

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: CS/HB 261	COMPANION BILL: CS/CS/SB 296 (Bradley)
TITLE: Middle School and High School Start Times	LINKED BILLS: None
SPONSOR(S): Gerwig	RELATED BILLS: None
FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 116 Y's 0 N's	GOVERNOR'S ACTION: Approved

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill allows district school boards and charter school governing boards to be in compliance with the requirement that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools must begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m., if the board submits to the Department of Education a report by June 1, 2026. The report must include school start times for all schools in the district, documentation of strategies considered to implement the start time changes, impact of implementation including financial, and any identified unintended consequences as a result of implementation.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

CS/HB 261 passed as [CS/CS/SB 296](#).

The bill allows for [district school boards](#) and charter school governing boards to be in compliance with the requirement that, by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools must begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m., if the board submits to the Department of Education a report by June 1, 2026. (Sections [1](#) and [2](#)).

The report must include, at a minimum:

- The [start times](#) of elementary, middle, and high schools in the school district.
- Documentation of strategies considered to implement a later school start time for middle schools and high schools within the school district, including the number of school board meetings, public hearings, and opportunities for parent input to discuss the strategies.
- A description of the impact of implementing the school start time requirement, including financial impact for the school district.
- Identified unintended consequences to the school district, students, and the community by implementing the start time requirements. (Section [1](#)).

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 21, 2025, ch. 2025-53, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2025. (Section [3](#)).

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[District School Boards](#)

STORAGE NAME: h0261z

DATE: 5/22/2025

District schools boards, among other duties, are responsible for the establishment, organization, and operation of schools.¹ These responsibilities include adopting policies related to:²

- opening and closing of schools;
- fixing uniform school dates; and
- determining school start times.

Public schools may not start the school year earlier than August 10 of each year³ and must operate a minimum of 180 days or the hourly equivalent.⁴ Charter schools are required to provide instruction for at least the same number of days as public schools.⁵

School Start Times

School start times are established by a local district school board or charter governing board. In 2023, the Florida Legislature passed CS/HB 733 requiring that by July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools may not begin earlier than 8:00 a.m. and for high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m.⁶

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2023	CS/HB 733	Temple	Burgess	Became law on July 1, 2023 with implementation beginning by July 1, 2026.

¹ S. [1001.42\(4\), F.S.](#)

² S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\)2., F.S.](#)

³ S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\)1., F.S.](#)

⁴ S. [1001.42\(12\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Hourly equivalent equates to 900 hours for students in grades 4 through 12 and 720 hours for students in kindergarten through grade 3, *see* [s. 1011.61\(1\)\(a\)1., F.S.](#) Florida law does not require a minimum number of hours or minutes per school day.

⁵ S. [1002.33\(9\)\(m\), F.S.](#)

⁶ S. [1001.42\(4\)\(f\), F.S.](#) and [s. 1002.33\(16\)\(b\)16., F.S.](#); *see* 2023 – 78, L.O.F.