

REVENUE: Revenue statement issued
FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	6 - 2 - 1
Yeas:	Clem, Dallum, Greenlick, Komp, Roblan, Buckley
Nays:	Lim, Whisnant
Exc.:	Krummel
Prepared By:	Derrick Olsen, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/03, 5/08 (Subcommittee on Education Innovation), 5/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Lowers minimum age for required school attendance to six. Directs State Board of Education to adopt rules ensuring that child beginning public school for first time be placed, in consultation with the child's parent or guardian, in grade level appropriate to child's development. Allows parents to request that their child age 6 be exempted until age 7 from required school attendance under procedures established in rule by the State Board of Education. Applies at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Appropriate age for beginning school
- Voluntary vs. mandatory minimum age for school attendance
- Early childhood education and research about potential benefits
- Mandatory minimum age levels for other states
- Pros and cons of an opt-out clause until age 7
- School attendance and school enrollment
- Application of truancy laws
- Grade level assessment for first-time students

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: The amendment clarifies that a child who is six years old and starting public school for the first time should be "placed, in consultation with the child's parent or guardian, in a grade level that is appropriate for the child's development;" and allows parents to request that their child age 6 be exempted until age 7 from required school attendance under procedures established in rule by the State Board of Education.

BACKGROUND: Currently, the minimum age for required school attendance is seven years of age. According to the Education Commission of the States, eight states mandate education at age 5, 24 states mandate education at age 6, 16 states mandate education at age 7, and two states mandate education at age 8. The Department of Education does not know exactly how many additional students would be in classrooms at age 6 that are not already attending public schools at this time.

The Senate Education and General Government Committee gave SB 392-A a Do Pass as Amended recommendation with a 4-1-0 vote, and it passed the Senate 19-8-3.