



50-State Comparison: Free and Compulsory School Age Requirements

What are the state’s free and compulsory school age requirements?

August 2020

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STATE ▲	AGE REQUIREMENT FOR FREE EDUCATION	CITATION/SOURCE	AGE REQUIREMENT FOR COMPULSORY EDUCATION	CITATION/SOURCE	NOTES
Alabama	5 - 19	Ala. Code § 16-28-4 Ala. Code § 16-11-16	6 - 17	Ala. Code § 16-28-3	
Alaska	5 - 20	Alaska Stat. Ann. § 14.03.080 Alaska Stat. Ann. § 14.03.070	7 - 16	Alaska Stat. Ann. § 14.30.010	If a parent or legal guardian of a 6-year-old child enrolls them in the first grade, the child is subject to compulsory education provisions.
Arizona	5 - 21	Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 15-821	6 - 16	Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 15-802 Ariz. Const. art. XI, § 6	

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Arkansas	5 - 21	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-202 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-207	5 - 18	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-201	
California	5 - 21	Cal. Educ. Code § 48000 Cal. Educ. Code § 46300.1	6 - 18	Cal. Educ. Code § 48200	No school district may receive school district apportionments for independent study by students 21 years of age or older or by students 19 years of age or older who have not been continuously enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, since their 18th birthday.
Colorado	5 - 21	Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-1-102	6 - 17	Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-33-104	
Connecticut	5 - 21	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-186	5 - 18	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-184	
Delaware	5 - 21	Del. Code Ann. tit. 14, § 202	5 - 16	Del. Code Ann. tit. 14, § 2702	

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District of Columbia	5 - none identified in statute	D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 5-E, § 2000 D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 5-E, § 2004	5 - 18	D.C. Code Ann. § 38-202	An adult student who is a resident shall be eligible for free instruction in the schools and programs of the D.C. Public Schools for which the student meets all other criteria and prerequisites for admission.
Florida	4 - none identified in statute	Fla. Const. art. IX, § 1	6 - 16	Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1003.21	
Georgia	5 - 20	Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-150	6 - 16	Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690.1	
Hawaii	5 - 20	Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 302A-1134	5 - 18	Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 302A-1132	
Idaho	5 - 21	Idaho Code Ann. § 33-201	7 - 16	Idaho Code Ann. § 33-202	
Illinois	4 - 21	105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/10-20.12 105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/34-19	6 - 17	105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/26-1	Reenrollment is denied to children 19 years of age or older who have dropped out of school and who cannot, because of age and lack of credits, attend classes during the normal school year and graduate before their 21st birthday.
Indiana	5 - none identified in statute	Ind. Code Ann. § 20-33-2-7	7 - 18	Ind. Code Ann. § 20-33-2-6	

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Iowa	5 - 21	Iowa Code Ann. § 282.1	6 - 16	Iowa Code Ann. § 299.1A	Children who are 4- or 5-years-old and enrolled in a school district are considered to be compulsory attendance age unless their parent or legal guardian notifies the school district in writing of their intent to remove the child from enrollment.
Kansas	5 - none identified in statute	Kan. Stat. Ann. § 72-3118 Kan. Stat. Ann. § 72-4348	7 - 18	Kan. Stat. Ann. § 72-3120	School districts are not required to provide educational services in a regular school setting to any person who has reached 19 years of age and is not currently enrolled in the school district. If a school district elects not to provide such person with educational services in a regular school setting, the school district shall offer the person educational services in an alternative setting or an alternative educational program.

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Kentucky	5 - 21	Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.030 Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.100	6 - 16	Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 159.010	Local school districts may adopt a district-wide policy requiring children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school. If 55% of local school districts adopt this policy, all local districts are required to adopt a compulsory school age of 6 to 18. This policy is currently in effect according to this FAQ.

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Louisiana	5 - 20	La. Stat. Ann. § 17:221 La. Stat. Ann. § 17:222 La. Stat. Ann. § 17:151.3	7 - 18	La. Stat. Ann. § 17:221	<p>Each city and parish school board, by rule, may provide for a child younger than age 5 to enter kindergarten, provided that they have been evaluated and identified as gifted in accordance with the regulations of the state department of education.</p> <p>Admission must be granted to students who are 19 years of age or younger on Sept. 30 of the calendar year in which the school year begins, or is 20 years of age on Sept. 30 of the calendar year in which the school year begins and has sufficient course credits that they will be able to graduate within one school year of admission or re-admission.</p>

