

Legislative Analysis



REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO OFFER KINDERGARTEN AND REQUIRE ATTENDANCE FOR CHILDREN AGE 5

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Senate Bill 285 (S-3) as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Sen. Dayna Polehanki

House Committee: Education

Senate Committee: Education

Complete to 12-9-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 285 would amend the Revised School Code to require students who are five years old by September 1 to be enrolled in kindergarten that school year, starting with the 2025-2026 school year. (The code currently allows, but does not require, children who are five by September 1 to be enrolled in kindergarten.) In addition, the bill would require all school districts and public school academies that offer first grade in a school they operate to also provide kindergarten

Under the bill, the parent or guardian of a child who is five by September 1 could delay enrollment for a year if they notify the school in writing. Enrollment could be delayed under this provision for one school year only.

A child who turns five after September 1 would have to be enrolled in the next school year, except that, as currently, a child who turns five by December 1 could (but would not have to) be enrolled in kindergarten for that school year.

Once enrolled, the child's parent or legal guardian or another person having control and charge of the child would have to continue to send the child to school during the entire school year.

If a school district or community school district does not directly operate schools on its own, the bill would require kindergarten enrollment in another public school geographically located in the school district.

Finally, the bill would eliminate an exemption from the provision that generally requires children to attend school that now applies to children younger than nine years old who reside 2.5 miles or more from a public school, as measured by the nearest traveled roads, if the school district does not provide transportation to children within its boundaries.

The bill would take effect 90 days after it is enacted into law.

MCL 380.1147 and 380.1561

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would increase costs to the state and would have an indeterminate, but likely minimal, impact on local school districts and public school academies (PSAs).

The state would incur costs to provide additional funding (namely, the per-pupil foundation allowance) to districts and PSAs that enroll five-year-olds who would not have otherwise enrolled in kindergarten if not for the bill's requirements. The foundation allowance is currently \$9,608 per pupil. The total cost to the state would depend on the total increase in kindergarten enrollment as a result of the bill.

The local fiscal impact would vary based on each district's or PSA's changes in kindergarten enrollment and whether the cost to educate any additional five-year-olds is covered by the corresponding foundation allowance.

The bill also requires a district or PSA that offers first grade to begin offering kindergarten. All districts and PSAs currently satisfy this requirement.

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