

**ACT No. 332**

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 663

BY REPRESENTATIVE WHITE AND SENATOR MIZELL

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:1381, relative to the consolidation of school systems; to create a  
3 commission to study the feasibility of consolidating the Bogalusa City and  
4 Washington Parish school systems; to provide for the membership, meetings, and  
5 duties and responsibilities of the commission; to provide for reporting; to provide for  
6 a public hearing; to provide for termination of the commission; and to provide for  
7 related matters.

8 Notice of intention to introduce this Act has been published  
9 as provided by Article III, Section 13 of the Constitution of  
10 Louisiana.

11 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

12 Section 1. R.S. 17:1381 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

13 §1381. Washington Parish and Bogalusa City school systems; consolidation study  
14 commission; creation; membership; duties and responsibilities

15 A. The Bogalusa/Washington School System Consolidation Commission is  
16 hereby created for the purpose of studying the feasibility of consolidating the  
17 Bogalusa City School System and the Washington Parish School System.

18 B. The commission shall consist of the following members:

19 (1) The president of the Bogalusa City School Board.

20 (2) The superintendent of the Bogalusa City School System.

21 (3) The president of the Washington Parish School Board.

22 (4) The superintendent of the Washington Parish School System.

23 (5) The mayor of the City of Bogalusa.

1                   (6) The mayor of the City of Franklinton.

2                   (7) The president of Washington Parish, or his designee.

3                   (8) The president of the Bogalusa Chamber of Commerce or his designee,  
 4 who shall be a member of the chamber.

5                   (9) The president of the Franklinton Chamber of Commerce or his designee,  
 6 who shall be a member of the chamber.

7                   (10) One parent of a child enrolled in a school in the Bogalusa City School  
 8 System, appointed by the president of the Bogalusa City School Board.

9                   (11) One parent of a child enrolled in a school in the Washington Parish  
 10 School System, appointed by the president of the Washington Parish School Board.

11                   (12) Three parents who have a child enrolled in a public school in either the  
 12 Bogalusa City School System or the Washington Parish School System, one  
 13 appointed by the state representative who represents House District No. 75, one  
 14 appointed by the state representative who represents House District No. 74, and one  
 15 appointed by the state senator who represents Senate District No. 12.

16                   (13) One teacher who teaches at a school in the Bogalusa City School System  
 17 or the Washington Parish School System, appointed by the Louisiana Federation of  
 18 Teachers.

19                   (14) One teacher who teaches at a school in the Bogalusa City School  
 20 System or the Washington Parish School System, appointed by the Louisiana  
 21 Association of Educators.

22                   (15) One principal of a school in the Bogalusa City School System or the  
 23 Washington Parish School System, appointed by the Louisiana Association of  
 24 Principals.

25                   (16) One member of the clergy who resides within the geographic boundaries  
 26 of the Bogalusa City School System, appointed by the Help Center of Churches.

27                   (17) One member of the clergy who resides within the geographic boundaries  
 28 of the Washington Parish School System, appointed by the Help Center of Churches.

29                   (18) The state representative who represents House District No. 75.

30                   (19) The state representative who represents House District No. 74.

1                   (20) The state senator who represents Senate District No. 12.

2                   (21) The director of finance for the Bogalusa City School Board.

3                   (22) The director of finance for the Washington Parish School Board.

4                   C. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation or a per  
5                   diem for their services or attendance at commission meetings.

6                   D. The members of the commission shall elect such officers and create such  
7                   subcommittees as they deem necessary to fulfill the commission's duties and  
8                   responsibilities.

9                   E.(1) The president of the Bogalusa City School Board and the president of  
10                  the Washington Parish School Board shall jointly call the first meeting, which shall  
11                  be held no later than September 1, 2018. The commission shall meet at least  
12                  monthly, but additional meetings may be called by the chairman or upon request of  
13                  a majority of the members of the commission.

14                  (2)(a) All meetings of the commission shall be held in accordance with the  
15                  Open Meetings Law, and official minutes and records of all meetings shall be kept.

16                  (b) All documents and proceedings of the commission shall be posted on the  
17                  website of the Bogalusa City School System and the Washington Parish School  
18                  System.

19                  (3) A majority of the membership of the commission shall constitute a  
20                  quorum for the transaction of business.

21                  F. The commission shall be domiciled in Franklinton, Louisiana, but the  
22                  meeting site shall alternate between the City of Bogalusa and the City of Franklinton.

23                  G. The Bogalusa City School System and the Washington Parish School  
24                  System shall provide staff support and resources to the commission.

25                  H. The commission shall:

26                  (1) Determine the feasibility of consolidating the Bogalusa City School  
27                  System and the Washington Parish School System, thereby creating a unified school  
28                  district, the geographic boundaries of which shall be coterminous with the  
29                  geographic boundaries of Washington Parish.

1           (2) If the commission determines that consolidating the two school systems  
2           is in the best interest of the students in each respective school system and the parish  
3           as a whole, the commission shall formulate a plan and time line to effect the  
4           consolidation. Such plan, at a minimum, shall provide for:

5           (a) Passage of a resolution by each school board calling for an election to  
6           gain voter approval of the consolidation in accordance with Article VIII, Section  
7           10(C) of the Constitution of Louisiana and R.S. 17:1379.

8           (b) The establishment and composition of a school board for the consolidated  
9           school system, including the election and qualification of members and  
10           apportionment of the districts of board members, all in accordance with applicable  
11           state law.

12           (c) The establishment and membership of an interim school board to ensure  
13           a coordinated, collaborative, and seamless transition of governance and provision of  
14           educational services to all students until a new school board is created and elected.

15           (d) Contracts, agreements, or memoranda of understanding that might be  
16           needed to effect the consolidation.

17           (e) Any federal court order, judgement, or consent decree in effect.

18           (f) Policies and processes to address:

19           (i) Governance and administration of the school system and schools.

20           (ii) Financial matters, including existing tax structure, taxing districts, bond  
21           issues, and debt, and the creation of a budget for the consolidated school system.

22           (iii) Transfer of buildings, facilities, and moveable and immoveable property  
23           owned by each respective school system.

24           (iv) Number of schools and grade distribution within the schools.

25           (v) Curriculum and instruction.

26           (vi) Student enrollment.

27           (vii) Student transportation.

28           (viii) Teachers and other school personnel.

29           (ix) Data management.

30           (x) Any other issues or considerations identified by the commission.

1           I.(1) The commission shall submit a written report of its findings,  
2           conclusions, and recommendations to the Bogalusa City School Board and the  
3           Washington Parish School Board not later than August 31, 2019.

4           (2) Prior to adoption of the final report, the commission shall hold a public  
5           hearing on its findings, recommendations, and plans developed for consolidating the  
6           two school systems. The commission shall publish public notice of the meeting in  
7           a newspaper with parish-wide circulation at least twenty days prior to the hearing  
8           and a copy of the report shall be made available for public inspection prior to the  
9           hearing.

10           (3) The final report shall be posted on the website of both school systems in  
11           a manner that provides easy access to the report by parents and the public.

12           J. The commission shall terminate on September 1, 2019.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

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