

(KEYWORD, SUMMARY, AND DIGEST as amended by Senate committee amendments)

SCHOOLS/CHARTER. Provides relative to charter schools and corporate entities that make major donations to such schools.

DIGEST

Present law provides generally for charter schools, which are public schools that operate somewhat independently of the local school board but pursuant to a charter agreement. A charter agreement is entered into by a nonprofit organization that operates the school and the school board or the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides various requirements regarding what students are allowed to enroll in a charter school depending on the type of charter. (Type of charter is determined in part by whether the school is created as a new school pursuant to the charter or was a preexisting school converted to a charter school and whether the chartering authority is the school board or BESE.) Generally only pupils who would be eligible to attend a public school operated by the local school board or pupils from the same area as those permitted to attend the preexisting school are eligible to attend.

Proposed law provides that a charter agreement may provide for enrollment of and an enrollment preference for dependent children of permanent employees of a corporate partner. Further provides that a charter agreement may provide for a corporate partner to have representation on its governing or management board; however, such representation may not constitute a majority of the board.

Proposed law defines corporate partner as any legal entity, whether for profit or not for profit, registered with the secretary of state, except a gaming related corporation as identified in present law relative to campaign finance, that has, acting individually or as part of a consortium of corporations, donated one or more of the following to the school: the land on which the school is built, the school building or the space the school occupies, or major renovations to the existing school building or other capital improvements including major investments in technology. Provides that if the business is leasing the building or space to the school, the enrollment preference or board membership may only be provided if the lease provides that the building or space is made available without cost and if the term of the lease is not less than the duration of the charter agreement. Defines major renovation and major investment in technology and provides that the value of such shall be equal to at least 50% of the per pupil allocation of state funds from the minimum foundation program formula for that year for the parish where the school is located multiplied by the school's enrollment as defined in the charter agreement.

Proposed law provides that an enrollment preference pursuant to proposed law shall not be implemented in a way that displaces children enrolled at the school at the time the charter agreement or amendment providing for the preference is authorized. Requires, during the enrollment preference period, the corporate partner and the charter school annually to enter into a memorandum of understanding that specifies the support methods to be provided to the charter school, including student internships, career counseling, academic tutoring, or enrichment activities.

Present law requires that at certain types of charter schools, the percentage of the students who are at risk shall be not less than 85% of the average percentage of pupils enrolled in the local public school district from which the charter school enrolls its students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program. Proposed law provides that in a charter school with a corporate partner enrollment preference, this requirement shall apply to and be based upon only students who are not dependent children of permanent employees of a corporate partner.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:3991.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill.

1. Amends relative to entities which may be corporate sponsors to allow legal entities which are not corporations to be corporate sponsors.
2. Relative to the donations an entity can make in order to qualify as a corporate sponsor, adds capital improvements, other than "major renovations" as authorized in the original bill, including major investments in technology.

House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

1. Defines major renovation and major investment in technology and provides for the minimum value of such.
2. Requires annual memorandums of understanding between corporate partners and charter schools that specify the support methods to be provided to the charter school.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill.

1. Makes technical correction.