

CHAPTER 74

AN ACT concerning communication between parents and school administrators on pupil absences and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.18A:36-25.4 Short title.

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as "Tabitha's Law."

C.18A:36-25.5 Findings, declarations relative to child abduction.

2. The Legislature finds and declares that when a child is abducted, the first few hours are absolutely critical in the recovery process; that the unexplained absence of a pupil from school can be a significant early warning sign of abduction; that although stranger abductions are rare, an efficient system of communication between school administrators and parents regarding a student's unexplained absence must be incorporated by our public school districts into their attendance systems; and that the benefits of this requirement will be realized even if only one child is saved as a result.

C.18A:36-25.6 Report of absence.

3. a. Whenever a pupil enrolled in a public school district will be absent from school, the pupil's parent or guardian shall notify the principal or the principal's designee.

- b. If a pupil is determined to be absent without valid excuse from a public school, and if the reason for the student's absence is unknown to school personnel, the principal or the principal's designee shall immediately attempt to contact the pupil's parent or guardian to notify the parent or guardian of the absence and to determine the reason for the absence.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved December 3, 2012.