Regular Session, 2013

SENATE BILL NO. 205

BY SENATOR LAFLEUR

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

SCHOOLS. Provides for the establishment of foreign language immersion programs in local public school districts. (8/1/13)

1   AN ACT

2   To enact R.S. 17:273.3, relative to foreign language immersion programs; to authorize local

3   public school boards to establish foreign language immersion programs; to provide

4   for a process whereby parents may petition a local public school board to establish

5   a foreign language immersion program; and to provide for related matters.

6   Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7   Section 1. R.S. 17:273.3 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8   **§273.3 Foreign language immersion programs; creation by local school boards;**

9   **parent petition**

10   **A. This Section shall be known and may be cited as the "Immersion**

11   **School Choice Act".**

12   **B. The legislature finds that:**

13   **(1) Research indicates that students who participate in foreign language**

14   **immersion programs, particularly French, demonstrate greater levels of**

15   **proficiency in the English language, higher overall academic achievement, and**

16   **higher levels of self-esteem.**

17   **(2) Learning a second language has a positive effect on intellectual**

1   **growth and increased awareness of diverse cultures through access to history,**

2   **art, and literature.**

3   **(3) Students in foreign language immersion programs have been shown**

4   **to demonstrate enhanced cognitive functions in solving complex problems and**

5   **mathematical computations through the development of more divergent and**

6   **higher order thinking skills.**

7   **(4) In Louisiana, French language development and French language**

8   **immersion programs, in particular, provide a better understanding of the**

9   **state's social traditions and serve to promote and preserve our unique bilingual**

10   **culture.**

11   **C.(1) Any local public school board may establish a foreign language**

12   **immersion program in any school under its jurisdiction that shall be open to the**

13   **enrollment of any student who resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of**

14   **the school district.**

15   (2)(a) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local school board, if

16   requested through a petition signed by the parent or legal guardian of at least twenty-

17   five students enrolled in kindergarten who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries

18   of the school district, shall establish a foreign language immersion program for such

19   students, provided that the parent or legal guardian of each student commits, in

20   writing, that the student will participate in the program.

21   (b) Such program shall be continued as long as at least twenty students

22   remain enrolled in the program.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

DIGEST

Proposed law creates the "Immersion School Choice Act" and provides as follows:

(1)   Authorizes a local public school board to establish a foreign language immersion program in any school under its jurisdiction that shall be open to the enrollment of any student who resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of the school district.

(2)   Provides that, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local public school board, if requested through a petition signed by the parent or legal guardian of at least 25

students enrolled in kindergarten who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the school district, shall establish a foreign language immersion program for such students, provided the parent or legal guardian of each student commits, in writing, that the student will participate in the program. Further provides that such program shall be continued as long as at least 20 students remain enrolled in the program.

Effective August 1, 2013.

(Adds R.S. 17:273.3)

Coding: Words which are ~~struck through~~ are deletions from existing law; words in **boldface type and underscored** are additions.