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## DIGEST

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HB 421 Engrossed

2021 Regular Session

Emerson

**Abstract:** Authorizes the establishment of learning pods as extensions of public schools for the purpose of small group instruction.

Proposed law authorizes each public school governing authority to establish learning pods as an extension of any school under its jurisdiction. Defines "learning pod" as a group of at least 10 students enrolled in the school who receive instruction in a small group setting and further provides:

- (1) All instruction provided to students assigned to learning pods shall be provided by teachers on the school's staff.
- (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.