

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 522 (Substitute of Senate Bill No. 95 by Senator Edmonds)

BY SENATOR EDMONDS

SCHOOLS. Provides for approval for charter schools that specialize in vocational and technical education to meet workforce demands for high demand and high wage jobs. (8/1/26)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(i) and to enact R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and

3 3991.2 and R.S. 51:934, relative to vocational and technical education; to provide for

4 charter schools; to authorize proposals for a vocational and technical education Type

5 2 charter school; to provide for resolutions from the State Board of Commerce and

6 Industry; to provide for definitions; to provide for enrollment; to provide for charter

7 governing authority board members; to provide for applications; to provide

8 agreements; to provide for restrictions; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(i) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:  
11 3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and 3991.2 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §3983. Chartering process by type; eligibility; limitations; faculty approval; parental  
13 approval

14 A.(1) \* \* \*

15 (2)(a)(i) Each proposal for a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school shall first be  
16 made to the local school board with jurisdiction where the school is to be located,  
17 except as provided for in Item (ii), (iii), ~~or (iv)~~, **or (v)** of this Subparagraph, by

1 submitting a written proposal. The applicant shall also provide notice of application  
 2 submission for a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school to the state Department of  
 3 Education. If, after review as required by R.S. 17:3982, the local school board denies  
 4 the proposal, or if conditions placed on the proposal by the local school board as  
 5 provided in Paragraph (B)(2) of this Section are not acceptable to the chartering  
 6 group, then a proposal for a Type 2 charter school may be made to the state board.

7 \* \* \*

8 **(v) The initial proposal for a vocational and technical education charter**  
 9 **school, as provided in R.S. 17:3991.2, may be made to the state board as a**  
 10 **proposal for a Type 2 charter school.**

11 \* \* \*

12 **§3991.2. Vocational and technical education charter schools; enrollment**  
 13 **preferences; board membership**

14 **A. The legislature finds and declares that:**

15 **(1) The economic vitality of the state is dependent upon the education of**  
 16 **its people, including its current and future workforce.**

17 **(2) The performance of Louisiana's public education system is critical in**  
 18 **providing every Louisiana child with the ability to graduate, being equipped to**  
 19 **enter college or the workplace, in order to obtain a rewarding and self-**  
 20 **sustaining career and to contribute to society in meaningful ways.**

21 **(3) High-quality educational options are essential to the academic growth**  
 22 **of Louisiana's students and the ability of the state to expand existing businesses,**  
 23 **attract new businesses, and recruit and maintain a highly talented workforce.**

24 **(4) Manufacturing, industrial, technology, energy, utility, and other**  
 25 **sectors are all dependent on a workforce that has vocational training and**  
 26 **technical education.**

27 **(5) Providing students with access to classes or educational programs**  
 28 **directly aligned with high-demand and high-wage jobs will help provide**  
 29 **students with the experience and resources needed to help prepare them to be**

1 effective employees and productive citizens.

2 (6) Encouraging and enhancing innovative vocational and technical  
3 school curriculum models aligned with the state's workforce needs benefits the  
4 state and its students.

5 B.(1) Notwithstanding geographic or other requirements for enrollment  
6 contained in this Chapter, a charter agreement may provide, initially or by  
7 amendment, for enrollment of students in a vocational and technical education  
8 program.

9 (2)(a) Preference may be given to students whose parent or legal  
10 guardian is employed or resides within the economic sector that is designated  
11 by the State Board of Commerce and Industry through a resolution of support  
12 for the vocational and technical charter school, as provided in R.S. 51:934. Up  
13 to fifty percent of the school's maximum enrollment may be reserved for the  
14 enrollment preference.

15 (b) The charter agreement shall specify both the school's maximum  
16 enrollment and the maximum proportion set aside for implementation of this  
17 enrollment preference.

18 (3) In addition to the applicable requirements in R.S. 17:3991, the  
19 application must be accompanied by a resolution from the State Board of  
20 Commerce and Industry, as provided in R.S. 51:934, that includes the following:

21 (a) The specialty vocational and technical education classes or programs  
22 to be offered by the charter school and the manner in which they are aligned  
23 with high-demand and high-wage jobs or determined as STAR Jobs by  
24 Louisiana Works.

25 (b) The school's maximum total enrollment, as well as the maximum  
26 number of students that may be enrolled into each specialty vocational and  
27 technical education class or program.

28 (c) A statement that the charter school and any vocational and technical  
29 education classes or programs offered by the charter school are not aligned with

1 any corporation or business entity that is identified in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3).

2 (4)(a) A charter agreement may provide, initially or by amendment, for  
3 board seats on its charter governing or management board to be held by various  
4 industry representatives who are employed by or retired from a business  
5 located within the economic sector or have served as an officer or director on  
6 the board of such business. Such membership is subject to all other provisions  
7 of law except those that are contrary to provisions in this Section and Chapter.

8 (b) For purposes of this Section, an industry representative may not be  
9 an officer, board member, or employee of any corporation or legal entity that  
10 is identified in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3).

