the public school's premises.

2. A school district employee who administers an approved emergency opioid antagonist to a student in compliance with ss. 381.887 and 768.13 is immune from civil liability under s. 768.13.

(p) Use and possession of headache medications.—A student may possess and use a medication to relieve headaches while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the medication is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use to treat headaches.

(4) DISCIPLINE.—

(a) Suspension of public school student.—In accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.09(1)-(4):

1. A student may be suspended only as provided by rule of the district school board. A good faith effort must be made to immediately inform the parent by telephone of the student's suspension and the reason. Each suspension and the reason must be reported in writing within 24 hours to the parent by United States mail. A good faith effort must be made to use parental assistance before suspension unless the situation requires immediate suspension.

2. A student with a disability may only be recommended for suspension or expulsion in accordance with State Board of Education rules.

(b) Expulsion.—Public school students and their parents have the right to written notice of a recommendation of expulsion, including the charges against the student and a statement of the right of the student to due process, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.08(1).

(c) Corporal punishment.—

1. In accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.32, corporal punishment of a public school student may only be administered by a teacher or school principal within guidelines of the school principal and according to district school board policy. Another adult must be present and must be informed in the student's presence of the reason for the punishment. Upon request, the teacher or school principal must provide the parent with a written explanation of the reason for the punishment and the name of the other adult who was present.

2. A district school board having a policy authorizing the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline shall review its policy on corporal punishment once every 3 years during a district school board meeting held pursuant to s. 1001.372. The district school board shall take public testimony at the board meeting. If such board meeting is not held in accordance with this subparagraph, the portion of the district school board's policy authorizing corporal punishment expires.

(5) SAFETY.—

In accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.13(6), students who have been victims of certain felony offenses by other students, as well as the siblings of the student victims, have the right to be kept separated from the student offender both at school and during school transportation.

(6) EDUCATIONAL CHOICE.—

(a) Public educational school choices.—Parents of public school students may seek any public educational school choice options that are applicable and available to students throughout the state. These options may include controlled open enrollment, single-gender programs, lab schools, virtual instruction programs, charter schools, charter technical career centers, magnet schools, alternative schools, special programs, auditory-oral education programs, advanced placement, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate, International General Certificate of Secondary Education (pre-AICE), CAPE digital tools, CAPE industry certifications, early college programs, Advanced International Certificate of Education, early admissions, credit by examination or demonstration of competency, the New World School of the Arts, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Florida Virtual School. These options may also include the public educational choice options of the Opportunity Scholarship Program and the McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program.

(b) Private educational choices.—Parents of public school students may seek private educational choice options under certain programs established under this chapter.

(c) Home education.—The parent of a student may choose to place the student in a home education program in accordance with the provisions of s. 1002.41.

(d) Private tutoring.—The parent of a student may choose to place the student in a private tutoring program in accordance with the provisions of s. 1002.43(1).

(7) NONDISCRIMINATION.—

All education programs, activities, and opportunities offered by public educational institutions must be made available without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, or marital status, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1000.05.

(8) STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.—

Parents of public school students with disabilities and parents of public school students in residential care facilities are entitled to notice and due process in accordance with the provisions of ss. 1003.57 and 1003.58. Public school students with disabilities must be provided the opportunity to meet the graduation requirements for a standard high school diploma as set forth in s. 1003.4282 in accordance with the provisions of ss. 1003.57 and 1008.22.

(9) BLIND STUDENTS.—

Blind students have the right to an individualized written education program and appropriate instructional materials to attain literacy, in accordance with provisions of s. 1003.55.

(10) LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS.—

In accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.56, limited English proficient students have the right to receive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instruction designed to develop the student's mastery of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English as rapidly as possible, and the students' parents have the right of parental involvement in the ESOL program.

(11) STUDENTS WITH READING AND MATHEMATICS DEFICIENCIES.—

The parent of any K-3 student who exhibits a substantial reading deficiency or the characteristics of dyslexia pursuant to s. 1008.25(5) or any K-4 student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in mathematics or the characteristics of dyscalculia pursuant to s. 1008.25(6) shall be immediately notified of the student's deficiency and consulted in the development of a plan, as described in s. 1008.25(4)(b).

(12) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.—

A public school student must be excused from reciting the pledge of allegiance upon written request by the student's parent, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.44.

(13) STUDENT RECORDS.—

(a) Parent rights.—Parents have rights regarding the student records of their children, including right of access, right of waiver of access, right to challenge and hearing, and right of privacy, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1002.22.

(b) Student rights.—In accordance with the provisions of s. 1008.386, a student is not required to provide his or her social security number as a condition for enrollment or graduation.

(14) STUDENT REPORT CARDS.—

Students and their parents have the right to receive student report cards on a regular basis that clearly depict and grade the student's academic performance in each class or course, the student's conduct, and the student's attendance, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.33.

(15) STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS.—

Parents of public school students shall be apprised at regular intervals of the academic progress and other needed information regarding their child, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.02(1)(h)2.

(16) SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RATING REPORTS; FISCAL TRANSPARENCY.—

Parents of public school students have the right to an easy-to-read report card about the school's grade designation or, if applicable under s. 1008.341, the school's improvement rating, and the school's accountability report, including the school financial report as required under s. 1010.215. The school financial report must be provided to the parents and indicate the average amount of money expended per student in the school, which must also be included in the student handbook or a similar publication.

