

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

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BILL: PCS/CS/SB 688 (490678)

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; and Senator Montford

SUBJECT: Opening and Closing of Public Schools

DATE: March 17, 2015

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Bailey</u>	<u>Klebacha</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Sikes</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	<u>Recommend: Fav/CS</u>
3.	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>AP</u>	<u>                    </u>

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

PCS/CS/SB 688 allows schools to open up to seven days earlier than current law allows. The bill requires district school boards begin the school year no earlier than the third Monday in August each year. The bill allows academically high performing districts whose calendar for the 2015-2016 school year was approved by the district school board before May 1, 2015, to waive compliance for the 2015-2016 school year.

The bill has no fiscal impact.

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2015.

**II. Present Situation:**

Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic school year, schools governed by a district school board may not have an opening date earlier than 14 days before Labor Day each year,<sup>1</sup> with the exception of academically high performing school districts.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary institutions also rely on standard school start dates for eligible students in accelerated programs.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> See s. 1003.621(1)(b) and (2)(a) – (k), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, by administrative rule, the board of trustees for community colleges and universities must adopt an annual calendar for use by all postsecondary institutions operated by their respective boards.

### **Current Starting Dates**

For the 2014-2015 school year, 62 of the state's 75 school district calendars began the traditional school year on August 18, 2014, which is 14 days before Labor Day.<sup>4</sup>

School districts are required to file an official copy of the annual calendar adopted by each school board with the DOE.<sup>5</sup>

### **Academically High Performing School Districts**

School districts designated by the State Board of Education as academically high-performing school districts may choose to waive compliance with a large number of statutory requirements, including prescribed school calendar dates.<sup>6</sup>

Academically high-performing school districts retain the designation for three years and then may renew it if the district continues to meet the requirements.<sup>7</sup> To be designated as an academically high-performing school district, a school district must meet the following requirements:

- Earn a grade of "A" for two consecutive years and have no district-operated school that earned a grade of "F."
- Comply with the class size requirements.
- Have no material weaknesses or instances of material noncompliance noted in the school district's annual financial audit.<sup>8</sup>

During the 2014-2015 school year, academically high-performing districts, Citrus, Nassau, Seminole, and Sumter counties, elected to waive the school start date requirement and started school between August 6<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill requires district school boards begin the school year no earlier than the third Monday in August each year; in effect, up to seven days earlier than current law allows. The bill allows academically high performing districts whose calendar for the 2015-2016 school year was

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Unless an exception is granted by the Department of Education, three common entry periods are established so that the first day of classes will fall within each of the three periods, the first 3 weekdays after August 22, the first 3 weekdays after January 4, and the first 3 weekdays after May 5. Rule 6A-10.019, F.A.C.

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2014-2015 School District Calendars*, <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/index.stml> (last visited March 2, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Rule 6A-10.019(3), F.A.C.

<sup>6</sup> See s. 1003.621(1)(b) and (2)(a) – (k), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.621(1)(c), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1003.621(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> The school districts that meet the eligibility criteria as academically high-performing school districts are: Citrus, Gilchrest, Martin, Nassau, Okaloosa, St. Johns, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, and Wakulla counties. Four elected, in the 2014-2015 school year, to choose an earlier start date than the 14 day uniform date. Florida Department of Education, *2014-2015 School District Calendars*, <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/index.stml> (last visited March 6, 2015).

approved by the district school board before May 1, 2015, to waive compliance for the 2015-2016 school year.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2015.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1001.42 and 1003.621.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**Recommended CS/CS by Appropriations Subcommittee on Education on March 16, 2015:**

The committee substitute amends the opening date for public school districts to no earlier than the third Monday in August.

**CS by Education Pre-K – 12 on March 4, 2015:**

The committee substitute authorizes, with school board approval before May 1, 2015, a one-year exemption before academically high performing school districts must comply with the start date requirements of the bill.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.