

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 95

BY SENATOR EDMONDS

SCHOOLS. Provides for approval for charter schools that specialize in vocational and technical education to meet workforce demands for high demand and high wage jobs. (8/1/26)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:183.4(B), 3983(A)(2)(a)(i) and to enact R.S. 17:183.4(B)(4),

3 3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and 3991.2 and R.S. 51:934, relative to vocational and technical

4 education; to provide for charter schools; to authorize proposals for a vocational and

5 technical education Type 2 charter school; to provide for resolutions from the State

6 Board of Commerce and Industry; to provide for definitions; to provide for

7 enrollment; to provide for charter governing authority board members; to provide for

8 applications; to provide agreements; to provide for restrictions; and to provide for

9 related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. R.S. 17:183.4(B), and 3983(A)(2)(a)(i) are hereby amended and reenacted
12 and R.S. 17:183.4(B)(4), 3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and 3991.2 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

13 §183.4. Vocational and technical education; partnering with other schools to provide
14 courses

15 * * *

16 B.(1) If a high school does not offer vocational and technical education
17 courses, the governing authority of the school may enter into agreements to partner

1 with **any of the following:**

2 (a) ~~other~~ **Other** public schools, **including those public charter schools**
3 **authorized pursuant to R.S. 17:3983.** ~~or with~~

4 (b) ~~one~~ **One** or more two-year public postsecondary education institutions in
5 the state. ~~or with~~

6 (c) ~~nonprofit~~ **Nonprofit** proprietary schools.

7 (d) ~~or~~ Course Choice providers approved by the State Board of Elementary
8 and Secondary Education.

9 **(2) The purpose of the partnering agreement provided in Paragraph (1)**
10 **of this Subsection shall be** to provide available vocational and technical education
11 courses for the student as required in Subsection A of this Section. Nothing in this
12 Section shall be interpreted to supersede R.S. 17:4002.1 et seq.

13 ~~(2)~~**(3)** If the high school's approved mission or curriculum model does not
14 align with providing vocational and technical education courses, the governing
15 authority of the school may request a waiver from the State Board of Elementary and
16 Secondary Education of the requirements of Subsection A of this Section.

17 ~~(3)~~**(4)** No student shall be assessed a course fee when the local education
18 agency receives career development funds in the minimum foundation program for
19 such course.

20 * * *

21 §3983. Chartering process by type; eligibility; limitations; faculty approval; parental
22 approval

23 A. (1) * * *

24 (2)(a)(i) Each proposal for a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school shall first be
25 made to the local school board with jurisdiction where the school is to be located,
26 except as provided for in Item (ii), (iii), ~~or~~ **(iv), or (v)** of this Subparagraph, by
27 submitting a written proposal. The applicant shall also provide notice of application
28 submission for a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school to the state Department of
29 Education. If, after review as required by R.S. 17:3982, the local school board denies

1 the proposal, or if conditions placed on the proposal by the local school board as
 2 provided in Paragraph (B)(2) of this Section are not acceptable to the chartering
 3 group, then a proposal for a Type 2 charter school may be made to the state board.

4 * * *

5 (v) Pursuant to R.S. 17:3991.2, an initial proposal for a vocational and
 6 technical education charter school may be made to the state board as a proposal
 7 for a Type 2 charter school, so long as the initial proposal is accompanied by a
 8 resolution of support adopted by the Louisiana Board of Commerce and
 9 Industry and that meets the requirements of R.S. 17:3991.2.

10 * * *

11 §3991.2. Vocational and technical education charter schools; location of
 12 schools; economic sectors; parental choice; required actions

13 A.(1) Notwithstanding geographic or other requirements for enrollment
 14 contained in this Chapter, a charter agreement may provide, initially or by
 15 amendment, for the enrollment of students, by parents, that are seeking
 16 vocational and technical education for their children. Preference may be given
 17 to students whose parent or legal guardian is employed or resides within the
 18 economic sector that is designated by the State Board of Commerce and
 19 Industry, as provided in R.S. 51:934.

20 (2) In addition to the applicable requirements in R.S. 17:3991, the
 21 application must be accompanied by a resolution from the State Board of
 22 Commerce, as provided in R.S. 51:934.

23 B.(1) The charter agreement shall also specify all of the following:

24 (a) The school's maximum enrollment.

25 (b) The maximum number of students that may be enrolled into each
 26 specialty vocational and technical education class or program.

27 (c) Which classes or programs are aligned with high-demand and high-
 28 wage jobs, or determined as STAR jobs by Louisiana Works.

29 (2)(a) A charter agreement may provide, initially or by amendment, for

1 board seats on its charter governing or management board to be held by various
2 industry representatives who are employed by or retired from a business
3 located within the economic sector or have served as an officer or director on
4 the board of such business. Such membership is subject to all other provisions
5 of law except those that are contrary to provisions in this Chapter.

6 (b) For purposes of this Section, an industry representative may not be
7 an officer, board member, or employee of any legal entity except for a
8 corporation identified in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3).

9 C. Any business entity or corporation that is identified in R.S.
10 18:1505.2(L)(3), whether the gaming entity is for profit or not for profit and
11 whether acting individually or as part of a consortium of such corporations,
12 may not donate or provide any of the following to the school:

13 (1) The land on which the school is built.

