
DIGEST

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HB 445 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Freiberg

Abstract: Provides relative to the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council (LaSTEM).

Present law (R.S. 17:4071) creates the LaSTEM Advisory Council to coordinate and oversee the creation, delivery, and promotion of STEM education programs, to increase student interest and achievement in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, to ensure the alignment of education, economic development, industry, and workforce needs, and to increase the number of women who graduate from a postsecondary institution with a STEM degree or credential.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law creates the council under the auspices of the Board of Regents. Present law (R.S. 36:651(K)) places the council within the Dept. of Education.

Proposed law provides that the council is created under the auspices of La. Works and places the council within that department.

Present law provides that the council consists of the following members:

- (1) The commissioner of higher education, or his designee.
- (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))