
DIGEST

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SB 234 Reengrossed

2025 Regular Session

Edmonds

St. George Community School System

Proposed law creates and provides for the St. George Community School System in East Baton Rouge (EBR) Parish and provides that the geographic boundaries of the St. George community school system shall be coterminous with the city of St. George.

Interim St. George school board

Proposed law provides for the governor to appoint a seven-member interim school board from nominations by House members from District Nos. 65, 66, 68, 69, and 70 and Senate members from District Nos. 6, 14, and 16. Grants this board the powers and duties provided generally for school boards by present law and subjects it to present law regarding open meetings and public records. Provides for this board to serve until the members of the elected school board take office. Also requires the governor to appoint an interim superintendent to serve until the elected school board selects a superintendent. Requires the interim school board to adopt a plan of governance and divide the system into seven single-member districts.

St. George Community School Board

Proposed law provides for the initial members of the St. George Community School Board to be elected at the time and place provided by present law. (Present law provides for school boards to be elected at the congressional elections.) Requires this board to begin actual operation for providing for the education of students within its jurisdiction on July 1, 2027.

Enrollment across school systems

Proposed law allows a student who resides in either system to enroll in any charter school in the parish. Proposed law further requires the two school systems to enter into an agreement that does all of the following:

- (1) Allows a student who is domiciled in St. George to enroll in the EBR system pursuant to present law that allows students to enroll in adjoining school systems subject to certain conditions.
- (2) Provides that students living in each school system shall be allowed to attend a magnet school with selective enrollment in the other school system if they meet the school's admission requirements and academic standards. (Allows each system to prioritize the enrollment of students who live within its boundaries.)
- (3) Provides that any new applicant to a magnet program or charter school shall not displace a student already on the waiting list.
- (4) Provides that a school that accepts a student in compliance with this agreement shall receive the local per pupil and state Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) funds for that student.

Transition and transfer

Proposed law requires:

- (1) The EBR school board to work with both the interim and elected St. George school boards to effect the transfer of the students, buildings and other facilities, property,

instructional materials, buses, and all other assets related to the schools located within St. George as well as all student and financial records.

- (2) The two school systems to develop a transportation plan or develop a plan for transferring school buses from EBR to St. George.
- (3) The EBR school system to provide extended school year services through Aug. 31, 2027, to students residing in St. George and qualifying for such services prior to June 30, 2027.
- (4) The transfer of all lands, buildings, improvements, facilities, and other property of the EBR school board located within St. George to the St. George school board by June 30, 2027.
- (5) That the EBR school system and any taxing district created by it receive all taxes levied for school purposes and collected within the boundaries of St. George and remitted by the tax collector through June 30, 2027; requires, beginning on July 1, 2027, the tax collector to remit all such taxes collected within St. George, including delinquent payments, to the St. George school system.
- (6) The two school boards, not later than 60 days after the effective date of proposed law, to meet jointly to begin the process of determining the fair and equitable division of all assets and liabilities and requires them to agree on an actuary, appraiser, and auditor to determine the valuation of the assets and liabilities.
- (7) St. George to assume jurisdiction over EBR-authorized charter schools located in St. George on July 1, 2027; allows a charter operator to renegotiate the terms of its contract with St. George or petition BESE to become a Type II charter school; and provides that if it chooses not to renegotiate, the terms of the exiting charter authorized by EBR remains in effect until the charter expires.

MFP funding

Proposed law requires the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to identify districts in parishes other than EBR on which the creation of the St. George school system has a negative impact; withhold the amount of such impact from the total MFP allocation to St. George; and transfer those funds on a per pupil basis to such districts. Provides for this process to begin on July 1, 2027, and continue for the next four fiscal years.

Retirement issues and legacy costs

Proposed law provides that if the creation of the St. George school system results in the elimination of positions of current members of the La. School Employees' Retirement System, the school system shall remit that portion of the unfunded accrued liability attributable to those positions.

Proposed law requires the EBR school system to provide annually to the St. George school system annually an itemization of all post-employment benefits to be paid by EBR for the benefit of those hired by St. George as full-time employees. Requires St. George to reimburse EBR on a quarterly basis for such benefits for all such employees until all such benefits have been paid in full. Requires the establishment of the "St. George Schools Legacy Benefit Trust for Retirees of the EBR School System" for the purpose of funding certain legacy costs.

EBR Educational Facilities Improvement District

Proposed law requires, by June 1, 2027, the EBR Educational Facilities Improvement District to provide to the St. George school board a schedule of values for construction completed within St. George with the proceeds of certain bonds. Requires the St. George school system, beginning on July 1, 2027, to reimburse the district certain amounts with respect to debt service.

EBR school board reapportionment

Proposed law requires reapportionment of EBR school board districts if the St. George school board begins operation as a separate school system.

Effective if and when a proposed amendment to Art. III, Sec. 13(D) of the Const. of La. is adopted at a statewide election granting the St. George Community School System certain authority granted to parishes relative to a parish school system or authorizing the creation of school districts by legislative act.

(Adds R.S. 17:58.2(J) and 68.1-68.7; Repeals R.S. 17:58.2(I) and 67-67.4)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill:

1. Add the House member from District No. 70 to the list of those making nominations for gubernatorial appointments to the interim St. George school board.
2. Instead of allowing students to remain in their schools for two years after the effective date of proposed law, allow K-5 students to remain through the end of 5th grade and 6-8 students to remain through the end of 8th grade.
3. Add that nothing in proposed law prohibits each school board from prioritizing the enrollment of students who reside within its respective boundaries.
4. Allow students who reside in either school system to attend any charter school in the parish instead of allowing students residing in St. George to enroll in charter schools in the EBR school system if the system obtains permission from BESE.
5. Provide for agreements between the school boards relative to the distribution of assets and liabilities.