
DIGEST

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HB No. 19

Abstract: Provides that, effective for the 2005-2006 school year, present law provisions relative to the requirements for student/lead teacher and student/adult staff member ratios for LA 4 classes shall not apply to public school systems and charter schools that provide LA 4 classes and meet certain specified requirements relative to enrollment of displaced students.

Present law provides for early childhood development and enrichment activity classes (LA 4 classes) for four-year-old children in public school systems and charter schools that apply for funding and use such funding solely to provide such classes. Requires the state Dept. of Education to allocate funding for such classes to participating school systems and charter schools out of funds appropriated for such purpose.

Provides that LA 4 classes shall be made available to every eligible child who meets certain specified requirements. Provides that such classes shall be provided at no cost, except applicable lunch cost, for any eligible child who is eligible to receive free or reduced price meals. Further provides that any other eligible child may be charged tuition for such classes and provides relative to the amounts of such tuition. Allows for such tuition to be scaled and imposed according to a student's family income in compliance with rules of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

Provides for partial participation in LA 4 classes by certain school systems and requirements relative to such participation. Provides for renewal procedures for participating school systems, including those participating on a partial basis.

Provides relative to funding amounts to be provided by the state Dept. of Education to participating school systems. Prohibits the allocation of funds for student participation in the LA 4 classes if a student participates in another early childhood education class which is funded from another source, but allows a participating school system to receive funding from the state Dept. of Education on a reimbursement basis under certain circumstances. Requires that any appropriated money that is not allocated for LA 4 classes shall revert to the fund from which it was appropriated and further provides for the redistribution of unallocated money in any election district. Provides for suspension of payments to participating school systems under certain circumstances and provides for procedures for funding LA 4 classes when there is less money appropriated than is required for full funding of all eligible applicants.

Provides certain requirements for each participating school system relative to submitting applications, providing for resource coordination services, meeting with all other governmentally

funded early childhood education providers, maintaining certain levels of funding, providing certain notices to parents, and reporting any required information. Provides authorization for such school systems relative to entering into consortiums with other participating systems, providing the LA 4 classes to other eligible children at no cost, and working with other governmentally funded early childhood education providers.

Provides certain requirements for the state Dept. of Education as it relates to the administration of the LA 4 classes and requires BESE to adopt rules necessary for such administration (which include minimum salary amounts for lead teachers and all other employees who have direct contact with students).

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law (R.S. 17:24.10(C)(4)) requires certain components to be included in each LA 4 class, including a full-day program of not less than 10 hours per day, classroom and instructional supplies, appropriate space and facilities, appropriate meals and snacks, and transportation for students. Additionally requires that each LA 4 class include a lead teacher in each classroom and a student to lead teacher ratio of no more than 20 to one and a student to adult staff member ratio of no more than 10 to one.

Proposed law retains present law except provides that, effective for the 2005-2006 school year, present law requirement relative to class ratios shall not be applicable to any public school system or charter school that provides LA 4 classes pursuant to present law if both of the following apply:

- (1) The school system or charter school enrolled any students during the 2005-2006 school year who were displaced from school in such year due to school closures as a result of natural catastrophe or disaster.
- (2) The school system or charter school cannot meet the requirements of present law due to the enrollment of students as specified in (1) above as certified by the state superintendent of education and approved by BESE.

Proposed law authorizes BESE to adopt rules effective for the 2005-2006 school year relative to the ratios required for LA 4 classes.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:24.10(C)(4))