

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 445

BY REPRESENTATIVES FREIBERG, BERAULT, CARPENTER, EGAN, FREEMAN,  
ILLG, LAFLEUR, LYONS, MARCELLE, MARTINEZ, TAYLOR, THOMPSON,  
AND ZERINGUE

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:4071(A), (B)(introductory paragraph), (E), (F), (H)(1), (2),  
3 (5), (6), (7), and (10), and (J) and 4072, to enact R.S. 36:309(E)(3), and to repeal  
4 R.S. 17:4071(B)(11), (15), (23), and (24) and R.S. 36:651(K)(6), relative to the  
5 Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council;  
6 to transfer the council from the Department of Education to Louisiana Works; to  
7 provide for the powers, duties, and functions of the council; to provide for the  
8 membership of the council; to authorize the council to meet via electronic means; to  
9 provide relative to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)  
10 Education Fund; to provide for the powers, duties, and authority of the commissioner  
11 of higher education, the Board of Regents, and Louisiana Works relative to the  
12 council; and to provide for related matters.

13 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

14 Section 1. R.S. 17:4071(A), (B)(introductory paragraph), (E), (F), (H)(1), (2), (5),  
15 (6), (7), and (10), and (J) and 4072 are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

16 §4071. Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory  
17 Council; creation; membership; powers, duties, and functions

18 A. The Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics  
19 Advisory Council (LaSTEM) is hereby created under the auspices of ~~the Board of~~  
20 ~~Regents~~ Louisiana Works to coordinate and oversee the creation, delivery, and  
21 promotion of STEM education programs, to increase student interest and

1 achievement in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, to  
2 ensure the alignment of education, economic development, industry, and workforce  
3 needs, and to increase the number of women who graduate from a postsecondary  
4 institution with a STEM degree or credential.

5 B. The council shall consist of ~~twenty-nine members as follows~~ the  
6 following members:

7 \* \* \*

8 E. The council shall be chaired by the ~~commissioner of higher education~~  
9 secretary of Louisiana Works or his designee. The secretary of Louisiana Economic  
10 Development or his designee shall serve as the ~~initial~~ vice chairman of the council.  
11 ~~Thereafter, the vice chairmanship shall alternate on a triennial basis between the state~~  
12 ~~superintendent of education, or his designee, the secretary of Louisiana Economic~~  
13 ~~Development or his designee, and the secretary of Louisiana Works or his designee.~~  
14 The council may elect such other officers as it deems necessary.

15 F. The council shall meet ~~monthly~~ twice each year and at such other times  
16 as called by the chairman. ~~Beginning August 31, 2018, the council shall be required~~  
17 ~~to meet only quarterly. The commissioner of higher education shall convene the first~~  
18 ~~meeting of the council not later than September 15, 2017. Members of the council~~  
19 ~~may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means in accordance with R.S.~~  
20 ~~42:17.2.~~

21 \* \* \*

22 H. As funding allows, the council shall:

23 (1) Create a comprehensive, statewide STEM plan that ~~contains clear~~  
24 ~~objectives to guide~~ guides the development of STEM education and aligned to  
25 STEM career opportunities and ~~aligns elementary, secondary, and postsecondary~~  
26 ~~STEM curricula, programs, initiatives, and activities.~~

27 (2) Coordinate all state STEM education-related programs and activities to  
28 align to workforce needs.

29 \* \* \*

1 (5) Encourage industry and business entities to provide funding, resources,  
2 and technical assistance to ~~elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools to~~  
3 promote interest in STEM ~~discipline courses and~~ career opportunities.

4 (6) Connect STEM ~~education~~ resources, initiatives, and programs regionally  
5 and throughout the state.

6 (7) Establish an information clearinghouse, to be housed at ~~the Board of~~  
7 Regents Louisiana Works, to identify and provide best practice resources for ~~both~~  
8 ~~the secondary and postsecondary educational systems and to review and acquire~~  
9 STEM ~~education-related instructional materials~~ education and training.

10 \* \* \*

11 (10) Establish a competitive grants program to fund robotics competitions  
12 to provide ~~students at all appropriate grade levels~~ opportunities to improve science,  
13 technology, engineering, and mathematics skills by participating in events ~~sponsored~~  
14 ~~by a science and technology development program known as FIRST (For Inspiration~~  
15 ~~and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics~~. The program may be funded  
16 through the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Fund  
17 and any other available public or private funds.

18 \* \* \*

19 J. The council, through ~~the Board of Regents~~ Louisiana Works, shall submit  
20 a status report regarding all actions taken to implement the provisions of this Section,  
21 including metrics that measure the success of implementing council activities and  
22 initiatives and any recommendations for legislation or policy changes, to the Senate  
23 Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations,  
24 ~~and~~ the House Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Labor and  
25 Industrial Relations by January thirtieth of each year.

26 §4072. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Fund

27 A. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)  
28 Education Fund, referred to in this Section as the "fund", is hereby created in the  
29 state treasury as a special fund for the purpose of conducting student-focused,  
30 project-based, programs and competitions in STEM subjects, including robotics,

1 coding, and design-build test projects, in grades prekindergarten through college  
 2 level.

3 ~~B.(1) The source of monies deposited into the fund shall be legislative~~  
 4 ~~appropriations. Monies in the fund shall be subject to appropriation by the~~  
 5 ~~legislature and shall be available exclusively for programs and initiatives prescribed~~  
 6 ~~by the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory~~  
 7 ~~Council.~~

8 (2) ~~The treasurer is hereby authorized to establish a separate account within~~  
 9 ~~the fund for the deposit of grants and donations received by the Louisiana Science,~~  
 10 ~~Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council. If the terms and~~  
 11 ~~conditions of the grant or donation or the agreements pertaining thereto require that~~  
 12 ~~the monies not be deposited into the treasury, the grant or donation may nevertheless~~  
 13 ~~be deposited into the fund. Monies in this separate account shall not be subject to~~  
 14 ~~legislative appropriation but shall be used by the council only to further their~~  
 15 ~~mission. After allocation of money to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund as~~  
 16 ~~provided in Article VII, Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana, the treasurer~~  
 17 ~~shall deposit into the fund any monies transferred or appropriated by the legislature.~~  
 18 ~~The treasurer shall also deposit into the fund any grants, donations, gifts, or other~~  
 19 ~~monies which may become available.~~

20 C. All unexpended and unencumbered monies in the fund at the end of the  
 21 fiscal year shall remain in the fund. Such monies shall be invested by the state  
 22 treasurer in the same manner as monies in the state general fund, and interest earned  
 23 on the investment of these monies shall be credited to the fund, after compliance  
 24 with the requirements of Article VII, Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana,  
 25 relative to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund.

26 ~~D. The council shall adopt a resolution stating which members or officers are~~  
 27 ~~authorized to withdraw money from the fund and the separate account in the fund,~~  
 28 ~~which resolution shall be submitted to the state treasury. Monies in the fund and the~~  
 29 ~~separate account shall only be used by the council to further their mission.~~

30 Section 2. R.S. 36:309(E)(3) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

