

DOES RAISING THE STATE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE ACHIEVE THE INTENDED OUTCOMES?

BACKGROUND

Compulsory school attendance legislation has been used to encourage high school students to stay in school. Maryland recently raised its compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) partnered with REL Mid-Atlantic to conduct this literature review and fulfill MSDE's reporting requirements to the legislature.

This review addressed the following research questions:

- What changes have occurred in dropouts, truancy, and disciplinary actions in states that raised their compulsory school attendance age during 2002–11?
- What broader social outcomes have been identified in studies using national datasets?
- How have these states measured changes?



*Maryland Senate Bill 362 (April 2012) required MSDE to "review available data from other states that have increased their CSA age during the last decade" to examine subsequent changes in dropout rates, truancy rates, and disciplinary actions.

WHAT THIS REVIEW FOUND

Positive financial and social outcomes are associated with higher compulsory school attendance ages. Higher compulsory school attendance ages are related to:



**HIGHER
ADULT
EARNINGS**



**AVERAGE
LIFETIME
WEALTH**



**UNEMPLOYMENT
RATE**



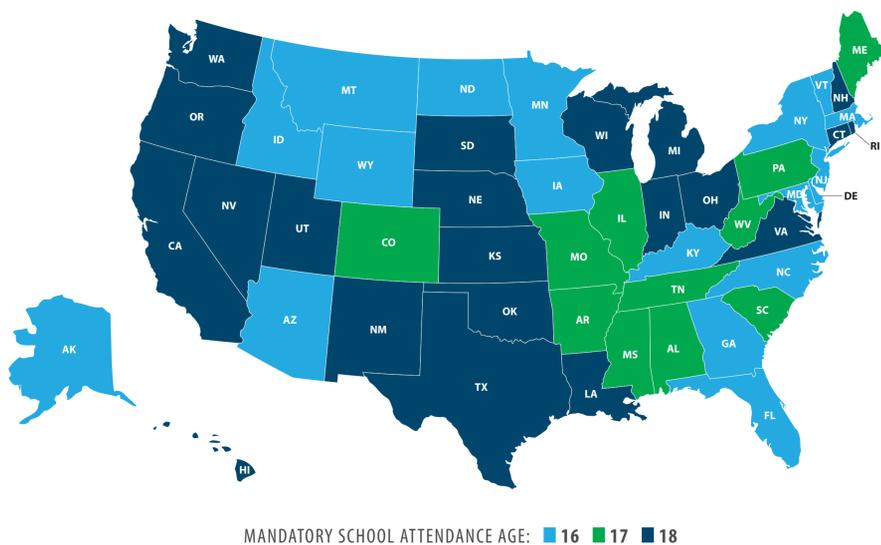
**TEENAGE
PREGNANCY
RATE**



**MORTALITY
RATE**

SOME STUDIES UNDERTAKEN UNDER DIFFERENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. SOME STUDIES FOUND MIXED RESULTS.

Compulsory School Attendance Ages in the United States



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures. Downloaded from <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/are-states-willing-to-require-school-attendance-until-age-18.html>



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Eleven states raised the compulsory school attendance age during 2002–11.

There was no conclusive evidence that this policy change reduced rates for dropout, truancy, or disciplinary actions.

Few studies documented the outcomes of increasing the age of compulsory attendance. In addition, studies had design and/or procedural flaws (e.g., not accounting for other changes in education policy or regional differences in dropout and completion rates).

SUGGESTED FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- Longitudinal analyses to monitor dropouts, truancy, bullying and harassment, suspensions, and expulsions could help inform policymakers in other states considering an increase in the compulsory attendance age.



- Experimental design studies that compare groups with different compulsory attendance ages can be helpful as the findings lend themselves to causal conclusions.



The information in this infographic can be found in the full report: Mackey, P. E., & Duncan, T. G. (2013). *Does raising the state compulsory school attendance age achieve the intended outcomes?* (REL 2014–005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.