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The original instrument was prepared by Michael Bell. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Carla S. Roberts.

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DIGEST

SB 313 Reengrossed 2024 Regular Session Edmonds

Present law provides for the definition of a "school".

Proposed law retains present law but makes technical changes to the definition of a "school."

Present law provides for the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program (voucher program).

Proposed law retains present law and authorizes the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to develop an educational savings account program (ESA), subject to an appropriation by the legislature. If ESA program is authorized by BESE, then BESE is to make recommendations to the legislature for an orderly and efficient transition of participating students from the voucher program to the ESA program. The recommendations are to include the necessary statutory changes that the legislature would need to make in order to accomplish the transition.

Proposed law provides that the purpose of proposed law is to do all of the following:

- (1) Recognizes that the La. Constitution requires that the legislature is to provide for the education of the people of the state and is to establish and maintain a public educational system. The public educational system is established to ensure that every person is afforded an equal educational opportunity and prohibits the use of state dollars in a manner that would have the effect of discriminating in providing equal educational opportunities for all students. The legislature further recognizes the importance of parental choice education, as well as the necessity that all students have access to quality educational opportunities.
- (2) Creates an opportunity for each parent to set aside part of their tax dollars in an educational savings account in order to provide the best educational opportunities for their child, whether the child's best opportunities are found at a public school, charter school, private school, home study program, or at a faith-based or religious school.
- (3) Creates an opportunity for the best and highest rated public school districts in Louisiana to stem the continued excess migration into those top school districts. Excessive migration into top rated public school districts create school overcrowding and overdevelopment of homes that inevitably result in traffic congestion, increased drainage problems, and the flooding of homes and businesses.

Proposed law provides for the following definitions:

- (1) "Department" means the state Dept. of Education.
- (2) "Program" means the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship program authorized in this Chapter.
- (3) "State board" means the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

Proposed law provides that the Dept. and BESE are to conduct a statewide survey of all existing educational resources available within the state that receives state educational funding and report those findings to the legislature no later than December 1, 2024. The survey will be categorized by parish, school grade, and collected by public schools, public charter schools, and state approved nonpublic schools. The report to the legislature will include, to the extent possible, all of the following:

- (1) The number of available seats for the 2024-2025 school year.
- (2) The number of students enrolled for the 2024-2025 school year and the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged.
- (3) The number of BESE approved schools and the 2023-2024 school year performance score and the letter grade of each school for which the statewide system of accountability is applicable.
- (4) The number of schools labeled as "Urgent Intervention Needed", "Urgent Intervention Required", or "Comprehensive Intervention Required" for the 2023-2024 school year.
- (5) The number of students who were enrolled in a "C", "D", or "F" rated school for the 2023-2024 school year.
- (6) The number of students for the 2023-2024 school year whose family income did not exceed 250% of the current federal poverty guidelines as established by the federal office of management and budget.
- (7) The number of students who participated in the voucher program for the 2023-2024 school year.
- (8) All schools that participated in the voucher program for the 2023-2024 school year, the number of students who participated in the program for each participating school, the number of program seats that were available for each participating school, and the aggregate test result data for participating students for each participating school.
- (9) The number of students for the 2023-2024 school year whose family income did not exceed 400% of the current federal poverty guidelines as established by the federal office of management and budget.

- (10) The number of schools subject to a school, district, or statewide system of accountability that earned a "C", "D", or "F" for the 2023-2024 school year.
- (11) The metrics, weight assigned to each metric, and point system used in determining the performance score and letter grade for the school, district, and statewide system of accountability.
- (12) The percentage of teachers and administrators for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year for which an evaluation was conducted.
- (13) The methodology, metrics, and weight of each that are utilized as evidence of growth in student achievement.
- (14) The student characteristics and methodology utilized to determine typical outcomes of comparable students for purposes of assigning each student an expected score to be compared to the student's actual score on state assessments in determining the student's growth result.
- (15) The percentage of students who demonstrated a positive growth result between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.
- (16) The percentage of students who demonstrated a negative growth result between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

Proposed law provides that BESE is authorized to develop an ESA program for parental choice, utilizing the survey. If an ESA program is developed by BESE, the program is to be for parental choice in education and is to have a focus on using limited resources in the most strategic and equitable way possible to increase and support student achievement.

Proposed law provides that, upon approval by a favorable vote of a majority of BESE, rules are to be promulgated by BESE to implement the ESA program.

Proposed law provides that the Dept. and BESE may use available public funds to develop the ESA program but the implementation is subject to a specific appropriation of funds by the legislature each year for that purpose.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:236; adds R.S. 17:4037.1-4037.4)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by the Senate and proposed by the Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Expands the provisions related to educational savings accounts (ESA) for students with exceptionalities who are not enrolled in public school.

2. Adds the La. Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship Program (ESA) for parental choice in kindergarten through 12th (K-12) education.

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Finance to the engrossed bill

1. Deletes Amendments proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and adopted by the Senate that required the Dept. and BESE to implement an ESA program.
2. Requires the Dept. and BESE to conduct a survey of educational resources and report the survey results to the legislature.
3. Authorizes BESE to develop an ESA program based upon the survey.
4. Requires that any ESA program include a plan for statutory changes for the orderly transition of voucher students to the ESA program.
5. Limits ESA program funding to a specific appropriation by the legislature.