

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 376

BY SENATORS MIZELL, BOUDREAUX, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK,  
EDMONDS, HODGES, JACKSON-ANDREWS, LAMBERT, MILLER,  
MORRIS, SELDERS, STINE, WHEAT AND WOMACK

SECONDARY EDUCATION. Provides for the Learn and Earn Act. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:81(A)(8), 3996(92), and Chapter 47 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised

3 Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:4201 through 4212, relative to local

4 public school boards; to provide relative to the authorization of career practicums in

5 public high schools; to provide for definitions; to provide relative to cooperative

6 endeavor agreements; to provide requirements for career practicums and cooperative

7 endeavor agreements; to provide relative to student labor, safety, and supervision;

8 to provide for reciprocity; to provide relative to the State Board of Elementary and

9 Secondary Education's rulemaking authority; to provide for trade and commerce

10 limitations; to provide for exemptions; to provide relative to charter school

11 participation; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

12 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

13 Section 1. R.S. 17:81(A)(8), 3996(92), and Chapter 47 of Title 17 of the Louisiana

14 Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:4201 through 4212, are hereby enacted to

15 read as follows:

16 §81. General powers of local public school boards

17 A.(1) Each local public school board shall serve in a policymaking capacity

1 that is in the best interests of all students enrolled in schools under the board's  
2 jurisdiction. When establishing board policies, each board shall prioritize student  
3 achievement, financial efficiency, and workforce development on a local, regional,  
4 and statewide basis. When choosing a local superintendent of schools, each board  
5 shall select a leader who shall prioritize student achievement and act in the best  
6 interests of all students enrolled in schools under the board's jurisdiction.

7 \* \* \*

8 **(8) Each local public school board shall have the authority to establish,**  
9 **operate, or enter into agreements for the operation of career practicums**  
10 **pursuant to R.S. 17:4201 et seq.**

11 \* \* \*

12 §3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

13 \* \* \*

14 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and  
15 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a  
16 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this  
17 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be  
18 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are  
19 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for  
20 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

21 \* \* \*

22 **(92) Career Practicums, R.S. 17:4201 et seq.**

23 \* \* \*

24 **CHAPTER 47. CAREER PRACTICUMS**

25 **§4201. Short title**

26 **This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Learn and Earn**  
27 **Act".**

28 **§4202. Legislative findings and intent**

29 **A. The legislature finds that Louisiana's long-term workforce**

1 competitiveness depends on the development of a coherent, statewide talent  
2 development system.

3 B. Compensated, credit bearing work-based learning aligned with the  
4 State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved career  
5 pathways is a critical component of such a system.

6 C. Reliance solely on external employer work sites creates inequitable  
7 access to work-based learning for rural students and students in underserved  
8 communities.

9 D. Career practicums, as provided for in this Chapter, shall serve an  
10 essential educational purpose by advancing established state objectives related  
11 to career and technical education, financial literacy, employability skills, and  
12 workforce development.

13 E.(1) A Career practicum shall operate pursuant to a cooperative  
14 endeavor agreement that complies with Article VII, Section 14 of the  
15 Constitution of Louisiana and meets the requirements of the *Cabela's* test as  
16 held in *Board of Directors of Indus. Development Bd. of City of Gonzales,*  
17 *Louisiana, Inc. v. All Tax Payers, Property Owners, Citizens of City of Gonzales,*  
18 *et al*, 938 So.2d 11 (La. 9/6/06).

19 (2) In order to satisfy the *Cabela's* test, a career practicum must serve a  
20 valid public purpose; be an enforceable, nongratuitous obligation; and there  
21 must be a reasonable expectation of value equal to or greater than the value of  
22 public assets provided.

23 (3) Compliance with the *Cabela's* test is mandatory and shall be  
24 demonstrated through the cooperative endeavor agreement.

25 §4203. Definitions

26 As used in this Chapter, the following terms have the following meanings  
27 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

28 (1) "Business partner" means a private business entity, financial  
29 institution, or nonprofit organization that enters into a cooperative endeavor

1 agreement with a city, parish, or other local school board to operate a career  
2 practicum.

3 (2) "Career practicum" means a limited scope educational franchise  
4 operation conducted on a public high school campus pursuant to a cooperative  
5 endeavor agreement, whose primary purpose is to deliver compensated, credit  
6 bearing work-based learning, aligned with BESE-approved career pathways,  
7 and related instruction.

