

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

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BILL: SB 688

INTRODUCER: Senator Montford

SUBJECT: Opening and Closing of Public Schools

DATE: March 3, 2015

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

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	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Bailey	Klebacha	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.	_____	_____	AED	_____
3.	_____	_____	AP	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 688 allows schools to open up to 7 days earlier than current law allows. The bill authorizes district school boards to begin the school year up to 21 days before Labor Day each year. The bill requires academically high performing districts to comply with the 21 day opening date of public schools.

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2015.

**II. Present Situation:**

Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic school year, schools governed by a district school board may have an opening date up to 14 days before Labor Day each year,<sup>1</sup> with the exception of academically high performing school districts.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary institutions also rely on standard school start dates for eligible students in accelerated programs.<sup>3</sup>

**Current Starting Dates**

For the 2014-2015 school year, 62 of the state's 75 school districts began the traditional school year on August 18, 2014, which is 14 days before Labor Day.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1001.42(4)(f), F.S., *as amended* by s. 11 of ch. 2006-74, L.O.F.

<sup>2</sup> *See* s. 1003.621(1)(b) and (2)(a) – (k), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, by administrative rule, the board of trustees for community colleges and universities must adopt an annual calendar for use by all postsecondary institutions operated by their respective boards. Unless an exception is granted by the Department of Education, three common entry periods are established so that the first day of classes will fall within each of the three periods, the first 3 weekdays after August 22, the first 3 weekdays after January 4, and the first 3 weekdays after May 5. Rule 6A-10.019, F.A.C.

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2014-2015 School District Calendars*, <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/index.stml> (last visited March 2, 2015).

School districts are required to file an official copy of the annual calendar adopted by each school board with the DOE.<sup>5</sup>

### **Academically High Performing School Districts**

School districts designated by the State Board of Education as academically high-performing school districts may choose to waive compliance with a large number of statutory requirements, including prescribed school calendar dates.<sup>6</sup>

Academically high-performing school districts retain the designation for three years and then may renew if the district continues to meet the requirements.<sup>7</sup> To be designated as an academically high-performing school district, a school district must meet the following requirements:

- Earn a grade of “A” for two consecutive years and have no district-operated school that earned a grade of “F.”
- Comply with the class size requirements.
- Have no material weaknesses or instances of material noncompliance noted in the school district’s annual financial audit.<sup>8</sup>

During the 2014- 2015 school year, academically high-performing districts, Citrus, Nassau, Seminole, and Sumter counties, elected to waive the school start date requirement and started school between August 6<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

SB 688 authorizes district school boards to begin the school year up to 21 days before Labor Day each year, in effect, 7 days earlier than current law allows. The bill also requires academically high performing districts to comply with the uniform opening date of public schools.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2015.

### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

#### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

#### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

<sup>5</sup> Rule 6A-10.019(3), F.A.C.

<sup>6</sup> See s. 1003.621(1)(b) and (2)(a) – (k), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.621(1)(c), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1003.621(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Of the eleven academically high-performing school districts, four elected to choose an earlier start date than the 14 day uniform date. Florida Department of Education, *2014-2015 School District Calendars*, <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/index.stml> (last visited March 2, 2015).

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1001.42 and 1003.621.

**IX. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.