

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 421

BY REPRESENTATIVE EMERSON

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

SCHOOLS: Authorizes public school governing authorities to establish learning pods for the purpose of providing small group instruction for students enrolled in public schools

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:3996(B)(59) and Chapter 43-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised

3 Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:4036.1, relative to elementary and

4 secondary education; to authorize public school governing authorities to establish

5 student learning pods for the purpose of providing small group instruction; to provide

6 that students assigned to learning pods shall be enrolled in the school; to require

7 instruction in learning pods to be provided by public school teachers; to provide

8 relative to funding; to provide relative to policies and procedures; to provide for an

9 effective date; and to provide for related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. R.S. 17:3996(B)(59) and Chapter 43-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana

12 Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:4036.1, are hereby enacted to read as

13 follows:

14 §3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

15 * * *

16 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and

17 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a

18 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this

19 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be

1 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are
2 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for
3 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

4 * * *
5 (59) Learning pods (R.S. 17:4036.1).

6 * * *

7 CHAPTER 43-B. LEARNING PODS

8 §4036.1. Learning pods

9 A. Each public school governing authority may establish learning pods as
10 an extension of any school under its jurisdiction. For purposes of this Section,
11 "learning pod" means a group of at least ten students enrolled in the school who
12 receive instruction in a small group setting.

13 B. A student shall only be assigned to a learning pod if the assignment is
14 requested by his parent or authorized by his parent upon the recommendation of
15 school officials.

16 C. All instruction provided to students assigned to learning pods shall be
17 provided by teachers on the staff of the school who meet all qualifications and are
18 subject to all requirements applicable to teachers at the school who are not assigned
19 to a learning pod.

20 D. Students assigned to a learning pod shall be:

21 (1) Counted among the enrollment of the public school governing authority
22 for purposes of full funding through the Minimum Foundation Program formula.

23 (2) Subject to all requirements applicable to students enrolled in the school
24 who are not assigned to a learning pod.

25 (3) Eligible for participation in all services and activities for which they
26 would be eligible if not assigned to a learning pod.

27 E. The establishment of learning pods shall be subject to policies and
28 procedures adopted by a public school governing authority, which, at a minimum,
29 shall provide for the following:

- (2) Students shall only be assigned to a learning pod upon parental request or authorization upon recommendation of school officials and shall be:
- (a) Counted among the enrollment of the public school governing authority for purposes of full funding through the Minimum Foundation Program formula.
 - (b) Subject to all requirements applicable to students enrolled in the school who are not assigned to learning pods.
 - (c) Eligible for participation in all services and activities for which they would be eligible if not assigned to a learning pod.
- (3) Provides for local policies and procedures, which, at minimum, shall provide for:
- (a) The student population of the learning pod, which may be a blended population of students of different grade levels.
 - (b) The method of instruction for the learning pod, which may occur in-person at a physical location on the school campus, remotely through virtual instruction, or through a hybrid approach that combines both methods.
 - (c) Any specialized curriculum or program provided in the learning pod.
 - (d) The process for parents to request a student's assignment to a learning pod, grant authorization for a student's assignment to a learning pod if recommended by school officials, and withdraw a student from a learning pod.

Proposed law is applicable to all public schools, including charter schools; proposed law is not applicable to any learning pod or other group of students that is formed and operated by parents, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a public school or a nonpublic school or participating in a home study program.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:3996(B)(59) and 4036.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Add that proposed law is not applicable to learning pods formed and operated by parents.