

HB

33

Louie Flora

From: Watkins, Bill [bwatkins01@kodiakschools.org]
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2009 6:13 AM
To: Louie Flora; Curran, Cynthia A (EED); Amy Lloyd; Becky Huggins; Bunny Schaeffer; Carol Comeau; Colleen Patrick-Riley; Debbie Bogard; Esther Cox; Kathleen Castle; Watkins, Kathy; Marcy Herman; Millie Ryan; Peggy Cowan; Phillip Schneider; PJ Ford Slack; Ronald Cadiente Brown; Saichi Oba; Sam Spinella; Theresa Holt; Tom Morgan
Subject: RE: Article on Step-Up program in relation to raising the compulsory school attendance age

I'm very concerned about raising the compulsory age - we have no controls over the existing compulsory age. Students who are motivated and/or see the connection between a "school" education and their future will attend. It is our job to make these opportunities available - this is why we work so hard to create so many alternative choices. Education can occur in a variety of places what do we do with the students who are homeschooled or more importantly the students who claim to be homeschooled?

Another idea? What if we continued to offer a variety of programs (like we currently do) but allowed students 14 years to earn their diploma instead of 12. Students who finish all high school requirements in 10 years can begin working on their college coursework or other postsecondary courses to prepare them for the career of their choice and have an opportunity to earn an associates degree or certificate while still attending highschool. Schools would no longer be punished for their efforts to help students who need more than 12 years to graduate. (Not all college students earn their BS in 4 years - and colleges are not punished for those students who need more time - in fact they prosper off the ones who take longer to graduate.)

Just a thought - but I do disagree with raising the compulsory school attendance age - just another law that our court system can't handle and our youth will find ways to break.

Thanks for sharing,

Bill Watkins

From: Louie Flora [mailto:Louie_Flora@legis.state.ak.us]
Sent: Tue 9/15/2009 4:57 PM
To: Curran, Cynthia A (EED); Amy Lloyd; Becky Huggins; Watkins, Bill; Bunny Schaeffer; Carol Comeau; Colleen Patrick-Riley; Debbie Bogard; Esther Cox; Kathleen Castle; Watkins, Kathy; Marcy Herman; Millie Ryan; Peggy Cowan; Phillip Schneider; PJ Ford Slack; Ronald Cadiente Brown; Saichi Oba; Sam Spinella; Theresa Holt; Tom Morgan
Subject: Article on Step-Up program in relation to raising the compulsory school attendance age

Representative Seaton posed the following questions based on the ADN article below in relation to raising the compulsory school attendance age and asked me to pass along the article to the Graduation Rate Working Group.

1. How would a compulsory age statute affect the "several hundred" long term "kick-out" in Anchorage alone?

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: HB 33

1 Page 1, line 1, following "attendance;":

2 Insert "relating to truancy;"

3

4 Page 1, following line 9:

5 Insert new bill sections to read:

6 ** Sec. 2. AS 14.30.030 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 14.30.030. Prevention and reduction of truancy.** The governing body of
8 a school district, including a regional educational attendance area, shall establish
9 procedures to prevent and reduce truancy. The procedures must include an
10 enforcement mechanism to ensure that all students who are not enrolled in a
11 school in a correctional facility or otherwise exempt from compulsory school
12 attendance in the district comply with truancy laws and procedures.

13 * Sec. 3. AS 14.30.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

14 (b) A school district shall enforce truancy laws and provide an education to all
15 students who are required under AS 14.30.010 to attend a school located in the
16 district."

17

18 Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

19

20 Page 1, line 15:

21 Delete "2009"

22 Insert "2010"

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

TO: CSSB 102(JUD)

1 Page 1, line 1, following "**attendance**";:

2 Insert "**relating to truancy**";

3

4 Page 4, following line 2:

5 Insert new bill sections to read:

6 *** Sec. 4.** AS 14.30.030 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 14.30.030. Prevention and reduction of truancy.** The governing body of
8 a school district, including a regional educational attendance area, shall establish
9 procedures to prevent and reduce truancy. The procedures must include an
10 enforcement mechanism to ensure that all students who are not enrolled in a
11 school in a correctional facility or otherwise exempt from compulsory school
12 attendance in the district comply with truancy laws and procedures.

13 *** Sec. 5.** AS 14.30.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

14 (b) A school district shall enforce truancy laws in order to provide an
15 education to all students who are required under AS 14.30.010 to attend a school
16 located in the district.

17 *** Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
18 read:

19 **APPLICABILITY.** The changes made to AS 14.30.010(a) by sec. 2 of this Act do not
20 apply to children who are 16 or 17 years of age who have been officially dropped from public
21 school enrollment in the state on or before the effective date of this Act."

F V I

HAINES BOROUGH

Adopted

RESOLUTION 09-03-159

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE HAINES BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AND HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD SUPPORTING AN INCREASE OF THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE FROM 16 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE.

WHEREAS, Alaska's drop-out rate is double the national average based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, sixteen-year-olds are not ready to make the enormous decision to give up a high school education at a critical age for their development and future success; and

WHEREAS, when the drop-out rate of Alaskan students increase, the direct and indirect costs to the State of Alaska also increase including unemployment, criminal behavior, and dependence on the State's social services; and

WHEREAS, it has been established through extensive research that the more education a person receives the more earning potential one gains; and

WHEREAS, Federal and State legislation holds districts and schools to the high standard of graduating all students; and

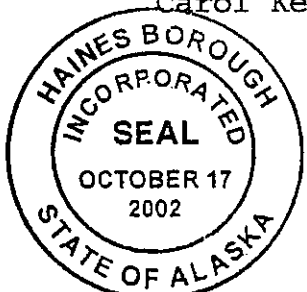
WHEREAS, parents and schools need all the tools they can to set a standard of expected attendance,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Haines Borough Assembly and Haines Borough School Board jointly support the increase in the compulsory attendance age for the State of Alaska from 16 to 18 years of age unless the School District's graduation requirements have been met.

ADOPTED BY DULY CONSTITUTED QUORUMS OF THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AND THE SCHOOL BOARD OF THE HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA, THIS 31ST DAY OF MARCH, 2009.

Janice Hill
Janice Hill, Mayor
Carol Kelly
Carol Kelly, Board President

ATTEST:
Julie Cozzi
Julie Cozzi, Borough Clerk



Louie Flora

From: Kelly Foreman [kelnmart@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2009 1:36 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Cc: Louie Flora
Subject: Please oppose HB 33
Attachments: Comparison of Compulsory School Ages and Dropout Rates.pdf

Dear Chair Seaton,

I am opposed to any legislation to increase the compulsory school age.

There is no solid evidence for expanding the compulsory school age. I have compiled a table comparing the compulsory school ages of all the states and their graduation and dropout rates. The information was obtained from the Education Commission of the States website (www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/64/07/6407.htm) and The National Center for Education Statistics website (nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/dropout06/figures/figure_04.asp). The average dropout rate for states with compulsory attendance until 16 is 23.4% and for states requiring attendance until 18 it is 23.9%. Is this small difference worth the increase in government spending and increase in taxation?

While a state or a parent might be able to force 17- and 18-year-olds to attend classes in a school, neither the state nor parent can force them to learn their academic subjects or have better attitudes toward academic learning.

Please oppose this legislation.

Thank you,
Kelly Foreman
19941 Grant Circle
Eagle River, AK 99577
907-622-4661

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Comparison of Compulsory School Ages and Dropout Rates on State-by-State Basis

State	Start age*	End age*	Graduation Rate**	Dropout Rate
Alabama (ALA. CODE § 16-28-3)	7	16	65.9	34.1
Alaska (ALASKA STAT. § 14.30.010)	7	16	64.1	35.9
Arizona (ARIZ. REV. STAT. § 15-802)	6	16	84.7	15.3
Delaware (DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 14, § 2702)	5	16	73.1	26.9
Florida (FLA. STAT. ANN. § 1003.21)	6	16	64.6	35.4
Georgia (GA. CODE ANN. § 20-2-690.1)	6	16	61.7	38.3
Idaho (IDAHO CODE § 33-202)	7	16	81.0	19.0
Indiana (IND. CODE ANN. § 20-33-2-6)	7	16	73.2	26.8
Iowa (IOWA CODE ANN. § 299.1A)	6	16	86.6	13.4
Kentucky (KY. REV. STAT. ANN. 159.010)	6	16	75.9	24.1
Maryland (MD. CODE ANN., EDUC. § 7-301)	5	16	79.3	20.7
Massachusetts (MASS. GEN. LAWS ANN. ch. 76, § 1; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 603, § 8.02)	6	16	78.7	21.3
Michigan (MICH. COMP. LAWS § 380.1561)	6	16	73.0	27.0
Minnesota (MINN. STAT. § 120A.22)	7	16	85.9	14.1
Missouri (MO. REV. STAT. § 167.031)	7	16	80.6	19.4
Montana (MONT. CODE. ANN. § 20-5-102)	7	16	81.5	18.5
New Jersey (N.J. REV. STAT. § 18A-38-25)	6	16	85.1	14.9
New York (N.Y. EDUC. LAW § 3205)	6	16	65.3	34.7
North Carolina (N.C. GEN. STAT. § 115C-378)	7	16	72.6	27.4
North Dakota (N.D. CENT. CODE § 15.1-20-01)	7	16	86.3	13.7
Rhode Island (R.I. GEN. LAWS § 16-19-1)	6	16	78.4	21.6
Vermont (VT. STAT. ANN. tit. 16, § 1121)	6	16	86.5	13.5
Wyoming (WYO. STAT. ANN. § 21-4-102)	7	16	76.7	23.3

Average dropout rate
for states with
compulsory
attendance age of 16:
23.4%

Arkansas (ARK. CODE. ANN. § 6-18-201)	5	17	75.7	24.3
Colorado (COLO. REV. STAT. §22-33-104)	6	17	76.7	23.3
Illinois (105 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. § 5/26-1)	7	17	79.4	20.6
Maine (ME. REV. STAT. ANN. tit. 20A, § 5001-A)	7	17	78.6	21.4
Mississippi (MISS. CODE ANN. § 37-13-91)	6	17	63.3	36.7
Pennsylvania (PA. CONS. STAT. ANN. § 13-1326)	8	17	82.5	17.5
South Carolina (S.C. CODE ANN. § 59-65-10)	5	17	60.1	39.9
Tennessee (TENN. CODE ANN. § 49-6-3001)	6	17	68.5	31.5
California (CAL. EDUC. CODE 48200)	6	18	74.6	25.4
Connecticut (CON. GEN. STAT. § 10-184)	5	18	80.9	19.1
District of Columbia (D.C. CODE ANN. § 38-202)	5	18	68.8	31.2
Hawaii (HAW. REV. STAT. 302A-1132)	6	18	75.1	24.9
Kansas (KAN. STAT. ANN. § 72-1111)	7	18	79.2	20.8
Louisiana (LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 17:221)	7	18	63.9	36.1
Nebraska (NEB. REV. STAT. § 79-201)	6	18	87.8	12.2
Nevada (NEV. REV. STAT. § 392.040)	7	18	55.8	44.2
New Hampshire (N.H. REV. STAT. § 193:1)	6	18	80.1	19.9
New Mexico (N.M. STAT ANN. §§ 22-8-2, 22-12-2)	5	18	65.4	34.6
Ohio (OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3321.01)	6	18	80.2	19.8
Oklahoma OKLA. STAT. ANN. TIT. 70, § 10-105	5	18	76.9	23.1
Oregon (OR. REV. STAT. § 339.010)	7	18	74.2	25.8
South Dakota (S.D. CODIFIED LAWS § 13-27-1)	6	18	82.3	17.7
Texas (TEX. EDUC. CODE ANN. § 25.085)	6	18	74.0	26.0
Utah (UTAH CODE ANN. § 53A-11-101)	6	18	84.4	15.6
Virginia (VA. CODE ANN. § 22.1-254)	5	18	79.6	20.4

Average dropout rate for
states with
compulsory
attendance age of 17:
26.9%

Average dropout rate for
states with
compulsory
attendance age of 18:
23.9%

Washington (WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 28A.225.010)	8	18	75.0	25.0
West Virginia (W. VA. CODE § 18-8-1)	6	18	77.3	22.7
Wisconsin (WIS. STAT. ANN. § 118.15)	6	18	86.7	13.3

*Compulsory School Age Requirements - www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/64/07/6407.htm

** Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States - nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/dropout06/figures/figure_04.asp

Rep. Paul Seaton

From: Alaska Pratts [akpratts@acsalaska.net]
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2009 6:26 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Cc: Rep. Cathy Munoz
Subject: HB33

Representative Seaton –

In your discussion on raising the mandatory school attendance age, please ensure that your decision does not increase class size, reduce teacher attention, or redirect resources from students who wish to remain in school. A diploma is unquestionably the best choice for every student, but forcing that to happen through a legal requirement rather than providing other options isn't necessarily the best choice for all students as far as I can tell.

I am not an educational expert. I am an economist considering optimal outcomes and least harm policies. I will try to listen to the hearing. I will be interested to hear why experts believe increasing the mandatory age is the best choice to produce better classroom environments. How does this benefit the vast majority of students who voluntarily want to be in school?

Steve Pratt
Anchorage

Louie Flora

From: Lisa Torkelson [lisa@advanced-design.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2009 11:16 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: House Bill 33
Attachments: Compulsory_Comparison.pdf

Honorable Chairman Seaton,

A bill to raise the compulsory education law in Alaska has been introduced...again. HB 33 has nothing to do with helping kids learn more. Seems the better alternative would be to find ways to motivate, not mandate, them to stay in school. As to the dropout rate reductions that these types of bills invoke, statistics show that it has the opposite effect (see attached chart). Students, parents, and teachers lose with this scenario.

Negative results. The attached chart, compiled by a parent of school-age children, shows the average dropout rate increases by .4% when laws mandate compulsory attendance until 18 years of age.

Disruption in the classroom. I don't know of any parents who have experienced good results when they force their children to do something they don't want to do. Mandating seat-time for dissatisfied, disruptive 17- and 18-year olds creates a non-productive environment for teachers and fellow students.

Are they really going to learn more? While legislation may mandate 17 & 18 year old physical bodies be in a seat in the room, teachers can't force a closed-mind to learn more. A wise parent recently said, "you can lead 'em to learning, but you can't make 'em think."

What about enticing kids to stay in school? Rather than mandating more warm bodies to (supposedly) boost statistics, we should instead be asking schools why these kids don't want to stay willingly. According to a recent study, the reasons most kids drop out is not because they are failing, but because they are "bored" and "unmotivated". Source: (<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/03/08/26dropout.h25.html>)

Enjoyment and creativity in teaching produces amazing results in kids; forcing them to continue doing something they hate will turn them not into valedictorians and model students but make them even more bitter toward the system and society that forces them to "sit still and be quiet" for two...more...years

Please help to defeat the misguided attempt of HB 33.

Sincerely,
 Lisa Torkelson

Chugiak, Alaska

"Compulsory education is the chink in the armor of capitalist societies: they try to teach children the values of contract and initiative, but base their educational system on compulsion and conformity. Communist societies suffer from no such inconsistency: they try to teach their children command and obedience, and their educational system is consistent with inculcating this ethic."

-Szasz, T.S. (1973). *The second sin*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press. (p.19)

Below is a short (and far from complete) bibliography

High School Dropouts: The Silent Epidemic

By George E. Curry

Source: <http://dcsistrunk.blogspot.com/2006/03/why-kids-drop-out-of-school.html>

"Nearly half of the former students - 47 percent - quit not because of the academic challenge, but because they found classes uninteresting."

H.S. Dropouts Say Lack of Motivation Top Reason to Quit

By Catherine Gewertz

Source: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/03/08/26dropout.h25.html>

"High school dropouts interviewed for a study released last week were far more likely to say they left school because they were unmotivated, not challenged enough, or overwhelmed by troubles outside of school than because they were failing academically."

Why do students drop out of school?

The dropout rate is a crucial indicator of schools, but also the slippery eel of education statistics.

By MARIA SACCHETTI

The Orange County Register

Source: http://www.ocregister.com/ocr/sections/news/news/article_294717.php

Policy Brief: A Case Against Compulsion

by Mary K. Novello, Ed.D, Adjunct Fellow, Washington Institute; March 1998

Source:

http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/Centers/Miscellaneous/policybriefs/98_novello_compulsion.html

Foreword

Mary Novello's brief is that compulsory school attendance serves no clear educational purpose while costing untold amounts in dollars and psychic energy. She argues convincingly in fact that while it serves a schooling purpose, the link between education and schooling is tenuous at best. She implies that government intrusion with its attendant regulations and certifications creates a dependency cycle that leaves it unclear as to who really needs whom. Do children need school or does the school bureaucracy need children in order to justify its existence? The continuously changing goal structure of public schooling suggests she may be on to something. Having come up somewhat short in their academic mission the schools have more recently taken on such responsibilities as self-esteem training, safe sex education, anger management as well as refusal skills and a host of other social programs. The agenda widens, encroaching upon territory previously thought to be within the spheres of home and church influence. She raises the trust issue in this context, more accurately the lack thereof, citing Horace Mann's characterization of parents as "ignorant and vicious," hardly the qualities one seeks in the upbringing of the young. A benign bureaucratic influence, of course, is the answer Mann and his spiritual descendants would apply. A common complaint leveled at critics like Mary Novello is that they identify the illness without suggesting a cure. What on earth would young people do if they did not go to school? I would only say to her critics that the first step in solving a problem is to identify clearly what the problem is. And this is exactly what she has done.

Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

Source: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/default.htm>

"§15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies have been implemented successfully at all education levels and environments throughout the nation.

You'll notice that none of the dropout prevention ideas include raising the compulsory education laws...

Rhode Island attempted the same bill in 2005:

1. Proponents of raising the compulsory attendance age claim it will lead to a higher graduation rate. But the state with the highest graduation rate in the country, New Jersey, at 89%, only requires attendance to age 16. And Florida, which requires attendance to age 18, has one of the nation's

lowest graduation rates, at 59%.

The facts demonstrate that forcing unwilling students to stay in school longer does not increase graduation rates. And it does not reduce juvenile crime.

In addition, it is certain that your tax bill will increase. When California raised its compulsory attendance age, taxpayers were forced to pay for a whole new school system to handle the numerous problems these unruly, unwilling students caused.

The statistics in the first paragraph come from the February, 2005, publication of the Manhattan Institute's Center for Civic Innovation, "Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002," by Dr. Jay P. Greene.

2. Rhode Island students who are enrolled in school must attend-until age 18 unless parents give written consent to leave at age 16.
3. States which compel attendance only to age 16 have better high school completion rates than states that compel attendance to 17 or 18, on average. (Source: "Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000", pp. 9-10, 40-41; National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Office of educational Research and Improvement, Doc. No. NCES 2002-114.)
4. States which compel attendance only to age 16 also have lower dropout rates than states that compel attendance to 17 or 18, on average. (Source: same as above.)
5. According to statistics published by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Dropout Prevention, a higher compulsory attendance age is not correlated to a reduction in juvenile crime. (Source: "Juvenile Arrests 1999." Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000.)

Source: Senate Bill 169: Raising the Compulsory Attendance Age
Sponsors: Senators Pichardo, Connors, Issa, Perry, and C. Levesque.

Summary: This bill would have raised compulsory attendance to age 17 from its current age of 16. Currently, children between 16 and 18 who are "enrolled in school" need written permission from their parents before they can be exempted from compulsory attendance. This bill would have required children to stay in school until age 17 before their parents could authorize the exemption. The bill was not taken up by the Committee before the legislature adjourned, thus the bill died in Committee.

Status:

02/02/2005 (Senate): Introduced, Referred To Senate Education.

03/17/2005 (Senate): Education Committee Hearing at 4:15 PM in Room 313 of the Rhode Island State House.

03/17/2005 (Senate): Committee Recommended Measure Be Held For Further Study

03/30/2005 (Senate): Education Committee Hearing at 4:30 PM in Senate Lounge - State House

03/30/2005 (Senate): Committee recommended measure be held for further study.

FAX

TO: Representative Paul Seaton
President, Education Committee

FROM: Rhonda Stark
PO Box 1452, Palmer AK 99645
(907)745-1242
stark@mtaonline.net

DATE: January 29, 2009

PAGE #: 2

RE: HB 33 Compulsory Education

January 29, 2009

RE: HB33 Compulsory Education

Honorable Representative Seaton:

I am writing to you requesting that you consider rejection of HB33 that would raise the age of compulsory attendance for students.

There is no evidence, through research or history, that forcing students to remain in school longer will reduce the dropout rate. In fact, the state with the highest graduation rate in the country, New Jersey at 89%, only requires students to remain in school until age 16. On the other hand, Florida, who requires students to remain in school until age 18, has the lowest graduation rate in the country at 59%.


This bill proposes a very costly option to taxpayers. Strategies that would be far more effective and less costly include: encouraging family involvement; intensive reading and writing programs; community collaboration; learning style/multiple intelligences strategies; alternative schooling; and individualized instruction such as tutoring. Forcing students to sit in desks like buckets on a bench will not improve their learning nor their career opportunities and, I would even suggest, you will likely just end up with them breaking the law by not being there anyway. All in all, further cost to taxpayers via law enforcement needs or more truant officers.

During the 75 years after we became a nation, our government had no role in education. At the time of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, the rate of literacy was at 97%. As long as we've had compulsory education, which began in the mid-late 1800's, the rate has never been that high. The original reasons for the beginning of compulsory education no longer exist. Children are no longer being forced into labor as there are strong laws in place disallowing that. There are also a myriad of child protection laws. Society as a whole also deeply values education. There is ample research to even suggest that compulsory education overall is pretty redundant and really does not improve our educational system. I would say the far greater influence to keep it has more to do with money, and control by an overbearing and out of control union.

As for the lowering of the age of compulsory education, this completely undermines the integrity of the home by taking away the autonomy and authority of parents to make educational decisions for their children. Put the power and decision making back into the hands of parents and let them decide when to begin formal education and allow young children to enjoy the short years of childhood without government meddling.

Generations of families have been charmed into believing that "government knows best" in education, thus, too much power and monopoly has been allowed to government in this area. It is time for increased educational choice and a little "competition" that will result in far greater success. There are a myriad of ways to do this. Compulsory education has resulted in excessive government control and expanding it will not lower the drop out rate but only be more costly to taxpayers. I am vehemently against HB33 and am asking you to please vote against it.

Respectfully,


Rhonda L. Stark
P.O. Box 1452
Palmer, AK 99645

Louie Flora

From: Yonder Alaska [yonderalaska@yahoo.com]
 Sent: Friday, January 30, 2009 2:51 PM
 To: Rep. Paul Seaton
 Subject: HR 33, 59, and 69
 Follow Up Flag: Follow up
 Flag Status: Yellow

Dear Alaska State Representative,

RE: HR 33, HR 59, and HR 69.

As a 10+ year home school family, I feel that government intervention in parental responsibilities should be avoided. The Home School Legal Defense Association has written an excellent article (Why Government Should Stay Out of Pre-K) outlining parents' concerns, and legal concerns, about HR 59 and 69. Please read their article in its' entirety.

As quoted from the article located at this link -
<http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/200809080.asp>

Conclusion - "In the realm of pre-K, there is neither compelling evidence nor constitutional justification for government involvement. Institutionalized early education programs are an assault on parental rights and limited government. It is parents, not the government, who know what is best for their children. Many pre-K bills, such as H.R. 2343 and H.R. 3289 are geared toward military families; it is especially outrageous to use the families who have sacrificed so much for our country as proverbial guinea pigs for government experimentation. Given institutionalized early education's appalling track record in regard to its effectiveness and expense, and the high probability that such programs will be ripe for government mandated morality, pre-K legislation ought to be strongly and unequivocally opposed."

HR 33 - It is not at all uncommon for home schooled students to finish high school level learning earlier than age 18. As a public schooled student, I graduated from high school at age 17. It is ludicrous to assume that a student should remain in school only because they do not meet the state set age for completion. This would hinder a graduate of home schooled high school from moving on with his/her life, getting a full-time job, etc. if he/she were required to be in school until age 18. Please visit this link <http://www.hslda.org/hs/state/ak/2007009120.asp>

for clarification on
 compulsory age
 attendance from a home school
 perspective.

House Bill 33 States that -
 Section 1.

AS 14.30.010(a) is amended to read:

a) Every child between seven and 18 [16] years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term. Every parent, guardian or other person having the responsibility for or control of a child between seven and 18 [16] years of age shall maintain the child in attendance at a public school in the district in which the child resides during the entire school term, except as provided in (b) of this section.

What is 'provided in (b) of this section' makes no mention of those who choose to home school their children.

I look

forward to hearing from you on these issues.
 Thank you for taking the time to listen to those who elected you to the public service seat in which you hold.

Sincerely and Respectfully,
 Lisa K. Hydock
 yonderalaska@yahoo.com
 Ketchikan, AK

Louie Flora

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2009 10:42 AM
To: Louie Flora
Subject: FW: HB 33

From: Leonard LaForest [mailto:lenlaforest@mtaonline.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2009 10:07 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB 33

Honorable Representative Seaton,

As a concerned Alaskan resident I am writing to you requesting that you consider rejection of House Bill 33 which seeks to raise the compulsory attendance age to 18 from 16 years of age. There is no research that suggests raising the age of attendance will ensure reduced drop out rates here in Alaska. Raising the age of compulsory attendance will not enable our young people to learn when they do not desire to be stifled by our current system of education which does not allow them to pursue their own interests at a rate that is in accordance to their skill and ability. More profitable usages of our tax dollars would be to encourage more parental participation, community cooperation, and instruction in learning styles, tutoring or a mentoring approach in areas of the student's interests. Raising the compulsory attendance age will benefit truancy officers more than encourage the absorption of knowledge by reluctant students. Compulsory education has resulted in excessive government control and expanding it will not lower the drop out rate but only be more costly to taxpayers. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 33 and respectfully request that you vote against it.

Respectfully
Pauline LaForest
Palmer, Alaska



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Education Committee
(committee name)

committee on HB 33, dated 3/12/09

We would like the bill ^(bill#/subject) to read 6-16.

Schools cannot, unfortunately, be all things to all people. Until there is access to multiple vocational programs, special programs for different learning styles, etc. within the public schools there will be students who are better served by getting their GED and proceeding to learning in a different context. For some this may be the local community college, for some on-the-job training, for some online learning parttime while they pursue other endeavors. We should be working on the carrot, not the stick - school programs and personnel to engage kids rather than forcing kids who don't want to be there to take up seats in classrooms without any motivation.

The Valdez School Board is on record as strongly advocating for starting compulsory education at age 6, instead of 7. The Alaska State Literacy Association stated most of our arguments. With home schooling exemptions, we find no downside to changing the lower age for school attendance. (We are advocating for 6, not 5, and part day homeschool is allowed.) Kids deserve to start school on time.

~~We would like to~~

Signed:

Kathleen G. Todd MD Kathleen G. Todd MD
Testifier

Valdez City School Board
Representing (optional)

Box 1889, Valdez, AK 99686
Address

907-835-4200
Telephone

Louie Flora

From: Mark Van Diest [jmvandiest@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 07, 2009 9:22 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: Opposed to House Bill 33 & Senate Bill 102
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Blue

Representative Seaton:

Our family is opposed to the House Bill 33 & Senate Bill 102 that will increase the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. We are opposed to expansion of state control over education. We are convinced that education of the children is a family decision, be this at a public school, private school, or home. Thank you for listening to our opinion.

Lorri Van Diest
Mat-Su School District teacher & Home educator

Louie Flora

From: Cathy Law [cathy@sundogmedia.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2009 10:16 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: opposition to expansion of state control over education
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Representative Paul Seaton

I am writing to express opposition to any expansion of state control over education. Please oppose the 2 following bills.

House Bill 33 has been scheduled for a hearing March 13th at 8:00 am. HB 33 would raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 or graduation. http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill_text.asp?hsid=HB0033A&session=26

Senate Bill 102 has also been scheduled for a hearing March 13 at 8:00 am. SB 102 would raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 ; "An act relating to compulsory school attendance; relating to the crime of contributing to the delinquency of a minor..." http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill_text.asp?hsid=SB0102A&session=26.

Thank you for your service to the state.

Sincerely,

5033 Sillary Circle
Anchorage, AK 99508

Stop Spam ~ use SpamArrest ~ <http://spamarrest.com/affi?1201204>

Louie Flora

From: Dave & Chris Cvancara [silentc@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 08, 2009 8:17 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Representative_Bryce_Edgemon@legis.state.ak.us;
Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Bob Buch; Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Oppose House Bill 33

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Blue

> Representatives;
>
> Please add me to the voice of those opposed to House Bill 33, which
> raises the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. As a
> homeschooler, I have every intention of having my 16 year old start
> attending college courses. In this time of fiduciary responsibility,
> we need less government "programs" that involve extra funding and more
> state control over education. Furthermore, parents are still the only
> and best institution that should determine what is best for their children.
>
> v/r
> David Cvancara
>

Alaska State Literacy Association Testimony HB33

March 13, 2009

My name is Patricia George and I represent the Alaska State Literacy Association along with my co-chair Brett Dillingham. The Alaska State Literacy Association is the largest professional education association in Alaska with over 500 members from across the state.

The Alaska State Literacy Association strongly believes that mandatory school attendance age should be lowered from age seven to age six. There are several house and senate bills currently under consideration that would provide quality pre-school and kindergarten programs. There is growing awareness of the importance of preparing children for school at an earlier age. The Alaska State Literacy Association feels that children should be required to attend school at an earlier age.

