

Governor Edwards recently signed into law several acts of the Louisiana Legislature that pertain to public elementary and secondary education. The Legislature also passed several resolutions calling for further study of important education issues. Below is a brief summary of new laws and resolutions that most directly relate to the work of local public school systems. The full text of these laws and resolutions can be found at www.legis.la.gov.

Contracts and Purchasing

- **Act 347:** Requires that any person purporting to enter into any contract on behalf of the school district or schools under the board's jurisdiction, including but not limited to contracts with vendors or contracts of membership in any private or quasi-public entity, comply with policies and procedures adopted by the local school board in effect at the time the contract is executed. This law does not apply to any contract in effect on July 31, 2016, but shall apply to any new contract, renewal or extension of an existing contract executed on or after August 1, 2016.
- **Act 510:** Authorizes political subdivisions of the state to purchase materials, supplies, vehicles, and equipment through an existing public contract of a political subdivision.
- **Act 548:** Allows public school districts or public schools to enter into an agreement with one or more qualified group purchasing organizations to purchase materials, equipment, and supplies, including any installation thereof.

Curriculum

- **Act 482:** Requires all public schools, including charter schools, to teach cursive writing beginning with the 2017-2018 school year. Such instruction must be introduced by the third grade and incorporated into the curriculum in each grade level thereafter, through the twelfth grade.
- **Act 624:** Requires each public elementary or secondary school, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, to offer instruction in personal financial management based on the concept of achieving financial literacy through the teaching of personal management skills and the basic principles involved with earning, spending, saving, and investing. Such instruction must be integrated into an existing course of study.

School and District Accountability

- **Act 498:** For the 2016-2017 school year, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) shall collect student assessment data but shall not require use of the results for evaluating teacher performance or making student placement decisions. The distribution of school and district letter grades shall not vary from that of the 2012-2013 school year unless the school or district has improved in its performance. The Department of Education will continue to produce transitional student growth data for the 2016-2017 school year.

School Employees

- **Act 130:** Requires BESE to grant an educational leader certificate to qualified assessment teachers, educational consultants, educational diagnosticians, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, speech and hearing therapists, school social workers, and audiologists, indicating eligibility for employment as a supervisor, director or coordinator of special education for a local public school system.
- **Act 454:** Provides for the term "unlicensed diabetes care assistant" to also refer to an employee of an entity that contracts with a school or school system to provide school nurses that are responsible for providing health care services required by law or regulation.
- **Act 466:** Provides relative to the reduction of salaries for teachers and other school employees, specifically when the elimination, discontinuance or reorganization of the position to which the employee is assigned results in the employee working fewer hours, days or months.
- **Act 504:** Continues to require educator evaluations to be based 50 percent on growth in student achievement; however, for those teaching tested grades and subjects, their evaluations shall be based 35 percent on data derived through a value-added assessment model as determined by BESE. The remaining 15 percent shall be based on other measures of student growth (i.e., student learning targets).

Special Education

- **Act 303:** Prohibits public schools from requiring the parent or legal guardian of a student to disclose medical information or special education needs prior to enrolling the student, unless otherwise specifically required by law. This Act also authorizes a person who is no longer enrolled in a public school but was identified as a student with a disability and who previously failed to receive a high school diploma or was denied graduation solely for failing to meet the state high school graduation exit examination requirements, to petition his or her city, parish, or other local public school board to receive a high school diploma. Such petitions shall be submitted to the local school system by December 31, 2017. The local school system must transmit diploma requests to the Department of Education in accordance with Department procedures and guidelines, which will be forthcoming.
- **Act 364:** Requires local school systems to enroll students with disabilities in a school of choice if certain specified conditions are met, including recommendations from licensed physicians, geographic requirements, and agreements between local education agencies.

Student Transportation

- **Act 365:** Provides relative to school bus inspection fees, setting the fee at \$20 effective January 1, 2017.
- **Act 535:** Specifies that a highway with one lane in each direction and with a dedicated two-lane left-turn is not a divided highway with separate roadways for the purpose of passing or overtaking from any direction any school bus that has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging school children. The driver of a vehicle upon any highway with one lane in each direction and a dedicated two-way left-turn lane must stop upon meeting or passing a school bus loading or unloading school children.