8 (3) "Fair market value" means the value of public assets, services, or  
9 resources made available to a business partner, including space, utilities,  
10 equipment, or other measurable benefits, calculated pursuant to BESE-  
11 approved methodology using commercially reasonable valuation principles.

12 (4) "Instructional scope" means the defined operational boundaries of  
13 a career practicum that are directly tied to instructional objectives, including  
14 pathway aligned activities, financial literacy instruction, employability skill  
15 development, and compensated work-based learning.

16 (5) "Student participant" means a student enrolled in a BESE-approved,  
17 work-based learning course who participates in a career practicum and is  
18 compensated as an employee of the business partner.

19 (6) "Hazardous occupation" shall mean any occupation or activity  
20 prohibited for minors under the provisions of the Louisiana Works rules  
21 governing the employment of minors.

22 §4204. Authorization; limited-scope model

23 A. A city, parish, or other local school board may establish and host one  
24 or more career practicums on Louisiana public high school campuses in  
25 accordance with this Chapter.

26 B. A career practicum shall operate exclusively within the instructional  
27 scope defined in its cooperative endeavor agreement and shall not engage in  
28 general commercial activity unrelated to instructional purposes.

29 C. Career practicums shall align with BESE-approved career pathways

1 and integrate financial literacy and employability skill development.

2 D. Any student participating in a career practicum under this Chapter  
3 who performs a credit-bearing internship experience aligned to a BESE-  
4 approved career pathway shall be deemed to have satisfied the requirements for  
5 an internship for purposes of the state school and district accountability system,  
6 as defined by rules of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

7 E. A business partner shall provide reciprocity under the cooperative  
8 endeavor agreement that meets or exceeds the fair market value of public assets  
9 utilized and shall fulfill all educational obligations established in the agreement.

10 F. Career practicums may provide customer-facing services only to the  
11 extent such services fall within the instructional scope established in the  
12 cooperative endeavor agreement.

13 G. Career practicums operating solely within the instructional scope of  
14 a compliant cooperative endeavor agreement shall be deemed instructional  
15 functions of the city, parish, or other local school board and shall not be  
16 classified as commercial tenants.

17 H. Any employee, agent, or representative of a business partner who has  
18 direct and unsupervised interaction with students participating in a career  
19 practicum shall be subject to the same criminal background check and  
20 eligibility requirements applicable to school employees and instructors pursuant  
21 to applicable state law and policy of the State Board of Elementary and  
22 Secondary Education.

23 I. Where a career practicum includes limited customer-facing services  
24 within the instructional scope, the city, parish, or other local school board shall  
25 retain full authority to regulate campus access consistent with existing safety  
26 and visitor policies. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to require  
27 general public access to school campuses.

28 **§4205. Cooperative Endeavor Agreements**

29 A. Each career practicum shall operate pursuant to a written cooperative

1 endeavor agreement between the city, parish, or other local school board and  
2 the business partner.

3 B. The agreement shall include but not be limited to the following:

4 (1) A declaration of the essential educational and public purpose served.

5 (2) Enforceable, nongratuitous obligations of the business partner.

6 (3) An inventory and valuation of public assets utilized, including a fair  
7 market value schedule.

8 (4) A reciprocity schedule demonstrating a reasonable expectation that  
9 benefits provided by the business partner meet or exceed fair market value.

10 (5) Annual fair market value recertification.

11 (6) A clear statement of instructional scope and operating parameters.

12 (7) Liability insurance naming the city, parish, or other local school  
13 board and the state as additional insureds.

14 (8) Indemnification of the city, parish, or other local school board and  
15 the state.

16 (9) Safety, supervision, and training requirements.

17 (10) Compliance with applicable federal and state laws governing student  
18 data privacy, child labor, workplace safety, and accessibility.

19 C. Each cooperative endeavor agreement shall be public record and  
20 posted on the website of the city, parish, or other local school board.

21 D. Nothing in this Chapter shall limit the authority of a city, parish, or  
22 other local school board to oversee, monitor, or evaluate the operations of a  
23 career practicum.

24 §4206. Student labor, safety, and supervision

25 A. Student participants shall:

26 (1) Earn academic credit pursuant to BESE rules.

27 (2) Receive wages at or above the applicable minimum wage.

28 (3) Be employees of the business partner for wage and workers'  
29 compensation purposes.

