
DIGEST

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HB 887 Reengrossed

2016 Regular Session

Steve Carter

Abstract: Creates an independent, residential, public school (Thrive Academy) in Baton Rouge as a pilot school for certain at-risk students in grades six through 12; provides for a board of directors for the school; provides for funding.

Proposed law establishes an independent, residential, public school (Thrive Academy) in Baton Rouge as a pilot school for certain at-risk students in grades six through 12. Provides for the enrollment of "at-risk" students who meet at least one of the following:

- (1) Is eligible for health benefits under Medicaid.
- (2) Is in the eighth grade or below and is reading two or more grade levels below grade level as determined by any test required pursuant to present law.
- (3) Has a documented history of truancy.
- (4) Is in foster care pursuant to placement through the Dept. of Children and Family Services.
- (5) Meets the criteria for a homeless student as defined in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- (6) Is referred by a teacher, counselor, or principal.

Proposed law provides for a board of directors for the school and provides for membership and terms. Provides that the members shall not receive any compensation. Provides for powers and duties of the board including but not limited to adopting necessary rules, regulations, and policies for the operation of the school, annually preparing and adopting a formula to adequately fund the educational programs at the school, awarding certificates and issuing diplomas, determining student eligibility with preference given to students with the greatest need, and selecting a director for the school.

Proposed law provides that the director shall be the chief administrative officer and shall administer the rules, regulations, and policies adopted by the board. The director shall be responsible for all the administrative functions, duties, and needs of the board including but not limited to preparing an annual budget, exercising budgetary responsibility and allocating funds appropriated for the school, developing a student handbook, and determining faculty and staff positions.

Proposed law requires the board to create an advisory panel to advise and provide assistance to the board on matters affecting the school as determined by the board. Provides for panel membership to consist of a representative from each local public school system that has entered into an agreement with the board for the enrollment of a student who otherwise would have attended school in the local public school system.

Proposed law provides that funding for the school shall come from legislative appropriation made directly to the school or through funds appropriated for the minimum foundation program (MFP), or both. Permits the board to accept federal and private funds.

Proposed law provides that the school shall offer extracurricular activities. Provides that the East Baton Rouge Parish public school system shall, to the extent practicable, allow the students of the school to participate in any extracurricular activities the system may offer which the school cannot. Further provides that students shall be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity at a nonpublic school that is located within the attendance zone of the school provided that such nonpublic school is approved by the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Proposed law provides that the school shall be subject to the same laws, rules, regulations, and other requirements applicable to public schools as specifically provided for in present law (relative to charter schools).

Effective July 1, 2017, except that proposed law relative to the creation and functions of the board of directors is effective October 1, 2016.

(Adds R.S. 17:1971-1976 and R.S. 36:651(D)(9))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Add that in enrolling students, preference shall be given to students with the greatest need based on the criteria specified in proposed law as determined by the board.
2. Add that certificates and diplomas awarded by the school shall be in addition to a regular high school diploma issued by the state board.
3. Delete provisions specifying that MFP funds shall be based on the school's enrollment and the amount allocated shall be equal to the MFP per pupil amount.
4. Make proposed law effective July 1, 2017, except proposed law relative to the creation and functions of the board of directors which is effective Oct. 1, 2016.