Miscellaneous

- **Act 234:** Requires all public schools, including charter schools, to post on their website the toll-free telephone number operated by the Department of Children and Family Services to receive reports of child abuse and neglect. The phone number is 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437).
- **Act 336:** Requires driver education courses to include instruction relative to trailer safety.
- **Act 404:** Establishes the "Louisiana Farm to School Program Act" by requiring the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to develop and implement a farm to school program to assist schools and school food service personnel in identifying and utilizing all available resources to support and increase the use of locally grown or raised agricultural products in school nutrition programs.
- **Act 425:** Requires that each high school have an automated external defibrillator (AED) on its premises by January 1, 2018, subject to the appropriation of funds and using authority granted to accept donations of AEDs or funds to acquire AEDs. **Act 128** requires each high school in any parish with a population of more than 200,000 and less than 250,000 according to the latest federal decennial census (Lafayette Parish) to have an automated external defibrillator on its premises. **Act 149** authorizes the governing authority of each public school system to have at least one member of the coaching staff for each extracurricular sport offered by the school to be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, and the use of an automated external defibrillator.
- **Act 480:** Requires a local public school system and the governing authority of a Type 2 charter school that enrolls students who reside within the geographic boundaries of the school system to enter into a memorandum of understanding to exchange student information necessary to verify student enrollment and residency status. The local public school system and the charter school governing authority are required to keep such information strictly confidential and shall not use the information for any purpose other than verifying student enrollment and residency. The memoranda of understanding must comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

- **Act 522:** Amends existing laws relative to the seclusion and restraint of students with disabilities and related reporting requirements, and provides for the creation of the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline to provide advice and guidance to BESE and the LDOE regarding best practices in providing support to public school governing authorities in the adoption and implementation of each school's master plan for student behavior and discipline.
- **Act 523:** Establishes the Louisiana Expectant and Parenting Students Act to recognize existing Federal Title IX obligations and policy provisions that must be adopted by governing authorities of public secondary schools with respect to such students. Requires the Department of Education to report to Legislature before the 2017 Regular Session a summary of data on rates of graduation for students who are expecting and parenting and any recommendations for further legislation. No personally identifiable information shall be reported.
- **Act 539:** Prohibits the use of an unmanned aircraft system to conduct surveillance or collect information about a school or school premises, and provides for related penalties.
- **Act 654:** Requires each public body that has a custodian of public records to make the contact information of the custodian available to the public in a manner what will allow a member of the public to quickly determine the appropriate person to whom a public records request should be submitted, including by placing such information on its website.

Study Resolutions

- **HR 154:** Requests State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, and the Board of Regents to collaboratively study the feasibility and advisability of allowing Anatomy and Physiology to satisfy certain requirements for high school graduation and qualification for TOPS awards.
- **HR 227:** Creates a task force to study the governance of local public elementary and secondary education in Louisiana.
- **HR 243:** Requests that BESE reconvene a Minimum Foundation Program Task Force to determine the actual cost of public education and identify potential funding mechanisms.
- **HCR 44:** Encourages each public school governing authority to fully use all resources available to provide students with quality remedial education programs and instruction that will improve student academic achievement and afford each student the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential.
- **HCR 136:** Requests BESE to study the feasibility of establishing two-way/dual language programs in public schools and to submit a written report on its findings and recommendations.
- **HCR 137:** Requests the BESE to study the prevalence and use of student fees in public schools.
- **HCR 141:** Requests the commissioner of higher education and the state superintendent of education to jointly report to the legislature on increasing availability and use of dual enrollment programs.
- **SR 122:** Requests the Department of Education to establish a task force to study student transportation and school bus passenger safety.
- **SR 180:** Requests BESE to prepare and publish a fiscal impact study that analyzes the impact each proposed Type 2 charter school would have on a local school district prior to granting the charter.
- **SR 182:** Requests the state superintendent of education, the commissioner of higher education, the secretary of economic development, and the executive director of the workforce commission, in consultation with stakeholders, to jointly study and develop recommendations for creating a more seamless system of secondary and postsecondary education.
- **SCR 89:** Requests the Board of Supervisors for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to develop and provide orientation programs to middle school students regarding the occupational programs available that will prepare students for high-paying, skilled careers that are in high demand in their local area.