

2020 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 481

BY SENATOR FIELDS

STUDENTS. Provides relative to students impacted due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:8, 3351(M), and Part IV-A of Chapter 50 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes

3 of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:5111, relative to elementary, secondary, and

4 postsecondary education; to provide relative to students impacted as a consequence

5 of the public health emergency declared by the governor on March 11, 2020, in

6 response to COVID-19; to provide with respect to the applicability of certain statutes

7 related to the provision and conduct of elementary and secondary education; to

8 provide relative to the powers and duties of postsecondary management boards; to

9 provide for waivers and exceptions to certain program requirements and conditions

10 for Taylor Opportunity Program for Students' awards; and to provide for related

11 matters.

12 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

13 Section 1. R.S. 17:8, 3351(M), and Part IV-A of Chapter 50 of the Louisiana
14 Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:5111, are hereby enacted to read as follows:

15 **§8. Students impacted by declaration of public health emergency; 2019-2020**
16 **school year**

17 **A. The legislature finds that the public health emergency declared by the**

1 governor on March 11, 2020, relative to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and
2 the subsequent ordered closure of public schools, has negatively impacted
3 students. The legislature further finds that it is in the best interests of the
4 elementary and secondary students of this state that certain statutory provisions
5 be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year including:

6 (1) The provisions of R.S. 17:10.1 relative to the statewide school and
7 district accountability system.

8 (2) The provisions of R.S. 17:24.4 that mandate annual administration
9 of testing through the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program and end-of-
10 course examinations.

11 (3) The provisions of R.S. 17:4023 and 6301(B)(2)(ii) that require
12 nonpublic schools to administer state assessments to students participating in
13 the Louisiana Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program and to
14 students receiving scholarships from donations to school tuition organizations.

15 (4) The provisions of R.S. 17:391.2 et seq relative to public school
16 accountability and assessments.

17 (5) The provisions of R.S. 17:407.23 relative a uniform assessment and
18 accountability system for publicly funded early childhood education programs.

19 (6) The provisions of R.S. 17:154.1 that provide for a minimum number
20 of instructional days and instructional minutes per school year.

21 (7) The provisions of R.S. 17:154.3 that require teachers to work a
22 minimum number of days per school year.

23 (8) The provisions of R.S. 17:194(B) to allow school districts greater
24 flexibility in administering nutrition programs.

25 (9) The provisions of R.S. 17:221 that mandate school attendance.

26 (10) The provisions of R.S. 17: 232 that require attendance to be checked
27 at all schools.

28 (11) The provisions of R.S. 17:3881 et seq., R.S. 17:3901 et seq., and R.S.
29 17:3997(D) relative to teacher evaluations and use of value-added data as a

1 criteria for the receipt of teaching credentials.

2 (12) The provisions of R.S. 17:3991(C)(1)(b) that require charter schools
3 to adhere to certain student application and enrollment procedures.

4 B. The State Board of Elementary Education shall adopt emergency
5 rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to effect the
6 suspension of the statutes enumerated in Subsection A of this Section.

7 * * *

8 §3351. General powers, duties, and functions of postsecondary education
9 management boards

10 * * *

11 M. Each public postsecondary education management board shall adopt
12 such policies as it deems necessary and prudent to address and minimize the
13 negative impacts of the public health emergency declared by the governor in
14 response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, upon the students, faculty, and
15 employees of each institution under its management and supervision. Such
16 policies may include, but not necessarily be limited to, online and distance
17 learning, student housing and food services, refund of tuition and fees as
18 appropriate, faculty and employees working remotely, cancellation or
19 postponement of campus events, commencement activities, regular
20 communication with students, faculty, and employees.

21 * * *

22 PART IV-A. STUDENTS IMPACTED BY DECLARED
23 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

24 §5111. Students impacted by declared public health emergencies; initial and
25 continuing eligibility for program awards; waivers and
26 exceptions

27 A.(1) The legislature finds that due to the effects of the public health
28 emergency declared by the governor on March 11, 2020, relative to the novel
29 coronavirus, COVID-19, it is in the best interest for the education of the people

1 of the state that initial eligibility requirements and continuing eligibility
2 requirements established in Part I of this Chapter for awards pursuant to the
3 Taylor Opportunity Program for students be modified as provided by this
4 Section for students impacted as a result of the public health emergency.

5 (2) For the purposes of this Section, "impacted student" mean:

6 (a) A student who was enrolled in a public high school or a nonpublic
7 high school having the approval of the State Board of Elementary and
8 Secondary Education required by Part I of this Chapter for program eligibility
9 purposes during the 2019-2020 school year.

10 (b) A student who is the recipient of a program award who was enrolled
11 in an eligible college or university on the fourteenth class day of the Spring 2020
12 semester or on the ninth class day for institutions operating on a quarter
13 system.

14 B. Relative to initial eligibility requirements for a Taylor Opportunity
15 Program for Students award applicable to a student impacted by the public
16 health emergency during the 2019-2020 school year, the administering agency,
17 in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, shall provide by rule as
18 follows:

19 (1) The program requirement that a student who graduates from an
20 eligible Louisiana high school during the 2019-2020 school year must have
21 successfully completed the applicable core curriculum shall be waived for an
22 impacted student upon proper documentation by the student's high school
23 principal or headmaster or authorized designee that failure to comply with such
24 requirement is due solely to the fact that school closure prevented the student
25 from completing any required course.

26 (2) The administering agency may receive and consider an impacted
27 student's qualifying score on the ACT or SAT which is first obtained after the
28 national April testing date in the year of the student's high school graduation
29 for purposes of determining eligibility for all program awards and levels.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:8, 3351(M), and 5111)