

2023 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 81

BY SENATOR MCMATH

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TEACHERS. Provides for the associate educator program. (gov sig)

AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:7.8, relative to the qualifications of public school teachers; to provide for the associate educator program; to provide for minimum requirements for individuals participating in the program; to provide relative to pay of program participants; to provide relative to rules for the program; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:7.8 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§7.8. Associate educator program; authority; rules; participant requirements

A.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may provide for the associate educator program through which a governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school may authorize certain individuals with associate's degrees to serve as teachers.

(2) The state board shall promulgate rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act for the implementation and administration of this Section and may provide by rule for additional qualifications and requirements for the program that are not inconsistent with this Section.

1 (3) A governing authority may establish stricter participation
2 requirements than those provided pursuant to this Section or by the rules
3 promulgated by the state board.

4 B. An individual who serves as a teacher through the program
5 authorized by this Section, referred to in this Section as a "participant", shall:

6 (1) Have an associate's degree from an accredited college or university.

7 (2) Be continuously enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education
8 program at an accredited college or university for the purpose of obtaining a
9 bachelor's degree.

10 (3) Be at least twenty-five years of age.

11 (4) Meet all other qualifications provided pursuant to this Section, board
12 rules, or requirements of the governing authority.

13 C. An individual shall not participate in the program for more than five
14 years.

15 D.(1) A participant shall be employed to teach only in the content area
16 related to the participant's associate's degree.

17 (2) A participant shall not teach in a class for students with identified
18 exceptionalities, unless the students are identified as gifted or talented.

19 E. For a participant enrolled in an approved teacher education program,
20 the hours spent teaching as a participant shall count towards the student
21 teaching hours required pursuant to R.S. 17:7.1.

22 F. No more than ten percent of the teaching staff of the governing
23 authority shall be program participants.

24 G. The salary paid to a participant shall not exceed seventy-five percent
25 of the average yearly classroom teacher salary of the employing school system.

26 H. Subject to the appropriation of funds for such purpose, the governing
27 authority shall assign a mentor teacher to a participant for the purposes of
28 providing on-site teacher training, demonstrating lessons, co-teaching,
29 observation, and providing feedback for improving instruction.

1 **I. Each participant shall participate in weekly teacher collaborations.**

2 **J. The governing authority shall conduct a criminal history record check**
 3 **in accordance with R.S. 17:15 and R.S. 15:587.1 prior to allowing a participant**
 4 **to work as a teacher.**

5 **K. The state board shall evaluate the effectiveness of the program and**
 6 **report its findings and conclusions to the legislature no later than December 29,**
 7 **2028. The report shall be submitted to the David R. Poynter Legislative**
 8 **Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772.**

9 **L. The provisions of this Section shall terminate on December 31, 2033.**

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

The original instrument was prepared by Cheryl Serrett. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Thomas L. Tyler.

DIGEST

SB 81 Reengrossed

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McMath

Proposed law allows the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to develop an associate educator program, whereby a governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school may authorize a program participant to serve as a teacher.

Proposed law requires BESE to develop rules for the program through the APA and allows the rules to make further provisions with regard to participant qualifications and requirements. Further provides that the governing authority may establish stricter participation requirements than established by proposed law or BESE rules.

Proposed law requires a participant to have an associate's degree, be enrolled and remain continuously enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education program for the purpose of obtaining a bachelor's degree, be at least 25 years of age, and meet all other qualifications provided for in proposed law, board rules, or the requirements of the local governing authority.

Proposed law limits a participant to teaching only in the content area related to the participant's associate's degree and prohibits the participant from teaching in a class for students with exceptionalities, unless it is a class for gifted or talented students.

Proposed law provides that for a participant who is enrolled in an approved teacher education program that the hours spent teaching as an associate educator shall count toward the required student teaching hours.

Proposed law limits the number of participants in the program that may be employed by a governing authority to ten percent of the teaching staff of the governing authority. Further limits the salary of a participant to not more than 75% of the average yearly classroom teacher salary of the employing school system.

Proposed law requires, subject to appropriation, the governing authority to assign a mentor teacher to each participant for the purpose of providing on-site training, assistance, and feedback. Further requires the participant to participate in weekly teacher collaborations.

Proposed law requires the governing authority to conduct a criminal history record check prior to allowing a participant to work as a teacher.

Proposed law requires the state board to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and report its findings and conclusions to the legislature no later than December 29, 2028.

Proposed law terminates the provisions of proposed law shall terminate on December 31, 2033.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:7.8)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Limit proposed law to persons enrolled in teacher education programs.
2. Raise the age for participation from age 21 to age 25.
3. Provide for a five-year progress report.
4. Terminate the program after ten years.

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Technical amendments adopted.