

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
Fiscal Note



Fiscal Note On: **HB 546** HLS 24RS 572

Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**

Opp. Chamb. Action:

Proposed Amd.:

Sub. Bill For.:

Date: March 21, 2024 5:50 PM	Author: AMEDEE
Dept./Agy.: EDUCATION	Analyst: Julie Silva
Subject: French language instruction in all public schools requirement	

CURRICULA OR SEE FISC NOTE GF EX Page 1 of 2
Provides relative to French language instruction in public schools

Proposed legislation requires that all public elementary, middle, and high schools offer three years of French language instruction. Elementary and middle schools are to ensure one course includes instruction on the culture, language, music, and traditions of French-speaking Louisiana. High schools are required to offer one course on the Cajun, Creole, and Indian dialects of Louisiana. Proposed legislation exempts school boards on the basis of financial infeasibility but prohibits the determination that a school board is financially unable to offer the instruction if it offers any other foreign languages and provides that proposed law applies regardless of financial determinations, if the instruction is requested by at least 25 parents. Requires LDOE to establish and maintain a list of recommended materials for use in required instruction and in French immersion programs throughout the state.

Requires the proposed sequences of instruction begin by the 2028-29 school year.

EXPENDITURES	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	INCREASE	INCREASE	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	\$0
Annual Total						
REVENUES	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	\$0
Annual Total	\$0	\$0	\$0			\$0

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

The requirement that three years of French immersion instruction be offered in each public elementary, middle, and high school is anticipated to result in an increase in state and local expenditures. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) reports they will need to hire additional employees at an annual estimated cost of \$300,000 beginning in FY 25 in order to start curriculum development and foreign language teacher recruitment efforts. Proposed legislation does not require the sequence of French language instruction to begin until the 2028-29 school year. As a result, the LFO is unable to corroborate that additional staff will need to be hired as early as FY 25, and therefore this fiscal note does not anticipate an increase in expenditures will be required until FY 28. To the extent LDOE opts to begin hiring in FY 25, and has the funding to do so, expenditures would be expected to begin at that time.

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REVENUE EXPLANATION

Local school districts may be eligible for additional Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) formula funding for foreign language teachers. Any city, parish, or other public school system or school employing a Foreign Language Associate is eligible for a supplemental allocation from BESE, allocated through the MFP formula of \$21,000 per teacher. Financial support by the state for this program is capped at a maximum of 300 Foreign Language Associates employed in any given year. Of the \$21,000 allocation, \$20,000 is to be allocated to the school where the teacher is employed with the funds used to support the total cost of the teacher's salary, and the remaining amount is intended to offset the cost of VISA sponsorship incurred by the employing school district.

Senate Dual Referral Rules
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}


Patrice Thomas
Deputy Fiscal Officer

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CONTINUED EXPLANATION from page one:

LDOE reports they will need to hire two (2) Education Program Consultant (EPC) 3 positions (\$107,641 salary and related benefits and \$15,089 operating expenses each), and assumes annual increases of 4% for personal services and 5% for operating expenses. One EPC 3 will work as an Instructional Materials Review (IMR) Specialist, as there is currently no process in place within the department to receive and review instructional materials in immersion education. The other EPC 3 will work as a World Language Specialist to recruit additional French language instructors and to ensure the department has enough capacity to support additional schools, programs, and international associate teachers. Finally, LDOE anticipates contracting with 24 additional Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs), overseen by the new IMR Specialist, to support staff and schools in French language program implementation and expansion. These contracted TLAs are anticipated to cost the department a total of \$52,000 per year.

In order to ensure they are prepared to assist in implementation of the proposed legislation for the 2028-29 school year, the department will need to hire these employees as soon as possible. The IMR specialist and TLAs will need to begin evaluation of materials submitted from various publishers and other sources based on a rubric to determine which have a high rate of alignment with state standards. LDOE does not currently have either a rubric, or a TLA team for foreign language materials. The department reports it will take time to identify and put together a qualified TLA group, lead them in evaluating the standards and developing a rubric, testing that rubric out, all prior to beginning the actual process of review. Once materials are identified, there will also be time needed to train educators on using the new materials. The department further reports curriculum can be developed, adopted, and rolled out for use in a significantly shorter timeframe, but they do not believe that allows for effective instruction as teachers are not as familiar with the curriculum's guidelines. The LFO is unable to corroborate the timing of hiring additional staff as reported by the department, and therefore assumes an increase in expenditures beginning with FY 28. To the extent LDOE opts to begin hiring in FY 25, and has the funding to do so, expenditures would begin then.

Local education agencies (LEAs) will experience increases in expenditures in order to ensure all schools under their authority are compliant with the provisions of proposed legislation. It is unknown how many public schools currently provide instruction in the French language, and of those how many supply the level of instruction required by proposed legislation. LEAs may need to recruit and hire additional instructors. This need will vary by system and be based on the extent to which schools currently have French language instructors on staff.

More significant impacts are anticipated for those schools and LEAs who do not currently employ French language instructors, and may have difficulty in hiring the quantity they would need to meet the requirements of proposed legislation. Availability of teachers may be an issue depending on location. There may also be additional costs due to the provision that "No school board that offers foreign language instruction in any language other than French shall be determined to be unable to provide French instruction on financial grounds." This will likely result in impacts for schools with limited resources, who are able to afford a single foreign language instructor, who is not a French instructor. The requirement that a school board implement a French program at the request of at least 25 parents, regardless of any determination of financial ability made by BESE, may force a local school district to reduce funding for other purposes. There are expected to be increased costs associated with purchasing a new curriculum to meet the standards of proposed legislation, as well as to purchase textbooks or other instructional materials.

Senate Dual Referral Rules


13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}

13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House

6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}

6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}


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