We have provided the committee with a chart and summary showing that 32 states require students attend school by age six. From my personal experience as a first grade teacher, I found that there were no ways to compel parents to have their children attend school regularly and on time. I know that there are parents who feel that changing the statute would infringe on their rights as parents, but it is my understanding that the change in mandatory school attendance age does not change any of the waivers that are already built into the law. It is important to have children who attend public school come to school regularly so that they don't miss critical steps in the learning process.

House Bill 33 is an appropriate vehicle to make this change in state statute. We urge you to amend House Bill 33 to lower the mandatory school age from seven to six.

We provided the staff and you should have in your packet a proposed amendment. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

TESTIMONY - HB 33

Good Morning, Chairman Seaton and members of the House Education committee. For the record my name is Lydia Garcia and I serve as the Executive Director for NEA-Alaska representing almost 13,000 public school employee members throughout the State.

I'm here today to testify in support of House Bill 33. This bi-partisan legislation is an attempt to address the problem of, quite frankly, children not remaining in school.

The reasons teenagers decide to drop out of school are many and varied, but certainly there are times when it is just the fact that legally they do not have to attend school which helps them out the door.

House Bill 33 will raise the upper end of mandatory attendance in Alaska's schools to the age of 18. While this is certainly not a silver bullet, it is a good ingredient in any recipe for success in life. As the sponsor has stated, the more education one receives the better earning potential one acquires and a better chance of personal success ensues.

About six weeks ago, 450 public school employee delegates, elected by their peers met at the Anchorage Hilton and set the policy for the coming year for NEA-Alaska. One of the resolutions passed by the 2009 NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly stated "*NEA-Alaska believes the legislature should establish policies for non-compliance with Alaska's compulsory attendance laws.*"

This legislation takes those laws a step further. It is the belief, however, of NEA-Alaska that a law with no teeth would serve little purpose.

Alaska's school employees work hard to offer our children opportunities that prepare them for life. We cannot fulfill the promise of a high quality education for Alaska's children if they are not in our classrooms.

We applaud the efforts and direction of House Bill 33 and ask that you move this legislation from committee.

Thank you for your time!

Lydia Garcia
Executive Director
NEA-Alaska

Alaska State Literacy Association
Patricia George, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair
3328 Fritz Cove Road
Juneau, AK 99801

March 13, 2009

The Honorable Paul Seaton
House Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Seaton,

The Alaska State Literacy Association would like to propose an amendment to **HB 33** that would lower the compulsory attendance age to six.

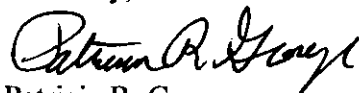
The Alaska State Literacy Association is the largest professional education association in Alaska with a growing membership of over 500 members. The mission of the Alaska State Literacy Association is to promote lifelong literacy for all Alaskans by advancing the quality of literacy instruction.

At present, the state of Alaska funds but does not mandate kindergarten. AS 14.03.070 mandates compulsory attendance from age 7 to 16. School age is further defined as 6 to 18 with 5 year olds allowed to attend kindergarten where it is available. The federal No Child Left Behind law stipulates that all children should be reading at grade level by the end of third grade. If Alaska's children are not required to attend school until the age of seven, many will not be reading at third grade level by the age of eight or nine. Young children will meet this requirement easier when they are provided the rich kindergarten experiences where they learn that text carries meaning, readers process print from left to right, top to bottom, and that real life involves using reading and writing for practical purposes.

The ASLA believes that compulsory school attendance by age six is an important component in providing quality educational opportunities to the children of Alaska. The ASLA encourages the Education Committee to amend HB33 to lower the compulsory school attendance age from seven to six years of age.

We have attached a proposed amendment to HB33 for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patricia R. George
ASLA Advocacy Committee Co-Chair

Brett Dillingham
ASLA Advocacy Committee Co-Chair

Amendment to HB 33

Section 2

AS 14.30.010(a)

Line 19 delete [seven] substitute six

Line 22 delete [seven] substitute six

Literacy Development of Alaskan Children Ages Three to Five A Position Statement of the Alaska State Literacy Association



The Importance of Preschool and Kindergarten

The Alaska State Literacy Association believes that every child in Alaska should attend kindergarten and that 3 and 4 year olds should have access to free, high quality public preschool. The high-quality preschool and kindergarten experiences that successfully foster early language and literacy skills lay a critical foundation for children's successful future. Children who attend high-quality preschools and kindergarten are less likely to be retained in the primary grades, have higher graduation rates from high school, and have fewer behavior problems (Barnett, 1995; Campbell & Raney, 1995; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2002; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997).

The Need For Free, High-Quality, Public Kindergarten and Preschools

At present, the state of Alaska funds but does not mandate kindergarten. AS 14.03.070 mandates compulsory attendance from age 7 to 16 years. School age is further defined as ages 6 to 18 with 5 year olds allowed to attend kindergarten where it is available. The federal No Child Left Behind law stipulates that all children should be reading at grade level by the end of third grade. If Alaska's children are not required to attend school until the age of seven, many will not be reading at third grade level by age eight or nine. Young children will meet this requirement easier when they are provided the rich kindergarten experiences where they learn that text carries meaning, readers process print from left to right, top to bottom, and that real life involves using reading and writing for practical purposes.

Alaska is one of a few states not fully or partially funding public preschools. Preschool is only available to a limited number of children based on the ability to pay. Yet children learn through assimilation of concrete "hands on" type of activities in the early years. They need rich experiences in preschool and kindergarten where children can engage and construct their theories about print (e.g., what are words – how do they work). Experience that builds background knowledge is essential to becoming a knowledgeable reader. High-quality preschools and kindergarten provide appropriate early literacy experiences delivered by well-prepared, knowledgeable, caring teachers. Teachers who enhance the early literacy of children from diverse cultural and language groups use culturally appropriate instruction that is congruent with the children's home and community language and literacies. (Heath, 1983; Hohepa & McNaughton, 2002; McNaughton, 2001).

Alaskan children's development can be positively affected by high-quality preschool and kindergarten experiences that improve later academic and social competence (Barnett, 1995; Morrow, 2004; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001). It is the position of the Alaska State Literacy Association that every child in Alaska should have access to free, high-quality, public preschools and mandated kindergarten.

Alaska State Literacy Council

Nature and Purpose

The Alaska State Literacy Council (ASLA) is the largest professional education association in Alaska with a growing membership of over 400 members. ASLA is affiliated with the International Reading Association (IRA) and hosts the largest, highest attended annual education conference in the state.

Members rely on ASLA for the professional development resources they need to reach our shared goal: Teaching Alaskans to read. ASLA supports literacy for all, lifetime learning and informed decision making. The state association in partnership with IRA and local councils recognizes and supports quality literacy programs and opportunities through awards, grants, council programs, workshops and annual conferences. ASLA provides educators, at all levels, access to research, materials and methodologies to promote and teach lifetime literacy and learning. ASLA provides a network for communication, exchange of information, leadership, professional development and involvement of Alaska's diverse community of educators.

Alaska State Literacy Association advocacy contact information:

Brett Dillingham
313 7th Street, #1
Juneau, AK 99801
brett@brettdillingham.com
(907) 586-1643
Fax (907)586-1643

Patricia George
3328 Fritz Cove Road
Juneau, AK 99801
pgeorge@gci.net
(907) 789-0172
(907) 789-6964

Summary of Table National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
Table 157

Table 157. Age range for compulsory school attendance and special education services, and policies on year-round schools and kindergarten programs, by state: Selected years, 1997 through 2006.

There are **9** states that have a compulsory school attendance age of **5**, all of which require school districts provide either half or full day kindergartens. **23** states have age **6** as the compulsory school attendance age, **20** require school districts provide kindergarten.

Alaska is one of **17** states which have **7** as the compulsory school attendance age, however, **Alaska** is **not** one of the **14** included states that require half or full day kindergarten be offered by school districts.



2007 Tables and Figures

DIGEST of EDUCATION STATISTICS

All Years of Tables and Figures

Most Recent Issue of the Digest

Table 157. Age range for compulsory school attendance and special education services, and policies on year-round schools and kindergarten programs, by state: Selected years, 1997 through 2006

State	Compulsory attendance				Compulsory special education services, 1997 ¹	Year-round schools, 2006		Kindergarten education, 2006		Attendance required
	2000	2002	2004	2006		Has policy on year-round schools	Has districts with year-round schools	School districts required to offer		
								Half day	Full day	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Alabama	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16	6 to 21		Yes	X		
Alaska	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16	3 to 22		Yes			
Arizona	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16 ²	3 to 22		—	X		
Arkansas	5 to 17 ²	5 to 17 ²	5 to 17	5 to 17	5 to 21	X	Yes		X	X
California	6 to 18 ²	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	Birth to 21	X	Yes	X ³		
Colorado	—	—	7 to 16	7 to 16	3 to 21		—	X ³		
Connecticut	7 to 16	7 to 18 ²	7 to 18 ²	5 to 18 ⁴	Under 21 ⁵		—	X		X
Delaware	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16 ²	5 to 16	3 to 20		Yes	X		X
District of Columbia	—	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18	—	(⁶)	(⁶)	X		X
Florida	6 to 16 ⁷	6 to 16 ⁷	6 to 16 ^{2,7}	6 to 16 ⁷	—	X	Yes	X		X
Georgia	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	Under 21 ⁵		Yes		X	
Hawaii	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	Under 20	X	Yes	X		
Idaho	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	3 to 21		Yes			
Illinois	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 17	7 to 17	3 to 21	X	Yes	X		
Indiana	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 18 ²	3 to 22		Yes	X		
Iowa	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16	6 to 16	Under 21	X	Yes	X		
Kansas	7 to 18 ²	7 to 18 ²	7 to 18 ²	7 to 18 ²	(⁸)		—	X ³		X
Kentucky	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16	Under 21		Yes	X		
Louisiana	7 to 17	7 to 17	7 to 17 ²	7 to 18 ²	3 to 21		Yes		X	X
Maine	7 to 17	7 to 17	7 to 17 ²	7 to 17 ²	5 to 19 ⁹		—	X		
Maryland	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16	Under 21	X	—		X	X
Massachusetts	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16 ²	3 to 21		—	X		
Michigan	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	Under 26	X	Yes			
Minnesota	7 to 18 ²	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16 ²	Under 22		—	X ³		
Mississippi	6 to 17	6 to 17	6 to 16	6 to 16	Birth to 20		—		X	
Missouri	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	Under 21		Yes	X		
Montana	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16 ²	3 to 18		—	X		
Nebraska	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	6 to 18	Birth to 21		Yes	X ³		
Nevada	7 to 17	7 to 17	7 to 17	7 to 17	Under 22		Yes	X		X
New Hampshire	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	3 to 21		—			
New Jersey	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	5 to 21		—		X ¹⁰	
New Mexico	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18 ²	5 to 18 ²	(¹¹)	X	Yes	X		X
New York	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16 ¹²	Under 21		—			
North Carolina	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	5 to 20	X	Yes		X	
North Dakota	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	7 to 16	3 to 20 ¹³		—			
Ohio	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	Under 22	X	—	X ³		X
Oklahoma	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18	3 and up ¹⁴		Yes	X ³		X
Oregon	7 to 18	7 to 18	7 to 18 ²	7 to 18	3 to 21		Yes	X		
Pennsylvania	8 to 17	8 to 17	8 to 17 ²	8 to 17 ²	6 to 21	X	—			
Rhode Island	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	3 to 21		—	X		X

South Carolina	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 16	5 to 17 ⁴	3 to 21		—	X	X	X
South Dakota	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	Under 21	X	—	X ³		
Tennessee	6 to 17	6 to 17	6 to 17	6 to 17 ⁴	3 to 21	X	Yes	X		X
Texas	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	3 to 21	X	Yes	X ³		
Utah	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	3 to 22		Yes	X		
Vermont	7 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16 ²	3 to 21		—	X ³		
Virginia	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18	5 to 18 ²	2 to 21		Yes	X ³		X
Washington	8 to 17 ²	8 to 17 ²	8 to 16 ²	8 to 18	3 to 21 ¹⁵		Yes	X		
West Virginia	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	6 to 16	5 to 21	X	Yes		X	X
Wisconsin	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	6 to 18	Under 21		Yes	X		
Wyoming	6 to 16 ²	6 to 16 ²	7 to 16 ²	7 to 16 ²	3 to 21		Yes	X		

X State has policy.

— Not available.

¹ Most states have a provision whereby education is provided up to a certain age or completion of secondary school, whichever comes first.

² Child may be exempted from compulsory attendance if he/she meets state requirements for early withdrawal without meeting conditions for a diploma or equivalency.

³ State requires either half-day or full-day program.

⁴ Parent/guardian may request a waiver to delay entry to a later age per state law/regulation.

⁵ Under 21 or until child graduates from high school.

⁶ State did not participate in the 2006 online survey.

⁷ Compulsory school age for all Manatee County students who turned 16 on or after October 1, 1999, is 18, except for students who earned a high school diploma prior to reaching their 18th birthday.

⁸ To be determined by rules and regulations adopted by the state board.

⁹ Must be 5 before October 1, and not 20 before start of school year.

¹⁰ Abbott districts only (31). These are districts covered by a New Jersey Supreme Court ruling that found that the education provided to urban school children was inadequate and unconstitutional. The Court ordered the state to implement comprehensive programs and reforms, including standards-based education supported by parity funding; supplemental programs; preschool education; and school facilities improvements.

¹¹ School-age unless otherwise provided by law.

¹² New York City and Buffalo require school attendance until age 17 unless employed.

¹³ Must not be 21 by September 1.

¹⁴ Children from birth through age 2 are eligible for additional services. Eligibility for special education services ceases upon completion of a secondary education program; no age limit.

¹⁵ Student may complete school year if 21st birthday occurs while attending school.

NOTE: The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) Amendments of 1986 make it mandatory for all states receiving EHA funds to serve all 3- to 18-year-old disabled children.

SOURCE: Council of Chief State School Officers, Key State Education Policies on PK-12 Education, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006; Education Commission of the States, Clearinghouse Notes, August 1997; California Department of Education, Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office, School Attendance Review Boards, Feb. 2001; School District of Manatee County Policy and Procedures, retrieved May 22, 2007, from http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/policy_procedure/pdfs/chapters/Chapter_5.pdf; "State Kindergarten Statutes: State Comparisons," Education Commission of the States, 2007, retrieved June 19, 2007, from <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=14>; and supplemental information from several state education websites. (This table was prepared May 2007.)

2007 Tables and Figures

All Years of Tables and Figures

Most Recent Issue of the Digest



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The Honorable Paul Seaton
House of Representatives
House Education Committee Chair
State Capitol, Terry Miller Bldg
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

March 2009

The Honorable Paul Seaton;

My name is Jacqueline [Jackie] Martin, Executive Committee Member of the Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS) Grand Camp and Council member of ANS Camp 70 Local Camp. All our members are strong advocates for all Alaska Natives.

We support HB-33; to encourage and give young people a chance to return to school to complete their education. We can read negative into House Bill 33 and say that 50% of our students are [commonly called] "Drop outs", but we say we have 50% graduates and the rest are "Push out"

Please accept these comments as encouragement to pass HB-33. I offer these answers to the questions put forth by your Education Committee.

1. What are the basis of a high school diploma

Basis for a high school diploma comes easily with a positive family and community; even then, sometimes this isn't enough, they need a second chance once obstacles have been identified. The second chance is HB-33.

A high school diploma is hard to come by, rules and laws change not quickly but fast enough to see a difference in graduates. "No Child Left Behind" "Qualifying exam", and other obstacles such as drugs and alcohol are made available to the children. There are many social issues in large and small communities. Please don't misinterpret me, I believe in some of the new laws and changes.

2. Is there an inherent problem with the design of graduation requirements that produce drop outs?

The Tlingit tribe in this area can take up hours of your time telling you sorrowful stories in our own Juneau school district. Some inherent problems are discrimination, social issues, and poverty.

Yes, it is an inherent problem, not only in Alaska but, it is a national problem.

There are many beautiful teachers that give more than themselves; they also use their own funds, and I offer these teachers kudos.

How does a community instill zero dropout tolerance of its community? Pass this Bill and let's get our communities back on track. I believe in the old saying "it takes a community to raise a child".

3. Is the high school qualifying exam a positive or a negative as relates to student performance and graduation?

I spoke about the percent success rate among the Alaska Natives, so now let's address the negative. According to newspapers we [Alaska Native and American Indians] have the highest rate of drunks, the most suicides, the most thieves, the most sex abuser, and we have the highest percentage of drop outs. I would like to see solution to these statistics; it is tiresome to read statistics without solutions.

I heard a speaker talk about herself as an Alaska Native [she is a successful person today and was perhaps talking about the natives as a whole] as being invisible in the school system. Time is changing relationships among the Natives and Governments and local residents. I do see many good changes, I see Alaska Native gaining respect in our community, and I'm 66 years old and have seen more natives and non natives working together, there is hope for change among our students. I believe with the passage of this bill, change will begin and the drop out rate will lessen, not immediately, but it will begin soon.

Is the qualifying exam a good thing? Yes, it helps our successful natives' offers an equal chance in the national population.

Then on the other hand this is a difficult exam for many and many oppose this exam, I believe also that this is one of many reasons why many drop out of school today, they can't pass the exam.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time, we realize that there is much opposition to this House Bill; we heard many statistics about the Native Peoples' problems. Today we the ANS Grand Camp and ANS Camp 70 stand in support of HB-33 as a beginning of many solutions to come for our students.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Martin

Jacqueline [Jackie] Martin
ANS Grand Camp
Executive Committee

HB 33 Compulsory School Age Attendance

(H) Education Committee 3-13-09



REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUNOZ

**SPONSOR STATEMENT
HB33**

Alaska currently faces one of the highest declining graduation rates in the country. According to recent statistics from the Alaska Commission on Post Secondary Education, thirty-eight percent of students in the ninth grade will not have a diploma in ten years. Alaska Department of Labor estimates that four-thousand Alaskans ages 16-19 are unemployed and not in school; and 57,000 Alaskans across Alaska do not have a diploma. Alaska's drop-out rate is double the national average based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education.

HB33 changes the compulsory school attendance age so that a student is compelled to stay in school until the age of eighteen. Current law requires compulsory school attendance from the age of seven to sixteen. All exemptions from compulsory attendance currently in Alaska statute, including homeschoolers, would remain exempt from this change. This bill will not affect any current statute that allows for early graduation, and relieves the requirement of compulsory attendance to the age of eighteen if those requirements are met.

Students at risk should not have the option of leaving school at a critical age when judgment and maturation development is most critical to their personal success. It has been established through extensive research that the more education a person receives, the more earning potential one gains. As the drop out rate of Alaskan students increase, so does the direct and indirect cost to the State of Alaska. Unemployment, criminal behavior, and dependence on the State's social services are examples of this increased cost.

HB33 is designed to improve Alaska's public education system. The intent of this legislation is to be one of several important first steps toward a long term solution. The young people of Alaska deserve our very best effort. Elevating the age of compulsory attendance in our education system will become an important new commitment we can make on behalf of all of our young citizens at a crucial time in their education and lives.

Contact: Terry Harvey 907 465 5392



Position Statement on HB 33 Compulsory School Attendance

School boards believe that 16-year-olds are not ready to make the enormous decision to give up a high school education. Increasing the mandatory attendance age from 16 to 18 helps ensure that students who have not yet graduated from high school and are too young to make the life-changing decision to forego basic education will stay in school and have more opportunities to meet performance standards and pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. AASB believes that the best way to keep students in school is to fund and provide education programs that engage students.



**Anchorage
School
District**

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99504-3135
(907) 742-4000

February 27, 2009

Dear Representative *Cathy* Munoz:

I am writing this in strong support for HB 33 that recommends increasing the age of compulsory education to age 18. Our School Board and the majority of our staff and community strongly believe it is time for this change. The rationale in your sponsor's statement makes the case very clearly.

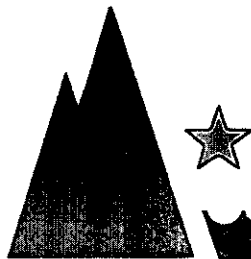
Our graduation rate is only 64 % and we are striving to increase that number with many new initiatives that support students. Our drop out rate has dropped from 6.48% in the 2004-2005 school year to 4.16% during the 2007-2008 school year. One of the identified causes of students dropping out if they are disengaged in high school is "they can". We try many different strategies to encourage young people to stay in school and we believe that if they knew they had to stay in school until age 18 or passing all the graduation requirements to qualify for a diploma, they would do so. Too many of our students, particularly those from immigrant families and families on the edge of economic survival, are pressured to go to work to help support their family. We believe that young people should know how important a high school diploma is to their future success. Our new graduation coaches are connecting with students and families in an effort to re-engage them in their education; this effort is often hampered by the fact that Alaskan students can drop out at age 16.

We strongly support your legislation and will be happy to testify in favor of the legislation when it is ready for a hearing. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

Carol

Carol Comeau
Superintendent



JUNEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

10014 CRAZY HORSE DRIVE · JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-8529 · (907) 523-1700

February 25, 2009

Dear Representative Munoz,

Please know how appreciative our district is for your attention to the urgent issue of dropping out of high school in Alaska.

In the past, such legislation has been miscast as a threat to parental rights. It is, in fact, the opposite of that: it is a parent empowerment bill. As a former high school administrator, I have witnessed the anguish of parents when their minor child dropped out and the parent had no authority to stop it. In Alaska, parents have control over their minor's drivers license until age 18; why not their child's education?

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development 2007 statistics tell us that 1 in 3 Alaskan youth are not getting a high school diploma. The data are even more startling for special education students (60 percent not graduating) and students of Alaska Native heritage (37 percent not graduating).

These data are significant because of the irrefutable correlation between dropping out of high school and several other factors which ultimately translate into a drag on the economy: incarceration (80 percent of inmates are high school drop outs); poverty and, thus, the need for public assistance (and, poverty has a direct correlation to multiple health issues which, in turn, drain state coffers of public health dollars); and the attainment of a diploma by the next generation (mother's education has direct bearing on whether a child will graduate). So, under-education has systemic, persistent, generational negative effect on public revenues.

Alaska is not the only state to recognize the significant impact of the diploma. According to the Education Commission of the States, more than half of all states require that students be 17 or 18 to graduate or to have completed all necessary credits.

How disingenuous is it for our leaders to decry the drop out rate and not take the sensible and simple step of telling minors: finish school or wait until you're of the age of majority to make that momentous and life-altering decision to not finish?

Drop outs cost the State of Alaska real public dollars. This bill is a cost-savings measure, as well as an accountability measure. If federal and state laws hold schools accountable for educating and graduating our youth, then please hold youth accountable for staying in school.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Laury Scandling
Assistant Superintendent
Juneau School District



CORDOVA SCHOOL DISTRICT

PO Box 140 * 100 Fisherman Avenue
Cordova, Alaska 99574-0140
(907) 424-3265 * FAX (907) 424-3271

Cordova Jr/Sr High School
(907) 424-3266
FAX (907) 424-5215

Mt. Eccles Elementary
(907) 424-3236
FAX (907) 424-3117

February 11, 2009

Dear Representative Munoz,

I am writing this letter in support of HB 33. As Superintendent of Schools, I struggle with the staggering statistics proving that nearly 40% of Alaskan youth will not graduate from high school this coming year. Current statute (allowing students to drop out at age 16) is outdated and opens the door for youth that are still in need of structure and direction that our public schools offer in Alaska. With Alaska's drop out rate double the national average HB 33 will be a huge step in the right direction for this great state!

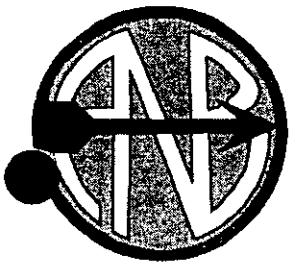
Unemployment, criminal behavior, and increased taxing on Alaska's social services are directly related to the exodus of youth choosing not to attend schools. Unfortunately many of those that drop out are bright students simply lacking good judgment and critical maturation necessary in such decision-making efforts.

Finally, with the quality of life exponentially better in today's world with a high school diploma, this legislation is one of several important steps towards the long-term solution of our lacking graduation success.

I look forward to its successful passage!

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools
Cordova School District



*Grand Camp
Alaska Native Brotherhood*

RESOLUTION NO. #23-08

TITLE: EXTENSION OF THE ALASKAN COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

WHEREAS, Over 3000 Alaskan students drop out each year representing the highest drop out rate in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Alaskan minority students experience the highest percentage of drop out amongst all students with Alaskan Native students double the rate of others at 14%; and

WHEREAS, To compete in the 21st century all students need at a minimum to stay in school long enough to finish a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, Studies show that students without a high school diploma earn less than 75% of those with a diploma and are more likely to live in poverty over the course of their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's mandatory compulsory school attendance is from 7 to 16 years of age; and

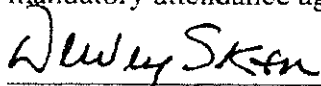
WHEREAS, Only 27 states allow students to drop out at the age of 16; and

WHEREAS, The national trend is moving toward extension of the mandatory school age to 18 years of age; and

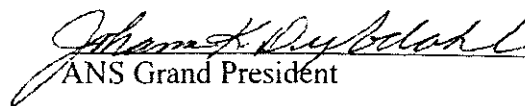
WHEREAS, The National Education Association as a top priority is recommending high school graduation or the equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 21 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Raising the high school drop out age from 16 to 18 will reduce the drop out rate.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood Grand Camp in convention at Ketchikan, Alaska during the week of October 7-11, 2008 hereby urges the Alaska Legislature to adopt legislation that would extend the mandatory attendance age for all Alaskan students to the age of 18 years.




ANB Grand President



ANS Grand President

ATTEST: I certify that this resolution was adopted by the ANB/ANS Grand Camp in convention at Ketchikan, Alaska during the week of October 7-11, 2008.



ANB Grand Secretary



NEA-ALASKA

Affiliated with the National Education Association

February 23, 2009

Rep. Cathy Munoz
State of Alaska
State Capital
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Rep Munoz:

NEA-Alaska supports HB 33, a raise in the age of compulsory school attendance to eighteen for Alaska's children. Truancy and dropout rates are too high and we believe every effort should be made to encourage our youth to become as fully educated as possible. Raising the age of mandatory school attendance may serve to keep students in school longer than they now stay. If this bill causes even one child to complete their education it will be worthwhile.

Further, the annual Delegate Assembly of members in January 2009 passed a resolution which states:

NEA-Alaska believes the Legislature should establish penalties for non-compliance with Alaska's compulsory attendance laws.

It is our belief that a law with no teeth serves little purpose. Alaska's school employees work hard to offer our children opportunities which prepare them for life. We cannot fulfill the promise of a high quality education for Alaska's children if they are not in our classrooms.

Thank you for sponsoring this piece of legislation and the work you do on behalf of Alaska's future.

Respectfully,

Barb Angaiak
President

Terry Harvey

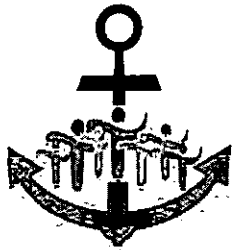
From: kelsey Clark [kelseyclark_03@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 9:34 PM
To: Terry Harvey
Subject: Testimonial for HB33

Terry Harvey,

I would be honored to testify in support of the compulsory attendance bill HB33. I feel that Alaska's drop out rate needs to be addressed and this would be the perfect opportunity to help solve the problem. I also want to thank you again for allowing the Unalaska School Board to meet with Representative Cathy Muñoz. Our meeting with her went very well, and on behalf of my school board I would like to thank you for listening to our comments and inputs. In the mean time feel free to contact me about any questions or needed information that you will need to know for me to testify. Also just to let you know I will be out of town till the 23rd of February.

Sincerely,
Kelsey Clark

Windows Live™: Keep your life in sync. [See how it works.](#)



**A Joint Resolution between
Anchorage Faith & Action – Congregations Together
and
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
Resolution 2006/07-06**

WHEREAS, more than 6,000 students were suspended in the 2005-06 school year in the Anchorage School District; and

WHEREAS, more than 90 students were expelled during the 2005-06 school year in the Anchorage School District, and

WHEREAS, the dropout rate in grades 7-12 during the 2005-06 school year was 6.3% in the Anchorage School District, and

WHEREAS, a high school dropout is likely to earn one-half as much as a high school graduate; and

WHEREAS, a high school dropout is three times more likely to live in poverty than a high school graduate;

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage Community Youth Violence Gang Response Team named the lack of supervision of students who are expelled from school as a critical issue in the community; and

WHEREAS, unsupervised youth and rising youth violence in Anchorage are critical concerns of the both the faith and business communities; and

WHEREAS, current Alaska law (AS 14.30.10) makes school attendance compulsory only until the age of 16; and

WHEREAS, current Alaska law exempts students who have been suspended or expelled from compulsory education; and

WHEREAS, programs for long-term suspended and expelled students are voluntary in Anchorage; and

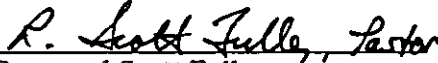
WHEREAS, on November 27, 2006, School Superintendent Carol Comeau and Mayor Mark Begich committed to AFACT before more than 400 people that they would include in their 2007 Legislative Agenda a request that the compulsory education age be raised to 18, or receiving a high school diploma, and education be made compulsory for long-term suspended and expelled students,


NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature and Governor Palin are encouraged to amend Alaska law by raising the compulsory education age to 18 or the achievement of a high school diploma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that State and Local entities are encouraged to consider the implications of this resolution and to provide separate facilities and funding from local, state and federal sources for compulsory education for long-term suspended and expelled students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature and Governor Palin are encouraged to amend Alaska law by making education compulsory for long-term suspended and expelled students and to provide adequate funding to establish appropriate programs.