14 (2) The school building or the space the school occupies.

15 (3) Major renovations to the existing school building or other
16 improvements including major investments in technology. For purposes of this
17 Paragraph, a major renovation to the existing school building means changes
18 that provide significant opportunities for substantial improvement including
19 but not limited to a structural change to the foundation, roof, floor, interior or
20 exterior walls or extension of an existing facility to increase its floor area; or an
21 extensive alteration of an existing facility, such as a change in its function or
22 purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change to the
23 facility.

24 (4) A major investment in technology, including but is not limited to a
25 donation of hardware, software, internet access, internet hardware, enterprise
26 systems, software licenses, smart board technology, or audiovisual equipment.

27 D. As used in Subsection C of this Section, the value of a major
28 renovation or of an investment of technology shall be equal to at least fifty
29 percent of the per pupil allocation of state funds by the minimum foundation

1 program formula for that year for the parish in which the school is located
2 multiplied by the school's enrollment as defined in the charter agreement.

3 E. For the duration of the enrollment preference specified in Paragraph
4 (A)(1) of this Section, businesses located within the economic sector may enter
5 into memorandums of understanding with the charter school and shall specify
6 the methods by which the businesses may support the charter school, including
7 but not limited to internships for students, career counseling, academic
8 tutoring, or enrichment activities.

9 F.(1) An enrollment preference pursuant to Paragraph (A)(1) of this
10 Section shall not be implemented in a way that displaces children enrolled at the
11 school at the time the charter agreement or amendment providing for the
12 preference is authorized.

13 (2) Enrollment at the school shall otherwise be as provided by this
14 Chapter.

15 G. As used in this Section, "STAR Jobs" or "Strategic Targeted Area
16 Resource jobs" means those employment opportunities identified by the
17 Louisiana Works Commission that have high-demand, high-wage jobs and are
18 listed on the commission's website on the date of the application.

19 Section 2. R.S. 51:934 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

20 §934. Resolutions of support for vocational and technical education
21 charter schools; economic sectors

22 A. The legislature finds and declares that:

23 (1) Economic development and the economic vitality of the state are
24 dependent upon an educated and highly trained workforce.

25 (2) Manufacturing, industrial, technology, energy, utility, and other
26 sectors are all dependent on a workforce that has vocational training and
27 technical education.

28 (3) High-quality educational options that include vocational and
29 technical educations are essential to the academic growth of Louisiana's

Type 2 charter school without first being proposed to a local public school board as a locally authorized school.

Present law authorizes proposals for charter schools with corporate partners to be made initially to BESE as Type 2 charter school proposals. Present law defines a "corporate partner" to include any legal entity registered with the secretary of state, except those holding gaming licenses. Present law also includes regional airports and any federal or state entity or agency, including public postsecondary education institutions, in the definition of corporate partners.

Proposed law retains present law and also provides that a specialty vocational and technical education charter school is authorized to apply for a Type 2 charter, without a corporate partner, by obtaining a resolution from the La. Board of Commerce and Industry (Bd. of Commerce) indicating a need for vocational and technical education exists in a designated economic sector.

Present law provides for a career diploma as an option in high schools and consists of a career major containing academic courses and technical studies. Present law also requires public high schools to provide students with the opportunity to enroll in available vocational and technical education courses. Present law further provides that, if a high school does not offer vocational and technical education courses, the governing authority of the school may enter into agreements to partner with other public and nonpublic schools to provide available vocational and technical education courses for students.

Proposed law retains present law and also provides that a traditional public school or an existing charter school may also partner with a specialty vocational and technical education charter school to meet the requirements under present law which requires schools to provide students with the opportunity to enroll in available vocational and technical education courses.

Proposed law provides that, if the Bd. of Commerce decides to adopt a resolution of support for a specialty vocational and technical education charter school, the resolution is to include all of the following:

- (1) The economic sector (geographic area) where jobs are in demand that require vocational and technical education training classes.
- (2) A list of the types of vocational and technical education training classes or skills that are needed for the jobs in that economic sector.

Proposed law defines "economic sector" to mean the economic development district or the parishes or geographic area surrounding a location where manufacturing, industrial, technology, energy, utility, and other facilities are, or will be, located that require vocational and technical education to support jobs at the facilities. Proposed law provides that gaming corporations may not be considered an "economic sector" for purposes of proposed law.

Proposed law requires an applicant for a vocational and technical education charter school to list the STAR jobs within the designated economic sector and which charter school classes or programs are aligned with the STAR jobs. Present law defines "STAR jobs" (Strategic Targeted Area Resource jobs) as those employment opportunities identified by the La. Works Commission to be high-demand, high-wage jobs and are listed on the commission's website.

Proposed law provides that enrollment in the specialty vocational and technical education may give preference to students whose parents or legal guardians are employed or residing within the economic sector.

Proposed law provides that a charter agreement may provide for board seats on its charter

governing board to be held by designated industry representatives located within the economic sector.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 17:183.4(B), 3983(A)(2)(a)(i); adds R.S. 17:183.4(B)(4), 3983(A)(2)(a)(v) and 3991.2 and R.S. 51:934)