

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 182

BY SENATOR WALSWORTH

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state superintendent of education, commissioner of higher education, secretary of economic development, and executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, in consultation with local school systems, college and university systems, and the Workforce Investment Council, to jointly study and develop recommendations for creating a more seamless system of secondary and postsecondary education.

WHEREAS, Louisiana's public high school education outcomes, including graduation rate and the attainment of dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, CLEP, and industry-based certification, are incrementally increasing but remain below that of many other states nationally; and

WHEREAS, many high school students and their parents continue to lack sufficient information about their academic options and have a limited ability to direct their high school education academic experience to meet high school graduation requirements and to plan toward postsecondary education goals; and

WHEREAS, current limitations include inadequate information about course options, insufficient academic counseling, the inability to make scheduling decisions, and financial disincentives to taking certain courses not paid by the school or school district; and

WHEREAS, the current system of preparing and transitioning high school students to postsecondary education is neither coordinated nor financially sustainable; and

WHEREAS, the state is not maximizing its limited financial resources, but instead funds secondary and postsecondary education separately which threatens both secondary and postsecondary education institutions during economic downturns; and

WHEREAS, the state currently funds the costs of dual enrollment above and beyond the funding provided to schools and colleges through the Minimum Foundation Program and higher education funding formulas; and

WHEREAS, incentives remain to continue operating in silos, rather than to collaborate, as the costs of secondary and postsecondary education rise; and

WHEREAS, students, their families, and the state face significant costs when students fail to maximize their high school opportunities, particularly during their senior year, in order to successfully transition to postsecondary education with college credit and with a greater likelihood of college completion; and

WHEREAS, the state can increase students' educational outcomes, save significant funds for the state and for families, and create a more sustainable educational model by designing a seamless system of secondary and postsecondary education.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana hereby urges and requests the state superintendent of education, commissioner of higher education, secretary of economic development, and executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, in consultation with local school systems, college and university systems, and the Workforce Investment Council, to jointly study and develop recommendations for creating a more seamless system of secondary and postsecondary education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in developing such recommendations, the agencies shall have as their goal to create a more seamless K-16 education system that enables students to accelerate their completion of a high school diploma and earn postsecondary education credits and industry-based credentials prior to graduation, thereby maximizing student opportunity, increasing the likelihood of college persistence, and saving money for taxpayers and families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the agencies shall prioritize the ability and fundamental right of students and their families to schedule academically appropriate dual enrollment courses consistent with their postsecondary goals, consistent high quality across all dual enrollment courses and providers, and the utilization of all existing public funding streams without the need for additional state appropriations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations shall address statewide needs and priorities, including but not limited to student eligibility, eligible providers and courses, academic counseling resources, full articulation and transfer of courses, measurements of success, and projected cost savings for families and taxpayers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommended plan shall address local and regional needs and priorities, including but not limited to student access to multiple career training pathways, pre-existing partnerships between school systems and postsecondary education institutions, the special needs of rural communities, and logistical issues such as transportation and the availability of instructors and equipment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state superintendent of education shall convene the first meeting of the agencies no later than August 1, 2016.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group's recommendations shall be submitted by the state superintendent of education to the House and Senate committees on education not later than 60 days prior to the 2017 Regular Session of the Legislature.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE