

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/HB 261](#)

TITLE: Middle School and High School Start Times

SPONSOR(S): Gerwig

COMPANION BILL: [CS/CS/SB 296](#) (Bradley)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Education Administration](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Education & Employment](#)

16 Y, 0 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill allows for district school boards and charter school governing boards to be in compliance with the requirement that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools must begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m., if the board submits to the Department of Education a report with specified requirements by June 1, 2026. The report must include school start times for all schools in the district, documentation of strategies considered to implement the start time changes, impact of implementation including financial, and any identified unintended consequences as a result of implementation.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill allows for [district school boards](#) and charter school governing boards to be in compliance with the requirement that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools must begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m., if the board submits to the Department of Education a report with specified requirements by June 1, 2026. (Sections [1](#) and [2](#)).

The bill requires the report to include, at a minimum:

- The [start times](#) of elementary, middle, and high schools in the school district.
- Documentation of strategies considered to implement a later school start time for middle schools and high schools within the school district, including the number of school board meetings, public hearings, and parent input to discuss the strategies.
- A description of the impact of implementing the school start time requirement, including financial impact.
- Identified unintended consequences to the school district, students, and the community by implementing the start time requirements. (Section [1](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section [3](#)).

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[District School Boards](#)

STORAGE NAME: h0261b.EEC

DATE: 3/26/2025

District schools boards, among other duties, are responsible for the establishment, organization, and operation of schools.¹ These responsibilities include adopting policies related to:²

- opening and closing of schools;
- fixing uniform school dates; and
- determining school start times.

Public schools may not start the school year earlier than August 10 of each year³ and must operate a minimum of 180 days or the hourly equivalent.⁴ Charter schools are required to provide instruction for at least the same number of days as public schools.⁵

School Start Times

School start times are established by a local district school board or charter governing board. In 2023, the Florida Legislature passed CS/HB 733 requiring that by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools may not begin earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m.⁶

RECENT LEGISLATION:

| YEAR | BILL # | HOUSE SPONSOR(S) | SENATE SPONSOR | OTHER INFORMATION |
|------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| 2023 | CS/HB 733 | Temple | Burgess | Became law on July 1, 2023 with implementation beginning by July 1, 2026. |

OTHER RESOURCES:

[American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement on School Start Times for Adolescents](#)

BILL HISTORY

| COMMITTEE REFERENCE | ACTION | DATE | STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF | ANALYSIS PREPARED BY |
|---|--|-----------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Education Administration Subcommittee | 16 Y, 0 N, As CS | 3/19/2025 | Sleap | Dixon |
| THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restored the requirement that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools may not start earlier than 8:00 a.m., and high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m. • Allowed district school boards and charter school governing boards to be in compliance with the required middle and high school start times by submitting a report with specified requirements to the Department of Education by June 1, 2026. | | | |
| Education & Employment Committee | 16 Y, 0 N | 3/26/2025 | Hassell | Dixon |

¹ S. [1001.42\(4\), F.S.](#)

² S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\)2., F.S.](#)

³ S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\)1., F.S.](#)

⁴ S. [1001.42\(12\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Hourly equivalent equates to 900 hours for students in grades 4 through 12 and 720 hours for students in kindergarten through grade 3, see [s. 1011.61\(1\)\(a\)1., F.S.](#) Florida law does not require a minimum number of hours or minutes per school day.

⁵ S. [1002.33\(9\)\(m\), F.S.](#)

⁶ S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\), F.S.](#) and [s. 1002.33\(16\)\(b\)16, F.S.](#); see 2023 – 78, L.O.F.

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
