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## DIGEST

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HB 199 Engrossed

2018 Regular Session

Smith

**Abstract:** Establishes the Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) Task Force to develop a framework for assessing children who are deaf or hard of hearing to determine competencies in language and literacy skills and to ensure opportunities for equitable achievement of kindergarten readiness.

Proposed law creates the Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) Task Force to develop a framework for assessing children who are deaf or hard of hearing to determine their competencies in language and literacy skills for the purpose of ensuring they are able to achieve kindergarten readiness in an equitable manner. Requires impartiality with regard to the language modalities used to teach such children. Provides for 22 members as follows:

- (1) 15 members appointed jointly by the state superintendent of education and the secretary of the La. Department of Health (LDH), who shall seek input on the appointments from offices and organizations that serve the deaf community. Provides that when making these appointments, preference shall be given, if applicable, to persons with deaf education certification or with early childhood education certification and experience working with children with hearing loss. These members shall be as follows:
  - (a) One parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing and is proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and English.
  - (b) One parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing and who uses only spoken English.
  - (c) One teacher of children who are deaf or hard of hearing whose expertise is in curriculum and instruction in ASL and English.
  - (d) One teacher of children who are deaf or hard of hearing whose expertise is in curriculum and instruction in English.
  - (e) One early intervention specialist who works with deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers using ASL and spoken English.
  - (f) One administrator of an early intervention program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- (g) One administrator of a school-age program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - (h) One speech pathologist with experience working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing on the development of spoken English, with or without the use of visual supplements.
  - (i) One school psychologist with experience working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing and with knowledge in conducting and interpreting cognitive assessments for such students.
  - (j) Two representatives of an association that advocates to enhance the quality of life for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - (k) One adult who is deaf or hard of hearing and is proficient in ASL and English.
  - (l) One adult who is deaf or hard of hearing who uses spoken English, without visual supplements.
  - (m) A mental health professional.
  - (n) A medical professional.
- (2) One member of the La. House of Representatives appointed by the speaker.
  - (3) One member of the La. Senate appointed by the president.
  - (4) One representative of the La. Dept. of Health appointed by the department secretary.
  - (5) One audiologist appointed by the secretary of the La. Dept. of Health.
  - (6) Executive director of the La. Commission for the Deaf or his designee.
  - (7) The state superintendent of education or his designee.
  - (8) The executive director of the Governor's Office on Disability Affairs or his designee.

Proposed law provides relative to membership and meetings:

- (1) A vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (2) Members shall elect a chairman and serve without compensation.
- (3) The state Dept. of Education and the La. Dept. of Health shall provide staff support.

- (4) The task force shall hold its initial meeting no later than August 1, 2018, and shall be domiciled in Baton Rouge but may hold public meetings elsewhere in the state.

Proposed law provides that the task force shall study and make recommendations relative to matters that shall include developing a framework for assessing children who are deaf or hard of hearing and shall do all of the following:

- (1) Review and make recommendations relative to tools or assessments for educators to use to assess the language and literacy development of such children.
- (2) Determine how often such tools or assessments should be used for children from birth to age five.
- (3) Identify language development milestones for such children by consulting with professionals trained in the language development and education of such children.
- (4) Identify procedures and methods for reporting language acquisition, assessment results, milestones, assessment tools used, and progress of such children to parents and to teachers and other professionals involved in their early intervention and education.
- (5) Make recommendations relative to ensuring that state law and state and local policies are adequately addressing the language developmental needs of such children.

Proposed law requires the task force to submit a report to the House and Senate education committees and health and welfare committees not later than Feb. 1, 2019. Requires the state Dept. of Education and the La. Dept. of Health to submit responses to this report to these committees not later than March 1, 2019.

Proposed law is effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action and is repealed on March 1, 2019.

(Adds R.S. 17:1960.1 and R.S. 36:651(G)(6); Repeals R.S. 17:1960.1 and R.S. 36:651(G)(6))

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Revise provisions relative to commission membership as follows:
  - (a) Increase number of commission members from 19 to 22 by adding a mental health professional, a medical professional, and the executive director of the Governor's Office on Disability Affairs.
  - (b) Instead of granting sole appointment authority of a majority of the commission to the state superintendent of education, provide for joint appointment by the

superintendent and the secretary of the La. Department of Health with input from offices and organizations that serve the deaf community.

- (c) Relative to appointments, add that preference be given, if applicable, to those holding early childhood or deaf education certification.
2. Instead of requiring that the task force be impartial with regard to language taught to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, require that it be impartial with regard to language modalities used to teach them.