

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 583

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

SCHOOLS/CHOICE: Provides for school choice with respect to foreign language immersion

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a)(introductory paragraph) and (v), (b), (d), and
3 (e), 1970.31(A) and (C)(7), 1977.1, and 1977.2(A)(4) through (7) and (9) and to
4 enact R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(g) and (h) and 1970.32 through 1970.34 and R.S.
5 36:651(C)(14), relative to foreign language immersion programs; to provide relative
6 to the procedure for parents to make requests to establish a new program; to create
7 a public French immersion school; to provide relative to École Pointe-au-Chien; to
8 provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a)(introductory paragraph) and (v), (b), (d), and (e),
11 1970.31(A) and (C)(7), 1977.1, and 1977.2(A)(4) through (7) and (9) are hereby amended
12 and reenacted and R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(g) and (h) and 1970.32 through 1970.34 are hereby
13 enacted to read as follows:

14 §273.3. Foreign language immersion programs; creation by local school boards;
15 parent petition

16 * * *

17 C.

18 * * *

19 (2)(a) ~~Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a~~ A local school board, if
20 requested in writing by the parents or legal guardians of at least twenty-five students

1 seeking to be enrolled in kindergarten or of at least twenty-five students seeking to
2 be enrolled in first grade who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the
3 school district, shall establish a foreign language immersion program for such
4 students, provided that all of the following apply:

5 * * *

6 (v) There is no existing foreign language immersion program offered by the
7 local school board, in the same foreign language being proposed, that has been
8 certified by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education pursuant to ~~R.S.~~
9 ~~17:273.2~~ R.S. 17:273.2, or the parents requesting the program submit in writing that
10 the existing foreign language immersion program is geographically inaccessible.

11 (b) Such program shall be continued as long as at least twenty students
12 remain enrolled in the program. If a program is discontinued in violation of this
13 Subparagraph, the school board shall reimburse to the state Department of Education
14 any funds that were provided to provide salary supplements to foreign language
15 teachers through the minimum foundation program.

16 * * *

17 (d) The local school board shall review the written requests submitted
18 pursuant to this Paragraph and shall notify the parents or legal guardians not later
19 than February ~~fifteenth~~ fifteenth, or fifteen days after receipt of the requests,
20 whichever is sooner, of its determination as to whether or not the required number
21 of requests was submitted. Parents who submit requests may appeal such
22 determination to the state department. The state department shall make a
23 determination on the appeal within fifteen days.

24 (e) The local school board shall inform the parents and legal ~~custodians~~
25 guardians of all students enrolled in the school ~~system~~ system, in writing via mail
26 and electronic mail, about the existence of any newly established foreign language
27 immersion program within fifteen days of the determination that at least twenty-five
28 requests were received pursuant to Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph and shall

1 permit all eligible students to apply for the program during the designated enrollment
2 period for the school year.

3 * * *

4 (g) If a school board does not fulfill the requirements of this Subsection,
5 parents who submitted requests to the board may appeal to the state Department of
6 Education. The department shall make a determination on the appeal within fifteen
7 days. If the department finds the school board is in violation of the requirements of
8 this Subsection, the parents may pursue one of the following:

9 (i) Incorporate a nonprofit organization and request approval as a charter
10 school as provided in R.S. 17:3983.

11 (ii) Request that the administration of École Pointe-au-Chien as created by
12 R.S. 1977.1 et seq., open a campus in an area that can serve their children.

13 (iii) Request that the administration of L'Académie de la Louisiana created
14 by R.S. 17:1970.31 et seq., open a campus in an area that can serve their children.

15 (iv) Request that a charter school with an immersion program open a campus
16 in an area that can serve their children.

17 (h) Local school boards shall make available to any school or campus
18 established pursuant to Subparagraph (g) of this Paragraph any vacant school
19 facilities or any facilities slated to be vacant for lease or purchase up to fair market
20 value.

21 * * *

22 PART II-C. ~~INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN LAFAYETTE~~ L'ACADÉMIE DE LA
23 LOUISIANE

24 §1970.31. Legislative intent

25 A. It is the intent of the legislature to establish a ~~world~~ French language
26 immersion school for the express purpose of making a French immersion education
27 available to all Louisiana families and thus providing an expansive and challenging

1 educational experience for the students of this state, thereby enabling such students
2 to reach their full potential and be productive citizens.

3 * * *

4 C. The legislature recognizes that sustained, intensive, continuous sequences
5 of second language study results in the following benefits:

6 * * *

7 (7) Preserves the heritage language of ~~Acadians~~ Acadians, Creoles, and
8 Bayou Indians and the related economic value of the ~~Cajun Creole culture~~ Cajun,
9 Creole, and indigenous cultures in Louisiana.

10 §1970.32. Creation; purpose; governance

11 A. There is hereby created L'Académie de la Louisiane, a public French
12 immersion school for students in grades prekindergarten through twelve. The
13 domicile of the school administration shall be in Baton Rouge; however, the school
14 may open campuses in locations throughout the state, subject to demand.

