



# Quincy School District 144 - 101

*Improving the Life Choices for All Students*

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## Truancy and Understanding the "Becca Bill"

### Truancy

In our state, the law requires that children ages 6 to 17, who are enrolled in public schools, attend school Monday through Friday, unless there is a good reason for being absent. In this case, the parent or legal guardian must excuse the absence by notifying the school. When students miss school and their parents have not excused the absence, they can be considered truant. Truancy is defined as being absent from school or from the majority of a student's classes without a valid excuse.

School districts around the state have different rules and regulations about student attendance and how parents should excuse absences. Be sure to read the attendance policies in your school district and discuss them with your student.

### The Becca Bill

The "Becca Bill" (SB 5439) is our state's truancy law. It is intended to stop truancy before it becomes a problem. Schools and families should work together as a team to ensure school attendance and student safety. However, if a student has unexcused absences, this law requires that schools and school districts take the following actions:

1. **One (1) unexcused absence.** The school must inform the parent when there is one unexcused absence. This is often done by a phone call home.
2. **Three (3) unexcused absences.** After the third unexcused absence, the school is required to schedule a meeting with the parent/legal guardian and student to discuss the causes of the unexcused absences and find solutions to prevent further absences. This is a team effort.
3. **Five (5) unexcused absences within 30 days.** The school must enter into a written truancy agreement with the family, where the parent, student and school agree on the necessary steps to resolve the student's attendance problem.
4. **Seven (7) unexcused absences during a month and no later than the fifteenth (15th) unexcused absence within a school year.** The school district will file a petition in juvenile court to order the student to attend school and will be referred to a \*Community Engagement Board. If this court order is violated, the court will call for a Contempt Hearing and the student could be ordered to do community service or a community purge. The parent may be fined up to \$25.00 for each day of unexcused absence.

\***Community Engagement Board** is an established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between a juvenile court and a school district. The board is composed of members of the community and school officials who help resolve truancy cases away from the court.

### Communicate with your school frequently

Ask the school about their policy and procedures on excusing absences from school.

Notify the school when your student is absent.

Respond quickly when the school notifies you of an unexcused absence.

Learn how you can check your student's attendance.

Immediately address issues of concern about your student with the school. Start with the teacher or counselor.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, read and understand the Truancy Law (Becca Bill)  
Parent/Guardian

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_