

ACT No. 649

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 244

BY REPRESENTATIVES HUGHES, CARLSON, CARVER, FREIBERG, SCHLEGEL,
TAYLOR, AND YOUNG

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Part III of Chapter 43 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes
3 of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:4032.1, relative to academic assistance for certain
4 public school students; to provide for student and service provider eligibility,
5 program administration, payment amounts and uses, notifications, reports, and
6 funding; to provide for an effective date contingent on necessary appropriations; and
7 to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. Part III of Chapter 43 of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of
10 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:4032.1, is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

11 PART III. STEVE CARTER ~~LITERACY~~ EDUCATION PROGRAM

12 §4032.1. Steve Carter ~~Literacy~~ Education Program; establishment; student
13 eligibility; service provider eligibility and approval; administration; payment
14 amounts and uses; notifications; reports; funding

15 A. The Steve Carter ~~Literacy~~ Education Program, referred to in this Part as
16 the "program", is hereby established for the purpose of providing funds for
17 supplemental educational services for eligible students.

18 B. A public school student who falls into one of the following categories is
19 eligible to participate in the program:

20 (1) He is in kindergarten or the first, second, or third grade and is determined
21 to read below grade level or be at risk for reading or mathematics difficulties
22 according to the results of a literacy ~~assessment~~ or mathematics assessment approved
23 by the state Department of Education.

1 (2) He is in the fourth ~~or fifth~~ through twelfth grade and scored below
2 mastery in English language arts or mathematics on the state assessment
3 administered the prior school year.

4 (3) His eligibility cannot be determined according to the measures provided
5 in Paragraphs (1) and (2) of this Subsection due to the lack of a department-approved
6 literacy or mathematics assessment or state assessment results but he is
7 recommended by his English language arts or mathematics teacher for participation
8 in the program due to the student's ~~reading~~ academic difficulties.

9 C. The state Department of Education shall administer and provide for the
10 implementation of the program pursuant to rules and regulations developed and
11 adopted for such purpose by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
12 in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

13 D. In administering the program, the department shall:

14 (1) Evaluate ~~student's~~ students' eligibility for the program.

15 (2) Develop an application process for students and providers and accept
16 applications.

17 (3) Evaluate and publish a list of approved providers of supplemental
18 educational services including but not limited to those with expertise in early literacy
19 or mathematics to determine their initial and continued eligibility for program
20 payments. ~~The department shall establish~~

21 (4) Establish minimum criteria by which approved providers shall be
22 evaluated to ensure program effectiveness in improving students' reading and
23 mathematics abilities, including but not limited to performance on ~~approved~~
24 department-approved literacy and mathematics assessments and the Louisiana
25 Educational Assessment Program state assessment and the results of a parental
26 satisfaction survey. Providers that fail to demonstrate improvement in students'
27 reading or mathematics abilities for two consecutive years shall be deemed ineligible
28 to participate in the program.

1 ~~(4)~~ (5) Remit payments to such providers for services rendered to students
 2 in the program with the lowest-performing economically disadvantaged students
 3 given the highest priority.

4 ~~(5)~~ (6) Notify the governing authority of each public school of the
 5 application process, requirements, and deadlines for parents and legal guardians.

6 E. By not later than September thirtieth of each year, or as soon as
 7 practicable if a student's reading or mathematics deficiency is identified after this
 8 date, each public school governing authority shall notify the parent or legal guardian
 9 of each student who is eligible to participate in the program of the process for
 10 applying for the program and other information provided by the department pursuant
 11 to Paragraph ~~(D)~~~~(5)~~ (D)(6) of this Section.

12 F.(1) The department shall remit payment for services provided, up to a
 13 maximum of one thousand five hundred dollars per student per school year. A
 14 participating student may receive tutoring services in both reading and mathematics,
 15 but the total for all services shall not exceed one thousand five hundred dollars.
 16 Program money may be used for any of the following eligible purposes that are
 17 designed to improve ~~reading or literacy~~ reading, literacy, or mathematics skills:

18 (a) Books for home use; chosen from a list developed by the department,
 19 including electronic or digital books and subscriptions to online book clubs;
 20 however, such costs shall not exceed two hundred fifty dollars per school year.

21 (b) Instructional materials and curriculum, including but not limited to online
 22 materials, that have been reviewed in accordance with R.S. 17:351.1 and have been
 23 determined to fully align with state academic content standards.

24 (c)(i) Tutoring services provided by a person who is trained in the state
 25 standards for English language arts or mathematics and who ~~holds a valid teaching~~
 26 ~~certificate in either elementary education or reading or holds a baccalaureate or~~
 27 ~~graduate degree in education, English, or another subject area indicative of expertise~~
 28 ~~in reading and literacy.~~ meets one of the following criteria:

29 ~~(aa)~~ (aa) He holds a valid teaching certificate in elementary education, reading,
 30 or mathematics or holds an associate or baccalaureate degree.

1 (bb) He is employed as a paraprofessional by a public school governing
2 authority.

3 (cc) He is a student pursuing a degree at a postsecondary education
4 institution.

5 (ii) In addition to the requirements provided in Item (i) of this Subparagraph,
6 a person providing tutoring services in reading shall have successfully completed a
7 department-approved science of reading training.

8 (d) Summer education programs.

9 (e) After-school education programs.

10 (2) The department shall remit payments to approved providers on behalf of
11 eligible students.

12 (3) Any expenses above the limit established in Paragraph (1) of this
13 Subsection shall be the responsibility of the student's parent or legal guardian.

14 (4) The department shall develop a procedure for verification that students
15 in the program received the services for which payments were made.

16 G. The department shall submit a report to the House Committee on
17 Education and the Senate Committee on Education by not later than April thirtieth
18 of each year regarding the implementation of the program. The report shall include,
19 at a minimum, the following information for that year:

20 (1) The total number of students on whose behalf payments were remitted.

21 (2) The public schools in which such students are enrolled and the number
22 of students on whose behalf payments were remitted in each school.

23 (3) The total dollar amount of payments remitted to approved providers.

24 (4) A list of the approved providers to which payments were remitted and the
25 supplemental educational services provided to each student.

26 (5) ~~A report~~ Information relative to the performance of each provider and
27 overall program performance with respect to improving participants' reading ~~abilities~~
28 and mathematics abilities as provided in Paragraph (D)(4) of this Section.

29 H. Implementation of the program is subject to the appropriation of funds or
30 the availability of any local funds for the purposes of this Part. The department may

1 use any federal or state funds appropriated for the purpose of increasing early
 2 ~~literacy~~ literacy, improving students' mathematics abilities, or supporting academic
 3 achievement among ~~elementary~~ public school students to make program payments.

4 Section 2. The provisions of this Act shall become effective when an Act of the
 5 Louisiana Legislature containing a specific appropriation of monies for the implementation
 6 of the provisions of this Act becomes effective.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____