

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 82

BY REPRESENTATIVE EDMONSTON

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Abolishes the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:201 and to repeal R.S. 17:200 and 202 through 220 and R.S.  
3 36:651(E)(2), relative to the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission; to  
4 abolish the commission and its functions; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 17:201 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

7 §201. ~~Legislative findings~~ Environmental education

8 A.(1) It is in the public interest that a comprehensive and balanced  
9 environmental education initiative be undertaken that will result in environmentally  
10 literate citizens who will effectively and constructively solve existing environmental  
11 problems, prevent new ones, and maintain a sustainable environment for future  
12 generations. The appropriate audiences for environmental education include formal  
13 education, business, government, nonprofit organizations, and citizens.

14 B.(2) Characteristics of an environmentally literate citizenry must include:

15 ~~(1)~~(a) An understanding of the right of every person to own, control, use,  
16 enjoy, and dispose of private property, subject only to reasonable regulation.

17 ~~(2)~~(b) An understanding that the Louisiana Constitution requires the use of  
18 a balancing process in environmental protection decisions in which environmental  
19 costs and benefits must be given full and careful consideration along with economic,  
20 social, and other factors.

1           ~~(3)~~(c) Ecological literacy, including a basic understanding of ecological  
2 principles and concepts and their application, the cause and effect relationship  
3 between human health and the environment, and the economics of that relationship.

4           ~~(4)~~(d) Civic literacy, including a basic understanding of the decisionmaking  
5 processes of governments, business, and other social, political, and economic  
6 institutions impinging upon environmental issues.

7           ~~(5)~~(e) Mathematical, technological, and scientific literacy, including an  
8 understanding of the basic concepts of mathematics and science to evaluate  
9 environmental problems and make sound decisions regarding their resolution.

10          ~~(6)~~(f) Personal and social action skills, including developing and using skills  
11 such as problem solving, risk analysis, and integrating diverse perspectives to  
12 understand and contribute to decisionmaking processes.

13          ~~(7)~~(g) Attitudes, including the expression of care for other humans, present  
14 and future, and for ~~other~~ other components of the environment. These attitudes also  
15 affect understanding of ecology and civic responsibility.

16          ~~(8)~~(h) Motivation for action, including the commitment to act for a healthy  
17 environment based on one's attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

18          ~~C.~~(3) The legislature declares that it is the intent of this ~~Subpart~~ Section to  
19 create a balanced statewide environmental education program for the purpose of  
20 identifying the needs and setting priorities for environmental education within the  
21 state.

22           B. As used in this Section, the following terms have the following meanings  
23 unless the context requires otherwise:

24           (1) "Department" means the state Department of Education.

25           (2) "Section" means the environmental education section located within and  
26 acting through the department.

27           C.(1) There is hereby created, within the department, the environmental  
28 education section which shall perform responsibilities relative to education as  
29 provided for in this Section. Subject to the appropriation of funds, staff may be

1 employed under the direction and control of the state superintendent of education and  
2 in accordance with policies of the department.

3 (2) The section shall implement the provisions of this Section relative to  
4 environmental education, including the following:

5 (a) Implement, administer, and evaluate a grants program benefitting  
6 kindergarten through twelve students, graduate researchers, professional  
7 development, and other initiatives supporting environmental education.

8 (b) Promote and aid in the establishment and assessment of elementary and  
9 secondary school environmental education programs.

10 (c) Promote and aid in the development of preservice and in-service  
11 environmental education programs for environmental educators, formal and  
12 nonformal, through cooperation with the Board of Regents and the state's colleges  
13 and universities.

14 (d) Cooperate with state and federal agencies and the private sector in  
15 developing, promoting, conducting, and evaluating programs of environmental  
16 education.

17 (e) Function as an environmental education clearinghouse by reviewing and  
18 recommending environmental education resources, establishing an electronic  
19 capacity to disseminate databases of environmental education information, formal  
20 and informal, networking with interstate and federal programs, and cooperating with  
21 state and federal agencies and organizations in the development and distribution of  
22 an environmental education newsletter.

23 (f) Promote the development of cooperative environmental education  
24 initiatives with the private sector.

25 (g) Initiate, develop, implement, assess, and market nonformal  
26 environmental education programs; assess environmental education curricula;  
27 promote state government and private sector policy that is consistent with the  
28 environmental education strategic plan; and coordinate nonformal environmental

1 education with elementary, secondary, and postsecondary environmental education  
2 programs.

3 (h) Coordinate environmental education conferences to assist in the  
4 dissemination, development, and achievement of the state's environmental education  
5 goals.

6 D. The section may accept, administer, and make use of federal, state, local,  
7 and private appropriations, public and private grants, and donations, and when it is  
8 deemed appropriate and feasible, to accept nonmonetary funding in the form of  
9 services or equipment for use in connection with any of the programs or purposes of  
10 this Section.

11 E. Preservice teacher education developed pursuant to Subparagraph  
12 (C)(2)(c) of this Section shall consist of the following components:

13 (1) Definition of the environmental education competencies that teacher  
14 candidates are expected to acquire.

15 (2) Definition of the acceptable approaches that can be used to develop the  
16 competencies.

17 (3) A timeline for implementing the required preservice education programs  
18 at colleges and universities.

19 F. In-service teachers shall develop the same environmental education  
20 competencies specified for preservice teachers as follows:

21 (1) School districts shall be encouraged to develop environmental staff  
22 development plans and seek matching funds for implementation of these plans from  
23 the state grants program.

24 (2) The Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental  
25 Quality, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Louisiana Department of  
26 Health, the office of state parks within the Department of Culture, Recreation and  
27 Tourism, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Department of  
28 Education shall develop and publicize environmental education teacher in-service

1       or professional internships related to their mission and shall be encouraged to  
2       develop such programs if they do not exist.

3               G. Postsecondary education institutions shall implement programs that  
4       encourage environmental literacy and provide opportunities for environmental  
5       stewardship among the student population.

6               H.(1) Nonformal education refers to education conducted outside of  
7       traditional formal education systems.

8               (2) All state agencies conducting nonformal environmental education  
9       programs shall:

10              (a) Identify target audiences and programs.

11              (b) Promote coordination and communications between the agencies  
12       conducting environmental education activities.

13              (c) Conduct a periodic review of nonformal environmental education offered  
14       by the department throughout the state.

15              (d) Maintain an inventory of its environmental education materials,  
16       programs, and resources.

17       Section 2. R.S. 17:200 and 202 through 220 and R.S. 36:651(E)(2) are hereby  
18       repealed in their entirety.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, 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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HB 82 Original

2023 Regular Session

Edmonston

**Abstract:** Abolishes the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission.

Present law creates the La. Environmental Education Commission. Requires the commission to:

- (1) Develop, review, approve, and transmit a plan for environmental education to the governor, the legislature, and the public.
- (2) Advise and assist the state superintendent of education and other state agencies on policies and practices needed to provide environmental education.
- (3) Serve as a forum for the discussion and study of problems that affect the environment and environmental education.

- (4) Assist and obtain information from various sources to coordinate the environmental education programs of federal and state agencies.
- (5) Investigate establishing an environmental education grant program.
- (6) Develop a curriculum framework for environmental education.
- (7) Participate in the development of guidelines for incorporating environmental education into teacher education requirements.
- (8) Maintain an inventory of nonformal education programs.

Proposed law abolishes the commission and its functions.

(Amends R.S. 17:201; Repeals R.S. 17:200 and 202 - 220 and R.S. 36:651(E)(2))