(17) ATHLETICS; PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL.—

(a) Eligibility.—Eligibility requirements for all students participating in high school athletic competition must allow a student to be immediately eligible in the school in which he or she first enrolls each school year, the school in which the student makes himself or herself a candidate for an athletic team by engaging in practice before enrolling, or the school to which the student has transferred, in accordance with s. 1006.20(2)(a).

(b) Medical evaluation.—Students must satisfactorily pass a medical evaluation each year before participating in athletics, unless the parent objects in writing based on religious tenets or practices, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.20(2)(d).

(18) EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.—

In accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.15:

(a) Eligibility.—Students who meet specified academic and conduct requirements are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

(b) Home education students.—Home education students who meet specified academic and conduct requirements are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the public school to which the student would be assigned or could choose to attend according to district school board policies, or may develop an agreement to participate at a private school.

(c) Charter school students.—Charter school students who meet specified academic and conduct requirements are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the public school to which the student would be assigned or could choose to attend according to district school board policies, or may develop an agreement to participate at a private school, unless such activity is provided by the student's charter school.

(d) Florida Virtual School full-time students.—Florida Virtual School full-time students who meet specified academic and conduct requirements are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the public school to which the student would be assigned or could choose to attend according to district school board policies, or may develop an agreement to participate at a private school.

(e) Discrimination prohibited.—Organizations that regulate or govern extracurricular activities of public schools shall not discriminate against any eligible student based on an educational choice of public, private, or home education.

(19) INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.—

(a) Core courses.—Each public school student is entitled to sufficient instructional materials in the core courses of mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, reading, and literature, in accordance with the provisions of ss. 1003.02(1)(d) and 1006.40(2).

(b) Curricular objectives.—The parent of each public school student has the right to receive effective communication from the school principal as to the manner in which instructional materials are used to implement the school's curricular objectives, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.28(4)(a).

(c) Sale of instructional materials.—Upon request of the parent of a public school student, the school principal must sell to the parent any instructional materials used in the school, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1006.28(4)(c).

(d) Dual enrollment students.—Instructional materials purchased by a district school board or Florida College System institution board of trustees on behalf of public school dual enrollment students shall be made available to the dual enrollment students free of charge, in accordance with s. 1007.271(17).

(20) JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS.—

Students who are in juvenile justice programs have the right to receive educational programs and services in accordance with the provisions of s. 1003.52.

(21) PARENTAL INPUT AND MEETINGS.—

(a) Meetings with school district personnel.—Parents of public school students may be accompanied by another adult of their choice at a meeting with school district personnel. School district personnel may not object to the attendance of such adult or discourage or attempt to discourage, through an action, statement, or other means, the parents of students with disabilities from inviting another person of their choice to attend a meeting. Such prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, attempted or actual coercion or harassment of parents or students or retaliation or threats of consequences to parents or students.

1. Such meetings include, but are not limited to, meetings related to: the eligibility for exceptional student education or related services; the development of an individual family support plan (IFSP); the development of an individual education plan (IEP); the development of a 504 accommodation plan issued under s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the transition of a student from early intervention services to other services; the development of postsecondary goals for a student with a disability and the transition services needed to reach those goals; and other issues that may affect the educational environment, discipline, or placement of a student with a disability.

2. The parents and school district personnel attending the meeting shall sign a document at the meeting's conclusion which states whether any school district personnel have prohibited, discouraged, or attempted to discourage the parents from inviting a person of their choice to the meeting.

(b) District school board educational facilities programs.—Parents of public school students and other members of the public have the right to receive proper public notice and opportunity for public comment regarding the district school board's educational facilities work program, in accordance with the provisions of s. 1013.35.

(22) TRANSPORTATION.—

(a) Transportation to school.—Public school students shall be provided transportation to school, in accordance with s. 1006.21(3)(a). Public school students may be provided transportation to school in accordance with the controlled open enrollment provisions of s. 1002.31(2).

(b) Hazardous walking conditions.—K-6 public school students shall be provided transportation if they are subjected to hazardous walking conditions, in accordance with the provisions of ss. 1006.21(3)(b) and 1006.23.

(c) Parental consent.—Each parent of a public school student must be notified in writing and give written consent before the student may be transported in a privately owned motor vehicle to a school function.

(23) ORDERLY, DISCIPLINED CLASSROOMS.—

Public school students shall be in orderly, disciplined classrooms conducive to learning without the distraction caused by disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students, in accordance with s. 1003.32.

(24) ECONOMIC SECURITY REPORT.—

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and annually thereafter, each middle school and high school student or the student's parent prior to registration shall be provided a two-page summary of the Department of Economic Opportunity's economic security report of employment and earning outcomes prepared pursuant to s. 445.07 and electronic access to the report.

(25) SAFE SCHOOLS.—

(a) School safety and emergency incidents.—Parents of public school students have a right to timely notification of threats, unlawful acts, and significant emergencies pursuant to s. 1006.07(4) and (7).

(b) School environmental safety incident reporting.—Parents of public school students have a right to access school safety and discipline incidents as reported pursuant to s. 1006.07(9).

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