DATED this 3 day of March 2007.


Reverend Scott Fuller
Anchorage Faith & Action -
Congregations Together, Board Chair


William G. Evans
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
Board Chair

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

MARCH 10, 2009



REPORT NUMBER 09.172

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE AND STATISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH EDUCATION LEVELS

PREPARED FOR REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUÑOZ

BY TIM SPENGLER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE IN THE UNITED STATES	2
<i>Table 1: Compulsory School Attendance Age in the United States</i>	2
ARGUMENTS SURROUNDING RAISING COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGES	3
ALASKA'S COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE LAW AND RECENT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE LAW	5
EARNING POTENTIAL BY EDUCATION LEVEL	5
<i>Table 2: Estimated Annual Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2007</i>	5
INCARCERATION RATES AND ASSOCIATED COSTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS	6
LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	7

You asked for information about compulsory school attendance age laws and statistics associated with education levels. Specifically, you were interested in the following:

- ◆ The compulsory school attendance age in different states;
- ◆ Arguments surrounding raising the compulsory school attendance ages from 16 to 18;
- ◆ Alaska's compulsory school age law and recent legislative efforts to change the law;
- ◆ Lifetime earning potential by education level; and

- ◆ The difference in incarceration rates between high school graduates and dropouts, and associated costs.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE IN THE UNITED STATES

Compulsory school attendance refers to the ages through which children are required to attend school. For this report, we focus on the maximum compulsory school attendance age requirements. Alaska Statute 14.30.010 mandates that, "Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school . . ." According to a report by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), as of July 2007, 23 other states had a maximum compulsory age of 16.¹ In eight states, the maximum compulsory age is 17, while the 18 remaining states require students to attend school until they are 18 years of age.² In the table below, we display the maximum age requirements for compulsory school attendance across the nation.

Table 1: Compulsory School Attendance Age in the United States

Students Required to Attend School Until 16 (24 states)
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, ¹ Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, ¹ West
Students Required to Attend School Until 17 (8 states)
Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee
Students Required to Attend School Until 18 (18 states and D.C.)
California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin
Notes: (1) Students are exempted from compulsory attendance requirements upon completion of 10th grade.
Source: Education Commission of the States, www.ecs.org .

¹ We include ECS's, "Compulsory School Age Requirements," as Attachment A.

² Most states allow parents to petition their local school board or principal for a waiver of these requirements under certain circumstances, such as enrollment in a vocational education program or an institution of higher education or early completion of required coursework. The great majority of states waive compulsory attendance requirements for high school graduates regardless of their age. In Alaska, and many states, youth who are homeschooled by their parents or guardians are not subject to compulsory education statutes.

ARGUMENTS SURROUNDING RAISING COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGES

When compulsory schooling laws were originally enacted around the country—for the majority of states this occurred between 1870-1910—policy makers assumed that finishing high school was not a necessity. In the primarily agrarian economy of that time period, a high school diploma was not a prerequisite to achieving a good job and having a successful and productive life. Times have changed radically since these laws were initially enacted and now four times more Americans live in urban settings than reside in rural environs.³ With the urbanization of our country, non-agricultural jobs have become much more prevalent. By and large, these are jobs that require more education than those of the 19th century. The importance of higher education has only increased as we have moved into the increasingly high tech environment of the 21st century.

The discrepancy between the earnings for high school dropouts and those with diplomas is pronounced. Well paying employment opportunities are not readily available to high school dropouts. Those in favor of raising the compulsory school attendance age argue that when most high-wage, high-growth jobs require a *college* degree, it does not make sense for states to make it easier for students to dropout prior to getting a *high school* degree.

Many of the sources we consulted for this report stress that allowing 16 years olds the choice to opt out of school is poor educational and social policy. It is argued that teenagers are not usually equipped to make informed decisions that will potentially affect their whole lives. Not only does this critical decision affect the youth involved, it also has significant impact on society at large. Along with weaker earning potential, dropouts also become incarcerated at a significantly higher rate. We compare the earning potential and incarceration rates of dropouts and graduates later in this report.

A 2007 report funded by Gates Foundation, entitled, "Raising the Compulsory School Attendance Age: The Case for Reform," argues that raising the compulsory attendance age can benefit graduation rates.⁴ The report concludes this should be done in conjunction with providing alternative learning opportunities and other educational reforms. Mary McNaught, chief of staff at Civic Enterprises, the entity that produced the study, maintains that allowing teenagers to leave school at 16 sends a dangerous message to youth.⁵ She contends that permitting this option statutorily is unwise given all we know about the rough road dropouts face. Ms. McNaught acknowledges that there is currently a scarcity of data linking raising the compulsory age limit and increased graduation rates. Nonetheless, she believes common sense dictates that raising the compulsory school age is a prudent step in the right direction.

Opponents of raising compulsory attendance ages hold that requiring all young people under the age of 18 to attend school can marginalize those who fare least well in traditional high school. Additionally, some argue that forcing young people to attend school when they are unwilling disrupts the learning opportunities for others. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is staunchly against raising mandatory age limits. The HSLDA argue in a November

³ *Mini-historical statistics: Population characteristics*, U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-02.pdf>.

⁴ We include, "Raising the Compulsory School Attendance Age: The Case for Reform," as Attachment B.

⁵ Mary McNaught can be reached at (202) 467-8908.

2007 issue analysis, "Raising the Compulsory Attendance Age Fails to Achieve Significant Results," that such legislation results in an increase in government spending and taxation, as well as a removal of parent's rights to make educational choices for their children. The document also asserts that there is no evidence that increasing the mandatory age limit will increase graduation rates.⁶

Dr. Jay Smink, executive director of the National Dropout Center, believes that raising the compulsory school age *might* be a good idea. He cautions, however, that raising the compulsory age without identifying struggling students and providing them with alternative learning opportunities, would result in no benefit.⁷ He strongly cautions against viewing raising the compulsory age as a "silver bullet."

It is difficult to ascertain whether raising the compulsory school attendance age makes a clear difference in dropout and graduation rates. One of the primary difficulties in discerning a connection is that states collect and report dropout and graduation data in different ways. A national movement aims to eventually standardize graduation and dropout data, and this will likely make comparisons useful. At this point, however, it is virtually impossible to make accurate and reliable comparisons, according to all the sources we reviewed.

The only study we found that that examines the impact of measures raising the required school age was produced by Canada's C.D. Howe Institute.⁸ This December 2005 study entitled, "Stay in School: New Lessons on the Benefits of Raising the Legal School Leaving Age," looked at youth in both New Brunswick, Canada (which had raised its required school age to 18 in 2000), and in the United States. The main objective of the study was to ascertain whether New Brunswick's policy was proving effective and whether the other provinces in Canada should enact similar laws. While the study found no change in the relative dropout rate in New Brunswick, it did find small positive effects in the United States. The study estimates that raising the mandatory maximum school age above 16 would:

- ◆ increase, on average, an individual's length of schooling by between 0.12 and 0.16 years;
- ◆ decrease the dropout rate by between 1.2 and 2.1 percentage points; and
- ◆ increase the percentage of young adults with at least some college or university by between 1.5 and 2.1 percentage points.

While these gains are modest, they do indicate that raising the age of maximum compulsory school attendance may be of value. We include the paper as Attachment C.

⁶ "Raising the Compulsory Attendance Age Fails to Achieve Significant Results," can be viewed at <http://www.hslda.org/docs/nche/000010/200205130.asp>.

⁷ Dr. Smink can be reached at (864) 656-2450. More information on the National Dropout Center can be found at <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>.

⁸ The study claims to be the first of its kind in the last 20 to 30 years in North America. The C.D. Howe Institute describes itself as a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization that aims to improve Canadians' standard of living by fostering sound economic and social policy. More information on the entity can be found at <http://www.cdhowe.org/>. The author of the study, Philip Oreopoulos, is an assistant professor of economics at the University of Toronto.

ALASKA'S COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE LAW AND RECENT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE LAW

Even during territorial days—in fact since 1929—the maximum compulsory school age in Alaska has always been 16.⁹ While there have been a few changes to AS 14.30.010 in the ensuing years, no changes have been made to the maximum age requirement.

There have been a few efforts in the recent past to raise the maximum mandatory school age. In 2006, House Bill (HB) 345, which would have raised the compulsory age to 17, did not make it out of the House education committee. Senate Bill (SB) 14, which would have raised the compulsory attendance age to 18, suffered a similar fate in the Senate in 2008. As you know, there are currently bills in both the Senate (SB 102) and House (HB 33) that would also raise the compulsory school attendance age to 18.

EARNING POTENTIAL BY EDUCATION LEVEL

According to U.S Census Bureau figures, there is nearly a \$10,000 difference between the annual income of a high school graduate (or equivalent) and a dropout. This difference increases the farther along in college an individual progresses. Table 2 shows estimated annual average incomes by educational attainment in 2007.

Table 2: Estimated Annual Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2007

High School Dropout	High School Graduate (or Equivalent)	Some College or Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
\$19,089	\$26,712	\$32,793	\$46,277	\$61,014

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, found through <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>.

While the economic benefit of staying in school is obvious from the table above, the impact on the nation at large is also noteworthy. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, if all the students who dropped out of the class of 2008 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefitted from an additional \$319 billion in income over the graduates' lifetimes.¹⁰ The Alliance estimates that in Alaska alone, if the projected number of nongraduates for the class of 2008 (3,865) had, in fact, not dropped out, their lifetime additional income would be over a billion dollars. We include, as Attachment D, "The High Cost of High School Dropouts, What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools." The article also explains how high school graduates benefit the nation socially as well as economically. Lower teen pregnancies and a higher likelihood of raising healthier, better educated children themselves are among the benefits discussed.

⁹ Chapter 97, Article 12, Laws of Alaska, 1929.

¹⁰ The Alliance for Excellent Education is a Washington-based policy, research, and advocacy organization concerned with improving graduation rates and preparing youth for postsecondary education. More information is available at <http://www.all4ed.org>.

INCARCERATION RATES AND ASSOCIATED COSTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS

According to the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, high school dropouts are three and one-half times more likely to be arrested, and more than eight times more likely to be incarcerated, than high school graduates.¹¹ "School or the Streets, Crime and America's Dropout Crisis," Fight Crime contends that across the country, 68 percent of state prison inmates have not received a high school diploma.¹² According to this report, if graduation rates improved by 10 percent, murder and assault rates would be reduced by about 20 percent. Increasing the nation's graduation rate from an estimated 71 percent to 81 percent, therefore, would yield 400,000 more graduates annually and avert more than 3,000 murders and almost 175,000 aggravated assaults each year. In Alaska, a ten percent increase in the graduation rate would prevent an estimated seven murders and 692 assaults each year, according to this study.

Crime is costly, certainly to the victims, but also economically to society at large. The Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2006 that a modest five percent increase in the *male* high school graduation rate would produce an annual savings of nearly \$5 billion in crime-related expenses. Coupled with the increased annual earnings of those who graduated, the U.S. would realize around \$7.7 billion in benefits. California alone would realize over a billion dollars in benefits if graduation rates went up five percent for males. Alaska's estimated total benefits would be over \$18 million.¹³

A University of California Berkeley study from 2004, also speaks to the enormous savings that would be reaped by increasing graduation rates.¹⁴ According to the report, a mere *one percent* increase in the high school completion rate of all men ages 20-60 in our country would save the United States as much as \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime incurred by victims and society at large. All the sources we reviewed concur that improving graduation rates will lower crime rates and improve the economic prospects for individuals, states, and our nation.

We hope you find this information to be useful. Please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

¹¹ Fight Crime: Invest in Kid is a bipartisan, anti-crime organization of over 4,000 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors. Their study can be found at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/fcik-dropout-nat.pdf>.

¹² We include "School or the Streets, Crime and America's Dropout Crisis," as Attachment E.

¹³ To view the estimated saving to all states if graduation rates for males were raised by five percent go to <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/SavingFutures.pdf>.

¹⁴ The study, "The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Report," can be viewed at <http://www.econ.berkeley.edu/~moretti/lm46.pdf>.

ATTACHMENT A

**“Raising the Compulsory School Attendance Age: The case for Reform”
2007, Civic Enterprises**

Attachment B

**“Stay In School: new Lessons On the Benefits of Raising the Legal
School –Leaving Age,” December 2005, Philip Oreopoulos, C.D. Howe
Institute**

Attachment C

ISER Publication –Kids Count Alaska Education Summary

Attachment D

NEA’s 12 Point Plan for Reducing the School Dropout Rate

Attachment E

“Understanding the Issue of the High school Dropout Age”

Attachment F

**“Alaska’s Dropout Rate Double US Average”
Anchorage Daily News 11-16-08**

Attachment G

**“Chugach Program Boast 98 Percent Graduation”
Anchorage Daily News 3-01-09**

Attachment H

**Legal Services Memo-Why Individual School Districts in Alaska Cannot
Raise Compulsory Age**

Attachment I

Notes on Juneau School District at Risk Programs

Attachment J

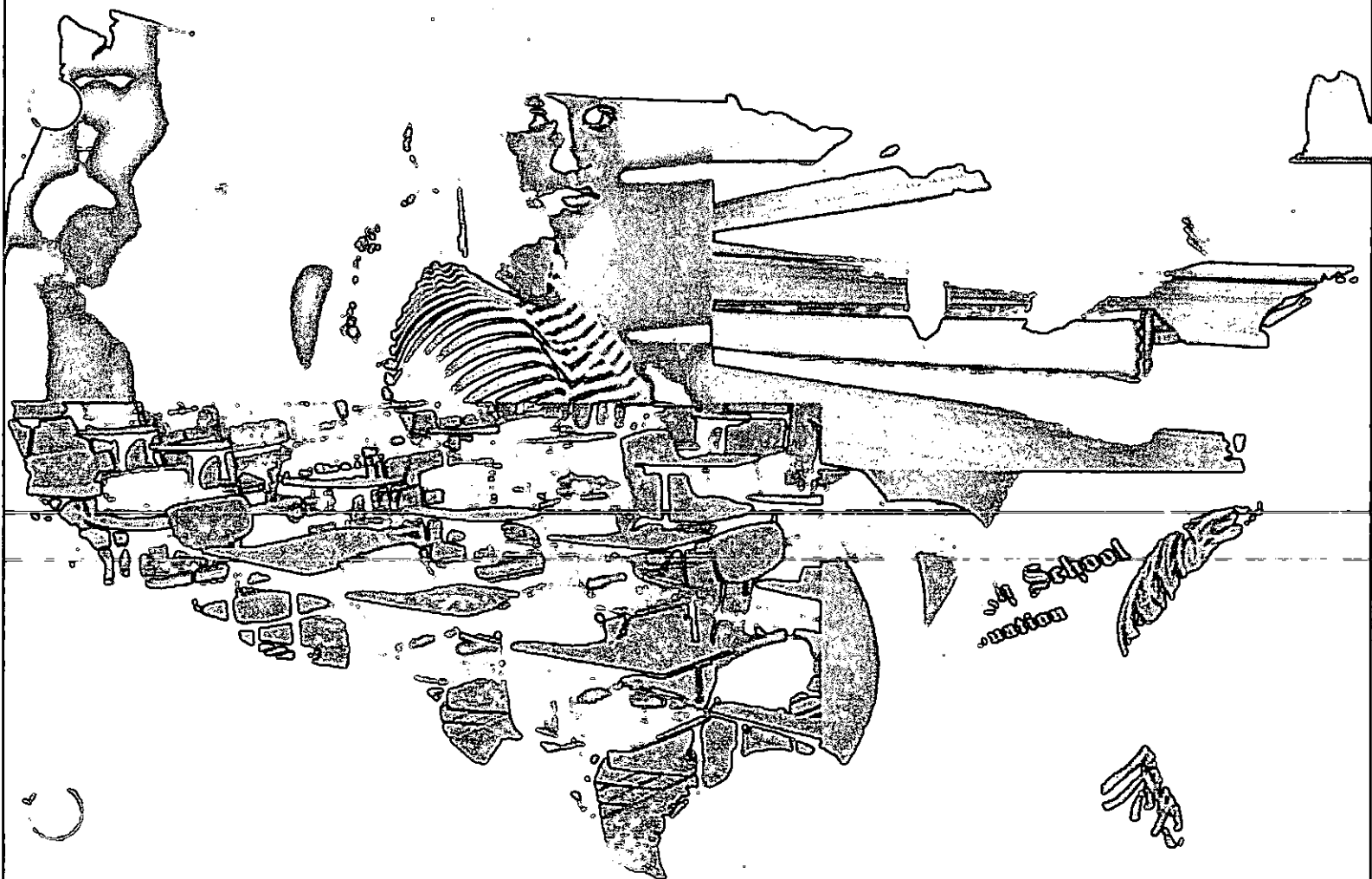
Truancy Report from Todd Brocius Dept of Education

ATTACHMENT A
“Raising the Compulsory School Attendance Age: The case for Reform”
2007, Civic Enterprises

RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE: THE CASE FOR REFORM

A Report by Civic Enterprises
with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,
The Case Foundation and The MCJ Foundation

By: John M. Bridgeland
John J. Dilulio, Jr.
Ryan Streeter





RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE:
THE CASE FOR REFORM

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Ryan Streeter




TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Dropout Problem	1
A Policy for a Bygone Era	2
The Unhappy Consequences of the Status Quo	3
What States Are Doing.....	3
Important Research & Reports Related to Compulsory School Attendance.....	4
A Growing Trend	6
SPOTLIGHT: Indiana & New Hampshire.....	8
Conclusion.....	12
Acknowledgement and Note	12
Endnotes.....	13
Appendix A: "The Dropout Challenge" by David Broder	14
Appendix B: Compulsory School Attendance Laws by State.....	15
Appendix C: Current Legislation.....	19
Appendix D: Indiana Legislation.....	21
Appendix E: New Hampshire Legislation.....	25

Since the publication of *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, governors and state legislators have requested more information about one of our policy recommendations – to consider raising the compulsory school attendance age under state law from 16 or 17 to the age of 18, coupled with support for struggling students. In recent years, more and more states have been passing or introducing legislation to raise the compulsory school age. Many states have recognized that the original laws were passed 100 years ago or more when we had a very different economy. Today's globally competitive economy requires at least a high school diploma and often additional education and training to provide the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century. Good research also supports the view that increasing the compulsory school age can help decrease the dropout rate in schools. Notwithstanding the evidence, a majority of states still permit students to drop out before the age of 18.

We have published this report to provide to state and local leaders more information about the merits of raising the compulsory school age – including the latest research, compelling arguments, and examples of how other states are making progress – in order to strengthen the arsenal of tools states and communities have to combat the dropout epidemic.

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM

The United States has a dropout epidemic. Almost one-third of all public high school students – and one-half of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans – fail to graduate from high school with their class. Most students drop out within just a few years of finishing school and often enter a life of poverty, crime, prison, and broken homes. Society also suffers from the loss of productivity and the higher costs of increased incarceration, health care and social services.

In our 2006 report, *The Silent Epidemic*, we shared the results of focus groups and a national survey of former students who had dropped out of high school. We also recommended concrete steps at the local, state and federal levels to address the dropout problem. While we face an epidemic in which the number of dropouts is unacceptably high, we also face an opportunity. Namely, the problem is not insurmountable, and we can make positive progress against it. One of the top reasons students gave for dropping out was that they had “too much freedom,” and many wished that their schools and parents had had higher expectations for them and had done more to keep them in classes each day. Another top reason was that they spent too much time with others who were not interested in school. Too much freedom combined with apathy about

“Every student in America should graduate from high school ready for college, career and life. Every child. No exceptions. Whether they are going off to college or into the work force or a combination of the two, it is the responsibility of public education to give our young people the skills, knowledge and preparation for life they need and deserve.”

— Bill Gates, testimony before Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, March 7, 2007

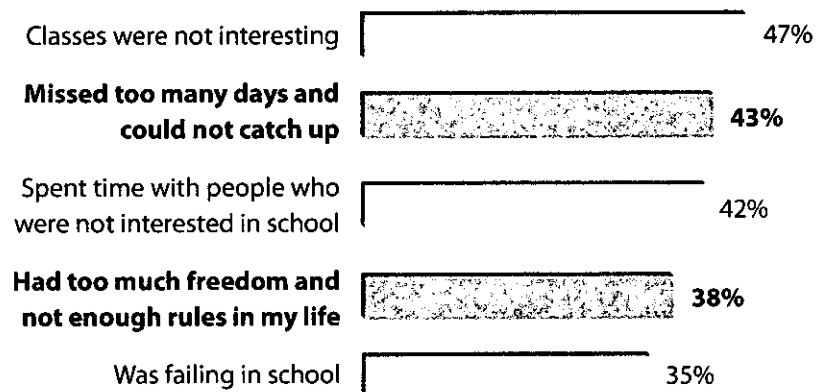
“Raising the minimum age for school attendance, if accompanied by real support for the wavering students, would do a lot to end the silent epidemic.”

— David Broder, *The Washington Post*, February 26, 2006 (See Appendix A)

school creates a potent mixture, increasing the chances that students will drop out. Nearly all of the dropouts we surveyed regretted the decision.

Our report recommended that states could help reduce the dropout rate by raising the compulsory school age under state law, coupled with more supports for struggling students. While this step alone will not solve the dropout epidemic, we believe based on best evidence that it can help.

Top Five Reasons Dropouts Identify as Major Factors For Leaving School



A POLICY FOR A BYGONE ERA

The majority of states allow students to drop out of high school when they are 16 or 17, before they have reached graduation age (see Appendix B). Most states enacted these compulsory school attendance laws between 1870-1910, a time when fewer than 10 percent of 17 year olds graduated from high school. In fact, fewer than 15 percent of 14-17 year olds were even enrolled in high school in any given year before 1910.¹ In an economy that was still significantly agrarian, a high school education was not a prerequisite to participating in the mainstream workforce. Fifty-two percent more Americans lived in rural than in urban areas in 1900. One hundred years later, the situation had changed entirely, and nearly four times more Americans live in urban than in rural areas.² And non-farm employment has increasingly required education over the past one hundred years as we have shifted from an economy in which the largest share of jobs has moved from the manufacturing to the services sector.³ Clearly, times have changed, though state laws have not always kept up. It is common knowledge that the U.S. economy needs college graduates. At a time when two-thirds of high-growth, high-wage jobs require a college degree and only one-third of Americans have college degrees, it makes little sense to us that

"I believe for me, like most people I know, most of them didn't graduate high school and whatever, and they was like you'd be talking like I can't wait until my 16th birthday so I didn't have to come back here no more. I mean I can't wait to drop out kind of thing."

Male focus group participant, Baltimore, 2006

state laws would continue to make it easy for students to avoid the prerequisite to college: a high school diploma.

THE UNHAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF THE STATUS QUO

Detractors might argue that students prone to dropping out of school will not go to college anyway, and therefore raising the compulsory school age will have little effect. Research indicates, however, that approximately one-quarter of potential dropouts remain in school because of compulsory school laws.⁴

In addition, overall enrollment rates among 16 year olds are lower in states that allow them to drop out when they turn 16.⁵ While it may be difficult to ascertain how many of those would choose to pursue a college education, it is more difficult to argue that they should be allowed to give up on school so easily before they are faced with that choice, especially in light of the fact that the vast majority of students who exercise the freedom to drop out of school later regret the decision and wish that their states and schools had had higher expectations of them. Faced with the reality of trying to get a job and raise a family, most students who dropped out wished they had remained in school.

Their concerns are merited – the economic consequences of dropping out are dramatic. In the United States, high school graduates earn 43 percent more than individuals without a high school diploma, and college graduates earn more than 150 percent – one and a half times – more. Median earnings for people who have not graduated from high school are currently a mere \$415 per week.⁶ Research has shown a 10 percent rise in earnings for people who simply stay in school one year longer.⁷ Over their lifetimes, female high school dropouts earn between \$120,000 and \$244,000 less than female graduates, and males \$117,000 to \$322,000 less than male graduates. College graduates earn between \$800,000 and \$1,387,000 more over their lifetimes than high school dropouts.⁸

Not only are earnings prospects bleak for dropouts who have jobs, but the prospect of having a job at all is not guaranteed: dropouts are much more likely to be unemployed. The unemployment rate among individuals who have not graduated from high school is 65 percent higher than it is for graduates and 3 times higher than it is for college graduates.⁹ Clearly, dropping out of high school is often equivalent to choosing a life of financial hardship. It also places a burden upon society as a whole. Annual public health costs for dropouts have been estimated at \$58 billion, and approximately \$10 billion could be saved each year in public assistance if all our students graduated from high school. A

What States Are Doing

"Our first step is to define more clearly an adequate education – what our students will need to know to succeed as citizens and to compete in today's economy...

In 1903, the New Hampshire legislature passed a law requiring young people to stay in school until age 16. Their goal was to make sure children didn't leave school without the basic education they needed to get good jobs and live better lives. The world today is very different than it was in 1903. Today a high school diploma is the minimum price of admission for most jobs. Yet 20 percent of our young people are dropping out of high school. These young people will not have the opportunities they deserve. Half a high school education is no longer enough. That is why we must increase our compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18."

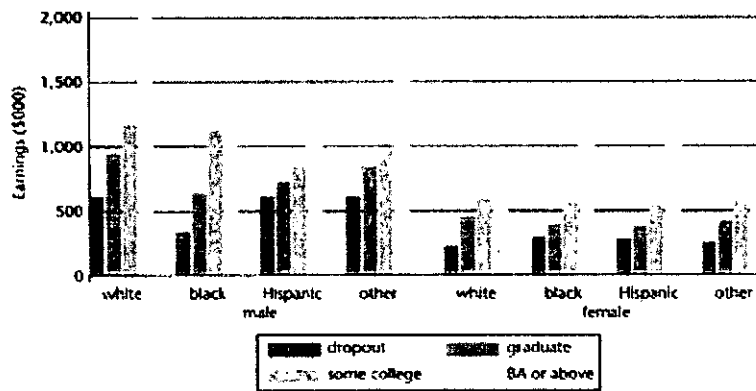
—New Hampshire Governor John Lynch,
Inaugural Address, January 4, 2007

"Today, we require young people to remain in school only until they're 16. That's a system that made sense 100 years ago, when there were no calculators let alone computers; when doctors had no x-rays let alone genetic tests; when there was no national phone system let alone an Internet. In those days, a high school graduate could expect to find a decent job. Those days are gone. Of jobs that pay a realistic livable wage in Maricopa County, less than two percent are available to those with only a high school diploma. Less than two percent. My One Arizona Education Initiative would raise the dropout age from 16 to 18, and make funds available for tutoring, mentoring and special services to get these at-risk students back on track. The work force demands better graduates, and more of them."

— Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, State of the State Address, January 8, 2007

10 percent increase in the high school completion rate would reduce the cost of crime by \$14 billion.¹⁰ One recent study has shown that cutting the current cohort of 20 year old dropouts in half would result in \$45 billion in added tax revenues and reduced public health, crime and welfare costs over the life of the cohort.¹¹

Lifetime Earnings by Education Level



Sources: Current Population Survey (March 2003 and 2006).
 NOTE: Earnings figures include all persons, i.e., persons with positive or zero income. Figures are adjusted for differences in inflation rates by education level (BLS real GDP status). Productivity growth is assumed at 1.5% per year. Discount rate is 3.5%.

Levin, Henry, Clive Belfield, Peter Muenning, & Cecilia Rouse (2007). The costs and benefits of an excellent education for all of America's children. Retrieved March 17, 2007, from Columbia University Web site: http://www.cbse.org/media/download_gallery/Leeds_Report_Final_Jan2007.pdf

IMPORTANT RESEARCH AND REPORTS RELATED TO COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In addition to what the data tell us about the social and economic prospects for dropouts, important research suggests that raising the compulsory school age curtails dropout rates and produces other positive outcomes. The following studies are useful resources:

- Joshua Angrist and Alan Krueger find in their study, "Does Compulsory School Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" that approximately one out of every four potential dropouts remains in school because of compulsory schooling laws. In addition, the study shows that states allowing students to drop out of school at 16 also have lower enrollment rates among 16 year olds. The authors also find support in their research for the view that students who attend school longer because of compulsory laws earn higher wages in

the future. The study can be found at: Joshua Angrist and Alan Krueger. "Does Compulsory School Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. V. CVI:4 (November 1991), 979-1014.¹²

- Philip Oreopoulos finds in his study, "Do Dropouts Drop Out Too Soon?" that students required to attend an extra year of schooling experience a 12 percent increase in earnings. In addition to increased earnings, the students are less likely to report being unemployed, having health problems, being depressed, and working in lower-skilled jobs. Oreopoulos shows that people with more schooling report higher levels of satisfaction with their lives overall, even when he controls for factors such as income. This study can be found at: Philip Oreopoulos. "Do Dropouts Drop Out Too Soon?" NBER Working Paper W10155 (December 2003). An updated working draft of the paper is available at <http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/oreo/research/dropouts/details.htm>.
- In their overview and survey of research on the importance of compulsory school ages, Hoor Bhanpuri and Ginger Reynolds find that raising the age is an important component of confronting the dropout problem. In their study, "Understanding and Addressing the Issue of the High School Dropout Age," the authors find evidence that raising the compulsory school age is gaining support across the United States in part because doing so helps reduce dropout numbers. The paper also provides a sampling of evidence-based interventions that help reduce the dropout rate. This study can be found at: Hoor Bhanpuri and Ginger Reynolds. "Understanding and Addressing the Issue of the High School Dropout Age." Learning Point Associates (2003).

