



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Below is a list of select new laws enacted following the 2015 legislative session, as well as some legislative resolutions, that relate to elementary and secondary education. This list includes many laws and resolutions of particular interest to school leaders – some requiring immediate attention – and is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all laws and resolutions affecting local school systems. Please visit www.legis.la.gov to read the full text of each instrument or to search for other laws or resolutions. If you have any questions, please contact Erin Bendily at (225) 342-3600 or at erin.bendily@la.gov.

TOPIC	INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
Charter schools	Act 467	Provides for equitable funding of students with disabilities and the enrollment of students with disabilities at charter schools. The Department will adjust LEA allocations accordingly, beginning with the 2015-2016 fiscal year, and update Bulletin 126 to reflect charter school enrollment expectations.
Curriculum	Act 400	Authorizes (does not require) each city, parish, or other local public school board to provide age- and grade-appropriate classroom instruction regarding firearm accident prevention and safety to elementary school students. Such instruction shall adopt or be based on the Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program, an accident prevention program developed by the National Rifle Association, or a substantially similar program, such as the Louisiana Law Enforcement for Gun Safety program, designed to promote firearm accident prevention and safety. Superintendents and principals should determine whether they wish to offer this instruction.
	Act 469	Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, requires all public high schools to include in Civics courses a unit of study related to the civics portion of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services naturalization test, and to administer a test to students on such content. Such test does not constitute a new requirement for graduation. Requires BESE to promulgate rules to guide implementation. The Department will propose policies to BESE later this fall. Please notify curriculum supervisors and civics teachers.
Data privacy	Act 228	Updates the 2014 law on collecting and sharing certain student information and provides for limitations on sharing personally identifiable student data effective August 1, 2015. The Department provided guidance in the June 23, 2015, district newsletter . The Department will provide further guidance to LEAs on how they should complete data submissions for the 2014-2015 school year.

Louisiana Believes.

Dropout recovery	Act 392	Authorizes (does not require) all public school systems to establish dropout recovery programs and emphasizes the importance of maximizing federal Title I funds and state MFP funds for at-risk students to support such programs. Requires any students participating in such a program to be enrolled in the school system and to have their participation recorded on a monthly basis. Please notify high school principals.
Early childhood	Act 364	Provides for the 2015-2016 school year to be an “academic learning year” for the early childhood accountability system, and requires the issuance of practice ratings that are not based on letter grades nor used for consequences. BESE has passed regulations that adhere to these requirements.
Homework assistance	Act 239	Requires public school governing authorities to inform students and parents of the homework assistance services offered through the State Library of Louisiana at http://www.homeworkla.org/ . School leaders may consider fulfilling these requirements as part of their back-to-school communications with students and their parents.
Food services	Act 167	Authorizes the LDOE and the governing authority of any nutrition program provider to use the simplified acquisition procedures for small purchases up to the Federal Small Purchase Threshold set by federal law, in accordance with the USDA Farm to School initiative and in support of procurement of local agricultural products. Please inform school food service managers.
Pest control	Act 311	Extends laws relative to pest control products and product application in public and non-public schools to certain schools enrolling pre-kindergarten students; requires each city, parish, or other local public school board to submit a single, comprehensive integrated pest management plan for all schools under its jurisdiction. Please inform school facility maintenance managers.
School boards	SCR 79	Requests each local public school board to provide for high school student interaction with the board in an informative, advisory, and nonvoting capacity. Please inform school board presidents.
School staffing	Act 149	Authorizes certain additional retirees to avoid suspension of their benefits while reemployed by local school systems. Please notify human resource managers.

