

Existing law (R.S. 17:154.1(A)(1)) provides that the minimum school day for grades one through 12 in every public school shall consist of 360 minutes of instructional time and the minimum school year shall consist of 177 days of instruction. Authorizes school governing authorities to modify the total number of instructional minutes per day and instructional days per year under certain conditions, provided the same minimum total instructional minutes for the year is not changed.

Existing law (R.S. 17:154.1(A)(3) and (4)) exempts from existing law requirements relative to instructional time, for the 2002-2003 school year and thereafter, certain public schools and school systems that cannot meet such requirements for the particular school year due to certain school closures for reasons of natural catastrophe or disaster. Provides for certification by the state superintendent of education and approval by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) of any school's or school system's failure to meet existing law requirements. Requires such schools and school systems to submit documented information to the state superintendent explaining the reasons for not meeting such requirements and efforts made toward meeting the requirements. Further exempts from existing law requirements, for the 2002-2003 school year, school systems in parishes having at least 475,000 persons that cannot meet such requirements for such school year due to the school system providing professional development for teachers during the school day and the reduced instructional time does not exceed 180 minutes.

New law retains existing law and adds that effective for the 2005-2006 school year, existing law requirements relative to instructional time shall not be applicable to any public school or school system which cannot meet such requirements for the 2005-2006 school year due to school closure for reasons of natural catastrophe or disaster. Provides for certification of such applicability by the state superintendent of education and approval by BESE in accordance with criteria established pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by BESE for such purpose. Specifies that such rules and regulations shall include a requirement that any public school or school system not able to meet existing law requirements submit to the state superintendent documented information explaining the reasons why such school or school system cannot meet such requirements and any efforts made by the school or school system toward meeting the requirements and a revised school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year. Provides that such rules and regulations also require schools and school systems to comply with the revised calendar and any changes in such calendar that the board may require. Provides that new law shall apply to an entire school system only if every school within the system is forced to close.

Existing law (R.S. 17:154.1(B)) authorizes local superintendents to dismiss school due to emergency situations as defined by BESE provided that no school year shall be less than 177 days of instruction.

New law retains existing law.

Existing law (R.S. 17:154.3) requires that all teachers shall work not less than 182 days per school year and except as provided in R.S. 17:154.1(A), no fewer than 177 of such days shall be used to provide instruction to students.

New law retains existing law except provides that, effective for the 2005-2006 school year, existing law provisions relative to the requirement that teachers work not less than 182 days per school year shall not be applicable. Authorizes BESE to adopt rules effective for the 2005-2006 school year relative to the minimum number of teacher work days.

Effective upon signature of governor (November 29, 2005).

(Amends R.S. 17:154.3; Adds R.S. 17:154.1(A)(5))