Our 21st century realities cannot be sustained by 19th century policies, and for this reason, governors and state legislators across the United States are beginning to call for more rigorous standards and supports for students in an effort to graduate more young people from high school. Since the publication of *The Silent Epidemic* report, Civic Enterprises has been contacted by numerous state leaders seeking to do something about the dropout problem in their states. While they all understand that raising graduation rates requires a multi-pronged approach, they also understand that it is more difficult to address the problem if state law permits students to drop out of school before they reach graduation age and sends the message that they can do so.

"I am also introducing, once again, a bill so that a student may not leave school until they graduate or reach the age of 18. Students need to graduate in order to get better jobs and have a better quality of life for the rest of their lives. This change will also motivate the state and schools to provide better alternative schools and more educational opportunities for those young people who are now dropping out of school."

— South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds, State of the State Address, January 9, 2007

"Education is the single most important factor in the future prosperity of our state... Since 2003, we have seen vast improvements in education. Some of the most important gains have been in our students' graduation rate — which has increased seven and a half percent over the last four years... But today I make the same challenge as before: While we've seen terrific progress, we must do better!"

— Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue, State of the State Address, January 10, 2007

"When one in four Hoosier kids drops out, we are not getting the job done. Formal education begins in kindergarten, but for successful lives today and tomorrow, it never ends. Family supporting jobs from now on will almost always require not merely a quality high school learning experience but continuing education beyond."

— Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, *State of the State Address, January 11, 2007*

"The best economic development tool is an educated workforce.

But too many of our kids are dropping out of high school. Our achievement gap is too wide, and we aren't doing enough to partner with teachers to help them improve student learning. My goal: to start us down a 10-year path of progress. Right now, about 30 percent of Colorado high school students don't graduate. Less than half of the black, Latino, and American Indian students who start high school in Colorado actually finish. Less than half. Our goal: cut the drop-out rate in half within 10 years."

— Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, *State of the State Address, January 11, 2007*

A GROWING TREND

As much as the nation should be alarmed by the scope and gravity of America's dropout problem, we should also be encouraged by the leadership that states across the country are demonstrating to address it. Only 17 states and the District of Columbia require students to be in school until they are 18. We are witnessing a movement, however, among states to raise their compulsory school attendance ages and provide more supports to struggling students.

Governors and state policymakers understand that their states' economic future and the dropout problem are related, and they are taking action. Many current state efforts to keep young people in school are dealing with the compulsory school age, because there is a growing, shared understanding that raising the age requirement is also a way to raise expectations among students, their parents, school authorities, and the general public. These efforts also demonstrate an understanding that raising the school age must be supplemented by additional measures and supports.

Today, in addition to the 17 states and the District of Columbia that require students to remain in school until they graduate or are 18, 14 states have either introduced or passed legislation in the current session raising their compulsory school age to 18 (See Appendix C). Another 7 states have introduced legislation raising the age from 16 to 17. We are witnessing a moral seriousness about enriching school attendance requirements that is unprecedented perhaps since the movement to establish a compulsory school attendance age more than 100 years ago. Not all legislative efforts emerge victorious, but our hope is that state leaders will act upon their shared obligation to make sure that no student fails to graduate who otherwise could have succeeded.

Each state's legislative initiative moves according to its unique needs, interests, and history. Some of the states' bills under consideration merely raise the age to 18, while others provide additional provisions. Elements of more comprehensive legislative approaches include:

- An increase in the compulsory school age to 18
- Exceptions "with teeth," namely express permission from school authorities and parents to be exempted from the legal age requirement
- Alternative schooling options for students needing extra help
- Sanctions or penalties for failing to attend classes

Not everyone, of course, supports raising the compulsory school age. Some have argued that students inclined to drop out will do so anyway, regardless of what the legal age is. In addition, some say, forcing likely dropouts to stay in school will lead to greater classroom disruptions and an overall negative influence on the remaining students. Others have opposed raising the legal age because it interferes with parents' rights to make educational choices for their children, while still others argue that it raises the burden on taxpayers and gives more control to an already intrusive government.

While each of the arguments against raising the compulsory age merits consideration, many of the current state efforts can be regarded as efforts to respond to and accommodate them. There appears to be a growing consensus among governors and state officials that the long-term costs associated with the dropout problem warrant additional measures to help students stay in school and receive the support they need to graduate. Seen within the context of state economic development, earlier investments in young people are more likely to result in future economic benefit and lower social costs. Since there is a high probability that the government will be assuming responsibility for some aspect of a dropout's life through welfare, healthcare, and the criminal justice system, increased attention by the public school system in an early effort to help students graduate seems a preferable and preemptive intervention. And because there is evidence that an increase in the legal age increases graduation rates, it does not seem like sound policy to assume that all potential dropouts will in fact drop out. For these reasons, states such as Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, and New Hampshire – to name only a representative sample – are doing more than addressing the dropout problem by raising the legal age. Rather, they are providing supplemental supports, alternative education, and additional instruction to help students stay in school until they graduate.

As state leaders consider the best approach to boost graduation rates and cut dropout rates, they are also faced with the question of how effective their anti-truancy laws and programs are. For students who do slip through the cracks, it is imperative to have an effective system in place that helps reunite students with school and, ultimately, a path to graduation. There is evidence that anti-truancy programs work best when students receive strong personal attention from an adult, their parents are involved early, and schools provide intensive interventions. State laws can build upon what research tells us works.¹³ Some states define truancy too broadly and without enough clarity such that officials are not compelled to intervene early and effectively. There are good anti-truancy statutes, however, that recognize what students need to be reengaged in school. For example, Virginia's anti-truancy law requires an intervention

"Our future and our way forward is always education. Education is our obligation and our path to expanding opportunity for all. . . You can't encourage success if you make it easy to drop out of school. Let's raise the drop out age from 17 to 18 years old, increase graduation requirements, and fund schools based on the time students are in class."

— New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, State of the State Address, January 16, 2007

"It's not the amount of money we pour into each child, but how we spend the money that counts. We'll look at successful education programs statewide and outside that can be replicated, and we'll look at new approaches! We've got to do something different. Our high school graduation rate is 61%. That's unacceptable! . . . We shouldn't have to import our workforce when it's growing up before us. And so a centerpiece of my administration is our commitment to a "world class education" system."

— Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, State of the State Address, January 17, 2007

"I'd also like you to fix another absurd law by requiring all students to attend school until they are 18. A law enacted in 1895 says it's okay to drop out when you turn 16. Maybe it was okay then, but it is not okay now, and we all know it. We need to keep at-risk kids in school, but we also need to do more to help them succeed. This fall, we will open the first of a series of revolutionary new high schools. They will allow students to earn in five years both a high school diploma and a community college degree that will prepare them to fill job vacancies in our health care industry... Even with the best of schools, some of our children lack the kind of personal attention they need to get on track or to reach for a big goal like college. Mentor Michigan continues to help fill that void. Between September of 2004 and 2006, we increased the number of youth being mentored by nearly 12,000."

—Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm,
State of the State Address,
February 6, 2007]

after five unexcused absences in which parents are notified and the situation is discussed. If a sixth unexcused absence follows, a conference between parents, school officials, and additional community service providers is held to develop the appropriate ongoing intervention to help the student. One additional unexcused absence is grounds for referral to the courts.¹⁴ The Virginia statute is designed to promote an early school-based intervention that is both compassionate and compulsory that involves parents and provides necessary community supports outside of school to help keep the student engaged in school.

SPOTLIGHT – INDIANA & NEW HAMPSHIRE

INDIANA

In an effort to address lagging graduation rates, the State of Indiana passed legislation in 2005 and 2006 that raises the compulsory school age to 18 and allows limited exceptions only after a formal withdrawal process involving the parents and principal that explicitly makes clear to the student the likely consequences of dropping out.

The Indiana law recognizes that raising the age will keep some but not all potential dropouts in school. Because many students at risk of dropping out start exhibiting "dropout-like behavior" before they actually leave school, Indiana's law places early warning requirements on the state's high schools. Report cards must show suspensions, absences, whether work or drivers licenses have been revoked on account of unexcused absences, and whether the student is earning enough credits to move to the next grade level. Counseling for students who fall behind on their career plans is required by law so that credit recovery options are available soon enough to make a difference in a student's life.

In addition, Indiana law has provided for alternate education for 11th and 12th grade students who need a different learning environment to graduate. The alternate program allows students to enroll in a vocational education program or to seek employment, provided they maintain a 95 percent attendance rate in a school program requiring at least 3 hours of classes per day leading to a timely graduation with the appropriate credits.

Taken as a whole, the Indiana law addresses many of the key reasons students have cited for dropping out of high school that we highlighted in *The Silent Epidemic*. A copy of the Indiana legislation is provided in Appendix D.

Indiana State Representative Luke Messer

Luke Messer, a former state representative in Indiana, successfully sponsored the Indiana school age legislation. His innovative work has received national recognition and was featured in TIME magazine's cover story "Dropout Nation" and on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

Mr. Messer has said: "I sincerely believe that this is one of the most important civil rights issues of our generation. In a society that promises an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, one can't meaningfully pursue happiness without an education that provides an opportunity at a living wage. For too long, we have sent too many young people into schools where they don't have a very good shot at success."

The following are excerpts from an interview with Mr. Messer.

How did you first get interested in the dropout issue?

A few years ago, Stan Jones, the Commissioner of the Indiana Higher Education Commission brought it to my attention that following the federal model and the model of nearly every state in the Union, Indiana computed high school completion rates in a way that did not track individual students and did not account for those who simply didn't show up for school the next year or other students who "disappeared" from the school system's enrollment. As a result, Indiana's more accurate statewide graduation rate was closer to 70%, not the 90+% that had been reported for years. Some urban schools had graduation rates below 30%.

What prompted you to introduce legislation?

First, I began to learn more about the devastating economic consequences of dropping out of school – both for an individual and society as a whole. Unfortunately, in our society it is remarkably hard to recover from the decision to drop out of school. Second, given those consequences, it simply does not seem just that we are sending our young people into schools where they have a 1/3rd chance of failure, and in many urban and remote rural schools the likelihood of failure is as high at 50% to 80%. That is just not good enough. We have to do better.

What were the greatest challenges to moving the bill?

Overcoming the myths surrounding this issue. The first myth was that we actually had a 90% graduation rate. The old way of

counting led to a result where almost every school in the state had a better than 85% graduation rate.

The second large myth was the "bad apple or bad egg" myth. Early on in this debate, I would have well meaning educators tell me, you just don't understand, if you keep these bad kids in class, you are just going to ruin school for the rest of the good kids. When you believe the true graduation rate is 90+%, you might believe that 10% of the kids are bad apples or bad eggs. However, when you begin to understand that true dropout rates are as high as 30, 50 to 80 percent in some schools, no one believes that 30, 50, 80 percent of kids are bad apples or bad eggs that can't make it. When folks see the real data, they begin to understand that something has to be done.

The third major myth was the "some kids move" myth. Again, well meaning educators would tell me that some of these kids just move. But, when you see the real data, you realize that no school has a 110% graduation rate graduating more seniors than they had as freshmen. The best schools in our state are in the 90+% graduation range. These kids are simply not moving to the suburbs, they are falling through the cracks of our system.

What do you think the impact of the legislation will be?

My biggest hope is that we started the process toward reform. Surely, there are better ideas out there for reform than the ones we came up with, but we did get started. And, I hope public policy leaders all across the country begin to address this crisis. We just cannot continue to allow a third to a half to in some places 80% of our young people be set up for failure.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Current research suggests that one in five students in New Hampshire drops out of high school. The New Hampshire legislature is currently considering a bill strongly backed by Governor John Lynch that aims to confront the problem. The bill raises the compulsory school age from 16 to 18 and provides alternative education for students at risk of dropping out.

Current New Hampshire law allows for standard exceptions to compulsory school attendance, such as physical or mental inability, and requires the agreement of parents and school authorities. The proposed legislation would allow a superintendent to waive attendance requirements in favor of an alternative learning plan for a student over the age of 16, so long as the plan is sufficiently rigorous and approved by the student's principal and parent or guardian. The law defines alternative learning plans broadly to include internships, technical education, community service, and online courses. The goal is to keep students engaged in learning so that they are sufficiently equipped to take the next steps in life after high school and participate fully in the economy.

A copy of the New Hampshire legislation is provided in Appendix E.

New Hampshire Governor John Lynch

John Lynch began a second term as New Hampshire's Governor in January 2007. Governor Lynch has made improving education and increasing the state's graduation rate a major priority of his second term and highlighted the issues in his recent inaugural address.

The following are excerpts from an interview with Governor Lynch. How did you first get interested in the dropout issue?

Right now, 20 percent of our students are dropping out of high school. That is simply unacceptable.

What prompted you to feature this in your State of the State and to introduce legislation?

If our broad goal for education is opportunity, we should ensure we give our children the opportunity to get better jobs and live better lives. That opportunity begins with more New Hampshire young people graduating from high school. As a state we cannot continue to send a mixed message to New Hampshire's children that they will have the opportunities they deserve if they leave school at 16. As a state, we established a compulsory attendance age in 1903 because lawmakers realized students needed a certain level of education to get good jobs. But what made sense in 1903, doesn't make sense in 2007. In 1903, students could

leave school at 16 and get good jobs at mills or farms. That's just not true any longer. Half a high school education is no longer enough.

What are the greatest challenges to moving the bill?

Some believe that additional resources are needed to support alternative education programs for at-risk youth. In order to support and expand these types of programs in New Hampshire, I included an additional \$4 million in state funds. For example, my budget will double the dropout prevention program and, as a result, serve an additional 1,350 students. The funding increases the capacity of adult high schools to serve nearly 8,800 students at 53 locations; it allows the state apprenticeship program to serve 880 students across the State of New Hampshire; and will allow nearly 500 more students, for a total of 3,000, to attend the career and technical educational centers. In total, we will spend \$54 million in state and federal funds this biennium to help young people graduate from high school. And in the capital budget, I have included nearly \$14 million to begin renovations to two regional career and technical education centers in Exeter and Manchester. We are providing significant resources to help our young people stay in school.

What are the arguments that opponents summoned against it?

Aside from a claim of a lack of funding for alternative education programs, critics claim the legislation would cause the "warehousing" of students who do not want to be in school, which would lead to significant disruptions in the classroom. This bill does not force students to stay in classroom environments that are not working for them. Instead, it gives school districts and students the flexibility to create alternative learning plans, including vocational education, night school or internships that will engage students and make them want to complete their education. The funding for expanding these existing alternative programs has been included in my budget.

Expense has been cited as another concern. However letting these young people drop out of school has proven to be a great expense. Nationally, 80 percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts. Dropouts are twice as likely to be on welfare. Rates of teen pregnancy, substance abuse and crime are significantly higher among dropouts. A recent study by Polecon Research of Dover concluded that the cost to the state's Medicaid program alone of high school dropouts, who have fewer opportunities to get jobs that offer health insurance, is nearly \$45 million a year. And students who drop out of high school will earn significantly less than their peers throughout their lives.

Also, a report by the Alliance for Excellent Education recently found if all households in New Hampshire were headed by high school graduates, the state would increase household wealth by more than \$216 million; New Hampshire could save more than \$13 million a year in remedial education costs at the state's community technical colleges if high schools eliminate the need for remediation; New Hampshire could save almost \$64 million in health care costs over the respective lifetimes of each class of dropouts; if New Hampshire's male high school graduation rate increases by 5 percent, it could lead to combined savings and revenue of more than \$15 million per year; and the lost lifetime earnings for each class of dropouts in New Hampshire are more than \$1 billion.

There is also the claim those wishing to leave school no longer have the desire or ability to learn. The majority of dropouts nationwide had grades of C or better when they left school and were confident they could have met graduation requirements. In fact, according to Civic Enterprises' report commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, two-thirds of those surveyed said they would have stayed in school if more were demanded of them.

How does the public, and particularly students, in the state feel about this legislation? Any grassroots opposition to it?

I spend a lot of time in schools and I have spoken to many of these young people who either dropped out and are back in alternative programs, or were at-risk of dropping out. They all tell me the same thing - raising the compulsory attendance age to 18 and expanding alternative programs is the right thing to do. When I speak to these kids, they said if they had dropped out they would just be hanging around street corners. Now, most of them I talk to want to go on to college, and all of them said they will get their diploma.

Parents of home-schooled children have opposed the legislation, however the bill does not apply to their children.

What about parents, business leaders, others?

Many parents I have spoken with feel that this legislation sends a positive message to our students - that education is vitally important, and that we care enough about New Hampshire's youth that we are not going to give up on them and we are going to require them to work toward a high school diploma. Talking to business leaders across New Hampshire, they tell me they have the products, they have the customers, but they need the skilled workers to allow their companies to grow. These jobs are not open to those without a high school diploma.

What do you think the impact of the legislation will be?

This legislation is about making it clear to New Hampshire young people that we are not going to give up on them or let them give up on themselves. It will further our goal of making sure every New Hampshire child receives a high school diploma. It will provide the skilled workers our companies need and help strengthen our economy.

CONCLUSION

The dropout epidemic in the United States requires the ongoing vigilance of our educators, policymakers, business and civic leaders, parents, students and the public. As states address the problem by raising the compulsory school attendance age, providing alternative learning opportunities, and making other reforms, we believe graduation rates will improve. Our hope is that the current momentum at the local, state and federal levels to do more to provide accurate information, improve accountability, raise expectations, and provide needed supports for students will go a long way toward addressing the silent epidemic of high school dropout.

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The views reflected in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Case Foundation or The MCJ Foundation.

ENDNOTES

¹U.S. Census Bureau (2003). *Mini-historical statistics: Education summary - enrollment*. Retrieved March 27, 2007, from Statistical Abstract of the United States, U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-20.pdf>

²U.S. Census Bureau (2003). *Mini-historical statistics: Population characteristics*. Retrieved March 27, 2007, from Statistical Abstract of the United States, U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-02.pdf>

³U.S. Census Bureau (2003). *Mini-historical statistics: Nonfarm establishments*. Retrieved March 27, 2007, from Statistical Abstract of the United States, U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-31.pdf> When services data became available in 1940, services accounted for 11.3 percent of non-farm employment, and manufacturing 34 percent. By 2000, those figures had changed to 30.7 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

⁴Angrist, Joshua D. & Alan B. Krueger (1991). Does compulsory school attendance affect schooling and earnings? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, CVI (4), 979-1014. Retrieved January 8, 2006, from JSTOR database.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (January 2007). *Usual weekly earnings of wage and salary workers: Fourth quarter 2006*. Retrieved March 26, 2007, from Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor Web site: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf>

⁷Oreopolous, Philip (2005). *Stay in school: New lessons on the benefits of raising the legal school-leaving age*. Retrieved October 23, 2006 from C.D. Howe Institute Commentary Web site: http://www.cdhowe.org/pdf/commentary_223.pdf

⁸Levin, Henry, Clive Belfield, Peter Muenning, & Cecilia Rouse (2007). *The costs and benefits of an excellent education for all of America's children*. Retrieved March 17, 2007, from Columbia University Web site: http://www.cbcse.org/media/download_gallery/Leeds_Report_Final_Jan2007.pdf

⁹Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (March 2007). *The employment situation*. Retrieved March 27, 2007 from Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor Web site: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empstat.pdf>

¹⁰Levin, Henry (2006). *Déjà vu all over again?* Retrieved March 18, 2007 from Education Next, Hoover Institution Web site: <http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/3210476.html>

¹¹Levin, Belfield et. al., 1.

¹²It is worth noting that not all analysts agree that compulsory schooling laws are the main reason for the higher earnings that Angrist and Krueger describe. For example, John Bound and David Jaeger have argued that additional variables besides compulsory schooling laws also explain the earnings outcomes Angrist and Krueger attribute to compulsory schooling laws only. Bound and Jaeger's analysis, however, does not directly call into question Angrist and Krueger's finding that compulsory schooling laws play a significant role in preventing dropout from occurring. See Bound, John & David Jaeger (1996). On the validity of season of birth as an instrument in wage equations: A comment on Angrist & Krueger's "Does Compulsory School Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" NBER Working Paper No. W5835. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=225621>

¹³See, for instance, "Effective truancy prevention and intervention." (2003). Wilder Research Center. St. Paul, Minnesota.

¹⁴Code of Virginia, 22.1-258. <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+22.1-258>

APPENDIX A

The Washington Post

The Dropout Challenge

By David S. Broder

Sunday, February 26, 2006; B07

They number in the millions — 3.5 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 25 who have dropped out of high school and were not enrolled in school in 2003, the most recent year for which an estimate is available. Of every three young men and women entering high school, only two will emerge with a diploma. For minority students, the odds are worse. And the losers pay a price all their lives.

They are the subject of “The Silent Epidemic,” a study that will be released Thursday. It was conducted for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation by a private research firm called Civic Enterprises. I was given a preview of the report by John Bridgeland, a former Bush administration domestic policy adviser who is one of its authors.

The dropout problem has been researched extensively. But this study is unusual in two respects. Peter Hart’s polling firm was commissioned to do focus groups and surveys of people between 16 and 25 who had quit school without diplomas. They were interviewed in 25 locations ranging from big cities and suburbs to small towns, all with unusually high dropout rates.

And these young people offered solid reasons to believe this is a solvable problem.

For one thing, they recognize that they made a mistake in quitting school. Eight out of 10 said they now know that having a diploma is important to success in life. And national data back them up. Dropouts earn an average \$9,200 a year less than high school graduates and have far greater likelihood of winding up on welfare, in prison or on drugs.

Three out of four of those interviewed said that, if they could do it over, they would choose to stay in school. Even more said they would re-enroll now to get their degrees, if they could do it with people their own age.

And most are confident they could make it. The big news out of the study — a surprise to many, I expect — is that most of these dropouts are not “hopeless losers.”

One-third of the 467 surveyed said they were failing in school. But more than six out of 10 were maintaining averages of C or better when they quit.

As many complained that classes were not challenging or interesting as found the academic requirements daunting, I believe it. A year ago, I visited — and wrote about — the Gateway to College program run by Portland (Ore.) Community College (and also funded by the Gates Foundation). There, I saw 14 teenage dropouts discussing the writings of Plato and Malcolm X — college-level work.

I quoted the leaders of the voluntary program, in which students accepted strict discipline barring absences or blown assignments, as believing it demonstrates that “even for the hardest cases — teenagers with few credits, low grade-point averages and a host of personal problems — the challenge of a tough curriculum, backed by skillful teaching in small classes and plenty of personal counseling, can be a path to success.”

That is also the essence of what the dropouts in this report suggest would rescue and reward them — and their millions of counterparts.

The authors of the study make a couple of other important points. They note that dropouts typically show many signs of disaffection before they quit school. One of the most common is frequent absences — skipping school entirely, cutting classes or leaving early in the afternoon. Better monitoring of attendance — and follow-ups with students and families when the pattern first appears — could do a lot to avert the ultimate act of dropping out.

And, the authors note, almost no one drops out of school before the 10th grade — or age 16. The fact that 16 is the last year of compulsory school attendance in most states is not irrelevant. Only one state — New Mexico — makes enrollment mandatory for most students until they obtain high school diplomas.

Raising the minimum age for school attendance, if accompanied by real support for the wavering students, would do a lot to end “the silent epidemic.”

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Appendix B – Compulsory School Attendance Laws by State

State	Age of Required School Attendance		Exemptions / Employed	
	from	to	Age	Completion of Grade
Alabama	7	16	legally and regularly employed under child labor law.	---
	3	21	for special education students.	---
Alaska	7	16	---	---
Arizona	6	16	14 with parental consent and gainfully employed.	---
Arkansas	5	17 must complete school year	---	---
California	6	18	---	---
Colorado	7	16	has current age and school certificate or work permit.	---
Connecticut	5	18	16 with parental consent.	---
Delaware	5	16	---	---
District of Columbia	5	18	---	---
Florida	6	17	may terminate attended at 16 with parental consent.	---
Georgia	6	16	---	---
Hawaii	6	18	15	---
Idaho	7	16	---	---
Illinois	7	17	employed and excused by school official.	---
Indiana	7	18	16 with consent of parent and principal 14 if a parent agrees and State Labor bureau issues a certificate. Must go back to school within 5 days of termination of employment for which certificate issued.	---
Iowa	6	16	---	---
Kansas	7	18	17 or 16 with parental consent	---
Kentucky	6	16	---	---

RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE: THE CASE FOR REFORM

State	Age of Required School Attendance		Exemptions ¹ / Employed	
	from	to	Age	Completion of Grade
Louisiana	7	18 or 17 with parental consent	---	---
Maine	7	17	15 or	9
Maryland	5	16	---	---
Massachusetts	6	16	14	---
Michigan	6	16	---	---
Minnesota	7	16	---	---
Mississippi	6	17	5 years of age if in public kindergarten.	---
Missouri	7	16	14	---
Montana	7	16 or completion of 8th grade, whichever is later	---	---
Nebraska	7	18	14 and 16 with parental consent; special legislation for home schooling.	8 ---
Nevada	7	17	14 and excused by board of trustees. 14 if work is necessary for own or parents' support.	8 ---
New Hampshire	6	16	---	---
New Jersey	6	16	---	---
New Mexico	5, or 8 if parents and school board agree	high school graduate or 17 if excused by school board and employed in a gainful trade or occupation or child is in alternative schooling with parental consent.	---	---
New York	6	17 in cities with 4,500 or more population and union-free school districts, otherwise 16 if approved by local school board	---	---
North Carolina	7	16	---	---
North Dakota	7	16	necessary to support of family.	---
Ohio	6	18	16 with parents' and superintendents permission.	---

RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE: THE CASE FOR REFORM

State	Age of Required School Attendance		Exemptions / Employed	
	from	to	Age	Completion of Grade
Oklahoma	5	18 or 16 if excused by written joint agreement	---	---
Oregon	7	18 or excused by district school board; 16 with consent of school administration and parent; 21 for a child with a disability	16	---
Pennsylvania	8	17	16 if regularly engaged in employment with a certificate. 15 in farm work or domestic service in private home with permit. Or, 14 employed as above if completed elementary school with permit recommended by district superintendent of schools or principal of private school.	---
Rhode Island	6	18	16 with written parental consent.	---
South Carolina	5	17	16 further attendance is determined by court to be disruptive, unproductive or not in best interest of child.	8th grade completed and employment is necessary for maintenance of home
South Dakota	6	16 or completion of 8th grade if member of certain religious organizations	---	---
Tennessee	6	18th birthday	---	local exemptions at 17th birthday for discipline problems
Texas	6	18	---	---
Utah	6	18	16 and 8th grade completed. home schooled minors has exempt from attendance	8th for employment purposes
Vermont	6	16	15 and completed 6th grade and services needed for support of family.	---

RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE: THE CASE FOR REFORM

State	Age of Required School Attendance		Exemptions ¹ / Employed	
	from	to	Age	Completion of Grade
Virginia	5	18	exempt any pupil with parent's consent along with that of principal or superintendent or a court which believes the minor cannot benefit from education at school.	---
Washington	8	18 or 16 and parent agrees that child should not be required to attend, or child is emancipated, or child has received certificate of competence.	16	---
West Virginia	6	16	---	---
Wisconsin	6	18	---	---
Wyoming	7	16	---	---

¹Nearly all States exempt those whose physical or mental condition precludes attendance. Other exemptions not directly related to employment include those because of distance from school or school transportation; expulsion, suspension or determined to be disruptive; marriage; excused by court or judge; and receiving religious education.

Prepared By:

Office of External Affairs
 Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration
 U.S. Department of Labor

This document was last revised in December 2006; unless otherwise stated, the information reflects requirements that were in effect, or would take effect, as of January 1, 2007.

