

HB 1573 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

5Mar2026... 0396h
05/07/2026 1729s
4Jun2026... 2166EBA

2026 SESSION

26-2868
12/06

HOUSE BILL **1573**

AN ACT permitting excused absences for student participation in certain activities and mandating the state board of education to grant school reassignment requests for students demonstrating a manifest educational hardship.

SPONSORS: Rep. Thibault, Merr. 25; Rep. Drye, Sull. 7; Rep. Farrington, Straf. 8; Rep. Freeman, Belk. 8; Rep. Harvey-Bolia, Belk. 3; Rep. Litchfield, Rock. 32; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 4; Rep. Wheeler, Hills. 33; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18

COMMITTEE: Education Policy and Administration

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill:

I. Permits excused absences for students that are participating in civic engagement activities and career or technical education (CTE) activities so long as parental notice is provided to schools and other requirements are met.

II. Directs the state board of education to develop rules, a list of recognized CTE organizations, and alternative academic credits relative to participation in civic or CTE activities.

III. Mandates that the state board of education, on appeal, grant a parent's or guardian's request to re-assign their student to another public school, public academy, or an approved private school where such parent or guardian demonstrates the student has a manifest educational hardship.

IV. Adds a statutory cross-reference to the exceptions for legal residence requirements relative to school attendance.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
 Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through]~~.
 Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

HB 1573 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

5Mar2026... 0396h
05/07/2026 1729s
4Jun2026... 2166EBA

26-2868
12/06

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT permitting excused absences for student participation in certain activities and
mandating the state board of education to grant school reassignment requests for
students demonstrating a manifest educational hardship.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities. Amend
2 RSA 193 by inserting after section 1-c the following new section:

3 193:1-d Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities.

4 I. Students in public or public charter primary or secondary schools who wish to attend civic
5 events during the school day shall have their school absences excused.

6 II. For the purposes of this section:

7 (a) "Civic event" means:

8 (1) Any event, activity, hearing, or meeting held by a federal, state, county, or local
9 government office, agency, or body; or

10 (2) Any educational program, competition, or award ceremony sponsored or hosted
11 by a patriotic or national organization, listed in 36 U.S.C., Subtitle II, Part B.

12 (b) "Career or technical education event," or "CTE event," means:

13 (1) State, regional, or national competitions or conferences sponsored by CTE
14 student organizations recognized by the state board of education pursuant to RSA 186:11, XXXVIII;

15 (2) Agricultural fairs where students are exhibiting livestock or project work; or

16 (3) Individual job shadows or workplace observations of no more than one school day
17 per employer.

18 III. Schools shall be required to excuse 2 of a student's school day absences per academic
19 year for civic or CTE events.

20 (a) This paragraph shall not preclude schools from excusing further absences at their
21 own discretion.

22 (b) Participation in activities related to statutory or executive New Hampshire youth
23 advisory councils, either as a member or a guest, shall supersede this paragraph and shall always be
24 excused.

25 (c) Students attending multi-day civics or CTE programs may have absences for such
26 programs excused with proof of attendance.

27 (d) Nothing in this section shall prevent schools from requiring students to complete
28 schoolwork missed due to an excused absence.

HB 1573 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

- Page 2 -

1 (e) Except as provided under paragraph III(b), students seeking more than 2 excused
2 absences per academic year for ongoing participation in the same civic or CTE activity shall enroll in
3 an extended learning opportunity. All absences to engage in an extended learning opportunity plan
4 approved by the student's school shall be excused, contingent on the student completing any
5 schoolwork missed.

6 IV. Schools may require students provide evidence of attendance of the activity they claim
7 participation in to verify the justification of the absence. Such evidence may include:

8 (a) A form created by the school and signed by an official of the activity, such as a New
9 Hampshire house or senate committee clerk or other government staffer, or event official; or

10 (b) A letter of excusal signed by a government or event official.

11 V. In addition to the requirements outlined in paragraph III, parents shall submit a notice
12 to school administrators no less than two school days before their student intends to be absent to
13 attend a civic or CTE event, with the exception of election days.

14 2 New Paragraph; Duties of the State Board of Education. Amend RSA 186:11 by inserting
15 after paragraph XXXVII the following new paragraph:

16 XXXVIII. Civic and Career Technical Education. The state board of education shall develop
17 and maintain rules pursuant to RSA 193:1-d civic and CTE events, such as testifying on legislation;
18 serving on membership on statutory or executive New Hampshire youth advisory councils; and
19 attending local government meetings or hearings, to count as alternative academic credit in public,
20 public charter, and private secondary schools that serve as public schools under RSA 193:3, VII,
21 including fulfillment of the civic education graduation requirement. In addition, the board shall
22 develop and maintain a list of recognized career and technical education organizations that shall be
23 used to determine if an absence shall be excused under RSA 193:1-d, II(b)(1). The initial list of
24 recognized career and technical education organizations shall include, at minimum: 4-H; Future
25 Farmers of America (FFA); Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA); SkillsUSA; Future Health
26 Professionals (HOSA); DECA; and the Technology Student Association (TSA). This list shall be
27 reviewed annually and shared with school administrators.

