

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE BILL NO. 558

BY SENATOR LAFLEUR

SCHOOLS. Provides relative to foreign language immersion programs in public schools.
(7/1/14)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact the introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a) and to enact
3 R.S. 17:273.3(E), (F), and (G), relative to foreign language immersion programs in
4 public schools; to prohibit local school boards from denying enrollment in a foreign
5 language immersion program to certain students; to provide with respect to
6 requirements for the establishment, continuation, and certification of such programs;
7 to provide restrictions; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. The introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a) is hereby amended
11 and reenacted and R.S. 17:273.3(E), (F), and (G) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §273.3. Foreign language immersion programs; creation by local school boards;
13 parent petition

14 * * *

15 C.

16 * * *

17 (2)(a) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local school board, if

1 requested in writing by the ~~parent or legal guardian~~ **parents or legal guardians** of
 2 at least twenty-five students **seeking to be** enrolled in kindergarten **or of at least**
 3 **twenty-five students seeking to be enrolled in first grade** who reside within the
 4 jurisdictional boundaries of the school district, shall establish a foreign language
 5 immersion program for such students, provided that all of the following apply:

6 * * *

7 **E. A local public school board shall not deny enrollment in a foreign**
 8 **language immersion program to any student who resides within the**
 9 **jurisdictional boundaries of the school district and who applies for enrollment**
 10 **in such a program by no later than March first of the school year prior to such**
 11 **enrollment.**

12 **F. The requirements of Subparagraph (C)(2)(b) and Subsection E of this**
 13 **Section shall apply to a foreign language immersion program established prior**
 14 **to the 2012-2013 school year. The local school board shall ensure that such**
 15 **program is designated as a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program by**
 16 **the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with**
 17 **R.S. 17:273.2 by not later than July 1, 2017.**

18 **G. Nothing in this Section shall contravene any order of a court of**
 19 **competent jurisdiction providing for the assignment of pupils within the school**
 20 **system.**

21 Section 2. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2014; if vetoed by the governor
 22 and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on July 1,
 23 2014, or on the day following such approval by the legislature, whichever is later.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
 of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

DIGEST

LaFleur (SB 558)

Present law provides for the "Immersion School Choice Law" as follows:

- (1) Authorizes a local public school board to establish a foreign language immersion program in any school under its jurisdiction. The program shall be open to the enrollment of any student who resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of the

school district.

- (2) Provides that, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local public school board, if requested in writing signed by the parent or legal guardian of at least 25 students enrolled in kindergarten who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the school district, shall establish a foreign language immersion program for such students if specified other criteria are met.
- (3) Provides that such program shall be continued as long as at least 20 students remain enrolled in the program.
- (4) Requires the local school board to ensure that any foreign language immersion program created pursuant to present law is designated as a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program in accordance with present law.
- (5) Provides that a local school board shall not be required to provide transportation to any student enrolled in a foreign language immersion program established that is located outside the attendance zone of the school the student would otherwise attend if providing such transportation would result in additional transportation costs to the school system.

Proposed law adds provisions that require, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a local public school board, if requested in writing signed by the parents or legal guardians of at least 25 students to be enrolled in kindergarten or first grade, to establish a foreign language immersion program for such students if specified other criteria are met. Otherwise retains present law.

Proposed law prohibits local school boards from denying enrollment in a foreign language immersion program to any student who resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of the school district and who applies to enroll in such a program by no later than March 1st of the school year prior to such enrollment.

Proposed law provides that, for a foreign language immersion program established prior to the 2012-2013 school year, the requirements of present law that require enrollment of 20 students for continuation of the program and that require enrollment of timely applicants shall apply. Further provides that the local school board shall ensure that such program is designated as a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program by BESE in accordance with present law (R.S. 17:273.2) by not later than July 1, 2017.

Proposed law provides that nothing in present law and proposed law shall contravene any order of a court of competent jurisdiction providing for the assignment of pupils within the school system.

Effective July 1, 2014.

(Amends R.S. 17:273.3(C)(2)(a)(intro para); adds R.S. 17:273.3(E), (F), and (G))