

ACT No. 400

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 421

BY REPRESENTATIVE EMERSON

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:3996(B)(59) and Chapter 43-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:4036.1, relative to elementary and secondary education; to authorize public school governing authorities to establish student learning pods for the purpose of providing small group instruction; to provide that students assigned to learning pods shall be enrolled in the school; to require instruction in learning pods to be provided by public school teachers; to provide relative to funding; to provide relative to policies and procedures; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:3996(B)(59) and Chapter 43-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:4036.1, are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

* * *

B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

* * *

1 (59) Learning pods (R.S. 17:4036.1).

2 * * *

3 CHAPTER 43-B. LEARNING PODS

4 §4036.1. Learning pods

5 A. Each public school governing authority may establish learning pods as
6 an extension of any school under its jurisdiction. For purposes of this Chapter,
7 "learning pod" means a group of at least ten students enrolled in the school who
8 receive instruction in a small group setting.

9 B. A student shall be assigned to a learning pod only if the assignment is
10 requested by his parent or authorized by his parent upon the recommendation of
11 school officials.

12 C. All instruction provided to students assigned to learning pods shall be
13 provided by teachers on the staff of the school who meet all qualifications and are
14 subject to all requirements applicable to teachers at the school who are not assigned
15 to a learning pod.

16 D. Students assigned to a learning pod shall be:

17 (1) Counted among the enrollment of the public school governing authority
18 for purposes of full funding through the Minimum Foundation Program formula.

19 (2) Subject to all requirements applicable to students enrolled in the school
20 who are not assigned to a learning pod.

21 (3) Eligible for participation in all services and activities for which they
22 would be eligible if not assigned to a learning pod.

23 E. The establishment of learning pods shall be subject to policies and
24 procedures adopted by a public school governing authority, which, at a minimum,
25 shall provide for the following:

26 (1) The student population of the learning pod, which may be a blended
27 population of students of different grade levels.

28 (2) The method of instruction for the learning pod, which may occur in-
29 person at a physical location on the school campus, remotely through virtual
30 instruction, or through a hybrid approach that combines both methods.

1 (3) Any specialized curriculum or program provided in the learning pod.

2 (4) The process for a parent to request student assignment to a learning pod,
3 grant authorization for a student's assignment to a learning pod if recommended by
4 school officials, and withdraw a student from a learning pod.

5 F. This Chapter does not apply to or have any effect on any learning pod or
6 other group of students that is formed and operated by parents, regardless of whether
7 they are enrolled in a public school or a nonpublic school or participating in a home
8 study program.

9 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
10 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
11 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
12 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
13 effective on the day following such approval.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____