28 3 New Subparagraph; Change of School or Assignment; Best Interest of Student; Manifest
29 Educational Hardship; Procedure for Appeals Modified. Amend RSA 193:3, II by inserting after
30 subparagraph (g) the following new subparagraphs:

31 (1) Pursuant to this subparagraph, if the state board of education finds that the
32 student has a manifest educational hardship, the state board of education shall grant the parent's or
33 guardian's request to re-assign the student to another public school, public academy, or an approved
34 private school within the district, or to a public school, public academy, or an approved private school
35 in another district.

HB 1573 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

- Page 3 -

(2) The student shall be enrolled in the receiving public school, public academy, or approved private school, subject only to the limitations set forth in RSA 193:3, III-a(d) and the admission requirements described in RSA 193:3, III-a(f).

4 School Attendance; Legal Residence Required; Exceptions; Cross-Reference Added. Amend RSA 193:12, I to read as follows:

I. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall attend school, or send a pupil to the school, in any district of which the pupil is not a legal resident, without the consent of the district or of the school board except as otherwise provided in this section, ***RSA 193:3***, or ~~in~~ RSA 193:28.

5 New Paragraph; Duties of the State Board of Education. Amend RSA 186:11 by inserting after paragraph XXXVIII the following new paragraph:

XXXIX. Civic and Career Technical Education. The state board of education shall develop and maintain rules pursuant to RSA 193:1-d civic and CTE events, such as testifying on legislation; serving on membership on statutory or executive New Hampshire youth advisory councils; and attending local government meetings or hearings, to count as alternative academic credit in public, public charter, and private secondary schools that serve as public schools under RSA 193:3, VII, including fulfillment of the civic education graduation requirement. In addition, the board shall develop and maintain a list of recognized career and technical education organizations that shall be used to determine if an absence shall be excused under RSA 193:1-d, II(b)(1). The initial list of recognized career and technical education organizations shall include, at minimum: 4-H; Future Farmers of America (FFA); Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA); SkillsUSA; Future Health Professionals (HOSA); DECA; and the Technology Student Association (TSA). This list shall be reviewed annually and shared with school administrators.

6 New Section; Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities. Amend RSA 193 by inserting after section 1-c the following new section:

193:1-d Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities.

I. Students in public or public charter primary or secondary schools who wish to attend civic events during the school day shall have their school absences excused.

II. For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Civic event" means:

(1) Any event, activity, hearing, or meeting held by a federal, state, county, or local government office, agency, or body; or

(2) Any educational program, competition, or award ceremony sponsored or hosted by a patriotic or national organization, listed in 36 U.S.C., Subtitle II, Part B.

(b) "Career or technical education event," or "CTE event," means:

(1) State, regional, or national competitions or conferences sponsored by CTE student organizations recognized by the state board of education pursuant to RSA 186:11, XXXIX;

- 1 (2) Agricultural fairs where students are exhibiting livestock or project work; or
2 (3) Individual job shadows or workplace observations of no more than one school day
3 per employer.

4 III. Schools shall be required to excuse 2 of a student's school day absences per academic
5 year for civic or CTE events.

6 (a) This paragraph shall not preclude schools from excusing further absences at their
7 own discretion.

8 (b) Participation in activities related to statutory or executive New Hampshire youth
9 advisory councils, either as a member or a guest, shall supersede this paragraph and shall always be
10 excused.

11 (c) Students attending multi-day civics or CTE programs may have absences for such
12 programs excused with proof of attendance.

13 (d) Nothing in this section shall prevent schools from requiring students to complete
14 schoolwork missed due to an excused absence.

15 (e) Except as provided under paragraph III(b), students seeking more than 2 excused
16 absences per academic year for ongoing participation in the same civic or CTE activity shall enroll in
17 an extended learning opportunity. All absences to engage in an extended learning opportunity plan
18 approved by the student's school shall be excused, contingent on the student completing any
19 schoolwork missed.

20 IV. Schools may require students provide evidence of attendance of the activity they claim
21 participation in to verify the justification of the absence. Such evidence may include:

22 (a) A form created by the school and signed by an official of the activity, such as a New
23 Hampshire house or senate committee clerk or other government staffer, or event official; or

24 (b) A letter of excusal signed by a government or event official.

25 V. In addition to the requirements outlined in paragraph III, parents shall submit a notice
26 to school administrators no less than two school days before their student intends to be absent to
27 attend a civic or CTE event, with the exception of election days.

28 7 Contingency. If HB 1448 of the 2026 regular legislative session becomes law, sections 1 and 2
29 of this act shall not take effect and sections 5 and 6 of this act shall take effect upon its passage. If
30 HB 1448 of the 2026 regular legislative session does not become law, sections 1 and 2 of this act shall
31 take effect upon its passage and sections 5 and 6 of this act shall not take effect.

32 8 Effective Date.

33 I. Sections 1, 2, 5, and 6 of this act shall take effect as provide in section 7 of this act.

34 II. The remainder of this act shall take effect upon its passage.