

SENATE No. 361

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Barry R. Finegold

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 providing for a study of chronic student absences.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Barry R. Finegold

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Essex and Middlesex

SENATE No. 361

By Mr. Finegold, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 361) of Barry R. Finegold for legislation to conduct a study into the causes and remedies for frequent student absences in the public schools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act providing for a study of chronic student absences.

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

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department
2 of elementary and secondary education shall conduct a study into the causes of and remedies for
3 frequent student absences in the public schools of the commonwealth. The study shall include,
4 but not be limited to, an analysis of: (i) disparities, if any, in rates of absenteeism based on
5 region, socioeconomic status or student age; (ii) disparities, if any, in rates of absenteeism
6 between students enrolled in a career pathway program, as opposed to a program of general
7 education; (iii) common causes of absences among students missing not less than 7 school days
8 in an academic year; and (iv) causes of absences, if any, that are specific to the commonwealth
9 or individual regions of the commonwealth. As part of the study, the department shall consult
10 with the department of transitional assistance, the department of children and families, the
11 Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, the
12 Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, public school districts located in gateway
13 cities and public school districts with above average student populations missing not less than 10

14 per cent of school days according to the most recent end of year attendance report compiled by
15 the department. The department shall report on its findings and submit any recommendations to
16 the clerks of the house and senate and the joint committee on education no later than 180 days
17 after enactment; provided, however, that the secretary of education may grant up to 1 extension
18 of not more than 90 days.

19 SECTION 2. Section 1 shall take effect upon enactment.