Appendix C – Current Legislation

Alaska	"An Act raising the compulsory school attendance age; relating to the crime of contributing to the delinquency of a minor; relating to duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to truancy; and relating to employment of a minor." (http://aksenate.org/index.php?bill=SB14)
Florida	"An act relating to mandatory school attendance; amending ss. 1002.20, 1003.21, and 1003.51, F.S.; changing the ending age for mandatory school attendance from 16 years to 18 years; providing an effective date." (http://www.flsenate.gov/data/session/2007/Senate/bills/billtext/pdf/s0360.pdf)
Iowa	"This bill raises the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18 years of age for students other than those receiving competent private instruction. The bill includes technical amendments to eliminate a reference to the compulsory attendance age for purposes of dual enrollment and to exempt children who meet conditions existing in Code section 299.2. The bill also directs the department of education to convene a compulsory attendance working group. The working group is to review supports for affected students and to consider the necessity of expanding support programs and services, online at-risk academy courses, career academies, current at-risk allowable growth provisions, and full funding of the instructional support levy. The working group must submit a report to the general assembly and the department of education by January 15, 2008. The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code section 25B.3. The bill requires that the state cost of any state mandate included in the bill be paid by a school district from state school foundation aid received by the school district under Code section 257.16. The specification is deemed to constitute state compliance with any state mandate funding-related requirements of Code section 25B.2. The inclusion of this specification is intended to reinstate the requirement of political subdivisions to comply with any state mandates included in the bill. The provision relating to the working group takes effect July 1, 2007, while the remainder of the bill takes effect July 1, 2008." (http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=true&ga=82&hbill=HSB13)
Kentucky	"Amend KRS 159.010 to provide that, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, and every year thereafter, compulsory school attendance shall be required for all children between the ages of six and eighteen who have not graduated from high school; make technical changes; amend KRS 159.020 to conform; amend KRS 159.051 to allow a student's driver's license to be revoked due to unexcused absences; amend KRS 186.560 to conform." (http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/07rs/HB221.htm)
Massachusetts	"Section 1B of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2002 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "attendance" in line 102 its [sic] following: provided, however, all children under the age of 18 shall be required to attend school if they have not graduated." (http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht00pdf/ht00394.pdf)
Michigan	"Education; attendance; compulsory age for attendance; increase age to 18 and provide for certain alternative education options. Amends secs. 1561 & 1596 of 1976 PA 451 (MCL 380.1561 & 380.1596) & adds sec. 1591. Last Action: 1/10/2007 - REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION" (http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2007-sb-0011)
Nevada	"AN ACT relating to education; requiring the boards of trustees of school districts to prescribe a policy for the development of 4-year academic plans for pupils enrolled in high school; requiring the principals of certain larger high schools to provide for a program of a ninth grade school within a school; requiring the State Board of Education to prescribe a uniform grading scale for high schools; requiring each school district to adopt a policy setting forth the duties of school counselors; expanding the age for compulsory school attendance from 17 years to 18 years; and providing other matters properly relating thereto." (http://www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/Bills/AB/AB212.PDF#xml=http://search.leg.state.nv.us/isysquery/rlr180cb/1/hilite)
New Hampshire	"This bill raises from 16 to 18 the age for compulsory school attendance and provides a procedure for a pupil who is at least 16 years of age to obtain an attendance waiver from school." (http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2007/SB0018.html)

RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE: THE CASE FOR REFORM

New Jersey:	"Every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between the ages of six and 18 years, if the child has not graduated from high school, shall cause such child regularly to attend the public schools of the district or a day school in which there is given instruction equivalent to that provided in the public schools for children of similar grades and attainments or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school." (http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2006/Bills/A2000/1801_11.HTM)
New Mexico	PASSED "A school-age person shall attend public school, private school, home school or a state institution until the school-age person is at least eighteen years of age unless that person has graduated from high school or received a general educational development certificate." (http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/_session.asp?chamber=S&type=++&number=561&Submit=Search&year=07)
North Dakota	"Any person having responsibility for a child between the ages of seven and eighteen years shall ensure that the child is in attendance at a public school for the duration of each school year." (http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/60-2007/bill-index/bi2184.html)
South Dakota	PASSED "Every person having control of a child, who is six years old by the first day of September and who has not exceeded the age of eighteen, shall cause the child to regularly and annually attend some public or nonpublic school for the entire term during which the public school in the district in which the person resides, or the school to which the child is assigned to attend, is in session, until the child reaches the age of eighteen years, unless the child has graduated or is excused as provided in this chapter." (http://legis.state.sd.us/sessions/2007/199.htm)
West Virginia	"A BILL to amend and reenact §18-8-1 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to changing the compulsory school attendance for children in the state from sixteen to eighteen years of age." (http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Text_HTML/2007_SESSIONS/RS/BILLS/hb2088%20intr.htm)
Wyoming	"AN ACT relating to compulsory school attendance; modifying requirements for compulsory attendance; imposing requirements on exemptions from required attendance; requiring school districts to report use of foundation funds directed at student drop-outs; and providing for an effective date." (http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2007/Introduced/HB0129.pdf)

APPENDIX D

INDIANA

Select Provisions from Indiana House Enrolled Act No. 1347, which was signed into law in March 2006

A complete copy of the act can be accessed at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2006/HE/HE1347.1.html>

SECTION 12. IC 20-33-2-9, AS ADDED BY P.L.1-2005, SECTION 17, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [JULY 1, 2006]: Sec. 9.

- (a) The governing body of each school corporation shall designate the appropriate employees of the school corporation to conduct the exit interviews for students described in section 6(a)(3) of this chapter. Each exit interview must be personally attended by:
 - (1) the student's parent;
 - (2) the student;
 - (3) each designated appropriate school employee; and
 - (4) the student's principal.
- (b) A student who is at least sixteen (16) years of age but less than eighteen (18) years of age is bound by the requirements of compulsory school attendance and may not withdraw from school before graduation unless:
 - (1) the student, the student's parent, and the principal agree to the withdrawal; and
 - (2) at the exit interview, the student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal that meets the requirements of subsection (c) and the:
 - (A) student's parent; and
 - (B) school principal;each provide written consent for the student to withdraw from school; and
 - (3) the withdrawal is due to:
 - (A) financial hardship and the individual must be employed to support the individual's family or a dependent;
 - (B) illness; or
 - (C) an order by a court that has jurisdiction over the student.
- (c) A written acknowledgment of withdrawal under subsection (b) must include a statement that the student and the student's parent understand that withdrawing from school is likely to:
 - (1) reduce the student's future earnings; and
 - (2) increase the student's likelihood of being unemployed in the future.

SECTION 13. IC 20-33-2-14, AS ADDED BY P.L.1-2005, SECTION 17, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2006]: Sec. 14.

- (a) This section and sections 15 through ~~17~~ 17.5 of this chapter apply to a student who attends either a public school or a nonpublic school.
- (b) Service as a page for or as an honoree of the general assembly is a lawful excuse for a student to be absent from school, when verified by a certificate of the secretary of the senate or the chief clerk of the house of representatives. A student excused from school attendance under this section may not be recorded as being absent on any date for which the excuse is operative and may not be penalized by the school in any manner.

SECTION 14. IC 20-33-2-17.5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2006]: Sec. 17.5. The governing body of a school corporation may authorize the absence and excuse of a student who attends any educationally related nonclassroom activity. Any educationally related nonclassroom activity and nonclassroom activity must meet all the following conditions:

- (1) Is consistent with and promotes the educational philosophy and goals of the school corporation and the state board.
- (2) Facilitates the attainment of specific educational objectives.
- (3) Is a part of the goals and objectives of an approved course or curriculum.
- (4) Represents a unique educational opportunity.
- (5) Cannot reasonably occur without interrupting the school day.
- (6) Is approved in writing by the school principal.

SECTION 15. IC 20-33-2-28.5, AS ADDED BY P.L.242-2005, SECTION 19, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2006]: Sec. 28.5.

- (a) This section applies to an individual:
 - (1) who:
 - (A) attends or last attended a public school;
 - (B) is at least sixteen (16) years of age but less than eighteen (18) years of age; and
 - (C) has not completed the requirements for graduation;
 - (2) who:
 - (A) wishes to withdraw from school before graduation;
 - (B) fails to return at the beginning of a semester; or
 - (C) stops attending school during a semester; and
 - (3) who has no record of transfer to another school.
- (b) An individual to whom this section applies may withdraw from school only if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (1) An exit interview is conducted.
 - (2) The individual's parent consents to the withdrawal.
 - (3) The school principal approves of the withdrawal.

(4) The withdrawal is due to:

- (A) financial hardship and the individual must be employed to support the individual's family or a dependent;
- (B) illness; or
- (C) an order by a court that has jurisdiction over the child.

During the exit interview, the school principal shall provide to the student and the student's parent a copy of statistics compiled by the department concerning the likely consequences of life without a high school diploma. The school principal shall advise the student and the student's parent that the student's withdrawal from school may prevent the student from receiving or result in the revocation of the student's employment certificate and driver's license or learner's permit.

(c) For purposes of this section, the following must be in written form:

- (1) An individual's request to withdraw from school.
- (2) A parent's consent to a withdrawal.
- (3) A principal's consent to a withdrawal.

(d) If the individual's principal does not consent to the individual's withdrawal under this section, the individual's parent may appeal the denial of consent to the governing body of the public school that the individual last attended.

(e) Each public school, including each school corporation and each charter school (as defined in IC 20-24-1-4), shall provide an annual report to the department setting forth the following information:

(1) The total number of individuals:

- (A) who withdrew from school under this section; and
- (B) who either:

- (i) failed to return to school at the beginning of a semester; or
 - (ii) stopped attending school during a semester;
- and for whom there is no record of transfer to another school.

(2) The number of individuals who withdrew from school following an exit interview.

(f) If an individual to which this section applies:

- (1) has not received consent to withdraw from school under this section; and
- (2) fails to return to school at the beginning of a semester or during the semester;

the principal of the school that the individual last attended shall deliver by certified mail or personal delivery to the bureau of child labor a record of the individual's failure to return to school so that the bureau of child labor revokes any employment certificates issued to the individual and does not issue any additional employment certificates to the individual. For purposes of IC 20-33-3-13, the individual shall be considered a dropout.

(g) At the same time that a school principal delivers the record under subsection (f), the principal shall deliver by certified mail or personal delivery to the bureau of motor vehicles a record of the individual's failure to return to school so that the bureau of motor vehicles revokes any driver's license or learner's permit issued to the individual

and does not issue any additional driver's licenses or learner's permits to the individual before the individual is at least eighteen (18) years of age. For purposes of IC 9-24-2-1, the individual shall be considered a dropout.

(h) If:

(1) a principal has delivered the record required under subsection (f) or (g), or both; and

(2) the school subsequently gives consent to the individual to withdraw from school under this section;

the principal of the school shall send a notice of withdrawal to the bureau of child labor and the bureau of motor vehicles by certified mail or personal delivery and, for purposes of IC 20-33-3-13 and IC 9-24-2-1, the individual shall no longer be considered a dropout.

APPENDIX E

New Hampshire

SB 18-FN – AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

03/15/07 0486s

2007 SESSION

07-1184

04/10

SENATE BILL 18-FN

AN ACT raising the age of required attendance of children in school.

SPONSORS: Sen. Estabrook, Dist 21; Sen. Gottesman, Dist 12; Sen. Gallus, Dist 1; Sen. Odell, Dist 8; Sen. Foster, Dist 13; Sen. Kelly, Dist 10; Sen. Fuller Clark, Dist 24; Sen. Hassan, Dist 23; Sen. D'Allesandro, Dist 20; Sen. Larsen, Dist 15; Rep. Rous, Straf 7; Rep. Dunn, Ches 3; Rep. Remick, Coos 2

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill raises from 16 to 18 the age for compulsory school attendance and provides a procedure for a pupil who is at least 16 years of age to obtain an attendance waiver from school.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in *bold italics*.

Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

03/15/07 0486s

07-1184

04/10

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Seven

AN ACT raising the age of required attendance of children in school.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 School Attendance; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil. Amend RSA 193:1, I to read as follows:

I. A parent of any child at least 6 years of age and under [16] 18 years of age shall cause such child to attend the public school to which the child is assigned in the child's resident district. Such child shall attend full time when such school is in session unless:

(a) The child is attending a public school outside the district to which the child is assigned or an approved private school for the same time;

(b) The child is receiving home education and is therefore exempt from this requirement; [or]

(c) The relevant school district superintendent has excused a child from attendance because the child is physically or mentally unable to attend school, or has been temporarily excused upon the request of the parent for purposes agreed upon by the school authorities and the parent. Such excused absences shall not be permitted if they cause a serious adverse effect upon the student's educational progress. Students excused for such temporary absences may be claimed as full-time pupils for purposes of calculating state aid under RSA 186-C:18 and equitable education grants under RSA 198:41;

(d) The pupil has been exempted from attendance pursuant to RSA 193:5;

(e) The pupil has successfully completed all requirements for graduation and the school district is prepared to issue a diploma or the pupil has successfully achieved the equivalent of a high school diploma by either:

(1) Obtaining a GED certificate; or

(2) Documenting the completion of a home school program at the high school level by submitting a certificate or letter to the department of education.

(f) The pupil has been accepted into an accredited postsecondary education program; or

(g) The pupil obtains a waiver from the superintendent, which shall only be granted upon proof that the pupil is 16 years of age or older and has an alternative learning plan for obtaining either a high school diploma or its equivalent.

(1) Alternative learning plans shall include age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the pupil's interests and manner of learning. These plans may include, but are not limited to, such components or combination of components of extended learning opportunities as independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, and on-line courses.

(2) Alternative learning plans shall be developed, and amended if necessary, in consultation with the pupil, a school guidance counselor, the school principal and at least one parent or guardian of the pupil, and submitted to the school district superintendent for approval.

(3) If the superintendent does not approve the alternative learning plan, the parent or guardian of the pupil may appeal such decision to the local school board. A parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the local school board to the state board of education consistent with the provisions of RSA 21-N:11, III.

2 School Attendance; Bylaws as to Nonattendance. Amend RSA 193:16 to read as follows:

193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance. Districts may make bylaws, not repugnant to law, concerning habitual truants and children between the ages of 6 and ~~[16]~~ 18 years not attending school ~~[and not having a regular and lawful occupation;]~~ *or who are not participating in an alternative learning plan under RSA 193:1, I(g)*, and to compel the attendance of such children at school; failure to comply with such bylaws shall constitute a violation for each offense.

3 Truant Officers; Duties. Amend RSA 189:36 to read as follows:

189:36 Duties. Truant officers shall, when directed by the school board, enforce the laws and regulations relating to truants and children between the ages of 8 and [16] 18 years not attending school ~~[and without any regular and lawful occupation]~~ *or who are not participating in an alternative learning plan under RSA 193:1, I(g)*; and the laws relating to the attendance at school of children between the ages of 8 and 18 years; and shall have authority without a warrant to take and place in school any children found employed contrary to the laws relating to the employment of children, or violating the laws relating to the compulsory attendance at school of children under the age of 18 years, and the laws relating to child labor. *No home school pupil nor any person between the ages of 6 and 18 who meets any of the requirements of RSA 193:1, I(c)-(g) shall be deemed a truant.*

4 Home Education; Definitions. Amend RSA 193-A:1, I to read as follows:

I. "Child" means a child or children at least 6 years of age and under [16] 18 years of age who is a resident of New Hampshire.

5 Repeal. RSA 193:1, IV, relative to withdrawal from school for children who are at least 16 years of age but under 18 years of age, is repealed.

6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009.

LBAO

07-1184

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SB 18-FN - FISCAL NOTE

AN ACT raising the age of required attendance of children in school.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of Education states this bill may increase local expenditures by an indeterminable amount in FY 2010 and each fiscal year thereafter. There will be no fiscal impact on state and county expenditures or state, county, and local revenue.

METHODOLOGY:

The Department indicated that raising the compulsory age of attendance to 18 years of age would increase the high school population by less than 1,100 students in FY 2010 and each fiscal year thereafter. Based on dropout data from the 2005-2006 school year, approximately 1,300 students who dropped out of school were under the age of

18; had these students stayed in school until age 18, average daily membership (ADM) would have been higher by approximately 1,200. The Department further indicated that based on anticipated declines in the dropout rate and student enrollment, increased ADM in FY 2010 will be approximately 1,100, and such an increase should not require additional facilities or teachers. The Department assumes students covered by catastrophic aid do not drop out of school before the age of 18. With an effective date of July 1, 2009, the first year in which enrollment will be impacted is FY 2010; enrollment from FY 2011 will be used to calculate FY 2014 equitable education aid. Only the limited English proficient and transportation portions of the targeted aid component will be impacted by an increased ADM. In FY 2005, 28 dropouts received three or more hours per week of limited English proficiency services, 20 of which were under the age of 18. It is assumed this number will remain constant. Total impact on targeted aid beginning in FY 2014 would be \$229,000 [(1,100 x \$190 transportation aid) + (20 limited English proficient x \$1,000)].

The Department states this bill may increase local school district expenditures in FY 2010 and each fiscal year thereafter to provide appropriate programs for potential dropouts between the ages of 16 and 18.

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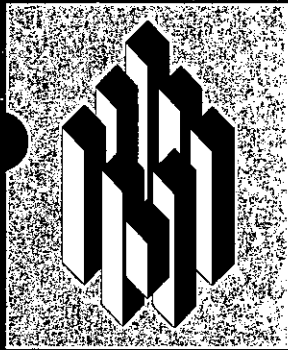
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Attachment B

**“Stay In School: new Lessons On the Benefits of Raising the Legal
School –Leaving Age,” December 2005, Philip Oreopoulos, C.D. Howe
Institute**



C.D. Howe Institute
Commentary

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The Education Papers

Stay in School:

*New Lessons on the Benefits
of Raising the Legal School-
Leaving Age*

Philip Oreopoulos

In this issue...

High-school dropout rates remain disturbingly high in Canada. But is raising the minimum age for leaving school part of the solution? New evidence suggests that it is.

The Study in Brief

Too many, too soon: that is the common lament over Canada's disturbing high-school dropout rate. With one in five young adults lacking a high-school diploma, politicians and educators are looking for solutions. This paper examines one possible answer: raising the minimum school-leaving age above 16.

The paper presents new evidence from the United States and New Brunswick, which raised the age to 18 in 2000, for considering whether the other provinces should support and enforce an increase in the school-leaving age. First, the study examines broad data on school enrolment and attainment in these jurisdictions. The finding: partly as a result of weak enforcement, recent changes in the school-leaving age had only a small — but still significant — impact on school completion rates.

The study then delves deeper with a more systematic analysis, which isolates those students specifically affected by changes to the school-leaving age. Based on the results, the study estimates that raising the school-leaving age above 16:

- increases, on average, an individual's length of schooling by between 0.12 and 0.16 years;
- decreases the dropout rate by between 1.2 and 2.1 percentage points; and
- increases the fraction of young adults with at least some college or university by between 1.5 and 2.1 percentage points.

Raising school attainment alone, however, does not indicate successful policy. More important are the effects of raising the school-leaving age above 16 on early unemployment and earnings outcomes for those forced to stay in school longer. The results show that an additional year of compulsory schooling not only lowers the probability of being unemployed but also boosts weekly earnings.

This is the first study to look at the impact of measures raising the school-leaving age over the last 20- to 30-year period in North America. Its findings are in line with those of previous studies, which have dealt with increases in the minimum age that occurred in the early half of the 20th century.

The Author of This Issue

Philip Oreopoulos is Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Toronto and Faculty Research Fellow with the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

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The high-school dropout rate in Canada remains uncomfortably high. About 20 percent of Canadians in their twenties — one in five — have no secondary-school certificate and no postsecondary education of any kind.¹ The figure is disturbing because high-school dropouts fare much worse later in life compared to those who obtain more education. They earn, on average, less than high-school graduates and are more likely to be unemployed, draw on social assistance and other welfare programs, end up in jail and be in poorer health. If dropping out causes these bad outcomes, students that drift towards early exit in school stand much to gain from staying on instead.

Provincial education ministries have grappled with finding ways to reduce the number of dropouts. Some suggest lowering class size, others suggest making the curriculum easier, or trying to target at-risk students earlier. An additional possibility, also considered recently by several provinces, is to raise the minimum school-leaving age. This specifies the length of time students must spend in school before having the legal option to leave. Except for New Brunswick, all provinces mandate a minimum school-leaving age of 16. In Alberta, a private member's bill proposing to raise the age to 17 was legislated in 2003, but was never proclaimed (Red Deer Public Schools 2005). The Ontario government said in 2002 it planned to raise the age to 18. It reiterated that commitment in the fall 2005 Throne Speech and a policy announcement is expected very soon.

Support for increasing the school-leaving age often rests on paternalistic hunches that students wishing to leave school early are, in fact, better off if they decide to stay on. In 1998, for example, the Deputy Minister of Education for New Brunswick provided this explanation for the province's decision to raise the minimum school-leaving age to 18:

"[E]ducators must help students fulfill the Mission of Public Education in New Brunswick to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and attributes needed to be a life-long learner, to achieve personal fulfillment and to contribute to a productive just and democratic society." (School-leaving Age Task Force 1998.)

And in Ontario, Premier Dalton McGuinty stated:

"We've got a law on the books now that says that you can quit school when you're 16. Think about it. This is the knowledge economy — that no longer makes sense. So we're going to require that young people be in school or learning outside of school ... until they reach the age of 18." (National Post, September 28, 2002.)

1 Twenty-seven percent of 22- to 24-year-olds in the 2001 Canadian Census had no secondary school certificate, down slightly from 29 percent in 1996 and 30 percent in 1991. Only 19 percent of these individuals take additional postsecondary schooling. There are several other ways to gauge high-school completion (see Kaufman, Alt and Chapman 2001). For example, event dropout rates indicate the percentage of students who dropped out of school over a relatively short period of time, often between one year and the next. The less time-sensitive status dropout rate measures the percentage of individuals who are not enrolled in high school and who lack a high-school credential. Completion rates measure the percentage of a given population that has a high-school credential, regardless of when the credential was earned. Measures of completion vary depending on what age groups are included, since some individuals return later to complete a degree. Data on completion rates from the census and labour force survey seem most reliable to me, but most other measures produce similar trends and measures. Mainly for exposition, I shall refer to students who do not complete their secondary degree as dropouts. These figures are similar, whether looking at all 22- to 24-year-olds, or only Canadian-born.

But hunches aside, what do the lessons of experience have to say? The purpose of this paper is to present new evidence from New Brunswick and the United States for considering whether the provinces should support and enforce an increase in the legal school-leaving age.

The first part of the paper focuses on whether recent changes in laws to increase the minimum age in Canada and the U.S. had any impact on increasing school enrolment and attainment. Many of the revised laws included exceptions, were poorly enforced, or had little punishment for non-compliance. Partly as a result of weak enforcement, I find that recent increases in the school-leaving age had only a small — but still significant — impact on school completion rates.

Then I apply a more systematic analysis, with findings that lend further support to increasing the school-leaving age. Most interestingly, even though compulsory schooling laws do not mandate any postsecondary education, I find that raising the school-leaving age above 16 increases the fraction of youths with at least some college or university. One notion consistent with this finding is that some individuals compelled to stay longer in high school become more interested in postsecondary education, or view higher education as less daunting than when they were younger. The paper finally considers the employment benefits for students who extend their schooling under compulsion. I estimate the subsequent impact on earnings and employment for the small fraction of students specifically affected by increases in the school-leaving age and who stay in school longer as a result.

A word on methodology: My methodology (see Appendix B) takes into account changes in compulsory school laws in different states at different times. It allows us to estimate not only the overall impact of compulsory school-leaving laws, but also their impact on students specifically affected by them and who would have otherwise left school.

Without this methodology, it is hard to distinguish between the effect of staying in school beyond 16 and the effect of the underlying factors, such as motivation, that lead some teenagers to remain in school longer than others. For example, if we observe that someone who finished high school earns more than someone who didn't, is it because the individual stayed in school longer or is it because the individual is generally more motivated, which led him/her to stay in school longer, and work harder to earn more? If we don't take care to distinguish between the two possibilities, we might assign to extra schooling an advantage that really comes from individual characteristics that are independent of school policies.

The results of my analysis are very similar to older studies. I estimate that individuals compelled to stay in school beyond 16 experience significantly higher earnings and higher opportunities for employment in their early careers. Finding large labour-market gains for individuals forced to stay in school raises the question of why dropouts drop out in the first place. Why do young persons in Canada leave school early if staying on generates attractive gains, on average, to their careers and overall well-being? For dropouts to know what they are doing, they must really hate school to forgo the large expected returns from staying on. Alternatively, perhaps the reasons behind wanting to introduce compulsory schooling laws in the first place are correct: perhaps dropouts are myopic, or

underestimate the gains from school, or perhaps social pressures dominate their concerns. Whatever the reasons, one clear recommendation of this paper is that if provinces are serious about raising the school-leaving age, they need to effectively enforce these laws and promote their potential benefits to administrators, parents, and students.

Previous Studies

Previous studies have dealt with increases in the minimum school-leaving age that occurred in the early half of the 20th century. They have consistently found large gains to adult social-economic outcomes. For the United States, Angrist and Krueger (1991) and Acemoglu and Angrist (2001) estimated (using very different methodologies) that annual adult earnings are about 10 percent higher for students compelled to stay a year longer in school. For the United Kingdom, Harmon and Walker (1995) found about 14 percent higher earnings from such compulsory measures. And for Canada, I found similar gains, using provincial law changes between 1915 and 1970, for would-be-dropouts compelled to stay in school.

Other studies have examined the impact of compulsory schooling on non-pecuniary outcomes. Lochner and Moretti (2004) estimated that compulsory schooling lowers the likelihood of committing crime or ending up in jail. Lleras-Muney (2005) estimated an additional year of compulsory schooling substantially lowers the probability of dying sooner among elderly people. Black, Devereux, and Salvanes (2005) found compulsory schooling reduces the chances of teen pregnancy in the United States and Norway. And Oreopoulos, Page and Stevens (2003) conclude that parents with more compulsory schooling are also less likely to have children who have to repeat a grade or drop out themselves.

However, these earlier reports examine effects from raising the minimum school-leaving age to 14, 15, or 16 many decades ago, often before the 1950s. The circumstances behind dropout decisions back then were quite different than the circumstances behind dropout decisions today. The demand for skilled workers has increased, and the gains from additional education attainment may also have increased. On the other hand, more students today graduate from high school and obtain postsecondary education. Today's dropouts come from relatively poorer families. Based on the 2001 Census, 73 percent of dropouts under 20 and living at home have parents with household income below the 25th percentile, compared to 61 percent of dropouts from the 1981 census. It is not clear whether compelling these individuals to remain in school beyond 16 would generate the same effects found in earlier studies.

Ideally, we need to explore more recent changes. New Brunswick's change in the school-leaving age, from 16 to 18 in 2000, is almost too recent, since not enough time has elapsed to examine subsequent outcomes. Consequently, I look to the United States. Like provinces in Canada, many states in the U.S. have discussed raising the school-leaving age to 17 or 18, almost making high-school graduation compulsory. As of today, 29 states have already increased the minimum age above 16. Below, I use these recent changes to examine the potential for compulsory schooling to: 1. serve as an effective policy for reducing dropout

rates; and 2. improve subsequent social-economic outcomes. While using the same methodology as the earlier studies, this is the first study to look at measures over the last 20- to 30-year period that raised the minimum school-leaving age above 16.

Recent Changes to Compulsory Schooling Laws in the U.S. and Canada

As a first step, this section provides an overview of compulsory schooling laws in U.S. states, then in New Brunswick. It considers the extent to which the laws are enforced, and their impact, based on broad data on high-school enrolment and educational attainment for the relevant age groups.

The U.S. Experience

Many states in the U.S. have a minimum school-leaving age of 17 or 18. The National Center for Education Statistics' annual Education Digest lists these laws. Figure 1A shows the minimum school-leaving age between 1970 and 2003 for states that set the age above 16 at least once during this period (and for the District of Columbia). Figure 1B shows the other states.² Several, like Rhode Island, Florida, and Nebraska, upgraded their compulsory school laws only in the last few years. Others, like Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah, however, have had a minimum-leaving age set above 16 for more than two decades.

The strange pattern shown by a few states, where the leaving age has been raised, then lowered, hints that more is going on. A closer look at the legislation reveals that there is much more to compulsory school laws than a specific age range within which individuals must remain in school. In several states, students can leave earlier than the legal minimum age if they work instead. In other cases, students can leave with parental consent. Kansas allows dropping out before the recorded minimum age if, after a counselling session, both student and parents sign a disclaimer. In doing so, they acknowledge a list of academic skills the student may not yet have acquired, and statistics on differences in average earnings and unemployment rates between dropouts and graduates.³

Some students disengage and drop out illegally because compulsory schooling policies are not well-enforced, or punishment for habitual truancy is not severe enough to deter them. Administrators may be reluctant to pursue court action, especially in cases where students are disruptive in class and do not appear interested in school. In virtually every state, the primary action when a student begins to disengage from school (through absenteeism) is to notify a parent or guardian and counsel him or her to encourage the child to attend. Some states require parents to pay fines or even face imprisonment for a child that regularly skips school. Children themselves can face termination of driving privileges (see Burke 2005), community service, or be forced to attend a juvenile detention facility.

2 Hawaii and Alaska are left out of this paper's analysis because student dropout trends in these states are less likely to follow trends in the rest of the country.

3 See Kansas State Department of Education (2005).

Figure 1A: States with Minimum School-Leaving Age Greater than 16 At Least Once, 1970 – 2003

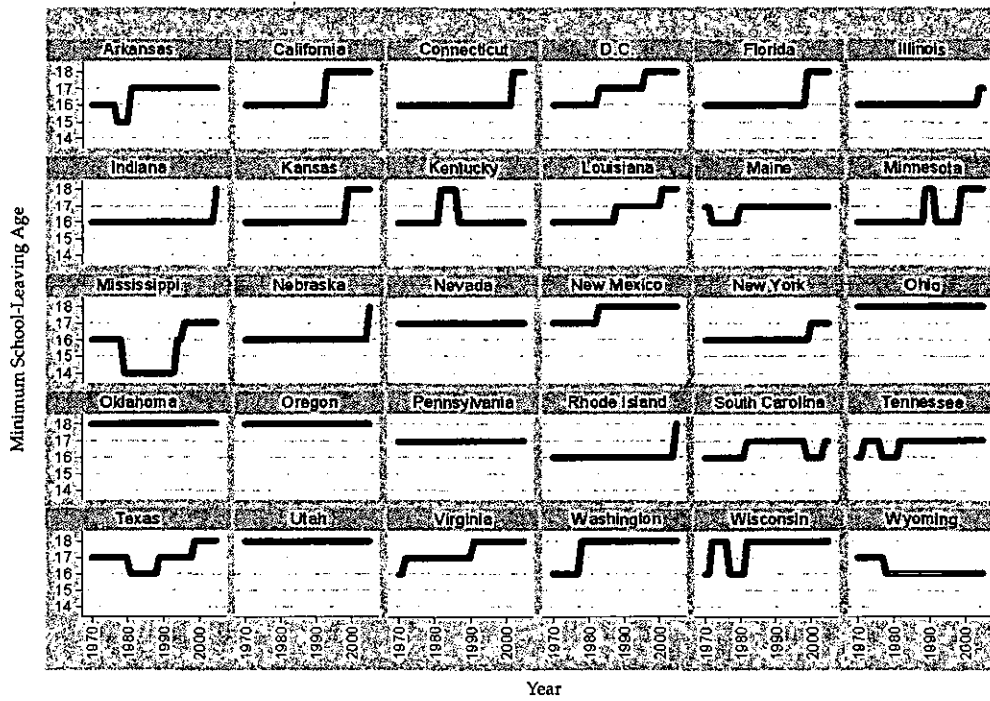


Figure 1B: States with Minimum School-Leaving Age 16 or Less, 1970 – 2003

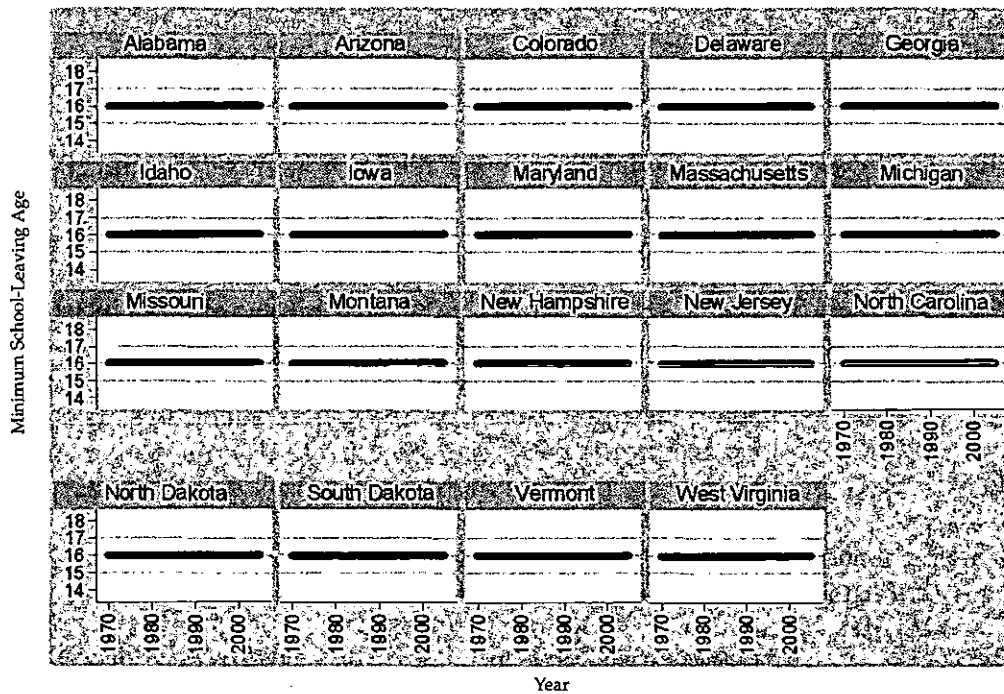


Table 1: School Attainment by School-Leaving Age Faced at Age 16, 2000 – 2003

	Legal School-Leaving Age Faced at Age 16		
	16	17	18
		%	
Fraction of 16-Year-Olds In School During School Year	96.20	95.65	96.63
Fraction of 17-Year-Olds In School During School Year	91.68	91.66	93.22
Fraction of 18-Year-Olds In School During School Year	73.42	73.64	74.73
Fraction of 20- to 24-Year-Olds with High School Degree or some Postsecondary	85.56	83.38	85.24
Fraction of 20- to 24-Year-Olds with some Postsecondary	51.55	48.55	52.14

Notes: Data are from the NBER's extracts of the Merged Outgoing Rotation Files of the Current Population Survey. The years included for this table are 2000 to 2003. The "in school" variable is coded as one if an individual is enrolled part-time or full-time in school the week of the survey.

In practice, only a fraction of habitually truant students are disciplined by the state. In Tennessee, for example, most attendance officers believe that their caseload is too large and that they face difficulty contacting the families of truant students (Palmisano and Potts 2004). Only general guidelines are provided by the state to determine habitual truancy, and schools have little financial incentive to improve attendance.

If the minimum school-leaving age affects at least some would-be dropouts, we might expect to observe more 16- and 17-year-olds in school in states that have legal leaving ages of 17 or 18, respectively, compared to states with a leaving age of 16. We also might expect that in states that provide no exceptions to a leaving age of 18, we should observe virtually all 16- and 17-year-olds in school.

To check these expectations, Table 1 presents the fraction of 16-, 17-, and 18-year-olds in school during the 2000 to 2003 school years. Results for each age group are categorized under the minimum-leaving age faced at age 16,⁴ whether that be 16, 17 or 18.

Consider, first, the case of 16-year-old students. Most 16-year-olds are in school regardless of the minimum school-leaving age that exists, which might be expected. But contrary to expectations, students in states with a school-leaving age of 17 are slightly less likely to be enrolled at 16, compared to students in states with a leaving age of 16 (95.7 percent versus 96.2 percent respectively). Yet, 16-year-olds in states with a school-leaving age of 18 are slightly more likely to be in school (96.6 percent).

The fraction of 17-year-olds in school by no means spikes up for youths in states with a school-leaving age of 18, as we might expect to see. Fully 6.8 percent

⁴ These proportions are calculated from responses in the 2000 to 2003 outgoing rotation files of the Current Population Survey, excluding the months of June, July and August and using population weights. I matched the state school leaving ages to the year in which an individual was 16 in their current state of residence. The data appendix provides additional details.

of 17-year-olds in states with a leaving age of 18 have left, which is comparable to 8.3 percent in states with a leaving age of 16.

Table 1 also presents education attainment measures for 20- to 24-year-olds. There are surprisingly no major differences in the dropout rate or postsecondary attainment rate across states with different leaving ages. One reason for this is that states that tend to have more restrictive compulsory schooling laws also perennially tend to have more students that drop out, regardless of legal stipulations. This limits our ability to observe the effects of these age limits. I address this in the next section. At the very least, the finding that many students leave before the legally mandated age suggests that exceptions, exemptions, and lack of enforcement of these laws weaken their effectiveness in keeping youths in school.

The New Brunswick Experience

The province of New Brunswick increased the school-leaving age to 18 in 2000. This was the first (and, so far, only) time any province raised the school-leaving age above 16. A task force in 1999 recommended the change, provided that programs were set up to address needs for students who would struggle to cope staying longer.⁵ New services, including apprenticeships and tutoring programs, were introduced along with the new law.

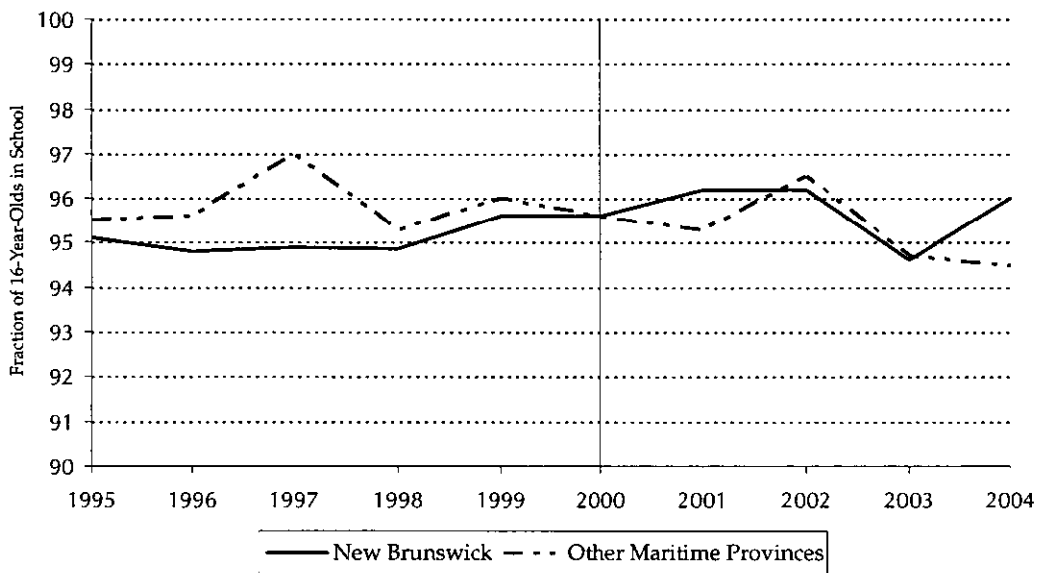
The school-leaving age of 18, however, is not enforced. The Education Act of New Brunswick (2005) indicates that a parent who fails to 'cause' a frequently truant child to go back to school is subject to a misdemeanour charge, but only until that child is 16. There is no consequence listed in the Act associated with habitual truancy of children 16 years old or older.⁶

To examine whether the new law affected school enrolment, Figures 2A, 2B, and 2C plot the portion of teenagers in school full-time in New Brunswick and in the other Maritime Provinces (which have minimum school-leaving ages of 16) between 1995 and 2004. These data come from the monthly Labour Force Surveys.⁷ Under the law change, we might expect to observe a jump in school enrolment among late teens in New Brunswick after 2000, but no such jump for late teens in the other provinces (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland). As with the U.S. comparison above, however, there is little difference between enrolment rates across the Maritimes. The fraction of 16-year-

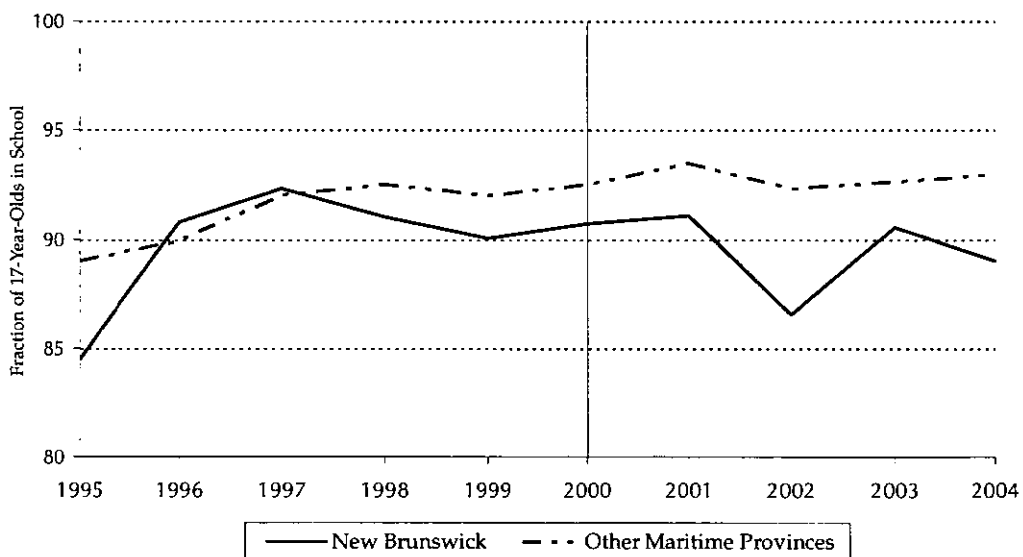
5 See School Leaving Age Task Force (1998).

6 An article by Davis (2004) in the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal* notes: "A five-year-old law designed to keep New Brunswick teens in school until age 18 has never been enforced." She cites Robert Gerard, director of student services with the Department of Education as saying the law wasn't put in place to prosecute offenders or their parents. "It was part of a proactive approach the department took to ensure the needs of all students are met. Psychologically, it has made a difference for educators, parents and students. The mindset had to be changed of educators to recognize that the Department of Education and society was serious about the need to keep our children in school and make sure they have a sound education."

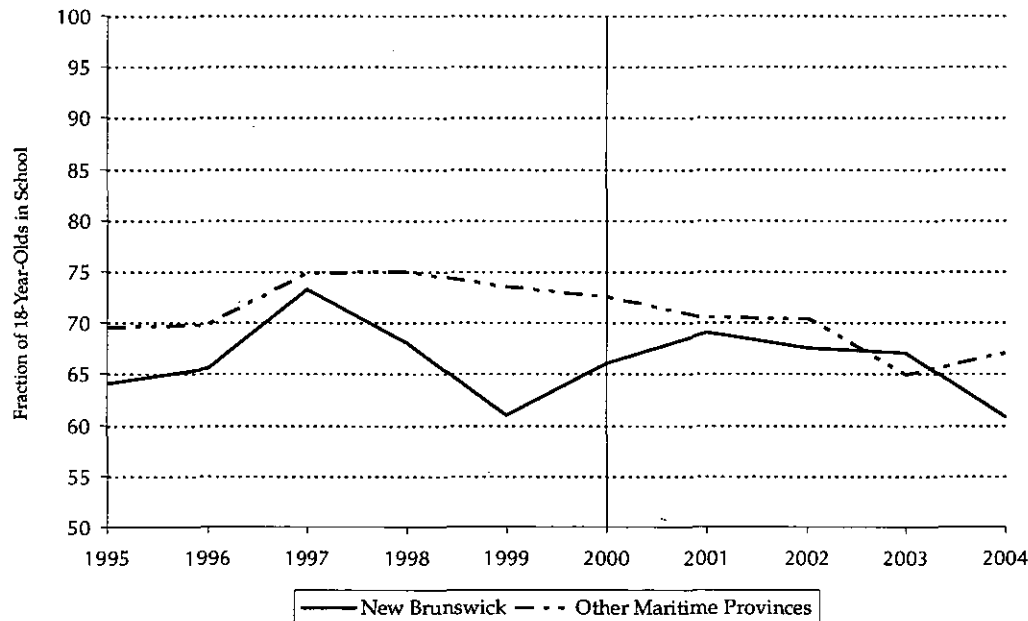
7 I use Statistics Canada's more detailed version that includes an individual's age, rather than age in the Public Use files. I combined the monthly surveys between 1995 and 2004, excluding the months between June and August. I use population weights to calculate the fraction of full-time students at different ages.

Figure 2A: *Fraction of Maritime 16-Year-Olds in School Full-Time, 1995 – 2004*

Note: Data are from the combined monthly Labour Force Surveys at Statistics Canada. Each plot indicates the fraction reported in school full-time for each survey year, excluding those in months June, July, and August. The vertical line in 2000 indicates the year in which New Brunswick raised the school-leaving age to 18.

Figure 2B: *Fraction of Maritime 17-Year-Olds in School Full-Time, 1995 – 2004*

Note: Data are from the combined monthly Labour Force Surveys at Statistics Canada. Each plot indicates the fraction reported in school full-time for each survey year, excluding those in months June, July, and August. The vertical line in 2000 indicates the year in which New Brunswick raised the school-leaving age to 18.

Figure 2C: *Fraction of Maritime 18-Year-Olds in School Full-Time, 1995 – 2004*

Note: Data are from the combined monthly Labour Force Surveys at Statistics Canada. Each plot indicates the fraction reported in school full-time for each survey year, excluding those in months June, July, and August. The vertical line in 2000 indicates the year in which New Brunswick raised the school-leaving age to 18.

olds in school stays relatively flat for all provinces, at about 96 percent. The fraction of 17-year-olds in school is also flat after 1998, at about 90 percent. The 17-year-old enrolment rate is slightly lower for New Brunswick, even though that province's law implies enrolment should be closer to 100 percent after 2000. We see no noticeable change at that time.⁸

A similar pattern holds when we look at educational attainment. The law change in New Brunswick is too recent to observe individuals older than 19 and exposed to the new law. But among 19-year-olds in 2004, 18.6 percent did not complete high school and did not take any postsecondary education. This compares to 19.7 percent for the other Maritime Provinces. In 2000, New Brunswick's dropout rate among 19-year-olds was also slightly smaller than for the other Maritime Provinces (22.6 percent versus 23.2 percent, respectively). Neither difference is statistically significant. In short, the increase in New Brunswick's school-leaving age appears to serve more as a signal by the province of its desire to encourage high-school graduation, but without a serious commitment to keeping every 16- and 17-year-old in school with appropriate enforcement.

⁸ The discrepancy in the difference between New Brunswick and other Maritime Provinces before and after 2000 is small and not statistically significant.

Delving Deeper: The Results of a More Systematic Analysis

The last section discussed how exceptions to, or weak enforcement of, the minimum school-leaving age can diminish its effectiveness in compelling students to stay. States with more restrictive laws do not have noticeably lower dropout rates or early exit rates than other states. These simple comparisons, however, may belie the true impact of compulsory measures if the same states with more restrictive laws also tend to have more students that leave school early for other reasons.

This section describes the results of a more systematic analysis of the effects of recent U.S. changes in school-leaving ages on school enrolment and attainment. I estimate that raising the school-leaving age above 16 is, in fact, associated with an increase in school attainment, albeit a small one.

The main analysis combines the monthly outgoing rotation files of the Current Population Survey (CPS) between 1979 and 2003. (Appendix A describes the data I use in more detail.) The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the CPS to calculate unemployment rates in the United States. Each monthly survey includes about 30,000 nationally representative individuals, with information about their state of residence, labour force participation, weekly or hourly earnings, and educational attainment. To focus the analysis on the effects of recent changes to compulsory school laws, I limit the sample to individuals aged 20 to 24 between 1975 and 2003, matched to the school-leaving ages shown in Figures 1A and 1B for the years 1970 to 1995. Individuals are matched to the school-leaving age of their state of residence when they were 16 years old.⁹

Using regression analysis (see Appendix B), the first question I ask is: what is the effect on length of schooling when the minimum-leaving age is raised above 16? The analysis uses control variables for the effects of an individual's state of residence, birth cohort, and survey year. These variables control for perennial differences in state education attainment that do not vary over time, as well as national trends in education attainment that do vary over time. Controlling for such outside influences allows for a more precise estimation of the effects we are really interested in; that is, the effects of facing a minimum school-leaving age above 16 on different measures of educational attainment.

I estimate that, on average, raising the school-leaving age above 16 increases an individual's length of schooling by between 0.12 and 0.16 years, depending on what control variables are included in the analysis (detailed results are in Table B1 in Appendix B).

Next, I ask whether raising the school-leaving age influences high-school completion and postsecondary enrolment. This is a similar analysis, but I use high-school completion and postsecondary school enrolment as outcome variables instead of years of schooling. The results indicate that raising the school-leaving age above 16 decreases the dropout rate and increases college or university entrance.

⁹ In this analysis, I include immigrants, since most 20-to 24-year-old immigrants likely faced compulsory schooling laws in the U.S. The results are similar excluding them, and available on request.

Again, depending on the specific set of control variables included in the analysis, raising the school-leaving age above 16 lowers the fraction of 20- to 24-year-olds who have never completed high school by between 1.2 and 2.1 percentage points. Even though compulsory schooling laws do not mandate any postsecondary education, I also find that raising the minimum age above 16 increases the fraction of young adults with at least some college or university by between 1.5 and 2.1 percentage points. One explanation consistent with this finding is that some individuals compelled to stay longer in high school become more interested in postsecondary education or view higher education as less daunting an obstacle than when they were younger.

As a check on these results, I perform the same analysis, but this time using the actual school-leaving age (16, 17, or 18) to categorize the results instead of the legal school-leaving age. The results are similar.

The evidence from the most recent cohorts

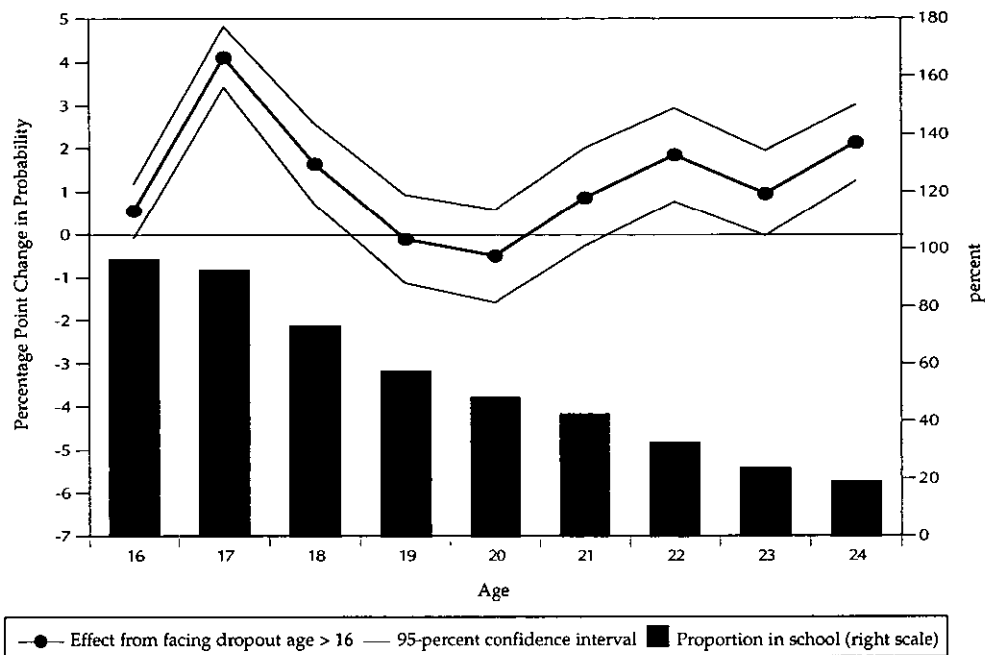
Some of the changes to compulsory schooling laws included so far in the sample occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Because the effects of these laws may have changed with time, it is useful to restrict the above analysis to the most recent cohorts.

For the most recent cohorts, Figure 3 shows the estimated effect of raising the legal leaving age above 16 on the probability of being enrolled in school at different ages. The sample used to construct this figure includes only individuals from the 2000 to 2003 CPS. Each dot in the figure shows the estimated increase in the likelihood of being in school (full-time or part-time) for the corresponding age group. The two thinner lines trace out the 95-percent confidence interval around this estimate. The bars at the bottom of the figure show the average school enrolment in each age group for comparison.

The first dot indicates that an increase in the school-leaving age to above 16 raises the probability of attending school at age 16 by 0.6 percentage points. A stronger influence occurs on the likelihood of attending at age 17 and 18. The attendance rate is 4.1 percentage points higher among 17-year-olds under a school-leaving age above 16, compared to one that is lower. I also estimate some effect on school enrolment in the early twenties, although the large confidence region indicates some uncertainty about the size of these later effects. The evidence lines up with the previous findings above that some individuals may be influenced by high school compulsion to also obtain postsecondary education.

Figure 4 shows the estimated effects from raising the school-leaving age above 16 on specific education-attainment levels. The sample includes only 20- to 24-year-olds in the CPS between 2000 and 2003. The findings are consistent with what effects we might expect the legal leaving age to have on the distribution of education attainment. Within U.S. regions, states with minimum-leaving ages above 16 have fewer individuals whose highest grade attainment lies below Grade 11, and more individuals with Grade 12 and some college education. The compulsory school laws do not influence university graduation, graduate school or professional degree attainment, but this may be because the sample mostly

Figure 3: *Estimated Effects of Minimum School-Leaving Age Above 16 on School Enrolment, 2000 – 2003 Current Population Surveys, Excluding June, July, and August*



Note: Each black dot in the top half of the figure represents a separate regression by age category. An indicator variable for whether an individual is in school was regressed on whether the individual faced a dropout age above 16 in his state of residence when he was 16 years old, plus nine region-fixed effects. The estimated coefficients for the effects of facing a higher dropout age are reported here for each age group. The thinner lines outline the 95-percent confidence interval. The bars in the bottom half of the figure indicate the fraction of sample in each age group in school (right scale).

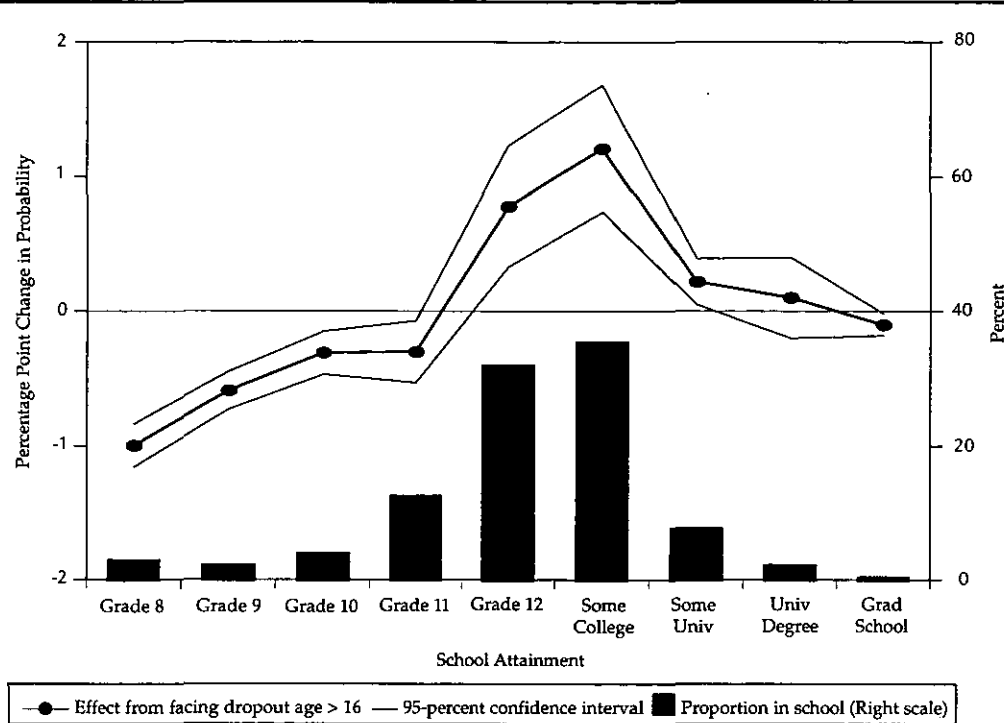
includes individuals in their early twenties who have not yet completed their schooling.

It may not seem surprising that compulsory schooling beyond age 16 increases educational attainment. After all, that is what the policy is meant to do. What's interesting about these findings is that the effects are small, especially considering that a strict interpretation of the law would imply that virtually no teenager would be allowed to leave before age 16. Clearly, this is not the case. The other interesting finding is that the more restrictive compulsory schooling laws also seem to lead to more postsecondary schooling. This effect was not observed in earlier studies (e.g. Acemoglu and Angrist 2001). Postsecondary schooling may seem more achievable from the standpoint of a high-school graduate compared to a high-school dropout.

The Effect of Compulsory Schooling on Subsequent Employment and Wages

Raising school attainment alone, however, does not indicate successful policy. A more important question is what happens to those compelled to stay in school. To answer it, the next section estimates the effects of raising the school-leaving age above 16 on early unemployment and earnings outcomes for 20- to 24-year-olds. I

Figure 4: *Estimated Effects of Minimum School-Leaving Age Above 16 on Grade Attainment, 2000 – 2003 Current Population Surveys, 20- to 24-Year-Olds*



Note: An indicator variable for the school attainment indicated along the x-axis was regressed on whether an individual 20 to 24 years old in the 2000 to 2003 CPS faced a dropout age above 16 in their state of residence when they were 16, plus nine region fixed effects. The estimated coefficients for the effects of facing a higher dropout age are reported here for school attainment level. The thinner lines outline the 95-percent confidence interval. The bars in the bottom half of the figure indicate the fraction of sample in each education level (right scale).

estimate the effects only among those impacted by the changes to law; that is, I estimate whether teenagers compelled to stay in school longer benefit from facing a more restrictive leaving age and, if so, by how much. (The methodology for producing these estimates, as well as detailed results, are found in Appendix B.)

The sample I use here includes all 20- to 24-year-olds in the CPS who were 16 years old between 1970 and 1995. I estimate the effect of compulsory schooling on employment status for everyone in this sample. Because some individuals affected by the law changes may still be in school (at the postsecondary level), I measure the effect of compulsory schooling on weekly earnings only for those in the sample working at least 25 hours per week.

Depending on the specific set of control variables included in the statistical analysis, the results indicate that an additional year of compulsory schooling beyond age 16 has the following effects: it lowers the probability of being unemployed by between 2.5 and 5.6 percentage points (unemployment is defined as not working but looking for work); lowers the probability of not working (irrespective of whether one is looking for work or not) by between 2.7 and 13.3 percentage points; and boosts weekly earnings among those working more than 25

hours per week by between 9.9 and 25.8 percent (detailed results are in Table B2 in Appendix B).

Again, as in the analysis on the effects of school-leaving age laws on education attainment, I repeat the same calculations using the actual dropout age faced by individuals at age 16 as the variable of interest instead of the categorical variable.

The similarities between this second set of estimates and the previous one are striking. They suggest that the impact of a year of compulsory schooling above the age of 16 in the last 30 years is similar to the impact from raising the school-leaving age to 14, 15 or 16 in the earlier part of the 20th century.

Why Not Stay in School?

Finding large gains to individuals from compelling them to stay in school raises the question of why dropouts drop out in the first place. Why do young persons in Canada leave school early if staying on generates attractive gains, on average, to their careers? The possibility that students cannot afford to stay in high school seems unlikely. Many dropouts do not work. Among 16- and 17-year-olds recorded in the 2001 Census as not in school, only 55 percent are in the labour force, and 90 percent still live at home with parents.

