

HB

76

Original sponsors: Cotten, Phillips  
and Zawacki

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

2 CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 76 (HESS)

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 A BILL.

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the school age and the minimum  
7 age for entering public school kindergarten; and  
8 providing for an effective date."

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

10 \* Section 1. AS 14.03.070 is amended to read:

11 Sec. 14.03.070. SCHOOL AGE. A child who is six years of age or  
12 who will become six years of age before August 15 preceding [NOVEM-  
13 BER 2 FOLLOWING] the beginning of the school year, and who is under  
14 the age of 20 and has not completed the 12th grade, is of school age.

15 \* Sec. 2. AS 14.03.080(d) is amended to read:

16 (d) A child who is five years of age [OR WHO WILL BECOME FIVE  
17 YEARS OF AGE] before August 15 preceding [NOVEMBER 2 FOLLOWING] the  
18 beginning of the school year, and who is under school age, may enter a  
19 public school kindergarten.

20 \* Sec. 3. This Act takes effect July 1, 1988.

May 11, 1987

Bethel Advisory School Board  
Linda Curda, Chairperson  
Box 731  
Bethel, AK 99559

Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services  
Senator Paul Fischer, Chairperson  
P.O.Box V  
Juneau, AK 99559

Dear Senator Fischer:

This letter is in reference to HB 76 which establishes school age and minimum age for entering kindergarten.

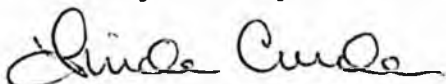
We are in support of HB 76 and its August 15 date for kindergarten entrance but we wish to express concern about the perspective that passage of this bill would insure "success in kindergarten."

Many people view age of a child as a key to success in school, particularly five year olds in kindergarten. Children with late summer/fall birthdays appear less apt to excel in kindergarten and other grades than do children who enter kindergarten at age five.

We believe that success in kindergarten is linked to three important things: a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate; an ongoing perspective that all children develop at their own individual rate; and teaching staff that reflect an understanding of young children and child development. These three are essential to success in school, and building a strong foundation for children to grow on.

Age is only one factor. We urge you to investigate the state's educational perspective on kindergarten: its curriculum, its teacher training requirements and its perspective on individual growth rates. When these factors change, along with adoption of this bill, we will indeed have children succeeding in kindergarten, continuing on to graduate from high school and becoming productive citizens of the state of Alaska.

Thank you very much.



Linda Curda, Chairperson  
Bethel Advisory School Board

cc: Department of Education, Commissioner Demmert  
State Board of Education  
Lower Kuskokwim School District Board of Education

I definitely support moving the age date to  
what is as possible - the  
child's ability to handle it. I  
think the child who appears to  
be ready and a good student  
in kindergarten at 4 years old  
is a good student. I have had  
children in 1st grade who were  
at the age of 4 and 1/2 and  
they were better than the  
children who were 5 and 1/2  
at the same time. I think  
it is better to have children  
who are ready to learn  
at an earlier age than  
to have them who are  
not ready to learn.

# Parents urged not to rush child into school

By Suzanne Gordon  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Anne Horstmann was 4½ when she started kindergarten four years ago, even though her birthday was six weeks after the cutoff date for entering school.

Her Wallingford, Pa., neighbor, Chrissy Breslin, entered school at 4 years, 9 months — just meeting the kindergarten cutoff day.

These ages were common when school districts required children to be 5 by January or February of their kindergarten year, resulting in September classes filled with 4 year olds.

But the ideas on school readiness are changing. Now, the experts believe that older is better.

"Our main thrust is that kids should start (kindergarten) based on behavioral age," said Louise Bates Ames, associate director and co-founder of the Gesell Institute of Human Development, a research, educational and clinical institute in New Haven, Conn. The institute has been trying for at least 10 years to persuade school districts to delay entry dates.

"If they're on the older side, there's a better chance they'll be ready," Ames said.

The argument is gaining supporters: School districts throughout the country are pushing back kindergarten eligibility dates to typically require students to be 5 by Sept. 1. Some educators would like them to be even older.

In addition, they are making sure, through tests and interviews, that the children are developmentally ready.

Oklahoma, for example, passed a law last year requiring kindergarten entrants to all public schools to have turned 5 by Sept. 1. In addition, all children must be screened for school readiness.

In Texas, a law also designating Sept. 1 as the cutoff date to turn age 5 took effect last year.

Kindergarten teacher Carolyn Baldwin has already experienced the change in her students at the Pearl S. Buck Elementary School since the Neshaminy School District of Bucks County, Pa., moved its cutoff date from Jan. 31 to Nov. 1 last year.

As her classroom has filled with older children, she has watched them move away from having "a short attention span and needing almost constant activity" to a group that is "more ready to accept the tasks they are given," she said.

Baldwin, who has taught kindergarten and pre-kindergarten for 12 years, said that most of her pupils turned 5 before school began this fall and that others, who had been kept out of school by their parents for an additional year, are almost 6.

