
DIGEST

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HB No. 911

Abstract: Relative to the School Choice Pilot Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities, removes the limitation that the program be a two-year pilot program and provides relative to student eligibility requirements regarding residency and grade.

Present law establishes the School Choice Pilot Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities as a two-year pilot program beginning with the 2011-2012 school year in parishes with a population in excess of 190,000 (currently, Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans, and St. Tammany). Provides for student eligibility including that the student is determined to be in need of special education services for specified exceptionalities, is residing within a pilot program parish, and is entering kindergarten or grades one through eight. Provides for nonpublic school eligibility, requirements, and authority. Provides for program administration and implementation by the state Dept. of Education pursuant to rules and regulations of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Permits parents/guardians of eligible students to apply for educational certificates for the cost of educational services offered by eligible nonpublic schools. Specifies that the value of each certificate shall be determined by the department and shall be an amount equivalent to 50% of the per pupil allocation of state funds to the local public school district in which the eligible student is residing for that school year but shall not exceed the tuition amount charged by the eligible nonpublic school. Requires the department to submit a report to the House and Senate education committees by Aug. 1, 2012, on the implementation of the program including certain information and recommendations.

Proposed law retains present law except as follows:

- (1) Removes the limitation that the program be a two-year pilot program but provides for termination at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.
- (2) Removes the eligibility requirement that a student is residing within a pilot program parish.
- (3) Removes the eligibility requirement that a student is entering kindergarten or grades one through eight.
- (4) Removes requirement that the department's 2012 report include recommendations to continue the program on a pilot basis or implement the program statewide.

- (5) Requires the department to submit a report by Dec. 1, 2014, in the same manner as provided in present law and additionally requires that the report include the department's recommendations as to whether the program should continue in the program eligible parishes or be implemented statewide.
- (6) Provides that proposed law shall be implemented beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

(Amends the heading of Part II of Chapter 43 of Title 17 of the La. Revised Statutes of 1950 and R.S. 17:4031(A), (B), and (E))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill.

- 1. Deletes proposed law increase of the value of the educational certificate to 75% of the per pupil allocation of state funds and retains present law value as 50% of such allocation.

House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

- 1. Requires the department to submit a report by Dec. 1, 2014, that includes the department's recommendations as to whether the program should continue in the program eligible parishes or be implemented statewide.
- 2. Provides that the program shall terminate at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.