1                   **(4) Receive required safety training prior to participation.**

2                   **(5) Be prohibited from engaging in hazardous occupations barred for**  
3                   **minors.**

4                   **B. Career practicums shall be structured so that student participants are**  
5                   **the primary beneficiaries of the educational experience.**

6                   **C. Career practicums shall comply with all applicable school safety,**  
7                   **supervision, and visitor access requirements.**

8                   **§4207. Reciprocity and restricted use of funds**

9                   **A. Business partners shall provide reciprocity as established in the**  
10                  **cooperative endeavor agreement, meeting or exceeding fair market value**  
11                  **requirements.**

12                  **B. Any funds provided to a city, parish, or other local school board as**  
13                  **reciprocity or compensation shall be deposited into a restricted Career**  
14                  **Practicum Fund and used solely for work-based learning, instructional**  
15                  **equipment, or related educational purposes.**

16                  **§4208. Rulemaking authority; limitations**

17                  **The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall**  
18                  **promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement this Chapter in**  
19                  **accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act. Such rules**  
20                  **shall implement but not waive, narrow, or redefine the statutory requirements**  
21                  **of instructional scope, fair market value valuation, reciprocity, or student**  
22                  **protections established in this Chapter.**

23                  **§4209. Trade and commerce limitation**

24                  **A career practicum operating solely within the instructional scope of a**  
25                  **compliant cooperative endeavor agreement shall not be deemed to be engaged**  
26                  **in trade or commerce for purposes of R.S. 51:1401 et seq.**

27                  **§4210. Proprietary school exemption**

28                  **A career practicum authorized under this Chapter shall be deemed an**  
29                  **extension of public educational programming and shall not be classified as a**

1 proprietary school pursuant to R.S. 17:3140.1 et seq.

2 §4211. Charter school participation

3 A charter school governing authority may authorize a career practicum  
4 on its campus in accordance with applicable charter law and the school's  
5 charter contract. Where the career practicum involves the use of facilities or  
6 property owned by a city, parish, or other local school board or other public  
7 entity, any cooperative endeavor agreement required under this Chapter shall  
8 be executed in a manner consistent with applicable law governing such  
9 property.

10 §4212. Existing programs

11 A. On campus business operations or work-based learning programs  
12 lawfully operating on Louisiana public high school campuses prior to the  
13 effective date of this Act may continue, provided they serve an educational  
14 purpose and comply with Article VII, Section 14 of the Louisiana Constitution.

15 B. Beginning with the 2029-2030 school year, all programs subject to  
16 Subsection A of this Section shall be in compliance with all other provisions of  
17 this Chapter.

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

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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## DIGEST

SB 376 Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

Mizell

Present law (R.S. 17:81) provides that each local public school board shall serve in a policymaking capacity that is in the best interests of all students enrolled in school under the board's jurisdiction.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides that each city, parish, or other local school board has the authority to establish, operate, or enter into agreements for the operation of career practicums pursuant to R.S. 17:4201 et seq.

Present law (R.S. 17:3996) provides that charter schools are exempt from statutory mandates or requirements applicable to public school except for certain laws listed in present law.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides that career practicums are applicable to charter schools.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4201) must be referred to and may be cited as the "Learn and Earn Act".

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4202) provides that the intent of proposed law is for career practicums to serve an essential educational purpose by advancing established state objectives related to career and technical education, financial literacy, employability skills, and workforce development.

Proposed law requires a career practicum to operate pursuant to a cooperative endeavor agreement and satisfy the "*Cabela's*" test, which means it must serve a valid public purpose; be an enforceable, nongratuious obligation; and there must be a reasonable expectation of value equal to or greater than the value of public assets provided.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4203) provides for the following definitions: "business partner"; "career practicum"; "fair market value"; "instructional scope"; "student participant"; and "hazardous occupation".

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4204) authorizes a city, parish, or other local school board to establish and host one or more career practicums on La. public high school campuses.

Proposed law provides that a career practicum must do the following:

- (1) Operate exclusively within the instructional scope defined in its cooperative endeavor agreement and not engage in general commercial activity unrelated to instructional purposes.
- (2) Align with BESE-approved career pathways and integrate financial literacy and employability skill development.

Proposed law provides that a student participating in a career practicum who performs an internship aligned with a BESE-approved career pathway will have satisfied the requirements for purposes of the state school and district accountability system.

