

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 386 (SB 10)

2021 Regular Session

Fields

Prior law (R.S. 17:151.3) required public school systems to provide for and offer full-day kindergarten and establishes the minimum age for entrance into kindergarten as one year younger than the minimum age for entering first grade, which is six years old on or before Sept. 30th. Also required that prior to entering first grade that a child must have either attended a full-day kindergarten or have passed an academic readiness screening established by the local school system. Required parents and legal guardians to send a child to kindergarten or ensure that the child is administered a readiness screening prior to the child entering first grade.

New law requires, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a child who turns five years of age on or before Sept. 30th to attend full-day kindergarten and to pass a readiness assessment prior to entering first grade. Notwithstanding this provision, new law provides:

- (1) That a parent or legal guardian shall have the option to defer enrolling his child in kindergarten for one year if either of the following applies:
  - (a) The child is four years of age on the first day of the school year.
  - (b) The child is enrolled in a prekindergarten program.
- (2) That a parent or legal guardian who opts to defer enrollment of his child in kindergarten as provided in new law shall not be considered to be in noncompliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

Prior law (R.S. 17:221) required compulsory school attendance for children ages seven through 18, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his 18th birthday.

New law provides, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, compulsory school attendance will be required for children age five through 18, unless the child's parent or legal guardian opts to defer enrollment of his child in kindergarten in accordance with new law or the child graduates from high school prior to his 18th birthday.

Prior law (R.S. 17:222) allowed the Jefferson and Orleans Parish school boards to set by rule a different minimum age for first grade entrance established in prior law. Further requires proof of age, race, and parentage.

New law removes the minimum age threshold for entry into the first grade. Provides that the provisions of prior law that allow Jefferson and Orleans Parishes to establish different entry standards shall become void on June 30, 2022.

New law clarifies that families may home school for kindergarten but must report student attendance to the state Department of Education. Further provides that kindergarten students in an approved home study program shall be considered in compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

Effective upon signature of the governor (June 16, 2021).

(Amends R.S. 17:151.3, 221(A)(1), and 222; adds R.S. 17:221(E))