
DIGEST

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HB 517 Engrossed

2019 Regular Session

Smith

Abstract: Requires public school governing authorities to adopt policies relative to the assessment, collection, and use of fees charged to students in elementary and secondary schools or their parents or legal guardians. Requires schools participating in the voucher program to identify all fees paid with voucher funds and provide certain information about fees to the parents or legal guardians of voucher students.

Proposed law requires each public school governing authority to adopt and publish on its website a policy for the assessment, collection, and use of fees charged to students or their parent or legal guardians. Defines "fees" as any monetary payment or supplies required as a condition of a student being enrolled in school or participating in any curricular or cocurricular activity, excluding the cost of school meals. Requires specified components to be included in such policies including fee lists, amounts, and use, a process for requesting waivers due to economic hardship, and an appeals process when waivers are denied. Requires each public school to publish the policy on its website and include it in the school's student handbook. Requires the state Dept. of Education to report to the House and Senate education committees regarding the implementation and compliance with proposed law by public school governing authorities.

Present law, relative to the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program, specifies requirements relative to schools (nonpublic and public) that participate in the program. Requires that participating schools accept the scholarship amounts provided to scholarship recipients as full payment of all educational costs, including incidental or supplementary fees that are charged to all enrolled students including but not limited to meals, field trips, and before- or after-school care. Proposed law additionally requires participating schools to identify all such fees that are paid with the scholarship. Provides that for any fees not charged to all enrolled students and not paid by the scholarship, the school shall adopt and disseminate to parents of scholarship recipients a policy that outlines the fee, its purpose, the amount charged, and a process by which parents of scholarship recipients may apply for and receive a waiver of the fee due to economic hardship, including objective criteria for granting such waivers. Requires that such policy shall include a statement prohibiting the education records of a scholarship recipient from being withheld due to failure to pay any fine, debt, or other outstanding obligation. Otherwise retains present law.

Proposed law provides that school supplies requested by classroom teachers of a student's parent or legal guardian shall not exceed a published amount per student per school year as determined by the public school governing authority. Requires school principals to approve school supplies. Requires that before assessing a school supplies fee or developing a school supply list, the existing school supply inventory shall be considered. Provides that a student shall not be denied the opportunity to

participate in a classroom activity due to his inability to provide requested supplies.

(Amends R.S. 17:4022(4); Adds R.S. 17:177, 178, and 3996(B)(54) and (55); Repeals R.S. 17:177(F))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Add that prior to assessing a fee for school supplies or developing a school supply list, consideration shall be given to the existing school supply inventory.
2. Delete provision prohibiting school supplies requested by teachers from constituting more than what a student can reasonably consume throughout the school year.
3. Delete requirement that school principals adopt a process for inventory of school supplies and that school supplies leftover at the end of a school year be used in the following school year.