

Prior law established the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program (LA 4), a program for early childhood development and enrichment activity classes. Required the state Dept. of Education to allocate funding out of monies appropriated for such purpose. New law authorizes any public or private entity, including a nonprofit organization, to make a directed donation to a participating school district for a student who is enrolled in LA 4 classes, as follows:

- (1) Authorizes private businesses, industry, foundations, charities, and other groups to make a request to the division of administration that they may create privately funded scholarship programs to make payments to participating school districts on behalf of qualified students.
- (2) Provides that if the division approves such a program, funds received by a school district from the program shall cause an equivalent reduction in the amount allocated to the district.
- (3) Prohibits the following:
 - (a) The interpretation of new law in a manner that would cause a school district to receive less benefits than it would have received.
 - (b) The construal or implementation of new law in a manner that would cause the loss of any funding for early childhood programs or services including LA 4 program and the Child Care and Development Fund.
- (4) Provides that if a district receives scholarship funds, the annual appropriation of state funds for the LA 4 Program shall be reduced by the amount of such funds.
- (5) Requires the state treasurer to (a) deposit the amount of the reduction as specified by the commissioner of administration into the prior law Overcollections Fund and (b) credit the deposit to an account within the fund created by new law and known as the "Program Participation Savings Account".

Effective July 1, 2014.

(Adds R.S. 17:407.26)