

Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
Fax: (517) 373-1986  
TDD: (517) 373-0543

Senate Bill 315 (Substitute S-2)  
Senate Bill 316 (Substitute S-2)  
Sponsor: Senator Darwin L. Booher  
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 3-13-12

## **CONTENT**

**Senate Bill 315 (S-2) would amend Section 1147 of the Revised School Code to require a child to be at least five years old as of November 1, rather than December 1, in order to enroll in kindergarten in the 2012-2013 school year. Subsequently, in the 2013-2014 school year, the child would have to be at least five years old as of October 1, and, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the child would have to be at least five years old as of September 1 in order to enroll in kindergarten. The bill also would:**

- Allow the parent or legal guardian of a child who was not five as of the eligibility date specified above, but would be by December 1, to apply to the school principal for a waiver.
- Require the principal to form a committee that would evaluate the child's kindergarten readiness.
- Require the committee to administer a skills level assessment and interview the child and his or her parent or guardian.

**Senate Bill 316 (S-2) would amend the State School Aid Act to require that a pupil meet the minimum age requirement to attend school under Section 1147 of the Revised School Code, or have received a waiver under that section, instead of being at least five years old on December 1, in order to be counted in membership for the purpose of calculating school aid.**

The bills are tie-barred to each other.

Senate Bill 315 (S-2) is described in detail below.

Currently, in a school district that provides kindergarten, a child who resides in the district may enroll in kindergarten if he or she is at least five years old on December 1 of the school year of enrollment. Under the bill, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, a child could enroll in kindergarten if he or she were at least five years old based on the following schedule: as of November 1 in the 2012-2013 school year; as of October 1 in the 2013-2014 school year; or as of September 1, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

If the parent or legal guardian of a child who was not five by the specified eligibility date but would be by December 1 wanted to enroll the child in kindergarten before the school year in which he or she would be eligible to enroll (i.e., the school year in which the child would be five as of the specified eligibility date), the parent or guardian could apply for a waiver. To obtain a waiver, the parent or guardian would have to apply to the principal of the school in which the child would enroll, using a form obtained from the principal, by May 1 before the school year for which enrollment was sought.

Upon receiving the application, the principal would have to form a committee consisting of a school administrator and two teachers to evaluate the child's kindergarten readiness. The committee would have to administer to the child a skills level assessment commonly used in the district for that purpose. The committee also would have to interview the child and the parent or guardian. By July 1, the committee would have to notify the parent or guardian of its decision of whether to grant the waiver.

The bill specifies that the ages prescribed in Section 1147 for a child's eligibility for enrollment in a school district also would apply to a child's eligibility to enroll in a public school academy.

Currently, in a school district that has semiannual promotions, a child may enroll in kindergarten for the second semester if he or she is at least five years old on March 1 of the year of enrollment. The bill would delete that provision.

MCL 380.1147 (S.B. 315)  
388.1606 (S.B. 316)

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Current law allows a child to enter kindergarten if age 5 on or before December 1 of the school year. Moving this date up by one month each of the next three years (to November 1 in 2012-2013, to October 1 in 2013-2014, and to September 1 beginning in 2014-2015) would mean prohibiting children born after September 1 but on or before December 1 from enrolling in kindergarten, subject to the phase-in schedule proposed by the bill. For 2012-13, this would mean prohibiting children born between November 2, 2007, and December 1, 2007, from enrolling in the 2012-2013 school year (without a waiver), and for that year, the kindergarten class would be smaller than a typical-size class. The next two kindergarten cohorts (in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015) also would be smaller than a typical class, due to the continued phase-in of an earlier kindergarten eligibility age.

A change in the kindergarten start date would result in lower State costs in FY 2012-13 equal to the reduction in kindergarten enrollees, multiplied by districts' per-pupil foundation allowance. Since this legislation would allow parents to seek a waiver and enroll a child who was not age 5 by September 1, if the school found the child ready via the assessment process, the extent to which this exception would affect the total size of the 2012-2013 kindergarten class is unknown.

The maximum State savings that could occur in 2012-2013 would be in the event that no waivers were approved, and would result from eliminating all children born between November 2 and December 1 of 2007 from enrollment in kindergarten in 2012. It is estimated that this number is approximately 7,000 children who would not be allowed to enter kindergarten in the 2012-2013 school year, but would have to wait until 2013-2014. Multiplying 7,000 pupils by an average foundation allowance of \$7,200 yields maximum State savings of \$50.0 million in FY 2012-13, if no waivers were granted to allow these children to start kindergarten without being age 5 by November 1. However, if waivers were sought and granted for one-half of these children, the State savings would be estimated at \$25.0 million. Again, it is not possible to determine how many waivers would be sought, or how many would be granted. If waivers were sought and granted for all children, the State savings would be \$0.

