

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1763 (Lee) – As Introduced February 9, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill adds observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student’s religion to the list of reasons that a student must be excused from school.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Potential Proposition 98 General Fund (GF) savings of an unknown, potentially significant amount, possibly in the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars, to the extent students who otherwise would have attended school do not attend school because of this measure. Savings at the state level would result from a redirection of funds from local educational agencies (LEAs) that would no longer generate state funding for students not attending school because of this measure.

LEAs receive an average of approximately \$13,700 in general purpose education funding annually per student, almost exclusively derived from average daily attendance (ADA). If 0.05% of the state’s student population of about 5.8 million students were absent for one school day they otherwise would not have been absent, Proposition 98 GF costs savings to the state would be about \$221 thousand while LEAs serving those students would lose, on aggregate, a like amount.

If the Commission on State Mandates determines the bill’s requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs either directly to LEAs or through the K-12 Mandates Block Grant.

COMMENTS:

When a student is absent from school or tardy by 30 minutes without a valid excuse, the absence is known as an “unexcused absence.” When a student has three unexcused absences in a school year, the student is considered truant. Laws governing truancy, including interventions and fines to parents, apply to these students.

When a student is absent from school with a valid excuse, the absence is known as an “excused absence.” Current law defines various reasons a student may be excused from school, including illness, funerals of immediate family, cultural ceremonies, naturalization ceremonies, and medical appointments. It also lists “justifiable personal reasons” including, but not limited to, appearance in court, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student’s religion, and attendance at religious retreats. However, excuses covered under the justifiable personal reasons

provision must be requested by the student's parent or guardian and approved by the principal or designated representative. This bill would provide the observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student's religion as an automatically approved valid absence excuse. Because schools are funded based on attendance, both an unexcused absence and an excused absence result in a loss of funding to an LEA equivalent to the number of days a student is absent.

Prior Legislation. AB 516 (Megan Dahle), Chapter 281, Statutes of 2021, added participation in a cultural ceremony or event to the list of reasons that a student must be excused from school.

AB 1593 (Oberholte), Chapter 92, Statutes of 2016, added a student's attendance at their naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen to the list of excused absences.

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