



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Truancy is a growing problem in the Chicago Public School system;
and

WHEREAS, In the 2010-2011 school year, the most recent school year for which information is available, it is estimated that 13 percent of the city's roughly 250,000 children in grades kindergarten through eighth grade missed four weeks or more of school; and

WHEREAS, Although the Chicago Public Schools has a Department of Attendance and Truancy to seek ways of encouraging children to attend school, truant officers were eliminated two decades ago due to budget cuts; and

WHEREAS, There are serious consequences that follow from children not attending school. School funding is linked to the number of students who attend school each day. The Chicago Public School system could lose significant funding due to poor attendance. Additionally, when children miss school, especially in the early grades, they fall behind their classmates who attend school on a regular basis. This further discourages children from attending school as they get older, since they find school to be too complex. Additionally, when children aren't in school, many of them tend to fall into the gang culture; and

WHEREAS, Other school districts across the Nation have addressed the issue of truancy in their school systems by identifying the causes of truancy and taking corrective actions to promote higher attendance; and

WHEREAS, Issues which have been linked to truancy across the Nation have included: bullying, which intimidates students and discourages them from going to school on a regular basis; not having a safe route to school on days in which gang shootings have occurred recently; a household environment which does not encourage children to attend school on a regular basis; not being able to keep up with the class work due to falling behind in the early grades due to truancy; and not being able to attend school on inclement days due to lack of proper attire such as a pair of boots, a winter coat or an umbrella; and

WHEREAS, School districts around the country have issued municipal tickets to parents whose children do not attend school on a regular basis. The mere threat of having to make a court appearance has been linked to an increase in attendance; and

WHEREAS, The re-establishment of truant officers should be thoroughly considered as a tool to help promote education for our children, who are our most precious resource; and

WHEREAS, The problem of truancy is a serious one facing the City of Chicago and needs our careful attention; now, therefore,

1

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this thirteenth day of February, 2013, do hereby call upon representatives of the Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Police to appear before the City Council Committee on Education and Child Development to discuss truancy in the Chicago Public Schools and ways to remedy the problem, and to explore the viability and advisability of re-establishing truant officers towards that end.

2