This smaller-than-average kindergarten class would persist in school years 2013-2014 (as children born between October 2 and November 1 would be prohibited from enrolling) and in 2014-2015 (as children born between September 2 and October 1 would be prohibited from enrolling). Each yearly one-month phase-in would reduce the otherwise likely population of kindergarteners by one-twelfth. Therefore, continuing the phase-in, the impact likely would be another 7,000 to 7,500 children not able to enroll in 2013-2014 due to their birthdays falling between October 2 and November 1 of 2008, and again, one year later, another 7,000

or so children with birthdays between September 2 and October 1 of 2009 who would have to wait until 2015-2016 to enroll in kindergarten (in the absence of approved waivers).

Therefore, the first-year State savings impact of \$50.0 million would again occur in the second year, along with further savings of \$50.0 million, for total second-year State savings of \$100.0 million. The third year of implementation would see a cumulative effect of all three smaller cohorts, for estimated State savings of \$150.0 million. However, the savings shown here are maximum estimates. Again, to the extent that school committees approved waivers that allowed children not yet age 5 by the applicable deadline to enroll in kindergarten, State savings would be reduced.

It should also be noted that any savings occurring because of a smaller pool of children entering kindergarten would continue as that smaller cohort moved through the K-12 system. In other words, the reduction in the size of a kindergarten class would turn into a smaller-than-normal first grade class, second grade class, and so on. Table 1 shows the estimated impact of the kindergarten phase-in as the smaller cohorts moved from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Turning to the impact on local schools, a reduction in the number of children eligible to enroll in kindergarten would mean a reduction in revenue. Whatever amount the State were to save would be the amount lost by school districts. Again, this would be a loss in revenue that would track the smaller cohorts as they moved from kindergarten all the way through grade 12. Districts would have an additional fiscal challenge in trying to align staff with the change in cohort sizes. In other words, the kindergarten class would be smaller than normal for three consecutive years, then increase back to "normal" size the fourth year, but three subsequent grade 1 classes would be smaller as the smaller kindergarten classes moved up, and so on.

Table 1  
Tracking Smaller Kindergarten Cohorts through K-12 System,  
Phase-In of Change in Kindergarten Date

<b>Pupil Population</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Dec. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2012-13 Nov. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2013-14 Oct. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2014-15 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2015-16 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2016-17 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>
Kindergarten	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 1	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000
Grade 2	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000
Grade 3	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000
Grade 4	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000
Grade 5	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 6	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 7	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 8	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 9	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 10	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 11	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 12	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>
Total K-12 Pupils	1,560,000	1,553,000	1,546,000	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,539,000
Change in Pupils		(7,000)	(14,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)
Est. State Savings from Phase-In		(\$50,400,000)	(\$100,800,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)

<b>Pupil Population</b>	<b>FY 2017-18 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2018-19 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2019-20 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2020-21 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2021-22 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2022-23 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>
Kindergarten	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 1	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 2	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 3	113,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 4	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 4	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 6	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 7	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000
Grade 8	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000
Grade 9	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000	113,000
Grade 10	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	113,000
Grade 11	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 12	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Total K-12 Pupils	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,539,000
Change in Pupils	(21,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)	(21,000)
Est. State Savings from Phase-In	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)

<b>Pupil Population</b>	<b>FY 2023-24 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2024-25 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2025-26 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2026-27 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>	<b>FY 2027-28 Sept. 1 Cutoff</b>
Kindergarten	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 1	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 2	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 3	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 4	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 4	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 6	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 7	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 8	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 9	113,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 10	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 11	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000	120,000
Grade 12	120,000	113,000	113,000	113,000	120,000
Total K-12 Pupils	1,539,000	1,539,000	1,546,000	1,553,000	1,560,000
Change in Pupils	(21,000)	(21,000)	(14,000)	(7,000)	0
Est. State Savings from Phase-In	(\$151,200,000)	(\$151,200,000)	(\$100,800,000)	(\$50,400,000)	\$0

Notes:

- 1) Assumes average foundation allowance of \$7,200 per pupil, and no change in foundation allowance
- 2) Assumes equal 7,000 student drop for each month that the kindergarten age eligibility is phased in
- 3) Assumes hypothetical, stable K-12 population to isolate the change in kindergarten enrollments
- 4) Assumes no waivers approved

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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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.