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Maine	5 - 20	Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 20-A, § 5201	6 - 17	Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 20-A, § 5001-A	War veterans who have not completed high school before their 18th birthday may enroll in the public schools in the school administrative units where they reside until they graduate or until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 25.
Maryland	5 - 21	Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-101	5 - 18	Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-301	
Massachusetts	LEA decision	Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 76, § 1 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Kindergarten Entry Age	6 - 16	603 Mass. Code Regs. 8.02 Massachusetts Department of Education School Finance: School Choice	Each school committee may establish its own minimum age for school attendance, provided that it is not older than the mandatory minimum age established by the state.
Michigan	5 - 20	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1147 Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 388.1606	6 - 18	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1561	
Minnesota	5 - 21	Minn. Stat. Ann. § 120A.20	7 - 17	Minn. Stat. Ann. § 120A.22	

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Mississippi	5 - 21	Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-15-9 Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-45-1	6 - 17	Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-13-91	Compulsory school age includes any child who is 5-years-old or will be 5-years-old on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program.
Missouri	5 - 21	Mo. Ann. Stat. § 160.051	7 - 17	Mo. Ann. Stat. § 167.031	The school board of a metropolitan school district for which the compulsory attendance age is seventeen years may adopt a resolution to lower the compulsory attendance age to 16. A child between ages 5-7 can be excused from attendance at school if a parent or guardian makes a written request that the child be dropped from the school's rolls.

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Montana	5 - 19	Mont. Code Ann. § 20-5-101 Mont. Code Ann. § 20-7-117	7 - 16	Mont. Code Ann. § 20-5-102	School district trustees may admit a child under the age of 5 or an adult over the age of 19 at their discretion if exceptional circumstances warrant waiving the existing age requirements.
Nebraska	5 - 21	Neb. Const. art. VII, § 1	6 - 18	Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201	
Nevada	5 - 21	Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 392.040	7 - 18	Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 392.040	
New Hampshire	LEA decision - 21	N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 189:1	6 - 18	N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 193:1	
New Jersey	5 - 20	N.J. Stat. Ann. § 18A:38-1	6 - 16	N.J. Stat. Ann. § 18A:38-25	
New Mexico	5 - 22	N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-8-2	5 - 18	N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-12A-4	
New York	5 - 21	N.Y. Educ. Law § 3202	6 - 16	N.Y. Educ. Law § 3205	Local boards of education have the power to require 16- or 17-year-old students who are not employed to attend full time day instruction until the last day of session in the school year in which the student turns 17.

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North Carolina	5 - 21	N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-364 N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-1	7 - 16	N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-378	Allowances for free education for children under age five are given dependent on military service of the student's parent.
North Dakota	5 - 21	N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-01	7 - 16	N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-20-01	
Ohio	5 - 22	Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3313.64	6 - 18	Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3321.01	
Oklahoma	5 - 21	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 1-114	5 - 18	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 10-105	
Oregon	5 - 19	Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 339.115	6 - 18	Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 339.010	A school district may choose to admit an individual who is not yet 21-years-old and who is not receiving special education if the individual is in need of additional education to receive a high school diploma.
Pennsylvania	6 - 21	24 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 13-1301	6 - 18	24 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 13-1326	A student who reaches the age of 21 during the school term and who has not graduated from high school may continue to attend public school in their district until the end of the school term.

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Rhode Island	5 - none identified in statute	R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-2-27 R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-2-28	5 - 18	R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-19-1 R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-2-27	
South Carolina	5 - 22	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-20	5 - 17	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-65-10	
South Dakota	5 - 21	S.D. Codified Laws § 13-28-2 S.D. Codified Laws § 13-28-5	5 - 18	S.D. Codified Laws § 13-27-1	
Tennessee	5 - none identified in statute	Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3001	6 - 18	Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0520-01-03-03	
Texas	5 - 21	Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 25.001	6 - 19	Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 25.085	
Utah	5 - 18	Utah Code Ann. § 53G-7-502	6 - 18	Utah Code Ann. § 53G-6-201	
Vermont	5 - none identified in statute	Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 16, § 1073	6 - 16	Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 16, § 1121	
Virginia	5 - 20	Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-1	5 - 18	Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-254	
Washington	5 - 21	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 28A.225.160	8 - 18	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 28A.225.010	
West Virginia	5 - 22	W. Va. Code Ann. § 18-5-18 W. Va. Code Ann. § 18-5-15	6 - 16	W. Va. Code Ann. § 18-8-1a	

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Wisconsin	4 - 20	Wis. Const. art. X, § 3	6 - 18	Wis. Stat. Ann. § 118.15	
Wyoming	5 - 21	Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 21-4-301	7 - 16	Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 21-4-102	