

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 445

BY REPRESENTATIVES FREIBERG, CARPENTER, MARTINEZ, AND TAYLOR

EDUCATION: Provides relative to the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:4071(A), (B)(introductory paragraph), (E), (F), (H)(1), (2),
3 (5), (6), (7), and (10), and (J) and 4072, to enact R.S. 36:309(E)(3), and to repeal
4 R.S. 17:4071(B)(11), (15), (23), and (24) and R.S. 36:651(K)(6), relative to the
5 Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council;
6 to transfer the council from the Department of Education to Louisiana Works; to
7 provide for the powers, duties, and functions of the council; to provide for the
8 membership of the council; to authorize the council to meet via electronic means; to
9 provide relative to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
10 Education Fund; to provide for the powers, duties, and authority of the commissioner
11 of higher education, the Board of Regents, and Louisiana Works relative to the
12 council; and to provide for related matters.

13 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

14 Section 1. R.S. 17:4071(A), (B)(introductory paragraph), (E), (F), (H)(1), (2), (5),
15 (6), (7), and (10), and (J) and 4072 are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

16 §4071. Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory
17 Council; creation; membership; powers, duties, and functions

18 A. The Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
19 Advisory Council (LaSTEM) is hereby created under the auspices of ~~the Board of~~
20 ~~Regents~~ Louisiana Works to coordinate and oversee the creation, delivery, and

1 promotion of STEM education programs, to increase student interest and
2 achievement in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, to
3 ensure the alignment of education, economic development, industry, and workforce
4 needs, and to increase the number of women who graduate from a postsecondary
5 institution with a STEM degree or credential.

6 B. The council shall consist of ~~twenty-nine members as follows~~ the
7 following members:

8 * * *

9 E. The council shall be chaired by the ~~commissioner of higher education~~ the
10 secretary of Louisiana Works or his designee. The secretary of Louisiana Economic
11 Development or his designee shall serve as the ~~initial~~ vice chairman of the council.
12 ~~Thereafter, the vice chairmanship shall alternate on a triennial basis between the state~~
13 ~~superintendent of education, or his designee, the secretary of Louisiana Economic~~
14 ~~Development or his designee, and the secretary of Louisiana Works or his designee.~~
15 The council may elect such other officers as it deems necessary.

16 F. The council shall meet ~~monthly~~ twice each year and at such other times
17 as called by the chairman. ~~Beginning August 31, 2018, the council shall be required~~
18 ~~to meet only quarterly. The commissioner of higher education shall convene the first~~
19 ~~meeting of the council not later than September 15, 2017.~~ Members of the council
20 may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means in accordance with R.S.
21 42:17.2.

22 * * *

23 H. As funding allows, the council shall:
24 (1) Create a comprehensive, statewide STEM plan that ~~contains clear~~
25 ~~objectives to guide~~ guides the development of STEM education and aligned to
26 STEM career opportunities and ~~aligns elementary, secondary, and postsecondary~~
27 ~~STEM curricula, programs, initiatives, and activities.~~
28 (2) Coordinate all state STEM education-related programs and activities to
29 align to workforce needs.

1 * * *

2 (5) Encourage industry and business entities to provide funding, resources,
3 and technical assistance to ~~elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools to~~
4 promote interest in STEM ~~discipline courses and~~ career opportunities.

5 (6) Connect STEM ~~education~~ resources, initiatives, and programs regionally
6 and throughout the state.

7 (7) Establish an information clearinghouse, to be housed at ~~the Board of~~
8 Regents Louisiana Works, to identify and provide best practice resources for both
9 ~~the secondary and postsecondary educational systems and to review and acquire~~
10 STEM ~~education-related instructional materials~~ education and training.

11 * * *

12 (10) Establish a competitive grants program to fund robotics competitions
13 to provide ~~students at all appropriate grade levels~~ opportunities to improve science,
14 technology, engineering, and mathematics skills by participating in events ~~sponsored~~
15 ~~by a science and technology development program known as FIRST (For Inspiration~~
16 ~~and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics~~. The program may be funded
17 through the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Fund
18 and any other available public or private funds.

19 * * *

20 J. The council, through ~~the Board of Regents~~ Louisiana Works, shall submit
21 a status report regarding all actions taken to implement the provisions of this Section,
22 including metrics that measure the success of implementing council activities and
23 initiatives and any recommendations for legislation or policy changes, to the Senate
24 Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations,
25 ~~and~~ the House Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Labor and
26 Industrial Relations by January thirtieth of each year.

27 §4072. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Fund

28 A. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
29 Education Fund, referred to in this Section as the "fund", is hereby created in the

1 state treasury as a special fund for the purpose of conducting student-focused,
2 project-based; programs and competitions in STEM subjects, including robotics,
3 coding, and design-build test projects, in grades prekindergarten through college
4 level.

