

Illinois School Code ([105 ILCS 5/10-22.18e](#))¹ created the Full-Day Kindergarten Task Force for the purpose of conducting a statewide audit to inform the planning and implementation of full-day kindergarten.

The task force may recommend that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) consider an additional criterion when granting a waiver to the establishment of full-day kindergarten for two additional years under 105 ILCS 10-22.18(b). ISBE shall make a final determination regarding this additional factor and provide public notice of that determination by no later than July 1, 2025.

The Full-Day Kindergarten Task Force met five times, beginning on November 27, 2023. There are two required reports that the task force must submit to the General Assembly and Office of the Governor. The first, an [interim report](#), was submitted in June 2024. The [final report](#) was submitted in January 2025.

What follows is context for and the recommendation of an 'additional criterion' for a waiver to delay implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten requirement.

Please share feedback no later than March 13, 2025 [here](#).

Context

Currently, elementary or unit school districts funded below 76% of adequacy according to the Evidence-Based Funding formula in FY 2023 already are allowed to apply to request a delay in implementing the mandate. The committee charge was to recommend an additional criterion that would allow other elementary or unit school districts to complete an application process requesting delay of implementation irrespective of their FY 2023 EBF tier.

Two surveys were administered to collect data from elementary and unit school districts in the development of the recommendation for an additional criterion that ISBE may use to approve the delay of implementation of the full-day kindergarten mandate.

Data from a survey administered in the *spring* 2024 (SY 2023-24) requested information on implementing full-day kindergarten in the 2024-25 school year. Of surveyed districts identified as offering half-day programming (n=20), six are at or below 76% (FY 2023 EBF).

Data collected (N=20) in a survey administered in the *fall* 2024 (SY 2024-25) indicated that five districts estimate that they will be unable to offer a full-day program by the 2027-28 school year. All of these districts are at or above 76% EBF in FY 2025. All other respondents estimate they will be able to offer a full-day kindergarten program by the 2027-28 school year.

Moreover, the following barriers were identified by the task force during its meetings. Evidence that could suffice to support the delay of implementation of the mandate also was considered.

- **Space (e.g., current availability as well future access to)**
 - **Evidence:** Current building plans and architect renderings, bidding process and timelines (i.e., competition between districts and impact on meeting implementation deadlines), materials and supply chain issues, length of time to complete projects, evidence of work to explore feasible options to find space for full-day kindergarten.
- **Staffing (e.g., assignability and teacher shortages)**
 - **Evidence:** Data on number of current kindergarten teachers in district with Early Childhood certification; projected number of additional EC teachers needed to transition to full-day kindergarten.
- **Transportation (e.g., availability of equipment, scheduling for, and cost of)/food services**

- **Evidence:** Need for and availability of additional buses, cost of and impact on other current/projected programs and services. Space currently used and available for delivery of “appropriate” food services (e.g., meets state/local laws).
- **Funding (e.g., challenges within contexts where there is not the likelihood of accessing additional local funding)**
 - **Evidence:** “Possession” or lack thereof of financial capacity to implement (e.g., Annual Financial Report, audits, and analysis of current and projected budgets to show impact on current programming if full-day mandate is implemented, history of/timelines of past and future referendums, available reserves, if a district currently implements a tuition-based half-day program, impact on loss of revenue).
- **Scheduling (e.g., impact of full-day kindergarten on the ordinary and usual scheduling of the school)**
 - **Evidence:** Members identified this as a barrier but did not provide evidence that could serve as such for delay of the mandate.

Recommendation

ISBE shall develop and implement a process through which any elementary or unit district may submit evidence for delaying the implementation of the full-day kindergarten beginning in the 2027-28 school year.

This process shall include:

- Identification of district and rationale for the request.
- Submission of evidence supporting the request, including, but not limited to:
 - Financial capacity to implement full-day kindergarten;
 - Annual Financial Reports from last five years;
 - Audits from last five years;
 - Analysis of current and projected budgets to show impact on current programming if full-day mandate is implemented (i.e., current budget and projected budgets over the next five years);
 - History of/timelines of past and future referendums, as applicable;
 - An action plan that provides a timeline and process(es) that the district deems reasonable to meet the full-day kindergarten mandate.
- Available and anticipated reserves (current fiscal year and subsequent five years), and, if a district currently runs a tuition-based half-day program, impact on loss of revenue projected over time.
 - Space currently available and needed for delivery of programming and necessary services, including, but not limited to:
 - Current building plans and architect renderings,
 - Bidding process and timelines for project completion,
 - District health and safety capital needs requiring capital expenditures,
 - Other evidence of availability of space or lack thereof to find space for full-day kindergarten (e.g., bonding capacity and/or community support of a referendum).
- Demographic data, including, but not limited to:
 - Anticipated numbers of students based upon most recent census data;
 - Actual/current number of assignable classroom teachers, anticipated needed assignable classroom teachers, and the projected cost of these staff (subsequent five years);
 - Actual/current number of assignable classroom aides/paraprofessionals and anticipated needed assignable classroom teachers and the projected cost of these staff (subsequent five years).
- Other supporting materials as submitted by school district to inform its application.
- ISBE shall:
 - Develop the means for submission of the aforementioned for approval to the School Business Services Department.
 - Acknowledge receipt and provide notification of approval or need of additional information within 45 days of receipt.
 - If additional information is requested and submitted, ISBE shall acknowledge receipt of it and provide a final determination within 30 days.

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