

2023 Kansas Statutes

72-3120. Compulsory school attendance; exemptions. (a) Subject to the other provisions of this section, every parent or person acting as parent in the state of Kansas, who has control over or charge of any child who has reached the age of seven years and is under the age of 18 years and has not attained a high school diploma, a general educational development credential or a high school equivalency credential, shall require such child to be regularly enrolled in and attend continuously each school year:

(1) A public school for the duration of the school term provided for in K.S.A. 72-3115, and amendments thereto;

(2) a private, denominational or parochial school taught by a competent instructor for a period of time which is substantially equivalent to the period of time public school is maintained in the school district in which the private, denominational or parochial school is located; or

(3) a combination of a public school and a private, denominational or parochial school for the periods of time referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) If the child is 16 or 17 years of age, the child shall be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of this section if:

(1) The child is regularly enrolled in and attending a program recognized by the local board of education as an approved alternative educational program;

(2) the parent or person acting as parent provides written consent to allow the child to be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of this section and the child and the parent or person acting as parent attend a final counseling session conducted by the school during which a disclaimer to encourage the child to remain in school or to pursue educational alternatives is presented to and signed by the child and the parent or person acting as parent. The disclaimer shall include information regarding the academic skills that the child has not yet achieved, the difference in future earning power between a high school graduate and a high school drop out and a listing of educational alternatives that are available for the child;

(3) the child is regularly enrolled in a school as required by subsection (a) and is concurrently enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution, as defined by K.S.A. 74-3201b, and amendments thereto; or

(4) the child is subject to a court order that allows or requires the child to be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements.

(c) Any child who is under the age of seven years, but who is enrolled in school, shall be subject to the compulsory attendance requirements of this section. Any such child may be withdrawn from enrollment in school at any time by a parent or person acting as parent of the child and thereupon the child shall be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of this section until the child reaches the age of seven years or is re-enrolled in school.

(d) Any child who is determined to be an exceptional child, except for an exceptional child who is determined to be a gifted child, under the provisions of the special education for exceptional children act shall be subject to the compulsory attendance requirements of such act and exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of this section.

(e) Any child who has been admitted to, and is attending, the Kansas academy of mathematics and science, as provided in K.S.A. 72-3903 et seq., and amendments thereto, shall be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of this section.

(f) No child attending public school in this state shall be required to participate in any activity which is contrary to the religious teachings of the child if a written statement signed by one of the parents or a person acting as parent of the child is filed with the proper authorities of the school attended requesting that the child not be required to participate in such activities and stating the reason for the request.

(g) When a recognized church or religious denomination that objects to a regular public high school education provides, offers and teaches, either individually or in cooperation with another recognized church or religious denomination, a regularly supervised program of instruction that is approved by the state board of education,

for children of compulsory school attendance age who have successfully completed the eighth grade, participation in such a program of instruction by any such children whose parents or persons acting as parents are members of the sponsoring church or religious denomination shall be regarded as acceptable school attendance within the meaning of this act. Approval of such programs shall be granted by the state board of education, for two-year periods, upon application from recognized churches and religious denominations, under the following conditions:

- (1) Each participating child shall be engaged, during each day on which attendance is legally required in the public schools in the school district in which the child resides, in at least five hours of learning activities appropriate to the adult occupation that the child is likely to assume in later years;
- (2) acceptable learning activities, for the purposes of this subsection, shall include projects supervised by a parent or person acting as parent in agriculture and homemaking, work-study programs in cooperation with local business and industry and correspondence courses from schools accredited by the national home study council, recognized by the United States office of education as the competent accrediting agency for private home study schools;
- (3) at least 15 hours per week of classroom work under the supervision of an instructor shall be provided, at which time students shall be required to file written reports of the learning activities they have pursued since the time of the last class meeting, indicating the length of time spent on each one, and the instructor shall examine and evaluate such reports, approve plans for further learning activities and provide necessary assignments and instruction;
- (4) regular attendance reports shall be filed as required by law and students shall be reported as absent for each school day on which they have not completed the prescribed minimum of five hours of learning activities;
- (5) the instructor shall keep complete records concerning instruction provided, assignments made and work pursued by the students, and these records shall be filed on the first day of each month with the state board of education and the board of education of the school district in which the child resides;
- (6) the instructor shall be capable of performing competently the functions entrusted thereto; and
- (7) in applying for approval under this subsection a recognized church or religious denomination shall certify its objection to a regular public high school education and shall specify, in such detail as the state board of education may reasonably require, the program of instruction that it intends to provide and no such program shall be approved unless it fully complies with standards specified by the state board of education.

If the sponsors of an instructional program approved under this subsection fail to comply at any time with the provisions of this subsection, the state board of education shall rescind, after a written warning has been served and a period of three weeks allowed for compliance, approval of the programs, even though the two-year approval period has not elapsed, and thereupon children attending such program shall be admitted to a high school of the school district.

(h) (1) Each board of education of a school district shall allow any child to enroll part-time in the school district to allow the student to attend any courses, programs or services offered by the school district if the child:

- (A) Is also enrolled in a nonaccredited private elementary or secondary school pursuant to K.S.A. 72-4345, and amendments thereto, or in any other private, denominational or parochial school pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a);
- (B) requests to enroll part-time in the school district; and
- (C) meets the age of eligibility requirements for school attendance pursuant to K.S.A. 72-3118, and amendments thereto.

(2) Each board of education of a school district shall adopt a policy regarding the part-time enrollment of students pursuant to this subsection and shall publish such policy on the school district's website. The board of education of a school district shall make a good faith attempt to accommodate scheduling requests of students enrolling in the school district pursuant to this subsection but shall not be required to make adjustments to accommodate every such request.

(i) As used in this section:

(1) "Educational alternatives" means an alternative learning plan for the student that identifies educational programs that are located in the area where the student resides and are designed to aid the student in obtaining a high school diploma, general educational development credential or other certification of completion, such as a career technical education industry certification. Such alternative learning plans may include extended learning opportunities such as independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships and online coursework.

(2) "Parent" and "person acting as parent" mean the same as such terms are defined in K.S.A. 72-3122, and amendments thereto.

(3) "Regularly enrolled" means enrolled in five or more hours of instruction each school day. For the purposes of subsection (b)(3), hours of instruction received at a postsecondary educational institution shall be counted.

History: L. 1874, ch. 123, § 1; L. 1903, ch. 423, § 1; L. 1919, ch. 272, § 1; L. 1923, ch. 182, § 1; R.S. 1923, 72-4801; L. 1965, ch. 409, § 1; L. 1968, ch. 356, § 1; L. 1969, ch. 316, § 1; L. 1976, ch. 310, § 1; L. 1980, ch. 217, § 3; L. 1984, ch. 263, § 1; L. 1996, ch. 229, § 121; L. 1997, ch. 157, § 1; Revived and amended, L. 2004, ch. 185, § 1; L. 2008, ch. 118, § 1; L. 2012, ch. 76, § 1; L. 2022, ch. 94, § 14; July 1.