
The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alan Miller.

DIGEST

LaFleur (SB 533)

Proposed law, which establishes Louisiana Early Learning Enrollment Coordination procedures, requires BESE to authorize local early learning enrollment coordinators that conduct a process for informing families about early childhood care and education programs in a coverage area, collect family preferences, develop and use a common application process, determine demand, and make recommendations to the Department of Education (DOE).

Proposed law provides that no entity that is currently providing early childhood care and education may be authorized as a local early learning enrollment coordinator.

Proposed law provides that no entity which has a potential conflict of interest with any early learning center, as determined by the DOE, may be authorized as a local early learning enrollment coordinator.

Proposed law provides that prior to authorizing local early learning enrollment coordinators, BESE shall:

- (1) Approve a process no later than 6/30/2015 to authorize entities as local early learning enrollment coordinators to begin performing required services as early as the 2015-2016 school year. Further, BESE shall make every attempt to ensure statewide coverage no later than the 2016-2017 school year.
- (2) Not certify any entity as a local early learning enrollment coordinator under proposed law unless it is in compliance with procedures and regulations established by BESE. The entity shall be either a state agency or a nonprofit or for-profit corporation having an educational or social services mission, including but not limited to a nonprofit corporation of a philanthropic or policy nature, a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution, or a nonprofit corporation established by the governing authority of a parish or municipality.
- (3) Review each proposed local early learning enrollment coordinator in a timely manner and determine whether each proposed coordinator complies with the law and rules and whether the proposal is valid, complete, and financially well-structured.
- (4) Approve a process by which the department serves as the local early learning enrollment coordinator for those coverage areas without an approved entity.
- (5) Initially authorize the local early learning enrollment coordinators for a period up to five years. After the initial authorization period, BESE may grant renewal of authorization for

additional periods of not less than three years nor more than five years after thorough review of the local early learning enrollment coordinator activities.

- (6) Promulgate rules establishing an appeals process and designating DOE to oversee the process through which families and early learning centers may appeal decisions made by local early learning enrollment coordinators.

Proposed law provides that local early learning enrollment coordinators shall support families in accessing high-quality publicly-funded early childhood care and education by:

- (1) Conducting a process for disseminating information about early childhood care and education programs and collecting family preferences in order to make distribution recommendations.
- (2) Using a common application process, annually determine family demand for publicly-funded early childhood care and education within the coverage area.
- (3) Producing an annual recommendation to DOE of the distribution of available publicly-funded early childhood care and education slots within the region.

Proposed law provides that pursuant to rules adopted by BESE, DOE shall allocate from public funds available for early childhood care and education programs an amount not to exceed 2% of such programs to fund local early learning enrollment coordinators in performing required services. DOE may additionally use such funds to support any local enrollment pilot programs during the 2014-2015 school year in order to inform the establishment of rules adopted by BESE on or before 6/30/2015.

Proposed law authorizes BESE to establish start-up or incubation grants to encourage sufficient supply of high-quality local early learning enrollment coordinators.

Proposed law requires the local early learning enrollment coordinator to annually submit to DOE an independent financial audit conducted by a certified public accountant who has been approved by the legislative auditor, along with the auditor's statement that the report is free of material misstatements. The audit shall be limited in scope to those records necessary to ensure that the coordinator has used funds to perform required services, and it shall be submitted to the legislative auditor for review and investigation of any irregularities or audit findings. Requires the local early learning enrollment coordinator to return to the state any funds that the legislative auditor determines were expended in a manner inconsistent with state law or state board regulations. The cost of such audit shall be paid by the department from funds provided pursuant to proposed law.

Requires all rules required in the proposed law to be adopted pursuant to the APA.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:407.41-407.46)