

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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June 27, 2023

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Clay J. Schexnayder
Speaker of the House
Louisiana House of Representatives
Post Office Box 94062
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9062



RE: Veto of House Bill 205 of the 2023 Regular Session

Dear Speaker Schexnayder:

Please be advised that I have vetoed House Bill 205 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Although well-intentioned, the disparate treatment this legislation would create among education professionals across the state requires that this bill not become law.

Throughout my career as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, and during my two terms as governor, I have advocated for and supported our public school systems and teachers. Under the previous administration and throughout my time as governor, outside interests have worked and continue to work to erode the public's confidence in our public school system. Louisiana's public school system suffered from a lack of investment in public education under the previous administration's motto of doing more with less and, as a result, we currently have a shortage of teachers, low enrollment in the colleges of education, and are competing with surrounding states to attract and retain qualified educators.

As governor, it has been a priority of mine to work with the legislature to increase teacher pay to the southern regional average. Throughout my service as governor and with the support of the legislature we have been able to provide our educators with incremental salary increases. Although not fully successful, teacher pay has increased more than \$5000, which is not an unsubstantial amount, over the last five years. The salary increases were possible because Louisiana now has a growing, diversified economy and practices sound budgeting policies.

Unfortunately, without additional guard rails, this legislation if signed into law would create unfunded mandates on school districts already struggling financially while at the same time

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exempting charter schools and special school districts from the additional compensation mandates. Even further, students in many school districts that are the most resource constrained would likely be unable to participate in and benefit from many of the extracurricular activities that should be available to all students. I appreciate Representative Bryant taking on this legislation to provide additional compensation to our public school teachers for the work and the service they provide to our state and it is my hope that the legislature continues to fight for our teachers.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

enclosure

cc: Honorable Patrick Page Cortez
Louisiana Senate President