

# HB 3615: Ensuring Success in School Act

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**H.B. 3615** promotes successful school completion by youth who are expectant parents, parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence by:

- **Enabling expectant and parenting students as well as student victims of domestic or sexual violence to succeed in school;**
- **Providing guidance to school districts when a student is a victim of domestic or sexual violence; and**
- **Encouraging the safe and meaningful involvement of parents of students.**

Pregnancy, parenting and domestic and sexual violence affect school completion:

- In 2000, 24.2% of Illinoisans age 16 to 24 had not completed four years of high school.
- In 2002, over 10% of Illinois births were to teen mothers.
- Over 60% of forcible rapes occur before the victim is 18 years old.
- In 2001, 8.1% of Illinois students reported being a victim of dating violence and 5.6% reported having been sexually assaulted.

Far too many Illinois youth find only more problems, and not solutions, at school:

- Rape victims report being ignored by school officials, or worse, expelled from school.
- Domestic violence victims report being subjected to intrusive “investigations” that blame them for violence.
- Expectant and parenting students report being encouraged by school staff to leave school.
- Parenting students report that they are disenrolled when they miss school due to childcare problems.

**H.B. 3615** addresses these and other barriers to school success and inappropriate school responses as follows:

**Statewide Working Group.** Forms a statewide working group to recommend best practices and protocols, which school districts have the option of adopting, to ensure student success and safety.

**Connecting Students to Community Resources.** Encourages schools to connect students to existing community resources to promote their successful completion of school.

**Confidentiality and Parental Involvement.** Enables students and their parents to strive for improved school performance and attendance without compromising student health and safety.

**Excused Absences.** Recognizes absences related to pregnancy, parenting and domestic and sexual violence.