

PRIVATE & HOME SCHOOL: PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT & REIMBURSEMENT

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House Bill 4594 (reported from committee w/o amendment)
Sponsor: Rep. Edward McBroom
Committee: Education
Complete to 6-9-15

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would allow the parents of privately-schooled and home-schooled students to also enroll their children in a public school kindergarten to take advantage of curricular opportunities. This is currently permitted in grades 1 to 12.

FISCAL IMPACT: To the extent that the bill would increase overall public school enrollments, it could create additional costs for both the state and local school districts. Currently there are approximately 10,300 nonpublic shared-time pupils counted in membership in grades 1-12, which at the FY 2014-15 average foundation allowance of approximately \$7,500, costs about \$77.2 million. An exact breakout of shared-time pupils by grade level is not currently available, but if the bill increased the number of shared-time pupils by the current average per grade, it would increase pupils by about 860 at an additional annual cost of \$6.5 million. However, if the marginal cost of educating an additional student is lower than the increased funding received by a school district, the school district may benefit

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Now under the law, the parents of students who are enrolled in grades 1 to 12 in a non-public school, or who are being home-schooled, can also enroll their students in a local public school district, public charter school, or public intermediate school district for any curricular offering. However, state school aid reimburses the district only for curricular offerings that are available to full-time pupils in the minor's grade level or age group during regularly scheduled school hours. And, for the purposes of state aid, a student enrolled is a part-time pupil.

Statewide, many school districts open their course offerings to home-schooled and privately schooled students. The arrangements are voluntary and locally negotiated, so contracts vary from district to district. For example, access to vaunted music programs are sought in some districts, while others offer foreign languages. Generally students attend the public school for a short period during the day, transported by their parents. However, in some districts, public school teachers travel to private schools to teach.

Legislation has been introduced to allow an expansion of shared public school programs, so they may begin in kindergarten, rather than waiting until first grade.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4594 would amend the School Aid Act to allow the parents of privately-schooled and home-schooled students to also enroll their children in a public school kindergarten to take advantage of curricular opportunities. The bill would take effect 90 days after being enacted into law.

MCL 388.1766b

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Proponents of this legislation note that the bill extends learning opportunities to home-schooled and private-school *kindergarteners*—enhancing their curricular offerings one year earlier than is now allowed under the law. They say the popularity of public school programs in the earliest elementary school grade have increased since the onset of the full-day kindergarten.

Proponents also say forging social connections from an early age with fellow students in public schools is an advantage, because most privately schooled students, and many home-schooled students complete the final years of their schooling in a community's public school system.

Finally, supporters of the legislation say that locally designed shared-time agreements build communities in positive ways, encouraging productive partnerships among community stakeholders.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Catholic Conference supports the bill. (5-21-15)

The Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools supports the bill. (5-21-15)

The Michigan Department of Education supports the bill. (5-21-15)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.