

1 WHEREAS, fifty-six percent of respondents reported having a formal policy in place
2 regarding student fees, while eighty-nine percent reported that they did not publish on their
3 websites, for parental review, a listing of specific fees assessed; and

4 WHEREAS, few respondents were able to identify a formal policy or information
5 on their websites regarding economic hardship waivers for students unable to pay fees; and

6 WHEREAS, without consideration of family economic hardships, economically
7 disadvantaged students could experience limited access to rigorous courses, experiences, and
8 services that comprise a quality education; and

9 WHEREAS, based on the findings of the report, the legislature passed House
10 Resolution No. 183 of the 2017 Regular Session, which requested the governing authority
11 of each public school and each nonpublic school that participates in the Student Scholarships
12 for Educational Excellence Program to adopt a policy on the assessment, collection, and use
13 of student fees; and

14 WHEREAS, in response to the resolution, the state Department of Education notified
15 all such governing authorities of the legislature's request and administered a survey to
16 determine which governing authorities had taken actions to adopt the policies requested; and

17 WHEREAS, the department received responses from sixty-three percent of such
18 governing authorities; sixty-one percent of respondents reported already having or having
19 recently adopted a formal, written policy, and thirty-nine percent reported that they did not
20 have such a policy; and

21 WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of governing authorities were unable to
22 identify clear language within their policies for addressing economic hardships when
23 students are unable to pay fees; and

24 WHEREAS, the practice of not addressing economic hardships in a clear and
25 consistent manner risks the creation of barriers to equity and opportunity; and

26 WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana provides that the goal of the public
27 educational system is to provide learning environments and experiences, at all stages of
28 human development, that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that
29 every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential; and

1 WHEREAS, all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, must have equal
2 access to a quality education in order to develop to their full potential.

3 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
4 establish the Task Force on Student Fees to study and make recommendations relative to the
5 assessment of fees to students attending public schools and students attending nonpublic
6 schools through the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program and to submit
7 a written report of findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education and
8 the Senate Committee on Education not later than January 31, 2019.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force shall be as
10 follows:

11 (1) One local superintendent appointed by the Louisiana Association of School
12 Superintendents.

13 (2) One member or staff representative of the Louisiana School Boards Association
14 appointed by the executive director.

15 (3) One charter school leader appointed by the Louisiana Association for Public
16 Charter Schools.

17 (4) One member or staff representative of the Louisiana Association of Public
18 Charter Schools appointed by the executive director.

19 (5) Two principals appointed by the Louisiana Association of Principals.

20 (6) One leader of a nonpublic school that participates in the Student Scholarships for
21 Educational Excellence Program appointed by the chair of the Nonpublic School Advisory
22 Council established by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

23 (7) Three parents of children attending a traditional public school, a charter school,
24 and a nonpublic school participating in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence
25 Program, respectively, selected by the Louisiana Parent Teacher Association.

26 (8) A representative of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
27 who works with family economic assistance programs appointed by the secretary of the
28 department.

29 (9) One member of the House Committee on Education appointed by the chairman.

30 (10) One member of the Senate Committee on Education appointed by the chairman.

1 (11) One representative of the state Department of Education who participated in the
2 studies conducted in response to House Concurrent Resolution No. 137 of the 2016 Regular
3 Session and House Resolution No. 183 of the 2017 Regular Session appointed by the state
4 superintendent of education.

5 (12) One representative of Urban League of Louisiana appointed by the president.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall study and make
7 recommendations relative to matters that include but need not be limited to the following:

8 (1) The establishment of clear, transparent, and consistent processes by which fees
9 and economic hardship considerations are clearly communicated to parents and the public.

10 (2) The needs of economically disadvantaged students in order to provide for equal
11 access to schools, rigorous courses, and enriching experiences.

12 (3) Related policies and processes of other states that may serve as best practices.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the representative from the state Department of
14 Education shall convene the first meeting not later than September 1, 2018, and that
15 department staff shall provide administrative support to the task force.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature does hereby urge and request the
17 governing authorities of all public elementary and secondary schools and nonpublic schools
18 participating in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program to fully
19 cooperate with the task force and provide any requested information that may be needed to
20 complete its work.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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2018 Regular Session

Smith

Creates the Task Force on Student Fees to study and make recommendations relative to the assessment of student fees and to submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House and Senate education committees not later than Jan. 31, 2019.