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## Free and compulsory school age requirements

More and more, state policymakers are exploring options to increase the age range that a student is required to attend school -- with goals of boosting high school graduation rates and creating a better prepared workforce that can meet the needs of modern employers.

States not only are extending the upper limit for mandatory school age, many also are pushing for earlier access to free education for the youngest students. A new 50-state review from Education Commission of the States, [Free and compulsory school age requirements](#), addresses three main components:

- At what age is a district required to provide free public education to students, and at what age is it no longer required?
- At what age does compulsory school attendance begin and end?
- How many years total is a student required to attend school?

"Expanding the age range in which students are permitted and required to attend school receives significant attention," said Stephanie Aragon, a researcher for Education Commission of the States. "This 50-state review provides a snapshot of where states have landed on school age requirements."

#### *Some highlights from the report:*

- To date, 24 states and the District of Columbia require students to attend school until they turn 18.
- In Massachusetts, children as young as 3 years old are considered to be of school age.
- Students are required to remain in school for as few as nine years and as many as 13 years, depending on the state.

*For questions, contact Education Commission of the States Director of Communications Amy Skinner at [askinner@ecs.org](mailto:askinner@ecs.org) or (303) 299. 3609.*