

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 228

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCFARLAND

SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS: Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study challenges of rural school systems impacted by economic downturn

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study  
3 challenges faced by rural school systems impacted by economic downturn resulting  
4 in decreased revenues and declining student populations and to submit a written  
5 report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education  
6 no later than January 31, 2020.

7 WHEREAS, rural communities across Louisiana experience unique challenges,  
8 including lack of a strong economic base to support sufficient funding for public education;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, school systems in rural communities with low property values and little  
11 industry struggle due to this insufficient funding for public education; and

12 WHEREAS, the loss of even one large employer within a rural community has a  
13 dramatic negative effect on the financial viability of the local school system resulting in  
14 decreased revenues and declining student enrollment; and

15 WHEREAS, as a significant barrier faced by these rural school systems, inadequate  
16 funding is further compounded by other challenges such as high-poverty rates, growing  
17 populations of English Language Learners, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining  
18 qualified teachers; and

19 WHEREAS, in addition, many rural school systems have to spend a higher share of  
20 their budgets on transportation and other non-instructional costs due to their locations and  
21 dispersed student populations; and

1           WHEREAS, measures that can be used by rural school systems to compensate for  
2 these challenges include sharing services, resources, and personnel across school systems,  
3 school system consolidation, and school closures; and

4           WHEREAS, although these measures have been successful in some cases, these  
5 options may not be available to all rural school systems in the state due to the costs and time  
6 required; and

7           WHEREAS, the minimum foundation program (MFP) was created to ensure that all  
8 school systems, regardless of wealth, are able to secure the funds necessary to meet the  
9 needs of all students; and

10           WHEREAS, the MFP is designed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary  
11 Education with separate calculations to provide funding for different educational needs and  
12 costs; and

13           WHEREAS, rural school systems have distinctive needs and challenges that require  
14 policies and solutions that consider the specific needs of rural students, educators, and  
15 communities.

16           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
17 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and  
18 Secondary Education to study challenges faced by rural school systems impacted by  
19 economic downturn resulting in decreased revenues and declining student populations and  
20 to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on  
21 Education no later than January 31, 2020.

22           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report shall include but not be limited to the  
23 following:

24           (1) A list of Louisiana's rural school systems, a summary of each system's financial  
25 status including but not limited to the information specific to each school system as  
26 contained in the "Annual Financial and Statistical Report" published by the state Department  
27 of Education, and an overview of the financial risks or vulnerabilities that each such system  
28 may be experiencing.

29           (2) Options and recommendations to identify measures to be taken to ensure that  
30 rural school systems remain viable and responsive to the needs of their students and families.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study shall be conducted in collaboration  
2 with the Louisiana School Boards Association and the Louisiana Association of School  
3 Superintendents.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
5 president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state  
6 superintendent of education, the president and the executive director of the Louisiana School  
7 Boards Association, and the president of the Louisiana Association of School  
8 Superintendents.

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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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HR 228 Original

2019 Regular Session

McFarland

Requests the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education to study challenges faced by rural school systems impacted by economic downturn resulting in decreased revenues and declining student populations and to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education by Jan. 1, 2020.