

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: SB 148

INTRODUCER: Senator Posey

SUBJECT: Opening of Schools/Labor Day

DATE: January 23, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	deMarsh-Mathues	Matthews	ED	Unfavorable
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The bill allows district school boards to adopt opening dates for the school year earlier than 14 days before Labor Day for schools that operate year-round or that offer an advanced placement (AP) or dual enrollment program.

This bill substantially amends section 1001.42 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Current law requires district school boards to adopt plans for the opening and closing dates of schools and the observance of school holidays and vacation periods. The law prohibits district school boards from adopting opening dates for the school year earlier than 14 days before Labor Day each year. This provision is effective beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.¹ For 2007-2008, the actual start date is no earlier than Monday, August 20, which is 14 days prior to September 3, Labor Day.

School Calendar, Length of the School Year, and Other Holidays

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, school boards must adopt an annual calendar for use by all schools operated by the board.² Districts must also provide for elementary and secondary schools to operate for a term of at least 180 days or the equivalent on an hourly basis as specified by rules of the State Board of Education.³ Currently, there is no requirement that the first and second semesters be equal in length. However, the law defines the minimum number of hours

¹ Section 1001.42(4)(f), F.S., as amended by s. 11 of ch. 2006-74, L.O.F.

² Rule 6A-10.019, F.A.C.

³ Section 1001.42(10)(a), F.S.

that comprise a full credit for high school graduation purposes.⁴ A credit is a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains student performance standards. For schools that use block scheduling, a full credit is a minimum of 120 hours.

The following chart documents a shift in school start dates from 1998-1999 through 2006-2007.⁵

School Year	Districts Starting in Week 1 (Aug. 1-7)	Districts Starting in Week 2 (Aug. 8-14)	Districts Starting in Week 3 (Aug. 15-21)	Districts Starting in Week 4 (Aug. 22-28)	Districts Starting in Week 5 (Aug. 29-31)
1998-99	6	25	23	16	3
1999-00	4	28	25	14	2
2000-01	13	38	16	6	0
2001-02	15	47	8	3	0
2002-03	18	46	6	3	0
2003-04	31	33	7	2	0
2004-05	25	38	10	0	0
2005-06	26	38	8	0	0
2006-07	33	33	5	0	0

Students began the 2006-2007 school year during the following weeks: July 31-August 4 in 13 districts; August 7-11 in 40 districts; August 14-18 in 12 districts; and August 21-25 in 2 districts.⁶ The regular school year ends as early as May 17, 2007, for students in Okaloosa County and as late as June 1, 2007, for students in Alachua, Franklin, Palm Beach, and Putnam Counties. The school year ends for students in eight districts during the week of May 14-18; in 48 districts during the week of May 21-25; 10 districts during the week of May 28-June 1, and one district during the week of June 4-8.⁷

According to the DOE, there are an average of 11 planning days and 23 holidays during the 2006-2007 school year for Florida's school districts. While the winter and spring break periods appear to be consistent throughout the state during the 2006-2007 school year, substantial differences exist between districts for other holidays. For example, several districts provide a full week Thanksgiving holiday and many provide up to five teacher-planning days throughout the school year in addition to the standard August pre-planning week. Fifteen school districts also provide a fall break in addition to the Thanksgiving holidays.⁸

Year-Round Schools, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment

Modified or year-round schools operate on a nontraditional school calendar. During 2006-2007, there are 13 schools (11 elementary schools and two middle schools) in five districts using the

⁴ Section 1003.436(1)(a), F.S.

⁵ Florida Department of Education, January 2007. The chart includes the 67 school districts, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Eckerd schools, and the four developmental research (lab) schools.

⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Statistical Brief*, Series 2007-01B, July 2006. See <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/calendar.pdf>

⁷ The data for the latest school end date appears to be inconsistent with other information provided by the DOE.

⁸ *Ibid.*

nontraditional calendar.⁹ Most of these schools have a scheduled break between sessions. According to the DOE, year-round schools and Department of Juvenile Justice's programs are currently allowed to have a calendar that is different from that of the local public school system and will continue to operate in this manner in the 2007-2008 school year.¹⁰

The DOE notes that 399 of 890 secondary schools (45 percent) offered at least one AP course, as of October 2006. Dual enrollment is offered through community colleges and state universities. All public secondary schools offer dual enrollment, according to the DOE.

When the current school date requirement was enacted, concerns were raised about the potential incompatibility of school district calendars with the calendars of postsecondary institutions involved in dual enrollment programs. In particular, there was concern that a later start date would result in ending the first semester after the winter break, which would then result in insufficient time for students to be prepared for and take the dual enrollment courses subsequently offered through community colleges. Concern was also raised about the impact of a later start date on the time available for a student to study for and successfully pass AP exams.

The AP exam calendar is set by the College Board and students must take the exam at the set time on the regularly scheduled date.¹¹ The 2008 AP exam schedule is May 5 through May 16.

By administrative rule, the boards of trustees for community college districts and universities must adopt an annual calendar for use by all postsecondary institutions operated by their respective boards.¹² The rule requires three common start dates for postsecondary educational institutions. The start dates must fall within the first 3 weekdays after August 22, January 4, and May 5.¹³ The DOE may grant an exception to these start dates. Under current law, the 2007-2008 school start date is no earlier than August 20, 2007. The postsecondary calendar start date could begin within the same week.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill allows district school boards to adopt opening dates for the school year earlier than 14 days before Labor Day for schools that operate year-round or that offer an AP or dual enrollment program. The bill essentially revises last year's school start date legislation to exempt all secondary schools from the 14 day prior to Labor Day requirement. This could result in school boards adopting a start date for all secondary schools that is different than the start date for elementary and middle schools.

The bill codifies existing policy by the DOE with respect to year-round school start dates. Additionally, the bill would address some concerns with matching school calendars with postsecondary institutional calendars for dual enrollment programs. Finally, the bill would provide additional opportunities for students to study prior to the administration of the AP exam.

⁹ Florida Department of Education, *Statistical Brief*, Series 2007-01B, July 2006. See <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/calendar.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Memorandum to District School Superintendents*, Chancellor Cheri Pierson Yecke, Ph.D., September 8, 2006.

¹¹ See <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/cal/cal2.html>

¹² Rule 6-A-10.019, F.A.C.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Data has not been provided that indicates that an earlier start date has any effect on student performance.

Ultimately, the impact of the bill on schools with AP and dual enrollment programs depends upon how school districts restructure their calendars.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2007.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Proponents of a later school start date suggest that state tourism may benefit, as families with school-aged children would continue with vacation activities during late summer and therefore increase tourism related revenues or significantly reduce labor costs. An interim project report in 2003 by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Economic Opportunities did not find any increase in state tourism dollars with the imposition of a later start date; however, the report did indicate that there were data limitations and that the effect of later school start dates on Florida's economy needed further review.¹⁴

C. Government Sector Impact:

If local school boards adopt a start date for secondary schools that is earlier than the one for elementary and middle schools, there may be some indeterminate cost associated with restructuring their calendars.

¹⁴ *Interim Report 2003-112*, the Florida Senate Committee on Commerce and Economic Opportunities.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
