

2025 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15

BY SENATORS PRESSLY AND JENKINS

COMMENDATIONS. Commends and congratulates C.E. Byrd High School as it celebrates its centennial year.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate C.E. Byrd High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, as it celebrates its centennial year.

WHEREAS, a Virginia native and lawyer who left the bar for a profession in education, Clifton Ellis Byrd, traveled to accept a principalship in Monroe, Louisiana in 1889 but left that position in 1892 to become principal of the first public high school in Shreveport, Louisiana, and assisted in the establishment of the Caddo Parish School Board; and

WHEREAS, after a one year interruption to accept the presidency at Louisiana Tech University, then known as Louisiana Industrial Institute, "Professor Byrd" returned in 1907 to become Superintendent of the Caddo Parish Public School System until his passing in 1926; and

WHEREAS, in 1923 the Caddo Parish School Board purchased a twenty-acre cow pasture two miles south of Shreveport from James Gras for \$110,000 with additional lots for \$9,500 to build a new high school awarding a \$772,133 contract to the Stewart-McGee Construction Company to replace the closed Hope Street School with a new facility in honor of Superintendent and Professor Clifton Ellis "Cliff" Byrd to be named C.E. Byrd High School; and

1 WHEREAS, on October 25, 1925, Principal Grover C. Koffman opened Shreveport's  
2 newest high school in a dedication ceremony held in the 2,000 seat auditorium; and

3 WHEREAS, for the next fifty years under the leadership and guidance of Principal  
4 Koffman and Principal J. H. Duncan, Byrd High School, during its "golden era of pristine  
5 glory", became a nationally recognized model for classical academic education and superior  
6 athletic achievement led by an extraordinary staff of faculty and coaches; and

7 WHEREAS, the legacy of Principals Koffman and Duncan continued through the  
8 years under the guidance of former Caddo Parish School Board member and president, state  
9 representative, and state senator Principal Dr. B. L. "Buddy" Shaw; interim Principal Jewell  
10 Wagner; Principal R. Lynne Fitzgerald; Principal Richard L. Lavergne; continuing to this  
11 day under the stewardship of Principal Gerald "Jerry" Badgley; and

12 WHEREAS, over the years Byrd High School experienced the national cultural  
13 trends and struggles confronting most urban areas, including "crossover day" in the spring  
14 of 1970 when the black Valencia High School merged with the white C. E. Byrd and the  
15 tumultuous years leading to the announcement on May 23, 1982, that due to the prohibitive  
16 cost to repair a declining building, decrease in enrollment to less than 800 students, and lack  
17 of community confidence in its academic standards, C. E. Byrd High School would close the  
18 next year; and

19 WHEREAS, committed to a plan to move Caddo Magnet High School, the Caddo  
20 Parish School Board responding to community and student efforts seeking a reprieve, the  
21 Board approved a multi-million dollar electrical and mechanical renovation, with skeptical  
22 approval for the opening of a C. E. Byrd Math Science Magnet Program; and

23 WHEREAS, in the fall of 1984, with fewer than 800 neighborhood students and 52  
24 students in the new Math Science Magnet Program, Principal B. L. Shaw hired two  
25 exceptional teachers, long time Byrd administrator and graduate, Jerry Malone, a counselor  
26 and a secretary to implement the program as well as R. Lynne Fitzgerald from Magnet High  
27 School to guide the neighborhood program; and

28 WHEREAS, unwilling to let closure become a reality, the loyal alumni of Byrd, a  
29 determined contingent, many of whom were alumni and an exceptional student body, staff  
30 and faculty, went to work to "save" Byrd; and

1 WHEREAS, during the next seventeen years, Byrd began a remarkable "Byrd is  
2 Back" story that included building the largest group of high school alumni in the country;  
3 creating the world's largest JROTC program; hosting the largest high school "Ultimate  
4 Reunion" attended by 6,000 graduates and families; generating the second largest enrollment  
5 of a Louisiana high school; and bringing back winning athletic tradition of state  
6 championships and competitive academic championships excellence; and

7 WHEREAS, on the eve of the Second Ultimate Reunion in February, 1997, only  
8 fifteen years after the board proposed to close Byrd, Byrd graduate and Principal, R. Lynne  
9 Fitzgerald, stood in the White House Rose Garden proudly representing the thousands who  
10 loved and worked tirelessly for Byrd's "comeback" to hear the name of C. E. Byrd High  
11 School called as one of the 100 public high schools in the United States to be recognized as  
12 a "National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence". Byrd Was Back!; and

13 WHEREAS, Principal Jerry Badgley has played a pivotal role in the growth and  
14 transformation of Byrd High School fostering significant advancements in school curriculum  
15 as a result of his leadership and guidance, including a new football practice field and  
16 enhanced facilities; and

17 WHEREAS, Principal Badgley's efforts have highlighted the impact of school  
18 leaders in the community, whose alumni include current state senators, Thomas A. Pressly  
19 and Sam L. Jenkins Jr.; former state legislators including Senator Virginia Kilpatrick  
20 Shehee; Senator Phil Short; Senator and Judge Robert Kostelka; former state representatives  
21 Art Sour, Frank Fulco, and James C. Gardner; United States Senator J. Bennett Johnston Jr.;  
22 Saxby Chambliss, United States Senator from Georgia; John Howard Dalton, former United  
23 States Secretary of the Navy; Brandon Friedman, former deputy assistant secretary of the  
24 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development; Tom Jarriel, ABC News  
25 journalist; and many other outstanding public servants including United States District Judge  
26 Tom Stagg, United States Circuit Court Judge, Jacques L. Wiener Jr., and Louisiana  
27 Supreme Court Justices, Jeffrey P. Victory and Pike Hall Jr.; and

28 WHEREAS, in 1991 the eight-acre area comprising the school buildings and other  
29 structures were added to the National Register of Historic Places, recognizing one of the few  
30 examples of Jacobean Revival architecture; and

1           WHEREAS, C.E. Byrd High School will celebrate its 100th graduating class, June  
2 5th through 7th, 2025, culminating the "Ultimate Reunion" on June 7th.

3           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
4 commend and congratulate the faculty, staff, students, and alumni of C.E. Byrd High School  
5 as they celebrate the school's centennial year.

6           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to C.E.  
7 Byrd High School Principal, Gerald "Jerry" Badgley.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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	DIGEST	
SCR 15 Original	2025 Regular Session	Pressly
Commends and congratulates Shreveport's C.E. Byrd High School as it celebrates its centennial year.		
Provides that a copy of the Resolution be transmitted to C.E. Byrd High School Principal Gerald "Jerry" Badgley.		