

Legislative Analysis



ELIMINATE REQUIREMENT FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO START SCHOOL YEAR AFTER LABOR DAY

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4671 as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. Matt Koleszar
Committee: Education
Complete to 6-13-23

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4673 would amend section 1284a of the Revised School Code to remove references to a requirement that schools not begin their school year prior to Labor Day unless they apply for and receive a waiver from the state superintendent, or they were operating on a year-round schedule or operating an international baccalaureate program as of September 29, 2005.¹

The bill would also repeal section 1284b of the Revised School Code, which contains the prohibition on schools starting their academic year prior to Labor Day (the first Monday in September), and section 160 of the State School Aid Act, which requires school districts and intermediate school districts to use a portion of their state aid dollars to hold a public hearing if applying for a waiver to the Labor Day start date provision. The Labor Day provision took effect in 2006.²

MCL 380.1284a (amended) and MCL 380.1284b and 388.1760 (repealed)

The bill would take effect 90 days after being enacted.

BACKGROUND AND BRIEF DISCUSSION:

School year start dates are set by each district in accordance with state law. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, Michigan schools are required to provide 1,098 hours and 180 days of pupil instruction each school year. Failing to provide that minimum amount of instruction results in loss of state aid. Starting in 2006, schools were required to begin their school year after Labor Day, with a few exceptions later added to accommodate schools with educational programs that were best implemented over a time frame longer than the minimum instructional time provided in law, and schools are currently allowed to seek a waiver from the state superintendent to begin the school year before Labor Day.

The original intent of pushing the school year start back was to allow businesses a set window to employ students for the summer season and to ensure that students would not leave their summer jobs prior to Labor Day weekend, which marks the traditional end of the main summer tourism season. For businesses in Michigan's tourism hot spots, this takes on added importance, as business owners make most of their annual revenue in the summer months. With businesses across the state reporting difficulty in attracting and retaining workers, especially in entry-level jobs in food service and retail, losing students prior to Labor Day

¹ <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2006-HB-5977>

² <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2005-HB-4803>

weekend has businesses concerned that they will lose revenue due to short staffing impacting their operating hours.

In 2022, approximately 75% of Michigan's schools started their school year prior to Labor Day.³ Separate from the start of the school year, the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) allows schools to begin holding formal practices for fall sports in early August, which often results in students leaving their summer employment before the school year starts. Because the majority of schools begin prior to Labor Day, supporters of the bill say that repealing the post-Labor Day start date requirement will have minimal impact on businesses, which have already had to contend with many students beginning their respective school years prior to Labor Day, and that districts that cover communities that rely on summer tourism will still be able to set their start dates after Labor Day. They note that repealing the requirement would result in less paperwork and bureaucracy for both local districts and the state Department of Education.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state and may decrease costs for certain districts, intermediate school districts (ISDs), and public school academies (PSAs) that plan to begin the school year before Labor Day. Section 160 of the School Aid Act requires districts, ISDs, and PSAs to pay for the cost of conducting a public hearing when applying for a waiver under section 1284b of the Revised School Code. The bill would repeal these sections and eliminate the requirement for a public hearing and therefore any costs associated with the hearing.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following entities testified in support of House Bill 4671 (6-6-23):

- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Association of School Boards

The following entities indicated support for House Bill 4671:

- Michigan Department of Education (6-6-23)
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) (6-13-23)
- Education Advocates of West Michigan (6-13-23)
- Social Equity Caucus (6-13-23)
- Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (6-13-23)
- Wayne RESA (6-6-23)
- Michigan Farm Bureau (6-6-23)
- Michigan Education Association (6-6-23)
- Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, Lenawee, and Monroe ISDs (6-6-23)
- Oakland Schools (6-6-23)
- Michigan Association of Public School Academies (6-6-23)
- Great Lakes Education Project Education Fund (6-6-23)
- Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity (6-6-23)
- Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (6-13-23)

³ <https://www.mlive.com/news/2022/09/its-michigan-law-to-start-school-after-labor-day-so-why-are-most-starting-earlier.html>

Representatives of the Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Association testified in opposition to House Bill 4671. (6-6-23)

The following entities indicated opposition to House Bill 4671:

- Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds (6-13-23)
- Michigan Boating Industries Association (6-6-23)
- Michigan Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (6-6-23)
- Traverse City Tourism (6-6-23)
- Upper Peninsula Travel Association (6-6-23)

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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.