

Senate Education Committee

Kat Bourque 271-3091

SB 191-FN, relative to the definition of average daily membership in attendance.

Hearing Date: February 7, 2017

Time Opened: 9:26 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:59 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Reagan, Ward, Watters and Kahn

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Giuda

Bill Analysis : This bill specifies the manner in which kindergarten pupils are counted in a school district's average daily membership in attendance.

Sponsors :

Sen. Watters

Sen. D'Allesandro

Sen. Feltes

Sen. Hennessey

Sen. Kahn

Sen. Lasky

Sen. McGilvray

Sen. Reagan

Sen. Soucy

Sen. Ward

Sen. Woodburn

Rep. Gile

Rep. Grenier

Rep. Bates

Who supports the bill: Senator Lasky, Joseph Boggio (Hinsdale School District), Holly Kennedy (Hinsdale School District), Senator Woodburn, Senator Soucy, Senator Feltes, Bonnie Wright, Lisa Witte (SAU #93), Barrett Christina (NHSBA), Senator Ward, Edward Murdough (Keene School Board), Lindsay Hanson (Save the Children Action Network), Rep. Martin, Rep. Tucket, Emily Johnson (Save the Children Action Network), Elaine Arbor (Dover School District), Jackie Cowell (Early Learning, NH)

Who opposes the bill: No one

Who is neutral on the bill: Anna Brown (Citizens Count NH), Caitlin Davis (DOE), Rebecca Woitkowski (New Futures)

Summary of testimony presented in support :

Senator Watters

Prime Sponsor

- This bill will pay for full-day kindergarten for those communities who choose to offer it.
- The language of this bill has been drafted so that it does not create any mandate. Those districts who remain at half-day status will receive half-day adequacy.
- It is his understanding that the funding will be included in the budget, but this will not be made clear for a few more days.
- There are several positive benefits of full-day kindergarten for children.

- Senator Reagan asked if this bill still gives local control. Senator Watters confirmed that the authority of full-day kindergarten still remains in local control.
- Senator Watters distributed a spreadsheet of current law versus full-day kindergarten, summarizing that the increase in cost will be about \$14 million.

Lisa Witte

Superintendent of SAU #93

- About four years ago, the district moved to full-day kindergarten.
- The budget over the last few years has been extremely difficult.
- The district's default operating budget for FY 2017/2018 came in at over 2% increase than available.
- In addition to supporting the effort to provide the district with the resources available to supply full-day kindergarten, Ms. Witte would encourage the committee to reexamine adequacy funding and revenue streams for the state.
- Senator Kahn asked how full-day kindergarten fits into the district's curriculum. Ms. Witte stated that finding quality opportunities for younger students outside of school can be difficult in impoverished areas. Some students do not have the opportunity for a preschool experience and kindergarten is truly about helping students learn. In this case, half-day kindergarten may not provide enough depth.
- Over the last four years, there has been a demonstrated want and need in the community for access to full day kindergarten. Current enrollment is at about 90%.

Barrett Christina

New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA)

- NHSBA supports this legislation, as they support a required kindergarten program and modifying RSA 198:38 to include state funding for full-day kindergarten.
- NHSBA believes that this bill is strong since it does not require that a school district provide full-day kindergarten, but gives local control.
- Senator Watters asked if this bill would make it more possible for districts that have less wealthy communities to eliminate barriers. Mr. Christina stated that yes, this bill would help to lower costs for communities who do not have the tax base to do this on their own.

Edward Murdough

Chair, Keene Board of Education

- Mr. Murdough explained that Keene has offered full-day kindergarten since 1999. The commitment of their tax payers has meant that Keene was not eligible for incentives that the state has given in recent years.
- In more young families today, both parents work and daycare is an issue. By providing full-day kindergarten, that need is met.
- Districts that have established full-day kindergarten have seen a significant interest. Keene is nearly at 100% enrollment.

- The state should recognize the importance of full-day kindergarten for children.

Lindsay Hanson

Save the Children Action Network

- Save the Children Action Network is in strong support of this bill.
- Full-day kindergarten has strong bipartisan support. 70% of New Hampshire voters agree that funding full-day kindergarten should be a major priority this year.
- There are sizeable advantages for students who attend full-day kindergarten, especially for low-income students.
- Research has found that there are several positive effects on students who attend full-day kindergarten.
- In one study, full-day Hispanic students had an increased literacy rate of 70% over half-day Hispanic students in kindergarten.
- The rate of return on investment for full-day kindergarten can be 13% per child, per year.

Elaine Arbor

Dover School District

- Ms. Arbor is in support of SB 191.
- Ms. Arbor echoed the benefits of full-day kindergarten that have been previously stated.
- She stressed that there is a cost involved in this addition, including staff, transportation and the like.
- She also stressed the importance that this bill will significantly help students who come from districts that are at an economic disadvantage.
- Senator Reagan stated that the increase for Dover would be \$665,000 dollars. Senator Reagan asked if this included staff costs. Ms. Arbor stated that it does not.
- Ms. Arbor stated that Dover currently has about 300-350 kindergarten students.
- Senator Watters asked if she thought that areas that do not offer full-day kindergarten are at a disadvantage. She stated that yes, she believes this, since families look at all the resources available to them when they choose to live and work in a certain area.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition : N/A

Neutral Information Presented:

Anna Brown

Citizens Count New Hampshire

- Citizens Count NH does not take positions as an organization, but summarizes citizen testimony from a variety of outreach programs.
- 3/5th of the group surveyed opposed full-day kindergarten.

Caitlin Davis

Department of Education

- Ms. Davis was present to answer questions that the committee members may have.
- 18 communities, or 8% of the state, offer something between half-day kindergarten and full-day, meaning they may offer it only three days per week.
- 19% of the state offers no full-day kindergarten at all.
- There are about 10-15 communities in the state that add full-day kindergarten every year.
- On the chart that Senator Watters distributed, the towns with the asterisk are those that added full-day kindergarten last year.
- Senator Kahn asked what the trend has been in beginning to offer kindergarten at all to offering full-day. Ms. Davis explained that some form of kindergarten has to be offered throughout the state. The full-day option has been increasing each year in interest.

Future Action: Pending

KAB

Date Hearing Report completed: February 8, 2017