

2018 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 144

BY SENATOR JOHNS

EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY. Requests BESE, DOE, and K-12 governing authorities to develop policies relative to student participation in state-mandated assessments.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state
3 Department of Education, and public school governing authorities to develop and
4 adopt policies and guidelines relative to students whose parents opt them out of
5 participation in state-mandated assessments.

6 WHEREAS, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires each state to
7 develop an educational accountability plan that utilizes data derived from state-mandated
8 assessments to determine student, school, and district performance; and

9 WHEREAS, ESSA further requires states to administer state assessments to a
10 minimum of ninety-five percent of all students eligible to participate in state assessments;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, despite the ninety-five percent student participation rate mandated by
13 ESSA, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) requires every
14 student to participate in state assessments; and

15 WHEREAS, the Louisiana school and district accountability system provides that
16 students whose parents opt not to have them participate in state-mandated assessments are
17 given a zero on the assessments, thus penalizing schools and districts by effectively lowering
18 their performance scores and letter grades; and

1 WHEREAS, although ESSA provides that states have the authority over policies
2 governing a parent's right to opt their children out of state tests, provided the ninety-five
3 percent student participation is maintained, BESE has not adopted a parental opt-out policy;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, the five-percent variance in the student participation rate allowed by
6 ESSA could be used to accommodate a parental opt-out policy, without putting the state in
7 danger of violating the provisions of ESSA; and

8 WHEREAS, BESE and the state Department of Education penalize students who do
9 not participate in state assessments by barring them from participating in student recognition
10 programs such as the Student of the Year program; and

11 WHEREAS, instances of public school governing authorities penalizing a student
12 or a school's student body for student nonparticipation in state assessments have been
13 reported; and

14 WHEREAS, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state
15 Department of Education, and public school governing authorities should refrain from
16 adopting policies, regulations, guidelines, and practices which penalize a student, group of
17 students, school, or district when a parent opts not to have his child participate in
18 state-mandated assessments.

19 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
20 does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the
21 state Department of Education, and public school governing authorities to develop and adopt
22 policies and guidelines relative to students whose parents opt them out of participation in
23 state-mandated assessments.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does
25 hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the
26 state Department of Education to reconsider any current policies that penalize students,
27 schools, and districts through the educational accountability system for students whose
28 parents opt not to have their child participate in state-mandated assessments.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
30 president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state

