

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5239

AS OF JANUARY 29, 1991

Brief Description: Extending the school year.

SPONSORS: Senators Bailey, Rinehart, Oke, Murray, Barr and Talmadge.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: January 30, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Lengthening the school year has been suggested as an important method of improving the educational system by providing students with more education. In 1989, a Gallup poll was conducted asking the question: "In some nations, students spend about 25 percent more time in school than do students in the United States. Would you favor or oppose increasing the amount of time that students in this community spend in school?" Forty-eight percent said they were in favor, 44 percent said they were opposed and 8 percent were undecided. The average length of the school year in the United States is 180 days. Quebec in Canada, Spain, and Sweden all have 180 school days. Japan offers 243 days, Germany between 226-240 days, South Korea offers 220 days, Israel and Luxembourg offer 216 days, the Soviet Union offers 211 days, and the Netherlands, Scotland, and Thailand provide 200 school days.

Studies conducted by national and state groups, including the 1985 State Board of Education study, "Continuity and Progress," indicate that a key to educational excellence lies in enhancing the profession of teaching by providing time for training and preparation. It has been suggested that time for training and preparation will help teachers better meet the educational needs of students.

SUMMARY:

SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS: Beginning with the 1992-93 school year, students would attend school for a minimum of 181 equivalent school days. The state-funded school year would be 181 days, a one-day increase over the current 180-day requirement. Technical changes are made to statutes to permit only one statute to be amended in future years if the number of days in the school year are changed. Private schools are required to provide the same number of school days as public schools are required to provide.

The length of the school year is defined in terms of equivalent school days rather than actual calendar days. School districts may choose how to schedule the program hours required to meet the definition of equivalent school day. The equivalent of a school day is defined as including a minimum number of program hour offerings as follows: Four program hours for full day kindergarten, two and one-half program hours for half-day kindergarten, five hours for grades one through three, five and one half hours for grades four through eight, and six hours for grades nine through twelve.

CONTRACT YEAR FOR TEACHERS: Beginning with the 1992-93 school year, the state-funded teacher contract year for teachers is increased by the equivalent of two days. The increase in the equivalent of two days is to provide teachers time for training and preparation. Including the additional day for students, the teachers' contract year would be a total of 183 days.

Appropriation: \$38,000,000

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested