

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1115 Mandatory School Attendance
SPONSOR(S): Holloway and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1506

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) PreK-12 Committee	3 Y, 6 N	Howlette	Mizereck
2) Choice & Innovation Committee			
3) Education Appropriations Committee			
4) Education Council			
5) _____			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 1115 raises the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18. It also increases from 16 to 18 the age at which the Department of Education has to ensure that district school boards notify students in a juvenile justice residential or nonresidential facility that they have the option to enroll in a program to obtain a Florida high school diploma by taking the general education development test.

The Department of Education estimates the fiscal impact of the bill to be \$388,559,473. See Fiscal Comments.

The bill sets an effective date of effect July 1, 2005.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Provide limited government – The bill increases the mandated years of school attendance from ages 6 to 16 to ages 6 to 18.

Safeguard individual liberty – The bill will require minors, who would otherwise have the choice of leaving school at 16 years of age, to remain in school until age 18.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current law requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school. Students are allowed to file a formal declaration of the intent to terminate school enrollment, with a parent's signature, at age 16. The Department of Education (DOE) is currently required to notify sixteen-year-old students in juvenile justice facilities that they have the option of enrolling in a program to take the general educational development (GED) test in order to obtain a Florida high school diploma.

The bill changes the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. Students are allowed to file a declaration of intent to terminate enrollment at age 18; the declaration still must have a parent's signature. The bill raises the age at which DOE must notify students in juvenile justice facilities of the GED option from age 16 to age 18.

In 1999 the Legislature created a pilot project requiring the Manatee County District School Board to increase the compulsory age for school attendance from 16 to 18. Manatee County has substantially decreased its dropout rate since the project's inception, from 7.4% to 1.8% in 2002-03.¹ Statewide dropout rates have declined over the same period from 4.6% to 3.1%.² However, results from the pilot project indicate that a number of support services and a wide range of educational alternatives are required to address the needs of the at-risk students who would have otherwise dropped out. The district was required to invest significant resources into truancy and retrieval activities. The school district reported that the "implementation of a higher compulsory school age without addressing the needs of the at-risk students who have traditionally dropped out of school does not help the students, the schools, or the community."³

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1002.20, F.S., to change the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18.

Section 2. Amends s. 1003.21, F.S., to change the compulsory school attendance age, and the age at which a student may sign a declaration of intent to terminate enrollment, from 16 to 18.

Section 3. Amends s. 1003.51, F.S., to change the age at which the Department of Education must notify students in juvenile justice facilities of options for obtaining a diploma from 16 to 18.

Section 4. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2005.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

¹ Manatee County School Board Minutes, November 2004, available at http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/manatee/school_board/minutes_2004/Minutes_11_1_2004/Page_1.html

² Florida Department of Education. *Dropout Demographics in Florida's Public Schools, and Dropout Rates*. Available at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/dropdemo.pdf>

³ Department of Education Bill Analysis.

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

Please see Fiscal Comments section.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

Please see Fiscal Comments section.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill does not appear to have a direct fiscal impact on the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill will have a substantial fiscal impact on operating and capital outlay expenses based on the increase in the number of students who will have to continue in compulsory school attendance beyond age 16. Districts may also incur additional truancy and alternative education costs.

According to the DOE analysis, 14,537 students who were between the ages of 16 and 18 dropped out of school in Florida in 2003-04. Based on average funds per full-time equivalent (FTE) from the Florida Education Finance Program for 2004-05, expenditures would increase by \$5,764 for each additional student. Additional students will also result in increased need for facilities, resulting in expenditures for additional high school student stations, at \$20,965 per station.

14,537 x \$5,764 = \$83,791,268 (FEFP funding -- recurring)
14,537 x \$20,965 = \$304,768,205 (cost of student stations – non-recurring)
\$388,559,473 TOTAL

In addition to these costs, districts may incur costs for additional truancy activities and alternative education programs. Manatee County budgeted over \$600,000 in 2002-03 for implementation of the pilot project for costs related to truancy enforcement and other student support services.⁴

⁴ Fiscal estimates from Department of Education Bill Analysis.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require a municipality or county to spend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds.

2. Other:

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Although the bill raises the age at which a student can file a declaration of intent to terminate enrollment from age 16 to age 18, the bill maintains current law that the declaration must have a parent's signature. Since the students who would be filing such declarations will have reached the age of majority, it may no longer be necessary to require a parent's signature.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES