

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 736

BY REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU

EDUCATION/PERSONNEL: Establishes the Athletic Trainer Professional Development Program in the Dept. of Education and provides for administration, qualification, and implementation of the various components of the program

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 31 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised  
3 of R.S. 17:3721 through 3726, relative to increasing the number of certified athletic  
4 trainers in rural areas; to establish the Athletic Trainer Professional Development  
5 Program; to provide with respect to the powers and duties of the Department of  
6 Education; to provide funding for the program; to provide qualifications and  
7 restrictions for the program; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for  
8 related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 31 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,  
11 comprised of R.S. 17:3721 through 3726 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 31. ATHLETIC TRAINER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

13 §3721. Athletic Trainer Professional Development Program

14 The Athletic Trainer Professional Development Program is hereby created  
15 in the Department of Education. The program is established to meet the projected  
16 shortage of certified athletic trainers employed at high schools in rural areas of the  
17 state by increasing the number of certified athletic trainers through a loan repayment  
18 program.

1        §3722. Definitions

2                For the purpose of this Chapter, the following terms have the following  
3        meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

4                (1) "Athletic trainer" means an individual possessing a Masters Degree in  
5        Athletic Training from an institution accredited by the Commission on Accreditation  
6        of Athletic Training Education.

7                (2) "Department" means the Department of Education.

8                (3) "Rural area" means a parish with a population of fewer than one hundred  
9        ten thousand persons according to the latest federal decennial census.

10              (4) "Superintendent" means the superintendent of education for public  
11        elementary and secondary education.

12        §3723. Retention and recruitment

13              A. The department shall develop and administer a plan for recruitment and  
14        retention of athletic trainers at high schools in rural areas. The plan shall provide for  
15        identification of shortage areas, prioritization of long-term and short-term goals,  
16        strategies for recruiting athletic trainers to rural areas, and public input.

17              B. The department shall implement the retention and recruitment plan,  
18        directly or through contract. Implementation may include advertising and  
19        promotion, professional recruitment services, travel, and all other necessary tasks.  
20        Total implementation costs shall not exceed seventy-five thousand dollars.

21        §3724. Loan repayment program

22              A. The department shall administer a loan repayment program.

23              B. To be eligible for the loan repayment program, an applicant must be an  
24        athletic trainer, be willing to work for a high school in a rural area, and meet any  
25        other requirements which may be established by the department.

26              C. Educational loans obtained by an eligible applicant for attending an  
27        accredited, athletic-trainer program shall be repaid retroactively after each term of  
28        service employed at a high school in a rural area for up to five years depending upon

1        the applicant's length of service. Loans shall be repaid pursuant to the provisions of  
2        this Section at the following rates:

3                (1) Six thousand dollars per year of service if the applicant obtained his  
4        degree from a school or program in Louisiana.

5                (2) Four thousand dollars per year of service if the applicant obtained his  
6        degree from a school or program outside of Louisiana.

7                D. No later than January 1, 2023, the department shall establish an  
8        implementation schedule for loan repayments.

9        §3725. Rules

10               The superintendent shall promulgate rules and regulations in accordance with  
11        the Administrative Procedure Act as necessary to carry out the provisions of this  
12        Part.

13        §3726. Athletic Trainer Professional Development Fund

14               There is hereby created as a special fund in the state treasury the Athletic  
15        Trainer Professional Development Fund, hereinafter "fund". The treasurer is hereby  
16        authorized to transfer and deposit one and one-half million dollars of state general  
17        fund monies into the fund after compliance with the requirements of Article VII,  
18        Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana relative to the Bond Security and  
19        Redemption Fund. Monies in the fund shall be used for the programs established in  
20        this Chapter. Monies in the fund shall be invested by the treasurer in the same  
21        manner as monies in the state general fund and all interest earned shall be deposited  
22        in and credited to the fund. All unexpended or unencumbered monies in the fund at  
23        the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund.

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

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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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HB 736 Engrossed

2022 Regular Session

Beaulieu

**Abstract:** Establishes the Athletic Trainer Professional Development Program in the Dept. of Education ("department") and provides for funding and administration of the program and qualifications and restrictions for program offerings.

Proposed law seeks to increase the number of certified athletic trainers at high schools in rural areas of the state by establishing a loan repayment program for qualifying individuals. Defines "athletic trainer" to mean an individual possessing a Masters Degree in Athletic Training from an institution accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education. Defines "rural area" to mean a parish with a population of fewer than 110,000 persons as of the most recent federal decennial census.

Proposed law requires the department to develop and administer a plan for recruitment and retention of athletic trainers at high schools in rural areas. Requires the plan to provide for identification of shortage areas, prioritize long-term and short-term goals and strategies, and provide for public input. Authorizes the department to contract out for implementation of the plan. Prohibits implementation costs from exceeding \$75,000.

Proposed law also establishes a loan repayment program for athletic trainers willing to work for a high school in a rural area and meet other requirements established by the department. Applies only to loans obtained to attend an accredited athletic trainer program. Authorizes retroactive repayment of these loans after each term of service employed at a high school in a rural area, for up to five years. Establishes the following rates for loan repayments pursuant to proposed law:

- (1) Up to \$6,000 per year of service if the individual obtained his degree from a school or program in La.
- (2) Up to \$4,000 per year of service if the individual obtained his degree from a school or program outside of La.

Requires the department to provide an implementation schedule for loan repayments by Jan. 1, 2023.

Proposed law requires the superintendent of education to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out proposed law.

Proposed law establishes the Athletic Trainer Professional Development Fund in the treasury and authorizes the state treasurer to transfer \$1,500,000 into the fund. Prohibits use of the monies in the fund for purposes outside of proposed law. Provides for interest to be credited to the fund and for unexpended or unencumbered monies to remain in the fund at the end of the fiscal year.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:3721-3726)