"Parents are becoming very aware that age is important," she said.

At Gesell, which publishes the widely used Gesell Developmental Test to measure school readiness, Ames said that being ready for kindergarten generally means having the skills of most 5-year-olds: being able to draw or color beyond a scribble, tie a knot, zip or button a coat, stand on one foot for 5 to 10 seconds, tell their left hand from their right, travel alone in a neighborhood for two blocks and cross a residential street safely.

A child who is not ready for school, she said, might draw a person with arms and legs coming out of the head, fuss about leaving his mother, say that school is dumb or boring, or have stomachaches or headaches, especially on weekdays.

"A lot more than the IQ goes to school, and a lot more than reading goes to school. Reading is a good thing to be able to do, but it's not necessarily a sign that the child is ready for the total school situation," Ames said.

R E S O L U T I O N

NUMBER: 11  
SOURCE: AAESP Resolution Committee/ASA Resolutions  
TITLE: School Age

WHEREAS, children entering kindergarten with birthday's after June 1 of the appropriate year appear to be less successful in their initial and subsequent school years; and

WHEREAS, children entering first grade with birthdays after June 1 of the appropriate year appear to be less successful in their subsequent school years; and

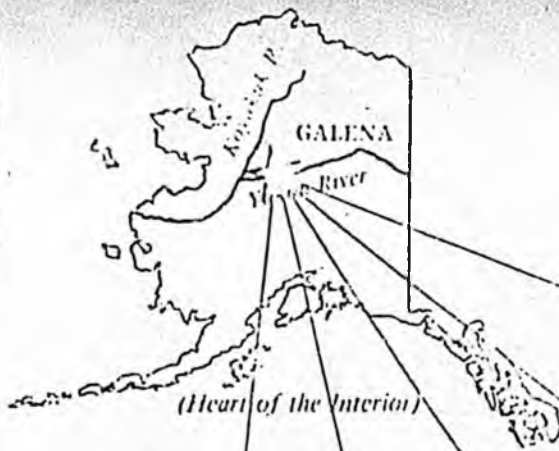
WHEREAS, the retention rate for students with birthdays after June 1st of the appropriate year appears to be significantly higher;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals supports legislation that would revise the school age requirement from November 1st of the appropriate year to June 1st of the appropriate year.

GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

GALENA, ALASKA 99741  
PHONE (907) 656-1205

SUPERINTENDENT'S  
OFFICE



April 22, 1987

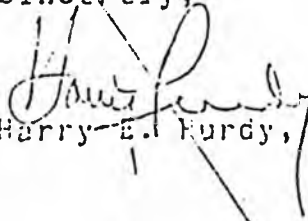
Representative Sam Gotten  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Gotten:

The Galena Board of Education understands that Sponsor Substitute for HB-96 has been modified. However, they support the concept that children are starting school too early, which is creating problems later on in their schooling.

Thank you for your support of children and their education.

Sincerely,

  
Harry E. Kurdy, Superintendent

HEP/elb  
111/87

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

316 W. 11th St. • Juneau, Alaska 99801-1510 • (907) 586-1083

April 23, 1987

The Honorable Sam Cotten  
Alaska State Legislature  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Cotten,

The Association of Alaska School Boards would like to express support for CS for H.B. 76 (HESS) that would change the entrance age for entering the public schools of Alaska.

The Association feels that moving the age eligibility date from November 2 to August 15 of the school year will eliminate a number of problems.

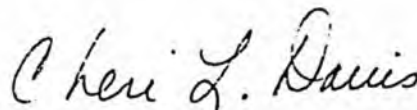
We assume, of course, that this change would not impact the ability of local districts to implement their early entrance procedures; something they have been doing for a long time.

The Association would like to express our appreciation for your continued efforts to enhance the quality of education in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Greene  
Executive Director



Cheri L. Davis  
President

**STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
FISCAL NOTE**

**REQUEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Bill Version: CSHB 76 (HESS)  
Publish Date: HOUSE 3/25/87

Revision Date: March 25, 1987  
Title: ...public school kindergarten...

Agency Affected: Education  
BRU: K-12 Support

Sponsor: Representatives Cotten & Phillips  
Requestor: House HESS

Components: Foundation

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>		0	0	0	0	0

<b>CAPITAL</b>						
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<b>REVENUE</b>						
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

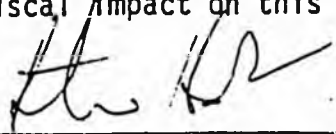
GENERAL FUND		0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
<b>TOTAL</b>						

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

**ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)**

This bill has no fiscal impact on this department.

Prepared by: Steve Hole   
Division: Commissioner's Office

Phone: 465-2800  
Date: March 25, 1987

Approved by Commissioner: Marshall L. Lind  
Agency: Education

Date: March 25, 1987

**Distribution (by preparer):**

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