
The legislative instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

SB 10

2021 Regular Session

Fields

Keyword and summary of the bill as proposed by the Conference Committee

KINDERGARTEN: Provides for mandatory kindergarten attendance and requires compulsory school attendance beginning at age 5. (gov sig)

Report rejects House amendments which would have:

1. Changed the date by which a child must turn five years of age to enroll in kindergarten from September thirtieth to March thirty-first of the calendar year.

Report amends the bill to:

1. Give the parent or legal guardian the option to defer enrolling his child in kindergarten if the child is four years of age on the first day of school or the child is enrolled in a prekindergarten program.
2. Provide that a parent or legal guardian who opts to defer enrollment of his child in kindergarten as provided above shall not be considered in noncompliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

Digest of the bill as proposed by the Conference Committee

Present law (R.S. 17:151.3) requires public school systems to provide for and offer full-day kindergarten and establishes the minimum age for entrance into kindergarten as one year younger than the minimum age for entering first grade, which is six years old on or before Sept. 30th. Also requires that prior to entering first grade that a child must have either attended a full-day kindergarten or have passed an academic readiness screening established by the local school system. Requires parents and legal guardians to send a child to kindergarten or ensure that the child is administered a readiness screening prior to the child entering first grade.

Proposed law requires, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a child who turns five years of age on or before Sept. 30th to attend full-day kindergarten and to pass a readiness assessment prior to entering first grade. Notwithstanding this provision, proposed law provides:

- (1) That a parent or legal guardian shall have the option to defer enrolling his child in kindergarten for one year if either of the following applies:

- (a) The child is four years of age on the first day of the school year.
- (b) The child is enrolled in a prekindergarten program.

(2) That a parent or legal guardian who opts to defer enrollment of his child in kindergarten as provided in proposed law shall not be considered to be in noncompliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

Present law (R.S. 17:221) requires compulsory school attendance for children ages seven through 18, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his 18th birthday.

Proposed law provides, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, compulsory school attendance will be required for children age five through 18, unless the child's parent or legal guardian opts to defer enrollment of his child in kindergarten in accordance with proposed law or the child graduates from high school prior to his 18th birthday.

Present law (R.S. 17:222) allows the Jefferson and Orleans Parish school boards to set by rule a different minimum age for first grade entrance established in present law. Further requires proof of age, race, and parentage.

Proposed law removes the minimum age threshold for entry into the first grade. Provides that the provisions of present law that allow Jefferson and Orleans Parishes to establish different entry standards shall become void on June 30, 2022.

Proposed law clarifies that families may home school for kindergarten but must report student attendance to the state Department of Education. Further provides that kindergarten students in an approved home study program shall be considered in compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:151.3, 221(A)(1), and 222; adds R.S. 17:221(E))