

SENATE SUMMARY OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS

SB 344 By Senator Duplessis**KEYWORD AND SUMMARY AS RETURNED TO THE SENATE**

SCHOOLS. Provides relative to submission and review of charter school proposals and charter renewals. (8/15/10)

SUMMARY OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO THE SENATE BILL

1. Changes proposed law relative to automatic renewal of charter schools that have met specified benchmarks and have demonstrated growth in student achievement to specify that such criteria shall have been met and demonstrated for the three preceding school years, and that there have been no significant audit findings during the term of the charter agreement.
2. Removes the May 31st deadline in proposed law for the local school board to provide written notification of its final decision to the chartering group.

DIGEST OF THE SENATE BILL AS RETURNED TO THE SENATE

Duplessis

SB No. 344

Present law requires a local school board to review and formally act upon each proposed charter within 30 days of its submission. Further provides that the local board engage in an application review process that complies with the latest Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

Proposed law extends the time within which a local school board must act upon a charter school proposal to 90 days and specifies that the local board's review process be transparent. Otherwise retains present law.

Proposed law authorizes local school boards to accept charter proposals until February 28th of each year and requires them to provide written notification of a final decision to the chartering group. Requires that notification regarding a denial include written explanation of the reasons for such denial.

Present law provides that a final decision on a charter proposal is not required within 30 days, but the local school board is required to indicate whether it is interested in working with the charter school group on its proposal and what specific timelines and procedures the board will follow. Further provides that if the local school board expresses no interest in working with the group or if no final decision is received within 60 days, the chartering group may submit its proposal to BESE. Proposed law deletes present law. Provides instead that if a chartering group does not receive a final decision within 90 days, it may submit its proposal to BESE.

Proposed law requires the local school board to make public through its website, and in printed form upon request, the following:

- (1) Guidelines for submitting a charter proposal.
- (2) Forms required for submission of a charter proposal.
- (3) The timelines established for accepting and reviewing charter proposals.
- (4) The process that will be used to review charter proposals.

- (5) The name and contact information for the primary point of contact for charter proposals.

Present law requires that local school boards make vacant school facilities or any facility slated to be vacant available to chartering groups for lease or purchase at fair market value. Proposed law makes fair market value a maximum for the lease or purchase price.

Present law provides that for a Type 2 charter created as the result of a conversion, the facility and all property within the existing school shall also be made available to the chartering group under similar terms. Proposed law deletes the requirement that facilities be provided to these Type 2 charters "under similar terms."

Present law provides that an approved charter shall be valid for an initial period of 5 years and may be renewed for additional periods of not less than 3 nor more than 10 years. Provides that the process for renewing a school charter shall be the same as for initial charter approval. Proposed law additionally provides that the chartering authority shall notify a chartering group in writing of any renewal decision not later than January 31st of the year in which the charter would expire. Further provides that if the charter is not renewed, the notification shall include reasons for non-renewal.

Present law provides that no charter shall be renewed unless the charter renewal applicant can demonstrate using standardized test scores improvement in the academic performance of pupils over the term of the charter school's existence.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally provides that:

- (1) A chartering authority shall provide each charter school with the criteria and procedures that will be used in considering whether to renew a school's charter.
- (2) A charter school which has met or exceeded for the three preceding school years the benchmarks established for it in accordance with the school and district accountability system, has demonstrated growth in student achievement for the three preceding school years, and has had no significant audit findings during the term of the charter agreement shall be deemed a high-performing school, and its charter shall be automatically renewed.

Effective August 15, 2010.

(Amends R.S. 17:3982(A)(1)(a) and (2) and (B) and 3992(A)(1) and (2))

Thomas F. Wade
Director, Legal Affairs Division