15 B. The school shall be independent of the control of the state superintendent
16 and of all local and state education boards, except its board of directors. The school
17 shall be governed and managed by a board of directors, the membership of which
18 and the powers and duties of which shall be as provided in this Part.

19 §1970.33. Board of directors; membership; terms; powers and duties; voting;
20 compensation

21 A. There is hereby created a L'Académie de la Louisiane board of directors
22 to govern and provide for the management of the school.

23 B. The board shall be composed of sixteen members as follows:

- 24 (1) One member appointed by the governor.
- 25 (2) One member appointed by the lieutenant governor.
- 26 (3) One member appointed by the Council for the Development of French
27 in Louisiana who is a member of the council.
- 28 (4) One member appointed by the Consul General of France in Louisiana.
- 29 (5) One member appointed by École Pointe-au-Chien.

1 (6) One member appointed by the state superintendent of education.

2 (7) Two members appointed by the Louisiana section of the Assemblée des
3 Parlementaires Francophones.

4 (8) One member appointed by Télé-Louisiane.

5 (9) One member appointed by L'Assemblée de la Louisiane.

6 (10) Two members appointed by the Louisiana Consortium of Immersion
7 Schools.

8 (11) One member appointed by Louisiane-Acadie.

9 (12) One member appointed by C.R.E.O.L.E., Inc.

10 (13) One member appointed by École Saint-Landry.

11 (14) One member appointed by Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans.

12 C.(1) All board members shall serve a four-year term and may be
13 reappointed.

14 (2) Vacancies on the board shall be filled for the remainder of an unexpired
15 term in the same manner as the vacating board member.

16 (3) Nine members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction
17 of business, and all official action of the board shall require the favorable vote of a
18 majority of those members present and voting.

19 D. Each board member shall serve without compensation.

20 E.(1) The board shall perform or direct the performance of all of the
21 following in compliance with the provisions of this Part, including the expression of
22 the intentions of the legislature:

23 (a) Adopt rules and policies necessary for the efficient and effective
24 operation of the school.

25 (b) Prescribe and select for use in the school free textbooks and other
26 materials of instruction for students enrolled in the school.

27 (c) Hire and evaluate the director of the school to manage the school and
28 administer the rules, regulations, and policies adopted by the board. The board shall

1 delegate to the director any powers and duties it deems appropriate. At a minimum,
2 the director shall be responsible for the following duties and responsibilities:

3 (i) Prepare and adopt an annual budget in compliance with the requirements
4 for budgeting for state agencies.

5 (ii) Pay the salaries and expenses, including but not necessarily restricted to
6 facilities, equipment, and supplies of the faculty and staff of the school, out of funds
7 appropriated or otherwise made available for the operating and administrative
8 expenses of the board and the school.

9 (iii) Exercise budgetary responsibility and allocate for expenditure by the
10 school pursuant to its approved budget all monies appropriated or otherwise made
11 available for purposes of the board and of such school.

12 (iv) Develop and annually update a student handbook that includes at a
13 minimum all rules, relations, and policies for student discipline and submit such
14 handbook to the board for adoption.

15 (v) Determine faculty and staff positions necessary for the operation of the
16 school and select personnel for such positions.

17 (vi) Create an advisory panel of persons with expertise or interest in matters
18 pertaining to the school.

19 (2) The board may:

20 (a) Accept donations, bequests, or other forms of financial assistance from
21 any public or private person or agency and comply with rules and regulations
22 governing grants from the federal government or from any other person or agency
23 that are not in contravention of the constitution and laws of this state.

24 (b) Purchase land, buildings, and equipment and make improvements to
25 facilities necessary for the use of the school, in accordance with applicable law.

26 (c) Lease land or other property belonging to it or to the school, subject to
27 the approval of the commissioner of administration and in accordance with the law.

28 (d) Sell or exchange land or other real property not needed for center
29 purposes, but only when specifically authorized by law and then only in accordance

1 with the approval of the commissioner of administration. Any sale shall be
2 authorized by resolution adopted by the board, and the act of sale shall be signed by
3 the president of the board or such other person to whom the signing may be
4 delegated by the board in the authorizing resolution.

5 (e) Adopt, amend, or repeal rules and policies necessary or proper for the
6 conduct of the business of the board.

7 (f) To the extent that funds are available, enter into contracts and
8 agreements, in accordance with applicable law, with other public agencies with
9 respect to cooperative enterprises and undertakings related to or associated with an
10 educational purpose or programs affecting education in the school. This shall not
11 preclude the board from entering into other contracts and agreements that it deems
12 necessary to carry out its duties and functions.

13 (g) Perform other functions as necessary to the supervision and governance
14 of the school.

15 F. The school shall act as its own local education agency.

16 §1970.34. Funding; inclusion in the minimum foundation program formula; other
17 appropriated state funds

18 A. The board of directors of the school annually shall adopt a recommended
19 budget to adequately fund the educational programs at the school. The budget shall
20 have as its goal to provide state funding for the school which shall not be less than
21 the average funding on a per-student basis at peer institutions in other states having
22 similar programs and enrollments and may provide for achieving its goal over a
23 multi-year period. The recommended budget shall be submitted to the division of
24 administration as the total budget request for the school.

25 B. L'Académie de la Louisiane shall be considered a public school for
26 purposes of receiving funding through the minimum foundation program of
27 education, in the same manner as for other public schools as contained in the
28 minimum foundation program budget letter approved by the State Board of

1 Elementary and Secondary Education. The school shall also be eligible to receive
2 such other funding as may be specifically appropriated by the legislature.

3 * * *

4 §1977.1. École Pointe-au-Chien; creation; location; governance

5 There is hereby created École Pointe-au-Chien, a public French immersion
6 school for students in grades prekindergarten through ~~four~~ five, and including
7 additional grades at the discretion of the board. The ~~school~~ school's initial campus
8 shall be located in Terrebonne Parish. The board may vote to open additional
9 campus locations throughout the state. The school shall be independent of the
10 control of the state superintendent of education and of all local and state education
11 boards except its board of directors.

12 §1977.2. Board of directors; creation; membership; terms; powers; voting;
13 compensation

14 A. There is hereby created a board of directors for the school, referred to in
15 this Part as the "board". The board shall be composed of thirteen members as
16 follows:

17 * * *

18 (4) One member appointed by the Council for the Development of French
19 in Louisiana who is an employee of the council and who shall serve in an advisory
20 capacity.

21 (5) One member appointed by the Consul General of France in ~~Louisiana~~.
22 Louisiana, who shall serve in an advisory capacity.

23 (6) One member appointed by the state-recognized Grand Caillou/Dulac
24 Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw.

25 (7) One member appointed by the state-recognized Bayou Lafourche Band
26 of Biloxi-Chitimacha Confederation of Muskogees.

27 * * *

1 (9) The state superintendent of education or his designee who is an employee
2 of the state Department of ~~Education~~. Education, who shall serve in an advisory
3 capacity.

4 * * *

5 Section 2. R.S. 36:651(C)(14) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

6 §651. Transfer of boards, commissions, departments, and agencies to Department
7 of Education; boards, commissions, and agencies within Department of
8 Education

9 * * *

10 C. The following agencies are transferred to and hereafter shall be within the
11 Department of Education as provided in R.S. 36:801.1:

12 * * *

13 (14) L'Académie de la Louisiane board of directors (R.S. 17:1970.31 et seq.).

14 * * *

15 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
16 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
17 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
18 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
19 effective on the day following such approval.

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)]

HB 583 Original

2024 Regular Session

Amedee

Abstract: Provides for school choice for French language immersion programs for students in grades prekindergarten through 12.

Proposed law offers options for certain students to pursue a French immersion education.

Parent petition

Present law (R.S. 17:273.3) authorizes local public school boards to establish foreign language immersion programs. Requires a school board to establish such a program if requested in writing by the parents of at least 25 students seeking enrollment in kindergarten or at least 25 students seeking enrollment in first grade if certain criteria are met. Requires

that such program be continued as long as at least 20 students remain enrolled in the program.

Proposed law retains present law and further requires that if the program ceases despite having 20 students enrolled, the school board shall remit minimum foundation program foreign language teacher salary supplement funds to the state Dept. of Education.

Proposed law authorizes parents who submit requests to local school boards to make appeals to the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Proposed law authorizes parents, if school boards do not fulfill the requirements of present law to establish a program, to request approval as a charter school or request École Pointe-au-Chien, L'Academie de la Louisiane, or a Type 2 charter school with an immersion program open a new campus in an area that can serve their children.

L'Académie de la Louisiane

Present law (R.S. 17:1970.31) establishes legislative intent for a world language immersion school called "International School in Lafayette". Proposed law narrows scope to French language and changes name to "L'Académie de la Louisiane".

Provides L'Académie de la Louisiane is a public French immersion school for students in grades prekindergarten through 12. Provides that the school shall be its own education agency. Provides for governance by a 16-member board of directors and for state funding.

École Pointe-au-Chien

Present law (R.S. 17:1977.1) creates École Pointe-au-Chien, an independent public French immersion school for students in grades prekindergarten through four.

Proposed law expands school to include students in grade five, and more grades at the discretion of the school's board of directors.

Present law provides for the school to be located in Terrebonne Parish.

Proposed law authorizes campus locations anywhere in the state.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a)(intro. para.) and (v), (b), (d), and (e), 1970.31(A) and (C)(7), 1977.1, and 1977.2(A)(4) through (7) and (9); Adds R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(g) and (h) and 1970.32-1970.34 and R.S. 36:651(C)(14))