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Potential Changes To Kindergarten Enrollment Age

A new bill would require all students to be 5-years-old to start kindergarten.

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Your child may be learning their ABC's around fewer kids if a new bill passes.

"Currently, the law is you have to be 5-years-old by December 1," Stanley Kogut, Ingham Intermediate School district superintendent, said.

Under the new law, your child would need to be 5-years-old by September 1 to start kindergarten. If it passes, the state could get a one-time savings of millions of dollars for the next fiscal year.

"There would be a savings to the state because of students moving up," Kogut explained. "The projection right now is \$154 million."

The savings would come from those children whose birthdays fall between September 2 and December 1. They would have to wait until the next school year, meaning the state wouldn't have to pay districts for those students.

Some argue the age of a student shouldn't be enforced by the law.

"I'm in favor of a parent deciding whether they want a December 1 date or a September 1 date for kindergarten," state superintendent Mike Flanagan said.

"I don't agree with the concept," Sen. Rick Jones, (R-Grand Ledge), said. "I think it's okay if a child is four and-a-half to enter school."

Others say the bill is only beneficial if the savings are put toward certain programs.

"If we don't reinvest those savings into young children we're not getting anywhere," Jack Kresnak, president of Voices for Michigan's Children, said. "It's not going to help anything to move that kindergarten start date."

There is a way to get your child into kindergarten if they're not yet 5-years-old. The proposed law would allow for parents to obtain a waiver and file it with the school. The child would then be evaluated by the district to see if they are ready for kindergarten.

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