School management	Act 159	Authorizes local public school districts to enter into an agreement with a higher-performing district to manage and operate one or more of low-performing schools. Superintendents and school boards may wish to explore this option as a strategy for improving low-performing schools.
Sex education	HR 69	Directs BESE and DHH to study and evaluate the effectiveness of the sex education curriculum used in public schools throughout the state on limiting the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and decreasing the rates of teen pregnancy. The Department will provide information regarding this study in a future district newsletter.
Standards and assessments	Act 329	Provides for the review and development of state academic content standards and requires BESE to consider the adoption of such standards no later than March 4, 2016. Additional information is available as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of review process: http://tinyurl.com/pkj3cg2 • Online standards review portal: http://www.louisiana.statestandards.com
	Act 342	Provides for the procurement and administration of state assessments during the 2015-2016 school year and limits the percentage of test questions on a test that are based on the blueprint or intellectual property of any federally funded consortium of states. The Department is following this and other applicable state laws in order to procure assessments for the 2015-2016 school year.
	Act 245	Provides relative to the adoption of rules by BESE and the role of legislative committees and the governor for oversight purposes. Provides that academic content standards promulgated as rules shall not be subject to severability in consideration by a legislative committee or the governor in oversight determinations, and shall be considered in globo in any determination of acceptability or unacceptability for oversight purposes. The legislature will follow this process in any future oversight hearings related to academic standards.
	HR 195	Requests BESE to promulgate rules relative to teacher and parent access to student assessments and their review of such assessments and results. The Department will recommend policies to BESE later this fall in response to these requests.

Student discipline	Act 248	Prohibits suspension or expulsion of students in prekindergarten through grade five for school uniform violations. Please notify all elementary school principals and school counselors.
	SR 130	Requests BESE and LDOE to study the implementation and effectiveness of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program in public schools. The Department will provide additional information about this study in a future newsletter.
	SR 167	Directs public elementary school governing authorities to report to LDOE regarding alternative discipline strategies used prior to suspending or expelling students in grades prekindergarten through five out of school. The Department will provide instructions for such reporting in a future newsletter.
Students' religious freedom	SCR 69	Expresses support of Louisiana students to assemble for religious expression and to express their religious beliefs in public elementary and secondary schools. Please share this information with school principals.
Students with disabilities	Act 250	Updates the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights and provides for the rights of students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. These provisions are aligned with current requirements of IDEA and BESE regulations and clarify that the IEPs for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind must include a communications plan. Please notify special education administrators.
	HR 33 and SR 79	Request schools and state and local educational agencies to recognize that dyslexia has significant educational implications that must be addressed. Please ensure that training and professional development for educators, special education administrators, and 504 coordinators include information about recognizing the symptoms of dyslexia and effectively supporting students with dyslexia.
TOPS	Act 101	Provides that a student graduating from high school during the 2018-2019 school year and thereafter who is not a citizen of the United States, but who is the child of a non-United States citizen who is either serving in any branch of the United States armed forces or has been honorably discharged from any branch of the United States armed forces, shall meet citizenship requirements with regard to eligibility for TOPS. Please inform high school counselors and eligible students.

	Act 403	Aligns curriculum requirements for TOPS Tech awards with those required to receive a career diploma for students graduating from high school in 2017-2018 and thereafter. Please inform high school counselors.
	Act 230	Provides that students may use TOPS Tech awards to fund courses that lead to associate or other short-term training and education programs that are determined by the Board of Regents and the Workforce Investment Council to be aligned with state workforce priorities. Please inform high school counselors. The Department will notify LEAs of any new approved programs or courses for which TOPS Tech may be used.
Textbooks and other instructional materials	Act 389	Provides for the review of textbooks and other instructional materials used in public schools and requires local school systems to follow certain review and selection processes. The Department will provide guidance to LEAs and recommend updates to BESE policies later this fall.
Transportation	Act 421	Provides for the loading and unloading of students on to and off of school buses. Please notify school bus transportation managers.
	SCR 92	Directs BESE and LDOE to establish policies and procedures to evaluate school bus driver training curricula developed by private providers and certify qualified private providers to deliver required school bus driver training. Please notify school bus transportation managers.