

Regular Session, 2013

SENATE BILL NO. 205

BY SENATORS LAFLEUR AND GUILLORY AND REPRESENTATIVE ORTEGO

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 public school districts and repeals the Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act. (8/1/13)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:273.3 and to repeal Subpart D-2 of Part III of Chapter 1 of Title 17 of the

3 Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:286.1 through 286.7,

4 relative to curriculum and instruction; to provide relative to foreign language

5 immersion programs; to authorize local public school boards to establish foreign

6 language immersion programs; to provide for a process whereby parents may request

7 a local public school board to establish a foreign language immersion program; to

8 provide for certification of such programs; to repeal the Balanced Treatment for

9 Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act; and to provide for related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

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

12 **§273.3. Foreign language immersion programs; creation by local school**

13 **boards; parent petition**

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

15 **School Choice Act".**

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

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

1 immersion programs, particularly French, demonstrate greater levels of  
2 proficiency in the English language, higher overall academic achievement, and  
3 higher levels of self-esteem.

4 (2) Learning a second language has a positive effect on intellectual  
5 growth and increased awareness of diverse cultures through access to history,  
6 art, and literature.

7 (3) Students in foreign language immersion programs have been shown  
8 to demonstrate enhanced cognitive functions in solving complex problems and  
9 mathematical computations through the development of more divergent and  
10 higher order thinking skills.

11 (4) In Louisiana, French language development and French language  
12 immersion programs, in particular, provide a better understanding of the  
13 state's social traditions and serve to promote, preserve, and develop our unique  
14 bilingual culture.

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

19 (2)(a) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local school board,  
20 if requested in writing by the parent or legal guardian of at least twenty-five  
21 students enrolled in kindergarten who reside within the jurisdictional  
22 boundaries of the school district, shall establish a foreign language immersion  
23 program for such students, provided that both of the following apply:

24 (i) The parent or legal guardian of each student commits, in writing, that  
25 the student will participate in the program.

26 (ii) The requisite number of written requests are submitted to the local  
27 school board not later than March first prior to the school year in which the  
28 program is to be established.

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

- 1           **remain enrolled in the program.**
- 2                   (c) **The local school board shall ensure that any foreign language**
- 3           **immersion program established pursuant to this Section is designated as a**
- 4           **Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program by the State Board of**
- 5           **Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with R.S. 17:273.2.**

6           Section 2. Subpart D-2 of Part III of Chapter 1 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised

7           Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:286.1 through 286.7, is hereby repealed.

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

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#### DIGEST

LaFleur (SB 205)

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 in writing 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:
  - (a) The parent or legal guardian of each student commits, in writing, that the student will participate in the program.
  - (b) The requisite number of signatures are submitted to the local school board not later than March first prior to the school year in which the program is to be established.
- (3) Provides that such program shall be continued as long as at least 20 students remain enrolled in the program.
- (4) Requires the local school board to ensure that any foreign language immersion program created pursuant to proposed law is designated as a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program in accordance with applicable law.

Present law provides for the Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act which required public schools in the state to give balanced treatment to creation-science and evolution-science in classroom instruction and instructional materials.

Proposed law repeals present law which was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. (Edwards v. Aguillard, La. 1987, 107 S. Ct. 2573, 96 L.Ed.2d 510.)

Effective August 1, 2013.

(Adds R.S. 17:273.3; repeals RS 17:286.1-286.7)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by SenateCommittee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Replaces parent petition process with written request by specified number of parents.
2. Provides that the required number of written requests be submitted to the local school board by March first of the year prior to the school year in which the program will be established.
3. Requires the local school board to ensure that immersion programs established pursuant to proposed law are designated as a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program by BESE.
4. Repeals the Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act.