Proposed law provides that a business partner must provide reciprocity under the cooperative endeavor agreement that meets or exceeds the fair market value of public assets utilized and

must fulfill all educational obligations established in the agreement.

Proposed law provides that a career practicum may provide customer-facing services only to the extent the services fall within the instructional scope established in the cooperative endeavor agreement; and if there is limited customer-facing services, the city, parish, or other local school board must retain authority to regulate campus access consistent with safety and visitor policies.

Proposed law provides that a career practicum that is operating within the instructional scope of a compliant cooperative endeavor agreement must be deemed instructional functions of the city, parish, or other local school board and not be classified as commercial tenants.

Proposed law provides that any employee, agent, or representative of a business partner who has interaction with students in the career practicum is subject to a criminal background check.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4205) provides that a career practicum must operate pursuant to a written cooperative endeavor agreement between the city, parish, or other local school board and the business partner; and include the following:

- (1) A declaration of the essential education and public purpose served.
- (2) Enforceable, nongratuitous obligations of the business partner.
- (3) An inventory and valuation of public assets utilized, including a fair market value schedule.
- (4) A reciprocity schedule demonstrating a reasonable expectation that benefits provided by the business partner meet or exceed fair market value.
- (5) Annual fair market value recertification.
- (6) A clear statement of instructional scope and operating parameters.
- (7) Liability insurance naming the city, parish, or other local school board and the state as additional insureds.
- (8) Indemnification of the city, parish, or other local school board and the state.
- (9) Safety, supervision, and training requirements.
- (10) Compliance with applicable federal and state laws governing student data privacy, child labor, workplace safety, and accessibility.

Proposed law provides that a cooperative endeavor agreement must be public record and posted on the website of the city, parish, or other local school board.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4206) provides that a student participant must do the following:

- (1) Earn academic credit pursuant to BESE rules.
- (2) Receive wages at or above the applicable minimum wage.
- (3) Be employees of the business partner for wage and workers' compensation purposes.
- (4) Receive required safety training prior to participation.
- (5) Be prohibited from engaging in hazardous occupations barred for minors.

Proposed law provides that a career practicum must be structured so that student participants are the primary beneficiaries of the education experience and must comply with all applicable school safety, supervision, and visitor access requirements.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4207) requires business partners to provide reciprocity as established in the cooperative endeavor agreement that meets or exceeds fair market value requirements. Any funds provided to a city, parish, or other local school board as reciprocity or compensation must be deposited into a Career Practicum Fund and used solely for work-based learning, instructional equipment, or related education purposes.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4208) requires BESE to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement proposed law in accordance with the provisions of the APA. The rules and regulations must implement but not waive, narrow, or redefine the statutory requirements of instructional scope, fair market value valuation, reciprocity, or student protections established.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4209) provides that a career practicum operating within the instructional scope of the cooperative endeavor agreement must not be deemed to be engaged in trade or commerce for purposes of unfair trade practices and consumer protection law, pursuant to R.S. 51:1401 et seq.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4210) provides that a career practicum must be deemed an extension of public education programming and will not be classified as a proprietary school.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4211) provides that a charter school governing authority is authorized to establish a career practicum on its campus in accordance with charter law and the school's charter contract. Any cooperative endeavor agreement required by proposed law must be executed in a manner consistent with applicable law governing such property.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:4212) provides that on-campus business operations or work-based learning programs operating on Louisiana public high school campuses prior to the enactment of proposed law may continue, provided they serve an educational purpose and comply with La. Const. Art VII 14. These programs will need to be in full compliance with all other provisions of proposed law beginning with the 2029-2030 school year.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:81(A)(8), 3996(92), and R.S. 17:4201-4212)

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

##### Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Makes technical changes.
2. Makes career practicum law applicable to charter schools.
3. Defines "hazardous occupation".
4. Provides that a student will have satisfied internship requirements for the state school and district accountability system if the student participates in a career practicum and performs a credit-bearing internship aligned with a BESE-approved career pathway.
5. Provides that any employee, agent, or representative of a business partner is subject to a criminal background check under certain circumstances.
6. Clarifies that "annual fair market value recertification" required in a

cooperative endeavor agreement does not have to be pursuant to BESE rules.

7. Removes requirement that BESE promulgate rules and regulations to establish permissible operating hours.