

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 247

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request each public school governing authority to review and consider the results of student screenings conducted to determine whether a student should be evaluated for dyslexia or giftedness, or both, and to study the feasibility of implementing universal screenings of students for dyslexia and giftedness.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana provides that it is the goal of the state's public educational system to provide learning environments and experiences at all stages of human development that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential; and

WHEREAS, the legislature acknowledges that identification of and adjustment to the individual characteristics that determine a child's academic needs will improve a child's opportunity to succeed in school and to develop to his full potential; and

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes the unique needs of students who demonstrate high academic and intellectual aptitude and that such students may require individualized education programs and additional funds through the minimum foundation program formula to support their individualized services; and

WHEREAS, regulations adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, as contained in *Bulletin 1508–Pupil Appraisal Handbook*, require school systems to develop and implement procedures for screening students who are suspected of being gifted; and

WHEREAS, according to information from the state Department of Education, only about twenty-eight percent of students identified as gifted are economically disadvantaged and only eighteen percent of the gifted student population are students of color; and

WHEREAS, current law (R.S. 17:7(11)) requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to adopt and provide for the implementation of a program for students enrolling in public schools to be tested for dyslexia and related disorders as may be necessary; and

WHEREAS, current law (R.S. 17:392.1) requires that every child in public school

in kindergarten through grade three be screened for the existence of impediments to a successful school experience including dyslexia and related disorders; and

WHEREAS, state law defines "dyslexia" as a language processing disorder that may be manifested in difficulties with reading, comprehension, writing, and spelling, despite adequate intelligence, educational exposure, and cultural opportunity; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to state law, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted regulations, as contained in *Bulletin 1903—Regulations for the Implementation of Louisiana Law for the Education of Dyslexic Students*, to require school systems to identify, evaluate, and support students with dyslexia; and

WHEREAS, current law, R.S. 17:182, requires the governing authority of each public elementary school to implement a reading program that is designed and intended to teach each student to read at grade level by the end of the first grade; and

WHEREAS, this law further requires each second grade teacher and each third grade teacher to report the number of students in the teacher's class who cannot read at grade level and requires that this information be sent to the state superintendent of education and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; and

WHEREAS, the law additionally requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education annually to compile a report of such information for each school, school system, and the state as a whole and to submit the report to the senate and house education committees; and

WHEREAS, one way to increase equity in the identification of students who are gifted and those who have dyslexia is to consider the results of screenings administered to elementary school students; and

WHEREAS, this information could reveal individual student abilities and challenges that suggest the need for a student to be evaluated to determine if he is gifted or dyslexic or both.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request each public school governing authority to review and consider the results of student screenings conducted to determine whether a student should be evaluated for dyslexia or giftedness, or both, in accordance with state laws and regulations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request each public school governing authority to study the feasibility of implementing universal screenings of students for dyslexia and giftedness in order to provide all students with an equal opportunity to have their needs identified and properly supported so that they may develop to their full potential.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive directors of the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, the Louisiana School Boards Association, and the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the state superintendent of education.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE