

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Antonio F. D. Cabral*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to require school attendance up to age 18 or until graduation.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>1/14/2025</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

[Pin Slip]

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3811 OF 2023-2024.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act to require school attendance up to age 18 or until graduation.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 An Act to reform school attendance age

2 SECTION 1. Section 1 of chapter 76 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022  
3 Official Edition, is hereby amended by:

4 (a) striking out, in lines 1 to 2, the words “between the minimum and maximum ages  
5 established for school attendance by the board of education” and inserting in place thereof the  
6 following words:

7 “ages of 6 and 18, having completed at least the twelfth grade, high school equivalency  
8 test, or whichever comes first”.; and

9 (b) inserting after the word “herewith”, in line 58, the following words:

10           “, provided that no student over the age of 16 shall face criminal penalties for failure to  
11 attend school through the mandatory age for school attendance”.

12           SECTION 2. Section 1B of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
13 amended by inserting before the period, in line 120, the following words:

14           “, provided, however, that all children under the age of 18 shall be required to attend  
15 school if they have not graduated from high school or completed the high school equivalency  
16 test”.

17           SECTION 3. Chapter 76 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
18 inserting after section 21 the following section:

19           Section 22. Commission to Study Barriers to High School Graduation.

20           (a)     Establishment of Commission. There shall be a special commission, referred to as  
21 the ‘High School Graduation Commission’. Said commission shall—

22           (1)     investigate and study barriers to high school graduation; and

23           (2)     make recommendations regarding the identification of students at risk of dropping  
24 out of high school and the targeting of services and programs that will ensure all students can  
25 graduate from high school.

26           (b)     Members.

27           (1)     The commission shall be chaired by the secretary of education or the secretary’s  
28 designee.

29           (2)     The commissioner of the department of higher education or the commissioner's  
30     designee and the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education or the  
31     commissioner's designee shall each be members.

32           (3)     The governor shall appoint 4 members, one of whom shall be nominated by the  
33     Massachusetts Teachers Association and one of whom shall be nominated by the American  
34     Federation of Teachers of Massachusetts.

35           (4)     The speaker of the house shall appoint one member and the senate president shall  
36     appoint one member.

37           (c)     Reporting Requirements. The commission shall report its findings and any  
38     legislation necessary to implement said findings to the governor, the clerks of the senate and  
39     house of representatives, the senate and house of representatives committees on ways and means,  
40     the senate and house of representatives committees on education, six months upon effective date  
41     of the act. The commission report shall include but not be limited to: an analysis of the student  
42     populations who are at the highest risk of dropping out, mechanisms to identify students who are  
43     at risk of dropping out, barriers to high school graduation and evidence based services that  
44     reduce and eliminate barriers to high school graduation. In making its recommendations the  
45     commission shall consider among other issues—

46           (1)     grades, attendance patterns, disciplinary issues, family and environmental factors,  
47     breaks or gaps in education, teen parenthood, limited English proficiency and disabilities that  
48     may indicate a student is at risk of not completing high school;

49           (2)     mechanisms and information technology that can be used to identify students at  
50     risk of dropping out and track students' progress once identified;

- 51           (3)     appropriate benchmarks for periodic review of students' progress;
- 52           (4)     wrap around support services designed to effectively target and alleviate or  
53 eliminate barriers for students completing high school;
- 54           (5)     methods to reengage students who have left school;
- 55           (6)     dedicated tutoring and academic services for students who have gaps in education  
56 as a result of moving, illness, absences, disciplinary issues or immigration;
- 57           (7)     emotional support services and resources for students at risk of dropping out; and
- 58           (8)     recommendations for mechanisms to emphasize the importance of high school  
59 graduation for all students.

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61           SECTION 4. Sections 1 to 3 of this Act shall become effective on the next school year  
62 calendar after passage.