11 C. For the duration of the enrollment preference specified in Paragraph  
12 (B)(1) of this Section, businesses located within the economic sector may enter  
13 into memorandums of understanding with the charter school and shall specify  
14 the methods by which the businesses may support the charter school, including  
15 but not limited to internships for students, career counseling, academic  
16 tutoring, or enrichment activities.

17 D.(1) An enrollment preference pursuant to Paragraph (B)(1) of this  
18 Section shall not be implemented in a way that displaces children enrolled at the  
19 school at the time the charter agreement or amendment providing for the  
20 preference is authorized.

21 (2) Enrollment at the school shall otherwise be as provided by this  
22 Chapter.

23 E. As used in this Section, "STAR Jobs" or "Strategic Targeted Area  
24 Resource Jobs" means those employment opportunities identified by the  
25 Louisiana Works Commission that have high-demand, high-wage jobs and are  
26 listed on the commission's website on the date of the application.

27 Section 2. R.S. 51:934 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

28 §934. Resolutions of support for vocational and technical education charter

29 schools; economic sectors

1                    **A. The legislature finds and declares that:**

2                    **(1) Economic development and the economic vitality of the state are**  
3                    **dependent upon an educated and highly trained workforce.**

4                    **(2) Manufacturing, industrial, technology, energy, utility, and other**  
5                    **sectors are all dependent on a workforce that has vocational training and**  
6                    **technical education.**

7                    **(3) High-quality educational options that include vocational and**  
8                    **technical educations are essential to the academic growth of Louisiana's**  
9                    **students and the ability of the state to attract businesses, maintain a highly**  
10                   **talented workforce, and expand existing businesses.**

11                   **B. A majority of the members of the State Board of Commerce and**  
12                   **Industry may adopt a resolution in support of an application for a vocational**  
13                   **and technical education charter school, pursuant to R.S. 17:3991.2 . If the State**  
14                   **Board of Commerce and Industry adopts a resolution, the resolution shall**  
15                   **include all of the following:**

16                   **(1) An economic sector where jobs require vocational and technical**  
17                   **education training classes and employment skills associated therewith.**

18                   **(2) A list of the types of vocational and technical education training**  
19                   **classes or skills that are needed for employment in the economic sector.**

20                   **C. Unless otherwise indicated, the following definitions shall apply to this**  
21                   **Section:**

22                   **(1) "Economic sector" means the economic development district or the**  
23                   **parishes or geographic area surrounding a location where manufacturing,**  
24                   **industrial, technology, energy, utility, and other sector facilities are, or will be,**  
25                   **located that require vocational and technical education to support employment**  
26                   **at the facilities. However an economic sector may not be established to provide**  
27                   **training for a corporation identified in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3).**

28                   **(2) "Vocational and technical education charter schools" means those**  
29                   **charter schools governed by R.S. 17:3991.2.**

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, 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)]

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DIGEST

SB 522 Original 2026 Regular Session Edmonds

Present law provides for different types of charter schools according to the charter authorizer (either a local school board or BESE) and the proposal and authorization process for each, which varies depending on the type of charter school.

Present law provides that a Type 2 charter school is authorized by BESE and operates pursuant to a charter contract between the charter operator and BESE. Present law includes corporate partner charter schools, within Type 2 charter schools, and defines "corporate partner" to include any legal entity registered with the secretary of state, except those holding gaming licenses, and also includes regional airports and federal or state entities or agencies, including public postsecondary education institutions.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally provides that a vocational and technical education charter school (vo-tech charter school) may apply directly to BESE for a Type 2 charter upon obtaining a resolution of support from the La. Board of Commerce and Industry (Bd. of Commerce), in lieu of securing a corporate partner as required by present law. Proposed law requires the application to include the applicable economic sector, the vocational and technical programs to be offered, alignment with high-demand and high-wage jobs or La. Works "STAR Jobs", maximum enrollment, and a statement that the school is not aligned with the gaming industry.

Proposed law requires the board's resolution of support to specify:

- (1) The economic sector in which demand exists for vocational and technical education.
- (2) The types of training or skills required for employment within that sector.

Proposed law authorizes a vo-tech charter school to enroll students without regard to geographic limitations and to provide an enrollment preference, not to exceed 50% of total enrollment, for students whose parent or legal guardian is employed or resides within the designated economic sector. Proposed law requires the charter agreement to specify enrollment limits and the percentage reserved for such preference.

Proposed law authorizes industry representatives to serve on the charter governing or management board, subject to applicable law, and prohibits participation by persons affiliated with the gaming industry.

Proposed law authorizes businesses within the designated economic sector to enter into memoranda of understanding with the school to provide support, including internships, career counseling, tutoring, and enrichment activities.

Proposed law defines "economic sector" as a geographic area where facilities require vocational and technical education to support employment needs and prohibits inclusion of gaming-related entities within such sector for purposes of present law.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(i); adds R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and 3991.2 and R.S. 51:934)