

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 421

BY REPRESENTATIVE EMERSON

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

23 \* \* \*

1                   (59) Learning pods (R.S. 17:4036.1).

2   \*       \*       \*

3   CHAPTER 43-B. LEARNING PODS

4                   §4036.1. Learning pods

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26                   (1) The student population of the learning pod, which may be a blended  
27                   population of students of different grade levels.

28                   (2) The method of instruction for the learning pod, which may occur in-  
29                   person at a physical location on the school campus, remotely through virtual  
30                   instruction, or through a hybrid approach that combines both methods.

1                   (3) Any specialized curriculum or program provided in the learning pod.

2                   (4) The process for a parent to request student assignment to a learning pod,  
3                   grant authorization for a student's assignment to a learning pod if recommended by  
4                   school officials, and withdraw a student from a learning pod.

5                   F. This Chapter does not apply to or have any effect on any learning pod or  
6                   other group of students that is formed and operated by parents, regardless of whether  
7                   they are enrolled in a public school or a nonpublic school or participating in a home  
8                   study program.

9                   Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
10                  signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
11                  by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
12                  vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
13                  effective on the day following such approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_