



Senate Fiscal Agency
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**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 4 (as introduced 1-12-05)
Sponsor: Senator Liz Brater
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 6-7-05

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to do the following:

- **Raise the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18.**
- **Allow a 16- or 17-year-old to satisfy the school attendance requirements by completing an alternative education program, a vocational education program, independent study, or community college coursework, and permit a school district to offer those options.**
- **Allow a community college or an intermediate school district (ISD) to provide cooperative educational programs related to a program described above.**
- **Allow a 16- or 17-year-old to meet the school attendance requirements by working at least 25 hours and attending school at least 15 hours a week, in a case of economic hardship or family need.**

Under the Code, subject to certain exceptions, every parent, guardian, or other person having control and charge of a child from the age of six to the child's 16th birthday must send the child to a public school during the entire school year. The bill would require a child to be sent to school until his or her 18th birthday.

Under the bill, a school board could offer any of the following, and a 16-, 17-, or 18-year-old pupil could complete some or all of the requirements for a high school diploma by successfully completing one or a combination of the following:

- An alternative education program approved by the Department of Education.
- A program of vocational education that included apprenticeship or work study and that required the pupil to attend school at least 10 hours per week for the entire school year.
- A program of independent study that was approved by the school district and met State Board of Education guidelines for independent study.
- Academic coursework at a community college.

If such a program were offered in the school district in which a pupil lived, a 16- or 17-year old could satisfy the school attendance requirements by attending the program.

A community college or, upon request by the board of a constituent school district, either solely or as part of a consortium of ISDs, could provide services or conduct cooperative educational programs related to a program described above. An ISD could charge a constituent school district for the costs of these services.

If a 16- or 17-year-old gave a school district proof that he or she was engaged in regular employment averaging 25 or more hours per week, and that the employment was necessitated by economic hardship or family need, the child could satisfy the Code's school attendance requirements by attending a public school at least 15 hours per week.

MCL 380.1561 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

State: The bill would have a fiscal impact on the State by increasing from 16 to 18 the maximum age of a child who must be sent to school. For each pupil who currently no longer attends school at age 16 or later and who would return to the school system under this proposal, the State would incur a cost in the form of a foundation allowance payment to the school district.

According to data received from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), there are an estimated maximum of 16,600 former students between the ages of 16 and 18 who exited the Michigan school system for various reasons over the course of the 2004-05 school year. Of those, according to the CEPI data, 8,600 are listed as "dropouts" in the exit data. Thus, using the State-wide average foundation allowance of \$7,100 per pupil, if the total maximum number of students returned to school (16,600), the cost to the State would be an estimated \$117.8 million per fiscal year. Using only the dropout data of 8,600 former pupils, the cost to the State of these pupils' returning to school would be an estimated \$61.1 million annually. However, the number of former students who actually would return to the Michigan public school system is indeterminate.

Local: Conversely, local school districts would realize an increase in State funding by an average of \$7,100 per pupil for each former student who returned to school if the compulsory age were raised to 18. In addition, local school districts would incur the cost associated with sending a pupil aged 16 to 18 to a program offering an alternative education or vocational education, or an independent study, at an intermediate school district or community college. The cost to a local school district would vary depending on the fees imposed by the intermediate school district or community college, if any.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.