5 ~~B.(1) The source of monies deposited into the fund shall be legislative~~
6 ~~appropriations. Monies in the fund shall be subject to appropriation by the~~
7 ~~legislature and shall be available exclusively for programs and initiatives prescribed~~
8 ~~by the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory~~
9 ~~Council.~~

10 ~~(2) The treasurer is hereby authorized to establish a separate account within~~
11 ~~the fund for the deposit of grants and donations received by the Louisiana Science,~~
12 ~~Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council. If the terms and~~
13 ~~conditions of the grant or donation or the agreements pertaining thereto require that~~
14 ~~the monies not be deposited into the treasury, the grant or donation may nevertheless~~
15 ~~be deposited into the fund. Monies in this separate account shall not be subject to~~
16 ~~legislative appropriation but shall be used by the council only to further their~~
17 ~~mission. After allocation of money to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund as~~
18 ~~provided in Article VII, Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana, the treasurer~~
19 ~~shall deposit into the fund any monies transferred or appropriated by the legislature.~~
20 ~~The treasurer shall also deposit into the fund any grants, donations, gifts, or other~~
21 ~~monies which may become available.~~

22 C. All unexpended and unencumbered monies in the fund at the end of the
23 fiscal year shall remain in the fund. Such monies shall be invested by the state
24 treasurer in the same manner as monies in the state general fund, and interest earned
25 on the investment of these monies shall be credited to the fund, after compliance
26 with the requirements of Article VII, Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana,
27 relative to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund.

28 D. ~~The council shall adopt a resolution stating which members or officers are~~
29 ~~authorized to withdraw money from the fund and the separate account in the fund,~~

- (2) The secretary of La. Economic Development, or his designee.
- (3) The secretary of La. Works, or his designee.
- (4) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.
- (5) The president of the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education, or his designee.
- (6) The president of the La. State University System, or his designee.
- (7) The president of the Southern University System, or his designee.
- (8) The president of the University of La. System, or his designee.
- (9) The president of the La. Community and Technical College System, or his designee.
- (10) The executive director of the La. School Boards Association, or his designee.
- (11) The executive director of the La. Association of Public Charter Schools, or his designee.
- (12) The president of the La. Science Teachers Association, or his designee.
- (13) The president of the La. Association of Teachers of Mathematics, or his designee.
- (14) The president of the La. Association of Business and Industry, or his designee.
- (15) Three members with demonstrated interest, experience, and expertise in STEM education, appointed by the governor.
- (16) Three members representing key industries in the state, appointed by the secretary of La. Economic Development.
- (17) A member of the La. Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate.
- (18) A member of the La. House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House.
- (19) The chairman of the La. Workforce Investment Council, or his designee.
- (20) The president of the La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or his designee.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law additionally provides for the following members:

- (1) The executive director of the La. Association of Principals, or his designee.
- (2) Two members who are on the faculty of a La. postsecondary education institution and who teach in a STEM discipline, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.
- (3) The president of the La. Federation of Teachers, or his designee.
- (4) The president of the La. Association of Educators, or his designee.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law provides that the council is chaired by the commissioner of higher education or his designee. Provides that the secretary of La. Economic Development or his designee is the initial vice chairman and that the vice chairmanship alternates on a triennial basis between certain specified members.

Proposed law provides that the council is chaired by the secretary of La. Works and that the secretary of La. Economic Development or his designee is the vice chairman.

Present law requires the council to meet quarterly. Proposed law instead requires the council to meet twice each year. Additionally provides that members of the council may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means in accordance with present law (R.S. 42:17.2).

Present law requires the council to submit a status report by Jan. 30th of each year regarding all actions taken to implement the provisions of present law, including metrics that measure the success of implementing council activities and initiatives and any recommendations for legislation or policy changes. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law requires the council to submit the status report through the Board of Regents to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education. Proposed law provides that the status report is submitted through La. Works and additionally requires the report to be submitted to the Senate and House committees on labor and industrial relations in addition to the committees required by present law. Otherwise retains present law.

Present law creates The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Fund in the state treasury for the purpose of conducting student-focused, project-based, programs and competitions in STEM subjects, including robotics, coding, and design-build test projects, in grades prekindergarten through college level. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides that the source of monies deposited into the fund is legislative appropriations. Provides that monies in the fund are subject to appropriation by the legislature and shall be available exclusively for programs and initiatives prescribed by the council.

Present law authorizes the treasurer to establish a separate account within the fund for the deposit of grants and donations received by the council. Provides that if the terms and conditions of the grant or donation or the agreements pertaining thereto require that the monies not be deposited into the treasury, the grant or donation may nevertheless be deposited into the fund. Provides that monies in this separate account shall not be subject to legislative appropriation but shall be used by the council only to further their mission. Requires the council to adopt a resolution stating which members or officers are authorized to withdraw money from the fund and the separate account in the fund, which resolution shall be submitted to the state treasury. Provides that monies in the fund and the separate account shall only be used by the council to further their mission.

Proposed law repeals present law. Provides that after allocation of money to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund as provided in present constitution (Art. VII, §9(B)), the treasurer shall deposit into the fund any monies transferred or appropriated by the legislature. Requires the treasurer to also deposit into the fund any grants, donations, gifts, or other monies which may become available.

Present law provides that all unexpended and unencumbered monies in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund. Provides that such monies shall be invested by the state treasurer in the same manner as monies in the state general fund, and interest earned on the investment of these monies shall be credited to the fund, after compliance with the

requirements of present constitution (Art. VII, §9(B)) relative to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund.

Proposed law retains present law.

(Amends R.S. 17:4071(A), (B)(intro. para.), (E), (F), (H)(1), (2), (5), (6), (7), (10), and (J) and 4072; Adds R.S. 36:309(E)(3); Repeals R.S. 17:4071(B)(11), (15), (23), and (24) and R.S. 36:651(K)(6))