Several alternative explanations for dropout behaviour exist. First, dropouts may simply abhor school. Poor classroom performance and condescending attitudes from other students and teachers may make students want to leave as soon as possible, even at the expense of forgoing large returns (Lee and Burkam 2003). Removing reasons for school distaste, in this case, could go a long way in reducing dropout rates. Second, dropouts may be myopic. Myopic students that temporarily downplay or ignore future consequences of their decisions — as considered by Laibson (1997) and O'Donoghue and Rabin (1999) — may prefer dropping out to staying on but later prefer staying on to dropping out. A third alternative is that cultural or peer pressures might dominate adolescent decision making and lead to dropout behaviour. Cultural norms that devalue schooling, a lack of emotional support, or low acceptance for higher education among peers may exacerbate students' distaste for school beyond the minimum (e.g. Akerlof and Kranton 2002; and Coleman 1961). A final consideration is that students may simply mis-predict, underestimating the real expected benefit from staying in school longer. Students' guesses about gains from schooling are often wildly off the mark from those estimated by social scientists (e.g. Dominitz and Manski 2000; and Usher 2005). Teenagers from more disadvantaged family backgrounds are more likely to predict lower gains from additional schooling than those from more affluent families — not just for high school, but higher education as well. Perhaps the main reason why students from low-income households more often dropout or fail to continue on to university is not poverty per se, or debt aversion, but a systematic tendency among this group to overestimate the costs and underestimate the benefits of education.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion about the implications of these results for explaining dropout behaviour, see Oreopoulos (2005).

Conclusion

This Commentary looks at recent experiences with raising the school-leaving age to 17 and 18 in order to assess the potential benefits for other provinces besides New Brunswick that might do the same. Do such measures serve to decrease high-school dropout rates and improve career outcomes among disadvantaged youths?

I find no change in the relative dropout rate of New Brunswick after it increased the school-leaving age to 18, compared with other Maritime Provinces. I do find small, but significant effects of raising the dropout age in the U.S. An increase in the school-leaving age above 16 increases the total number of years in school by 0.13 years, on average, and decreases high-school dropout rates by about 1.2 percent. I also find that raising the age limit increased postsecondary school attendance by 1.5 percent, even though postsecondary school is not compulsory. Perhaps this finding indicates that would-be dropouts reconsider postsecondary options after getting close to, or completing, a high-school degree.

Exceptions to the law, weak consequences for truancy, or lack of enforcement limit the effectiveness of raising the school-leaving age. But perhaps exceptions are desirable because some students clearly would not benefit from staying on. The results in this paper do not capture whether those students for whom exceptions were made would have gained from being forced to stay. But among students affected, I estimate that additional compulsory schooling significantly improves their early career outcomes by lowering the likelihood of being unemployed and increasing earnings, on average. While the estimates obtained are based on data with a degree of imprecision, which warrants some caution, they are entirely consistent with earlier studies that find significant gains to wealth, health, and other social-economic outcomes from raising the minimum age for leaving school.

If the provinces are serious about making would-be dropouts stay in school longer, they need to effectively enforce these laws while promoting their potential benefits to administrators, parents, and students. While flexibility is prudent to deal with special circumstances, the results here point to a need for more resolve in cases where students begin to disengage from high school. Ideally, compulsory schooling laws would exist in the backdrop, where students don't consider leaving school before the minimum possible age simply because virtually no one does. A temporary increase in enforcement of existing laws might lead to this shift in attitude towards leaving early.

Overall, the results presented here speak favourably to supporting an increase in the school-leaving age to 17 or 18. Raising this age may offer an effective and affordable means to increase education attainment among the least educated and improve their subsequent employment circumstances and earnings potential.

Appendix A: Data

The data for this paper come mostly from the National Bureau of Economic Research's extracts of the Current Population Survey (CPS) outgoing rotation files between 1979 and 2003. The CPS, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, collects monthly household data about employment and labour markets for about 30,000 nationally representative individuals aged 16. It is the source of the data used to calculate the unemployment rate in the United States. The extract contains variables related to employment, such as hours worked, earnings, industry, occupation, education, and unionization. The extracts also contain many background variables: age, sex, race, ethnicity, and geographic location.

Every household that enters the CPS is interviewed each month for four months, then ignored for eight months, then interviewed again for four more months. In a given month, there are about 120,000 individuals sampled, but only one-fourth of the sample exit the survey and are not interviewed the following month. Usual weekly hours/earning questions are asked only to households in their fourth and eighth interview. Data from these outgoing interviews are combined for every year between 1979 and 2003 to create the extract, for a total sample size over 8.1 million.¹¹ To examine recent compulsory school-law changes, the base dataset includes only 16- to 24-year olds, who were aged 16 between 1970 and 1995. This restriction cuts the sample down to about 1.2 million.

Some of the variable definitions change from survey to survey and had to be adjusted to make year-to-year comparisons consistent. The years of schooling variable is the highest grade completed plus the number of years of postsecondary school. This variable is recorded in every CPS survey from 1979 to 1992 (the *gradeat* variable), and is capped at 17. Following Acemoglu and Angrist (2001), I combine this variable with the education categorical variable from the 1992 survey onwards (variable name *grade92*) by assigning imputed years of schooling to each category for males and females using the imputation method in Park (1994). A high-school dropout is defined as an individual with less than 12 years of schooling. A high-school graduate is defined as an individual with 12 or more years of schooling. An individual in school is defined as an individual reporting in the CPS as being enrolled in high school or college in the previous week, excluding surveys taken in the months between June and August. This variable is only available from the CPS since 1984 and for individuals aged 24 or less.

I use the NBER extract's imputed weekly earnings (*earnwke*), which essentially is actual weekly earnings among those who report it, and reported hourly earnings, times hours worked per week, for individuals who report earnings in hours. Definitions of unemployment (not working but looking for work) and not working come directly from the imputed labour force participation measures of the CPS (*ftpt79*, *ftpt89*, *ftpt94*).

¹¹ Individuals in these files are interviewed twice, so the combined dataset contains two observations for almost all individuals one year apart. The analysis adjusts for heteroskedasticity from having the same individual in the dataset twice by first aggregating the entire dataset into cells by survey year, birth cohort, gender, and region, and uses Huber-White standard errors clustered at the cohort-region level.

The minimum school-leaving age data come from various years of the National Center for Education Statistics Education Digest. Individuals in the CPS were matched according to the minimum school-leaving age they would have faced at age 16 and assuming an individual's high-school state was the same as her current state of residence. The CPS does not record state of birth.

Much of the main analysis in the paper uses the data collapsed into cell means, aggregated by survey year, birth cohort, state of residence, gender, and race. All regressions and tabulations use either non-institutional population weights or earnings weights, depending on whether the dependent variable uses earnings.

Appendix B: Methodology

Effect of Compulsory Schooling Laws on Educational Attainment

The main regression model to estimate the effects of raising the school-leaving age above 16 is the following:

$$(1) \text{ EDUC}_{iscy} = \lambda (\text{DROPAGE}_{sc} > 16) + u_s + u_c + u_y + e_{iscy},$$

where EDUC_{iscy} is a measure of education attainment for individual i , living in state s , born in year c , surveyed in year y . The variable $\text{DROPAGE}_{sc} > 16$ is equal to one if the individual faced a school-leaving age above 16 when he, or she, was 16 years old in state s . The variable equals zero otherwise, and e_{iscy} is the error term. The regression includes fixed effects for state of residence, birth cohort, and survey year. These variables control for perennial differences in state education attainment that do not vary over time, as well as for national trends in education attainment that do vary over time. I also examine the results with linear birth cohort trends for each state.¹²

The variable of interest, λ , is the average effect of facing a school-leaving age above 16 on educational attainment. Table B1 shows estimates of λ under alternative specifications using the CPS sample of 20- to 24-year-olds who were 16 years old between 1970 and 1995. The first column replaces the state-fixed effects in equation (1) with nine region-fixed effects. The identification of the compulsory schooling effects in this case comes not only from changes in the school-leaving laws, but also from state-to-state variation in the leaving age, within a region. I estimate that, on average, raising the school-leaving age above 16 increases an individual's years of schooling by 0.12 years. Replacing region- with state-fixed effects in column 2 controls for average differences in attainment across states over the entire period. This specification (equation 1) does not significantly change the point estimate, now at 0.13 years. Finally, in column 3, I add state-specific linear cohort trends to examine the possibility the results are driven by state differences in overall education-attainment trends. This cautious specification makes estimation of the compulsory schooling law effect more difficult, since some of the trends may absorb some of the effects. Under this specification, however, we still identify a small effect — 0.16 more years of schooling — from higher school leaving laws.

The second and third rows show the same results, but with high-school completion and postsecondary school enrolment as outcome variables. The results also indicate that raising the school-leaving age above 16 decreases the dropout rate and increases college or university entrance. From the main specification in column 2, raising the school-leaving age above 16 decreases the fraction of 20- to 24-year-olds with less education than a high-school degree by 1.2 percentage points.

¹² The data are first aggregated into cell means at the state, cohort, survey year, gender, and race level, and weighted by cell sample size. The standard-errors reported cluster for state-specific heteroskedasticity using the Huber-White methodology.

Table B1: The Effects of the Minimum School-Leaving Age on School Attainment for Individuals Aged 20 to 24 Who Were Aged 16 Between 1970 and 1995 — Regression Estimates

	Faced Dropout Age > 16 at Age 16			Dropout Age Faced at Age 16		
Years of Schooling	0.1177 [0.0208]***	0.1301 [0.0236]***	0.1647 [0.0319]***	0.0681 [0.0094]***	0.0808 [0.0158]***	0.1042 [0.0199]***
Never Completed High School	-0.0164 [0.0033]***	-0.0119 [0.0037]***	-0.0212 [0.0050]***	-0.0155 [0.0014]***	-0.007 [0.0024]***	-0.0132 [0.0028]***
Some College	0.006 [0.0037]	0.0146 [0.0043]***	0.0214 [0.0059]***	-0.003 [0.0019]	0.0082 [0.0028]***	0.0138 [0.0037]***
Cell Size Observations	21555	21555	21555	21555	21555	21555
Region Fixed Effects	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cohort Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Survey Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort* State Linear Trend	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Notes: Data are from the NBER's extracts of the Merged Outgoing Rotation Files of the Current Population Survey. The first three columns show results from regressing school attainment on a dummy for whether an individual faced a dropout age greater than 16, plus control variables indicated in the bottom rows. Columns 4 to 6 show results from regressing school attainment on the minimum school-leaving age (16, 17, or 18), plus the control variables. Standard errors are in brackets. The *, ** and *** indicate that an estimate is statistically significant at the 10-, 5- and 1-percent level, respectively. See text for further details.

The second set of results uses the actual school-leaving age as the dependent variable (16, 17, or 18) instead of the dummy variable indicating a school-leaving age above 16 for the main specification. The results are similar.

Some of the compulsory schooling law changes used in the above analysis occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. We can examine the effects of facing a school-leaving age above 16 among the most recent cohorts if we use region-fixed effects instead of state-fixed effects, as we did in column 1 of Table B1. This requires a more restrictive assumption: that within a region (e.g. Pacific, New England), any relationship between the states' education-attainment differences and compulsory schooling-law differences are not driven by other institutional differences related to both. The finding in Table B1 that the estimated effect is very similar, whether we include region- or state-fixed effects, suggests this assumption is reasonable.

Figure 3 (in the main text) shows the estimates of λ for school enrolment status, but using region-fixed effects in equation (1) in place of state-fixed effects. The sample includes only individuals in the 2000 to 2003 CPS. Each dot in the figure shows the estimated increase in the likelihood of being in school (full-time or part-time) for the corresponding age group. The thinner lines trace out the 95-percent confidence interval around this estimate. The bars at the bottom of the figure show the average school enrolment in each age group for comparison.

Figure 4 (in the main text) shows the estimated effects from raising the school-leaving age above 16 on specific levels of educational attainment. The sample

includes only 20- to 24-year-olds in the CPS between 2000 and 2003. The x-axis values correspond roughly to an individual's cumulative years of education. The variable, 'highest education level obtained' was recoded as 8 for eighth grade, 9 for ninth grade, etc. Some college was recoded as 13, a professional degree was recoded as 14, a university degree was recoded as 16, and a graduate degree as 17.

Effect of Compulsory Schooling Laws on Unemployment Rates

To estimate the impact of compulsory schooling for those influenced by these laws (those that would have dropped out sooner), consider the same regression model in equation (1), but using unemployment status as the dependent variable:

$$(2) \text{UNEMP}_{iscy} = \lambda (\text{DROPAGE}_{sc} > 16) + u_s + u_c + u_y + e_{iscy},$$

where UNEMP_{iscy} is equal to one if individual i (now older), living in state s , born in year c , surveyed in year y is unemployed, zero otherwise. Equation (2) is known as the reduced-form equation. The coefficient λ captures the average effect of raising the school-leaving age above 16 on the unemployment rate for everyone in the sample. Of course, not everyone is affected by the change in law. What we want to estimate instead is the impact from an increase in the dropout age for those that end up taking one more year of school. For example, suppose the increase in the dropout age makes 50 percent of the population take one more year of school ($\gamma = 0.50$). We can estimate the impact of raising the school-leaving age on those 50 percent by dividing λ by 0.50. If an increase in the dropout age increases total number of school years by 0.50 and an increase in the dropout age decreases average unemployment by 0.02, then we can deduce the effect from taking one more year of compulsory schooling decreases average unemployment by 0.04 ($0.02 / 0.50$), or λ / γ .

Thus, to estimate the effect of one more year of compulsory schooling (from raising the school-leaving age above 16), we simply rescale our estimate in (2) by the estimated increase in school years in (1). Another way of looking at this is to suppose raising the school-leaving age caused everyone to take one more year of school. Then our estimate in (2) would give us exactly the effect of one more year of school on the likelihood of being unemployed ($\lambda/1$).

For this approach to work, changes in the school-leaving age must be unrelated to changes in state demographic or institutional characteristics that also affect school attainment. Also, if raising the school-leaving age does not affect an individual's education attainment (e.g. whether facing a dropout age of 16 or 18, she intends to graduate), raising it also does not affect her unemployment rate. Another way to describe this instrumental variables method is in two stages. In the first stage, we estimate education attainment differences caused only by changes in the school-leaving age (the first stage is equation (1)). In the second stage, we estimate:

$$(3) \text{UNEMP}_{iscy} = \beta \text{EDUC_HAT}_{iscy} + v_s + v_c + v_y + e_{iscy},$$

Table B2: The Effects of Compulsory Schooling on Unemployment and Earnings for Individuals Aged 20 to 24 Who Were Aged 16 Between 1970 and 1995 – Second-Stage IV-Regression Estimates

	Faced Dropout Age > 16 at Age 16			Dropout Age Faced at Age 16		
Unemployed	-0.025 [0.0139]*	-0.0378 [0.0160]**	-0.0561 [0.0163]***	-0.0278 [0.0104]***	-0.0253 [0.0138]*	-0.0504 [0.0147]***
Not Working	-0.1326 [0.0318]***	-0.0435 [0.0232]*	-0.0268 [0.0185]	-0.1356 [0.0256]***	-0.0236 [0.0222]	-0.0227 [0.0174]
Log Weekly Earnings for those working > 25 hrs/week	0.099 [0.0533]*	0.1328 [0.0757]*	0.2582 [0.0385]***	-0.0473 [0.0385]	0.0764 [0.0672]	0.2151 [0.0637]***
Cell Size Observations	21555	21555	21555	21555	21555	21555
Region Fixed Effects	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cohort Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Survey Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort* State Linear Trend	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Notes: Data are from the NBER's extracts of the Merged Outgoing Rotation Files of the Current Population Survey. Standard errors are in brackets. The *, ** and *** indicate that an estimate is statistically significant at the 10-, 5- and 1-percent level respectively. See text for further details.

where $EDUC_HAT_{iscy}$ is an individual's predicted education based on the first stage. The coefficient β is the average effect from one year of education, caused from a change in the compulsory school-leaving age. It is equivalent to λ / γ .

Table B2 shows estimates of the effects of a year of compulsory schooling on early career outcomes. The first three columns look at the effects of compulsory schooling when the school-leaving age is raised above 16. The last three columns use the actual dropout age faced as the independent variable of interest. The sample includes all 20- to 24-year olds in the CPS that were 16 years old between 1970 and 1995. I estimate the effect of compulsory schooling on unemployment and employment status for everyone in this sample. Because some individuals affected by the law changes may still be in school (at the postsecondary level), I measure the effect of compulsory schooling on weekly earnings only for those in the sample working at least 25 hours per week.

Column 1 shows the results using region-fixed effects instead of state-fixed effects. This specification lets us estimate the effects of compulsory schooling using cross-section variation in state laws, but requires the assumption that this within-region variation is not related to other factors that could explain education or labour market outcome differences. The table indicates that an additional year of compulsory schooling, caused from increasing the school-leaving age above 16, lowers the likelihood of unemployment by 2.5 percentage points (unemployment is defined as not working but looking for work). The confidence interval around this estimate is wide, but the estimate is statistically significant at the 10-percent level. The effect on the likelihood of working at all for this age group is quite

large, but imprecisely estimated. Perhaps most interestingly, the return to compulsory schooling on weekly earnings is 9.9 percent, an estimate not much different from earlier studies that use older birth cohorts. An additional year of compulsory schooling is associated with about 10-percent higher weekly earnings among those working more than 25 hours per week.

Column 2 shows the main results that include state-fixed effects, so that identification of the effects of compulsory schooling comes only from changes in the minimum school-leaving age. I estimate that a year of compulsory schooling from these law changes decreases the probability of being unemployed by 3.8 percentage points and decreases the probability of not working by 4.4 percentage points. The extra year also increases weekly earnings by an average of 13.3 percent.

Column 3 shows results from estimating the model that allows for underlying linear birth-cohort trends for each state. This specification makes the assumption required for causal interpretation of the results more likely, but at the expense of possibly absorbing variation driven by the school-leaving ages and making the estimates less precise. Nevertheless, with this model, the estimates for the effects of compulsory schooling on unemployment and not working are similar to those in column 2, and the effects on weekly earnings are greater.

Columns 4 to 6 show the same estimates but using the actual dropout age faced by individuals at age 16 as the instrumental variable in equation (1).

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Attachment C
ISER Publication –Kids Count Alaska Education Summary

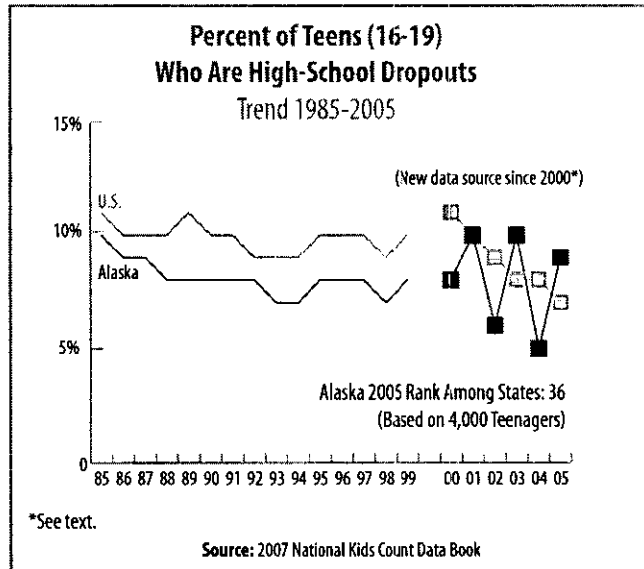
Kids Count Alaska is part of a nationwide program, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to collect and publicize information about children's health, safety, and economic status. We pull together information from many sources and present it all in one place. We hope this book gives Alaskans a broad picture of how the state's children are doing and provides parents, policymakers, and others interested in the welfare of children with information they need to improve life for children and families.

More than 206,000 children ages 18 or younger live in Alaska—just under a third of Alaska's 2006 population of about 671,000.

That's an increase of about 15% in the number of children since 1990. During the past 15 years the age structure of Alaska children has also changed, with younger children making up a declining share and teenagers a growing share. In 1990, children ages 4 or younger made up 31% of all children; by 2006 that share had dropped to 26%. Among those 15 to 18, the 1990 share was about 16%, but it had risen to 22% by 2006.

Boys outnumber girls in Alaska by close to 6%. There are more boys than girls in every age group. Even among infants, boys outnumbered girls by 8% in 2006.

Alaska's children have also grown more racially diverse in the past two decades, as illustrated by the figure showing Alaska's school children by race. In 1988, 68% of school children were White and 32% were from minorities—primarily Alaska Natives.



DEFINITIONS

Methods for measuring both the share of teenagers who drop out of school and the share who graduate have proliferated recently. Here we report data from two sources that define "dropouts" differently and two sources that measure high-school graduation rates differently. We use those various sources to help us better understand why so many teenagers don't finish high school—and to help identify possible ways of keeping more in school.

The American Community Survey, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, tabulates dropouts as the percentage of teenagers 16 through 19 who are not enrolled in high school and have not graduated. Those who have earned general equivalency diplomas (GEDs) are considered graduates and are not counted as dropouts. This is the source the national Kids Count Data Book uses, and the data are shown in the trend graph at the top of this page. This is also known as a "status" drop-out rate and is the measure used by the U.S. Department of Education.¹ It is a consistent measure, comparable across states and over time.

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) uses a different definition of dropout: "A student who

was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year whose enrollment terminated. Dropouts do not include graduates, transfers to public or private schools, or transfers to state- or district-approved education programs. Students who are absent due to suspension, illness, or medical conditions are not reported as dropouts." DEED's calculations include students who are enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in October of a given school year but who drop out before the end of the year.

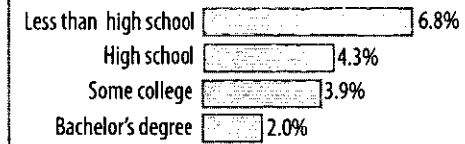
Looking at graduation rates, we use measurements from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and DEED. NCES uses the "averaged freshman graduation rate," based on the percentage of freshmen in a given class who graduate four years later. DEED calculates the share of students graduating in a given class by incorporating the number of dropouts each year from grades 9 through 12.²

SIGNIFICANCE

Completing high school is a necessary step toward becoming a self-sufficient adult—and those who don't graduate face serious financial and social consequences. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the median yearly income of high-school dropouts in the U.S. was about \$20,200 in 2006. Those with even slightly more education (a high-school diploma or a GED) earned nearly one-third more, or about \$30,200 a year.³ Those who go on to college can potentially earn several times what dropouts earn.

Besides a staggering loss in wages, Americans who fail to finish high school are also likely to experience poorer health, higher unemployment, greater need for public assistance, and an increased likelihood of going to jail.⁴ The bar chart demonstrates that for every additional level of schooling, Americans have a lower unemployment rate. In 2006, the unemployment rate for Americans without high-school diplomas was 6.8%.⁵ Those who finished high school but didn't go to college had an unemployment rate of 4.3% in 2006, while about 3.9% of those with some college were unemployed. Only 2% of those with bachelor's degrees were out of work.

U.S. Unemployment Rate by Education Level, 2006



Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

DROP-OUT MEASURES

As the trend graph to the left shows, the percentage of Alaska teens (16-19) who dropped out of high school varied considerably between 2000 and 2005. In 2005, Alaska's drop-out rate of 9% was higher than the national rate of 7% and ranked Alaska 36th among the states. We expect the fluctuations in this drop-out rate to become less dramatic as the American Community Survey increases its sample size in rural Alaska.

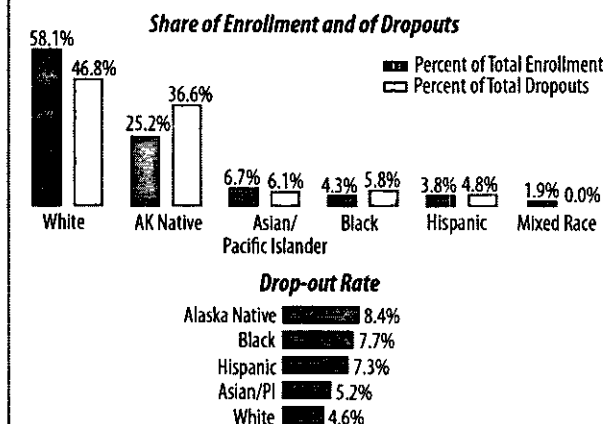
Alaska's DEED reports drop-out rates for a larger age range of teens than the American Community Survey does. This indicator is based on the number of students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in the public schools. A total of 63,132 students were enrolled in those grades during the 2005-2006 school year in Alaska, and 3,642—or 5.8%—dropped out.

The bar chart on the next page shows the share of enrollment and the share of dropouts by race in grades 7 through 12 in the 2005-2006 school year, as well as the drop-out rates by race. Alaska Natives made up about 25% of students but nearly 37% of those who dropped out. Black and Hispanic students made up much smaller shares of enrollment (about 4% to 5%) but about 5% to 6% of dropouts. On the other hand, White, Asian and Pacific Island, and mixed-race students made up smaller shares of dropouts than of enrollment.

The map showing drop-out rates by region of Alaska in the 2005-2006 year is also based on information from DEED. Rates were lowest in the Gulf Coast and Southeast regions and highest in the Northern, Southwest, and Interior regions.

Teens Who Drop Out (continued)

Share of Enrollment and of Dropouts (Grades 7-12) by Race (2005-2006)



Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

Drop-out rates in the Southwest, Gulf Coast, and Anchorage regions changed little from those in the previous school year. The Northern region saw an increase from 6.5% to 7.5%. Rates decreased in the Interior (from 7.8% to 6.7%), the Mat-Su Borough (from 6.1% to 5.2%), and Southeast (from 5.4% to 4.1%). Alaska's overall drop-out rate declined slightly between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, from 6% to 5.8%.

HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATION MEASURES

The only measure of high-school graduation rates that is comparable across states is from the National Center for Education Statistics, which uses the "averaged freshman graduation rate" described earlier. This is the measure the U.S. Department of Education uses. The line graph shows that in the 2003-2004 school year, the averaged graduation rate among public high-school students was 74% nationwide and just over 67% in Alaska. These are the most recent figures available from NCES.

Sixteen states had graduation rates above 80% in the 2003-2004 year, and Nebraska had the highest rate, at 87.6%. Nine states had rates lower than Alaska's. Over the period from the 2000-2001 to 2003-2004, the graduation rate increased in 44 states and decreased in 5—including Alaska.⁶

More recent graduation figures are available from Alaska's Department of Education and Early Development—but remember that DEED calculates graduation rates differently. DEED's figures show that 7,361 (or 60%) of Alaska's high-school seniors graduated with a regular high-school diploma during 2005-2006. That figure incorporates the number of dropouts each year from grades 9 through 12.

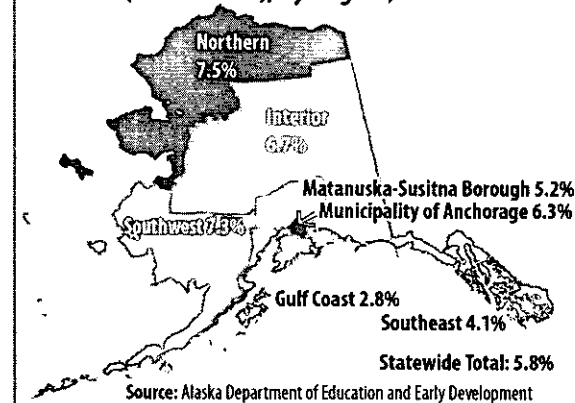
The first figure on the facing page shows 2006 graduation rates among Alaska students by race, sex, and other characteristics, while the figure below it compares shares of enrollment and shares of graduates by race.

There is a large gap in graduation rates among students of different races, with about 68% of White students graduating in 2006, compared with 45% among Alaska Native students. But the rates among Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students all increased 2 percentage points over rates in the previous school year. And while the graduation rate among Asian and Pacific Islander students remained the same, the rate among Whites declined by 3 percentage points, from 71% to 68%.

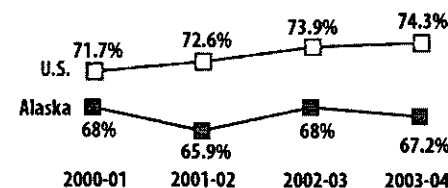
Alaska girls are more likely to graduate from high school than boys—63% compared with 57% in 2006. Students who have disabilities, speak limited English, or are from low-income families graduate at rates substantially below the statewide average of 60%. Fewer than half the students from low-income families graduated in 2006, and only around 40% of those with disabilities or limited ability to speak English got their diplomas.

The second bar chart on the facing page shows the racial and ethnic differences between enrollment and graduation among 12th-graders in 2005-2006. Ideally, the proportion of enrollment would be the same as the proportion of graduates—in other words, all the students who enrolled would actually graduate.

Percentage of Dropouts (Grades 7-12), by Region, 2005-2006



High-School Graduation Rates,* Alaska and U.S. Average

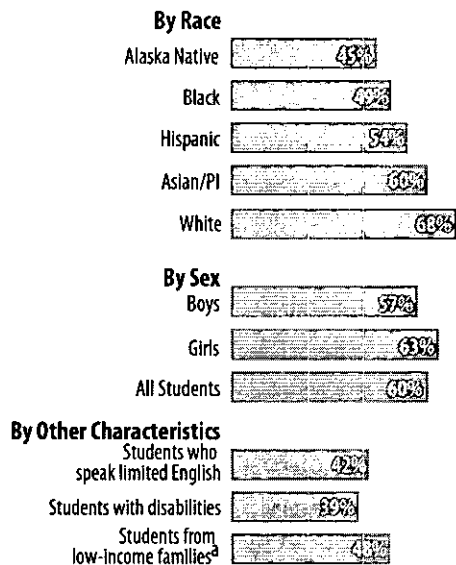


*The number of graduates divided by the estimated count of freshmen four years earlier.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

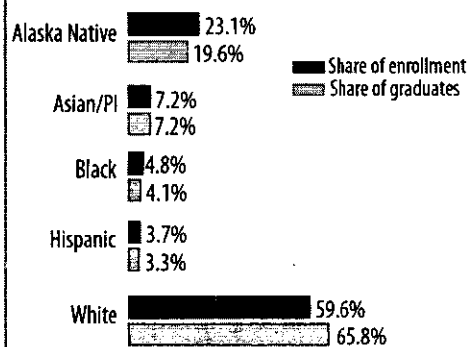
But we can see that White students made up a considerably larger share of graduates than of enrollment—about 60% of enrollment but 66% of graduates. Among Asian and Pacific Island students, the shares of enrollment and graduates were in fact the same—7.2%. Among other groups, the share of graduates fell short of their share of enrollment.

Graduation Rates Among Alaska Students, 2006



^a "Low-income" as measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch
Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

Share of Enrollment and of Graduates (Grade 12), by Race, 2005-2006



Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

DEFINITION

This indicator monitors teenagers 16 through 19 who are not in school (either part- or full-time), not in the military, and not working (either part- or full-time). Both high-school dropouts and those with general equivalency diplomas who are not working or on active military duty are included. The data since 2000 are from the American Community Survey.

SIGNIFICANCE

This is an important time in adolescent life: the start of the transition to adult life. It can be a difficult process even for those adolescents who have lots of support and resources available to them. But for teenagers who don't have the skills and the support they need, the prospect can be daunting.

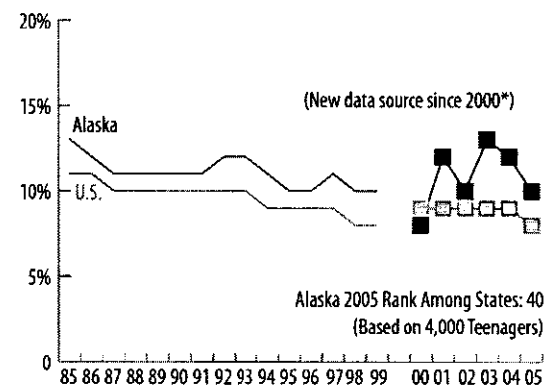
Teenagers who are not attending school nor working are sometimes referred to as "idle" or "disconnected," because they aren't spending their days in activities that will help them become productive adults—they are disconnected from adults and community networks. They are also more likely to be from families living in poverty. A recent study found that 31% of all children in Alaska lived in low-income families, while 44% of disconnected teens came from such families. About 1 in 5 teens from families in the lowest income bracket are not enrolled in school or working, compared with just 1 in 33 teens from families in the highest income bracket.⁷

A Hewlett Foundation report identified those least likely to make a successful transition to adulthood: (1) high-school dropouts; (2) those who have been in the juvenile justice system or foster care; and (3) teenage parents, especially mothers.⁸ These teenagers don't have—and face major challenges trying to get—the educational and vocational skills and social support they need.

DATA

In 2005 the share of Alaska's teens 16 to 19 who were not employed or attending school declined to 10%, down from 13% in 2003. Still, Alaska has more idle teens than the 2005 national average of 8% and ranks 40th among the states on this indicator.

Teens (16-19) Not in School and Not Working Trend 1985-2005



*See text.

Source: 2007 National Kids Count Data Book

We don't have reliable breakdowns of disconnected teens by sex and race for Alaska, but the table below shows these breakdowns for the nation as a whole in 1996 and 2005. The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics found that the share of disconnected teens in all groups declined during this ten-year period. The largest decline (27%) was among teenage girls; this may reflect the increasing rate of girls graduating from high school and college. Among Hispanic teenagers the disconnected share dropped 25% and among Black teenagers 20%. Still, both Hispanic and Black teenagers remain more than twice as likely as White teens to be disconnected.

Percentages of U.S. Teenagers (16-19) Not in School and Not Working, 1996 and 2005

	1996	2005	Change
All 16-19	9%	8%	-11%
Teenage Girls	11%	8%	-27%
Teenage Boys	8%	7%	-13%
White Teenagers	7%	6%	-14%
Black Teenagers	15%	12%	-20%
Hispanic Teenagers	16%	12%	-25%

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

Attachment D
NEA's 12 Point Plan for Reducing the School Dropout Rate



NEA's 12-Point Action Plan for Reducing the School Dropout Rate

To address the nation's school dropout crisis, NEA has developed a 12-point action plan that includes the most promising actions supported by experience and data.

1. Mandate high school graduation or equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 21. Just as we established compulsory attendance to the age of 16 or 17 in the beginning of the 20th century, it is appropriate and critical to eradicate the idea of "dropping out" before achieving a diploma. To compete in the 21st century, all of our citizens, at minimum, need a high school education.
2. Establish high school graduation centers for students 19-21 years old to provide specialized instruction and counseling to all students in this older age group who would be more effectively addressed in classes apart from younger students.
3. Make sure students receive individual attention in safe schools, in smaller learning communities within large schools, in small classes (18 or fewer students), and in programs during the summer, weekends, and before and after school that provide tutoring and build on what students learn during the school day.
4. Expand students' graduation options through creative partnerships with community colleges in career and technical fields and with alternative schools so that students have another way to earn a high school diploma. For students who are incarcerated, tie their release to high school graduation at the end of their sentences.
5. Increase career education and workforce readiness programs in schools so that students see the connection between school and careers after graduation. To ensure that students have the skills they need for these careers, integrate 21st century skills into the curriculum and provide all students with access to 21st century technology.
6. Act early so students do not drop out with high-quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten; strong elementary programs that ensure students are doing grade-level work when they enter middle school; and middle school programs that address causes of dropping out that appear in these grades and ensure that students have access to algebra, science, and other courses that serve as the foundation for success in high school and beyond.
7. Involve families in students' learning at school and at home in new and creative ways so that all families-single-parent families, families in poverty, and families in minority communities-can support their children's academic achievement, help their children engage in healthy behaviors, and stay actively involved in their children's education from preschool through high school

graduation.

8. Monitor students' academic progress in school through a variety of measures during the school year that provide a full picture of students' learning and help teachers make sure students do not fall behind academically.
9. Monitor, accurately report, and work to reduce dropout rates by gathering accurate data for key student groups (such as racial, ethnic, and economic), establishing benchmarks in each state for eliminating dropouts, and adopting the standardized reporting method developed by the National Governors Association.
10. Involve the entire community in dropout prevention through family-friendly policies that provide release time for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences; work schedules for high school students that enable them to attend classes on time and be ready to learn; "adopt a school" programs that encourage volunteerism and community-led projects in school; and community-based, real-world learning experiences for students.
11. Make sure educators have the training and resources they need to prevent students from dropping out including professional development focused on the needs of diverse students and students who are at risk of dropping out; up-to-date textbooks and materials, computers, and information technology; and safe modern schools.
12. Make high school graduation a federal priority by calling on Congress and the president to invest \$10 billion over the next 10 years to support dropout prevention programs and states who make high school graduation compulsory.

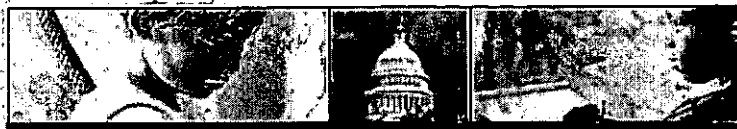
For the Spanish version of this plan, see [El Plan de la NEA para Reducir el Abandono de los Estudios](#).

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Attachment E
“Understanding the Issue of the High school Dropout Age”


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[Meetings and Activities](#)
[Publications](#)
[State-Specific Information](#)
[Issue Scanning](#)
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Understanding and Addressing the Issue of the High School Dropout Age

Benefits to Increasing the Compulsory Attendance Age

States have realized the increased importance of completing a high school education for entry into postsecondary education and the labor market, but the high school completion rate has only shown minimal gains over the last three decades and has shown no increase throughout the 1990s (Kaufmann et al., 2000). Changing the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 is one strategy states are employing in an attempt to reduce dropout rates. Within the last four years, numerous states have considered legislation to increase the compulsory attendance age. New Mexico, Connecticut, Louisiana, New York, Texas, and Vermont have recently passed such legislation. The following table ranks high school dropouts in 2000 from Midwestern states that have compulsory attendance age regulated at 18.

State	National Rank	Dropout Rate Percentage
Minnesota	2	5%
Wisconsin	7	7%
Ohio	13	8%

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003)

The Pasadena Independent School District in Texas has seen positive results in decreasing its dropout rate by raising the compulsory attendance age. The state allowed school districts to raise the dropout age from 16 to 17, and this provided districts with "some teeth" to their anti-dropout plans (Schneider, 2000). In addition to raising the age limit, districts—through attendance clerks and counselors—kept excellent tracking records of students who left school and encouraged them to enroll into a GED program or re-enroll back into the school district. For example, in 1998–99, a report from the Texas Education Agency commended Pasadena's intermediate school district (Grades 7–12) for achieving a record low annual dropout rate of 1.6 percent.

The next table presents the compulsory attendance ages for other states in the Midwest, along with the year the attendance laws were established.

State	Enactment	Age Limits
Illinois	1883	6 - 16*

Indiana	1897	7 - 16
Iowa	1902	6 - 16
Michigan	1871	6 - 16**
Minnesota	1885	7 - 18
Ohio	1877	6 - 18
Wisconsin	1879	6 - 18
(Infoplease.com, 2003)		
*Illinois: 2003 Legislature introduced House Bill 2584, which would increase the legal dropout age to 18.		
**Michigan: 2003 Legislature introduced House Bill 4128, which would increase the legal dropout age to 18.		

Increasing the attendance age is an issue that has garnered support across the country, and in 2002 six states made the push to amend their laws. In states with successful legal passage of new compulsory attendance laws, such as Louisiana and Connecticut, similar language and processes were implemented. In all cases, parents or other persons having control of a child under the age of 18 can withdraw the child from school but must do so with legal written consent. The consent makes clear the decision of the parent to remove the child from school and that the school has offered to provide additional resources to keep the student in school.

Funding for an increase in the compulsory attendance age is difficult to assess and varies widely across states. States such as Louisiana and Montana have outlined fiscal policy analysis that details each state's estimated expenditures for increasing the compulsory attendance age. An explanation of fiscal spending, as well as additional examples of what other states have done to implement laws in support of increasing the compulsory attendance age, can be found in [Appendix A](#).

[Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next](#)

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Attachment F
“Alaska’s Dropout Rate Double US Average”
Anchorage Daily News 11-16-08

Alaska's dropout rate double US average

'THIS IS A SOCIAL ISSUE': Educators brainstorm how to keep our kids in school.

By MEGAN HOLLAND

mholland@adn.com

(11/16/08 00:11:59)

Failure can start early.

Some educators say they can see which kids aren't going to make it on the first day of kindergarten. Some children show up knowing how to read, while others come not even knowing what the colors are.

Battling one of the worst dropout rates in the country, Alaska educators gathered for a third day on Saturday to brainstorm how to stop the epidemic of kids quitting school before earning their diplomas. They called dropping out a result of an accumulative failure, which can start before kids even enter school.

"This is a social issue, one we all own," said Association of Alaska School Boards executive director Carl Rose. "We all need to take some responsibility in this."

Among the grim statistics:

- Alaska's dropout rate, at 8 percent, was double the national average in the 2005-2006 school year, according to the latest figures available from the U.S. Department of Education.
- 38 percent of today's ninth-graders will have no high school diploma 10 years from now, according to the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.
- Alaska ranks 50th, or last, in the number of ninth-graders who will likely have a bachelor's degree in 10 years, according to the commission.

Republican U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski convened the Saturday hearing. She asked state and national education experts what the federal government could do to help fix the problem, even though the federal government has little input into public education, an arena largely left to the states, and, in Alaska, mostly to local school districts. (The big exception to this is the controversial federal No Child Left Behind law, which went into effect in 2002 and was meant to raise educational attainment for all students through testing.)

Among the suggestions for federal help was to fund more pre-kindergarten programs; to support more vocational and technical classes in high schools; and to continue to provide special grants for the education of Alaska Natives, who have among the highest dropout rates.

"We are failing our kids and we should be ashamed of ourselves," said Tina Michels-Hansen, of Cook Inlet Tribal Council, which offers tutoring and other schooling help for Anchorage School District Alaska Natives.

"Schools have become factories that communities passively accept," she said.

Part of the issue, according to University of Alaska president Mark Hamilton, is cultural. Parents and families are not valuing education. They need to realize even skilled labor fields, like plumbing or construction, require training that depends on knowledge, such as math, learned in high school.

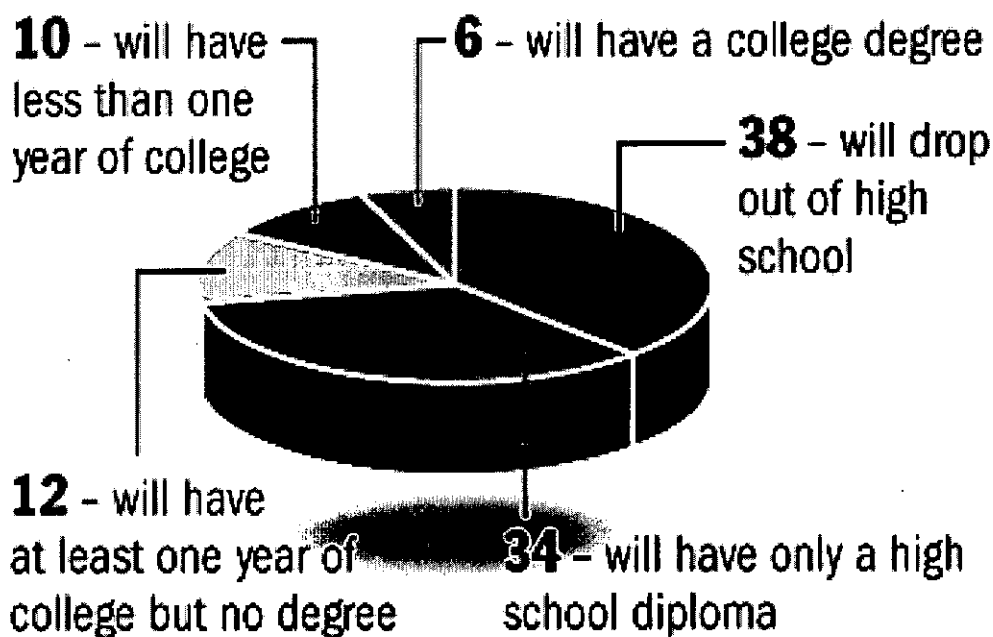
"We have to stop saying, 'College isn't for everyone,' " he said. "Post-secondary education is for nearly everyone unless your goal is to be the head fry guy at McDonald's."

Find Megan Holland online at adn.com/contact/mholland or call 257-4343.

Copyright © Tue Feb 17 14:14:22 UTC-0900 20091900 The Anchorage Daily News (www.adn.com)

Not college bound

For every 100 ninth graders in Alaska today, 72 percent will not go to college within 10 years - and slightly more than half of those will have dropped out of high school.



Source: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

RON ENGSTROM / Anchorage Daily News

Attachment G
“Chugach Program Boast 98 Percent Graduation”
Anchorage Daily News 3-01-09

Chugach program boasts 98 percent graduation

By JULIA O'MALLEY
jomalley@adn.com
(03/01/09 19:41:01)

Around a South Anchorage dinner table on a recent night, a group of students takes a moment before eating.

Girls in ponytails and boys in baseball caps who come from points all over the Alaska map -- Crooked Creek, Pilot Point, Teller and Chignik Lagoon -- go around the table, saying what they're thankful for.

One by one, each says, "Opportunities."

The students were in Anchorage as part of the Chugach School District's Voyage to Excellence program, which brings rural, primarily Alaska Native students from across the state, to Anchorage for weeks at a time to learn firsthand about big-city life, plan their futures and prepare for the high school graduation qualifying exam.

The program, in its 10th year, has a striking success rate: 98 percent of its students graduate from high school.

Compare that to 45 percent, the 2006 statewide graduation rate for Alaska Native students -- the lowest of any minority here, according to the state Department of Education. Or Alaska's overall graduation rate, which is 60 percent.

The secret: teaching social skills and tying what happens in the classroom to the work world.

THE REAL WORLD

VTE's recipe is a little bit like the old MTV reality show "Real World": take a group of kids from all over the state, put them together in a fashionable house, give them a set of rules and watch what happens.

On a recent night, seven students filled the five-bedroom house in a subdivision off Elmore, lounging on couches, clicking away at laptops before dinner. The house is fashionably decorated with contemporary paint colors, overstuffed furniture, and a big kitchen with marble counter-tops and commercial appliances. They sleep in bedrooms, dormitory-style. The girls have the upstairs, the boys the basement.

The program is run by the Prince William Sound-based Chugach district, but it accepts students from the Lake and Peninsula, Kuspuk and Bering Strait districts, as well as Nome's Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center.

About 150 participate each year. There's a waiting list and other rural districts would like to take part, but right now the program -- which is funded with a combination of state money and grants -

- can't handle any more.

Students begin as early as junior high school. The program works in phases -- most last a week or two though some can be longer.

The kids learn things they don't learn in the village, like how to talk to strangers, how to find an address they've never been to, how to dress for a job interview. They look at different career possibilities and make a plan for after high school. There's also lots of prep for the high school graduation qualifying exam.

In the village, students are used to knowing everyone, to having a network of support. Coming to Anchorage for training or school can be very frightening.

"You don't have the bus system, even the amount of people is intimidating," said Billijo Mills, one of the directors.

Working from their family-like home base, students learn the basics of setting up a life: renting an apartment, opening a bank account, looking for a job, being interviewed by a prospective employer.

"We set them up with a network of resources," Mills said.

Studies show that the more practical daily-living skills students have, the better their performance in school, she said.

"That's why we start in junior high. We start working on handshakes, eye contact, communication," she said.

Sometimes in tiny villages where there are only a handful of students in each class, isolation can make it hard for children to imagine a career, said Carol Wilson, the program's other director. VTE is focused on future employment, taking students to visit workplaces so they can see what happens on the job and what employers expect.

The program is an alternative to a boarding school. It doesn't take students out of their community for long. The idea is to broaden their horizons and give them skills they can use both in the city and back at home.

Once students pick a career field, teachers construct lessons to demonstrate how writing or math gets used in the commercial kitchen, or construction job site, or office.

"What makes it so successful is we are able to take what kids learn in a classroom and apply it to real life," Wilson said.

FUTURE

The Carrs at Abbott Loop is mostly quiet at 8 p.m. as Gwen Vlasoff, 17, studies her grocery list. Half a dozen others buzz about, carrying items from the aisles. The students are in "Phase 3." In that phase, they function mostly independently, setting up job shadows with people in fields they are interested in and visiting vocational programs and UAA.

One of their tasks is to develop a menu for the week, shop using a budget, and then cook for each other. The selections aren't complicated. There's frozen pizza, chicken nuggets, fried rice and lasagna.

But in the vast grocery store, the questions stack up. One pizza seems cheaper than the other, but it's also slightly smaller. Which is the best deal? How many "servings" does a normal person eat? Less than \$3 a pound seems good for oranges compared to village prices but eight pounds of them still aren't cheap. Should they buy them?

Vlasoff, from the Prince William Sound village of Tatitlek, is one of the most focused and outgoing in the group. Kids commonly drop out of her high school, she said. Her sister just left school because she's having a baby. VTE keeps her thinking about graduating, she said. After several years in the program, she's decided she wants to be an elementary school teacher. She plans to go back to her village to teach.

VTE helps students get used to the city's sprawling stores and traffic and lines of strangers, said Jamie Ablowaluk, 16, who lives in the Bering Sea village of Teller. She spent a little time in Anchorage a few years ago, attending East High. The school is four times the size of her whole village, she said and she never settled in. It was too "rushy."

The program introduced her to vocational education classes. She discovered welding and is building up hours for a certification. Some kids in her village end up living with their parents practically forever, not ever building a life of their own. She doesn't want to be that way, she said.

"I'm thinking about the North Slope."

PASSING THE EXAM

Lewis Phillips, 18, is from Crooked Creek, a village of 140 or so on the Kuskokwim River. He plans to be a heavy-equipment operator, but first he's got to pass the high school graduation qualifying exam to get his diploma. He already took it, and he's studying to take it again.

"I got to pass the writing," he said.

The exam can be a major hurdle for some students, Mills said. Students who complete all four years of high school but fail the exam get a certificate, but not a diploma. Last year, only one of 40 seniors in the state's five largest districts got a certificate instead of a diploma, while in the smaller districts one in 16 students did, according to state numbers.

"(It's) a high-stakes exam; there's always going to be issues with it," Mills said.

After they're done with high school, the students can come for test prep if they don't have a diploma, either staying for a session in the house or coming for a month for a test-prep summer camp, she said.

Sometimes students have to take the test several times, she said. But, they always take it again.

"We had one student take it, the math, six times. He stayed until he was 21," she said. But, in the end he finally passed. Now he has a job in the mining industry.

"He sent us a picture of him in his cap and gown," she said. "It was huge."

Because students in the program have plans for the future, they're motivated both to finish high school and to pass the test.

"We hear from teachers and parents," she said. "We get notes: 'What did you do to our son? He's getting up and going to school.' "

Attachment H
Legal Services Memo-Why Individual School Districts in Alaska Cannot
Raise Compulsory Age

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

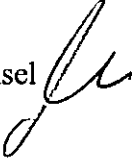
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

February 26, 2009

SUBJECT: Compulsory School Age (HB 33)

TO: Representative Cathy Muñoz
Attn: Terry Harvey

FROM: Jean M. Mischel
Legislative Counsel 

You have asked whether a school district is prohibited from establishing a compulsory school age that is different from the compulsory age set by the legislature in AS 14.30.010. The answer is yes. While a school district may adjust the school age for purposes of enrolling a student as many districts have done for kindergartners, a school district may not compel a student's attendance if the student is beyond the compulsory age of seven to 16 years of age.

AS 14.30.010 provides

(a) Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term. Every parent, guardian or other person having the responsibility for or control of a child between seven and 16 years of age shall maintain the child in attendance at a public school in the district in which the child resides during the entire school term, except as provided in (b) of this section.

(b) This section does not apply if a child

(1) is provided an academic education comparable to that offered by the public schools in the area, either by

(A) attendance at a private school in which the teachers are certificated according to AS 14.20.020;

(B) tutoring by personnel certificated according to AS 14.20.020;

or

(C) attendance at an educational program operated in compliance with AS 14.45.100 - 14.45.200 by a religious or other private school;

(2) attends a school operated by the federal government;

(3) has a physical or mental condition that a competent medical authority determines will make attendance impractical;

(4) is in the custody of a court or law enforcement authorities;

(5) is temporarily ill or injured;

(6) has been suspended or expelled under AS 14.03.160 or suspended or denied admittance under AS 14.30.045;

(7) resides more than two miles from either a public school or a route on which transportation is provided by the school authorities, except that this paragraph does not apply if the child resides within two miles of a federal or private school that the child is eligible and able to attend;

(8) is excused by action of the school board of the district at a regular meeting or by the district superintendent subject to approval by the school board of the district at the next regular meeting;

(9) has completed the 12th grade;

(10) is enrolled in

(A) a state boarding school established under AS 14.16; or

(B) a full-time program of correspondence study approved by the department; in those school districts providing an approved correspondence study program, a student may be enrolled either in the district correspondence program or in the centralized correspondence study program;

(11) is equally well-served by an educational experience approved by the school board as serving the child's educational interests despite an absence from school, and the request for excuse is made in writing by the child's parents or guardian and approved by the principal or administrator of the school that the child attends;

(12) is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian.

(c) If a parent, legal guardian, or other person having the responsibility for or control of the child elects to enroll a child who is six years of age in first grade at a public school, after enrollment, the child is subject to the provisions of (a) and (b) of this section. If the parent or guardian of a child who is six years of age and is enrolled in first grade at a public school determines, within 60 days after the child is enrolled, that the best interests of the child are not being served by enrollment in the first grade, the child may be withdrawn from school, and the provisions of (a) and (b) of this section do not apply to the child until the child is seven years of age.

By its plain meaning, nothing in this section exempts school districts or authorizes a modification to the age for *compulsory* attendance at a school in this state.

A school district may, however, establish a school age for purposes of *allowing* a child to attend a school in the district under AS 14.03.070 and 14.03.080. Those sections provide

Sec. 14.03.070. School age. A child who is six years of age on or before September 1 following the beginning of the school year, and who is under the age of 20 and has not completed the 12th grade, is of school age.

Sec. 14.03.080. Right to attend school. (a) A child of school age is entitled to attend public school without payment of tuition during the school term in the school district in which the child is a resident subject to the provisions of AS 14.14.110 and 14.14.120.

(b) A person over school age may be admitted to the public school in the school district in which the person is a resident at the discretion of the governing body of the school district. A person over school age may be charged tuition by the governing body of the school district.

(c) A child under school age may be admitted to a public school in the school district of which the child is a resident at the discretion of the governing body of the school district if the child meets minimum standards prescribed by the board evidencing that the child has the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform satisfactorily for the educational program being offered. A district's educational program must prescribe that under school age students advance through the curriculum or grade level by the following school year. A governing body may delegate the authority granted under this subsection to the chief school administrator of the school district.

(d) A child who is five years of age on or before September 1 following the beginning of the school year, and who is under school age, may enter a public school kindergarten.

(e) A child under school age shall be admitted to school in the district of which the child is a resident if immediately before the child became a resident of the district, the child was legally enrolled in the public schools of another district or state.

(f) This section does not require a school district to admit a child or person currently under suspension or expulsion under AS 14.03.160 in that or another school district.

Under AS 14.14.090(2) a school board is required to provide for an educational program for each school age child who is enrolled in or a resident of the district.

The statutes establishing school age do not contradict or supersede the compulsory attendance requirement. A district is obligated to provide an education for a student of school age but the student is not compelled to take advantage of it, or forced to stay at the school after age 16 under the compulsory attendance statute.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

JMM:plm
09-122.plm

Attachment I
Notes on Juneau School District at Risk Programs

Juneau School District – Programs for At-Risk Students (some)

Alternative High School-no more than 150 students, separate campus,

CHOICE Program-for students who are academically at risk-retreat model involving parent & teacher support

Learning Communities- for all students, more choices for grades 10-12, voc ed, construction, engineering, native culture, college bound, arts & humanities, science & technology, new-health, recreation & fitness

Truancy- Juneau has a full time truant tracker. As required in statute, Juneau presents to all students at the start of the year a handbook that must be shared with parents and signed; it explains the truancy policy in detail.

Enforcement-Juneau (and Anchorage too) have worked with the municipality to pass a local ordinance allowing the school to issue tickets directly to parents, \$100 fine. After home visits, after calls, they do issue the tickets when warranted.

Attachment J
Truancy Report from Todd Brocious Dept of Education

Terry Harvey

From: Brocious, Todd D (EED) [todd.brocious@alaska.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 2:35 PM
To: Terry Harvey
Cc: Prussing, Paul R (EED); Curran, Cynthia A (EED); Herman, Marcy J (EED)
Subject: RE: info

Hi Terry,

It was good to talk to you yesterday. I really cannot speak with any authority as to how districts are enforcing compulsory attendance and responding to attendance violations across Alaska. As we talked about, some districts have shared that they employ truancy officers who actively work with students who are or who have been challenged by truancy, but EED does not formally collect information on what truancy procedures districts develop, or on any enforcement measures they are implementing. Districts anecdotally report broadly varying interpretations of what constitutes truancy, as well as report tremendous variability in the resources they have available to dedicate to enforcement/encourage compliance with compulsory attendance. I can confirm that there is no uniform or standardized response to truancy in Alaska's public schools. Alaska's truancy laws explicitly give districts local authority to establish their procedures.

My involvement with truancy has very formal parameters. First, I provide technical assistance to districts to ensure they are cognizant of the existing state laws requiring them to have procedures to reduce and to prevent truancy. Second I ensure districts understand their state and federal statutory reporting requirements-- they are required to collect and report truancy data on all full-day unexcused absences to EED for each school year by June 30th. (EED provides several statewide audio conferences to districts each fall to inform them of all state and federal laws pertaining to truancy, suspensions, and expulsions. EED highlights reporting requirements under No Child Left Behind Title IV Part A Safe and Drug-Free Schools Community Act, Alaska statutes Sec 14.30.010-14.30.030, and Regulation 4 AAC 06.250 during these training events. We also respond to many individual district inquires each year.) Third, I am responsible for ensuring the EED statewide suspensions, expulsions, and truancy data collection system is working and that it is collecting the information Alaska is required to collect. Finally, I do have an enforcement role with districts in that I review the data base each year to ensure all districts have submitted their data as required, and have the authority to withhold NCLB reimbursements for any district that might fail to comply. (In my 8 years of involvement, no district has failed to ultimately submit data) I hope this information is helpful.

Respectfully, Todd

Todd Brocious
 Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
 Education Specialist
 Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Innovative Programs, HIV, FASD, Elearning, Quality Schools
 phone: (907) 465-2887
 fax: (907) 465-2713

From: Terry Harvey [mailto:Terry_Harvey@legis.state.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 10:32 AM
To: Brocious, Todd D (EED)
Subject: info

Todd, appreciate your comments regarding truancy enforcement in Alaska. Possible for a brief overview of your working knowledge of how enforcement is applied in Alaska? Also confirmation of your understanding that each district enforces in their own way, there is no standard enforcement