

Regular Session, 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 106

BY SENATOR THOMPSON

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. To urge and request the Department of Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to expand and enhance oral health care education in Louisiana public schools.

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request that the Department of Education and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, endeavor to expand and enhance oral health education in Louisiana public schools.

WHEREAS, tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, yet fewer than half of the low-income children in Louisiana who are Medicaid-eligible actually see a dentist in any year; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown systemic associations between a variety of diseases of the mouth and afflictions in other parts of the body, including connections between periodontitis (gum disease), diabetes, and strokes; the consequences of poor oral health also include a host of conditions associated with poor nutrition, lost productivity due to pain, and even the possibility of death from untreated infections or oral cancer; and

WHEREAS, the educational objectives for public elementary and secondary schools' curricula established by the Department of Education known as Grade Level Expectations, or GLEs, which schools must follow in designing their curricula, do presently include an oral health education component; and

WHEREAS, the GLEs only apply at the kindergarten level, where they deal almost exclusively with brushing teeth, and at high school grade levels, but only in rather vague and

1 insignificant terms; and

2 WHEREAS, the American Dental Association and Louisiana Dental Association,
3 through its Children's Oral Health Education Initiative (COHEI), have identified a number
4 of oral health education resources appropriate for, and beneficial to, children and have
5 expressed a willingness to identify and/or develop more; and

6 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature hereby recognizes that good oral health is
7 essential to good overall health and that comprehensive oral health education, especially in
8 children's formative years, is a vital aspect of ensuring the development of optimal habits
9 of good oral hygiene and ongoing preventive care, including regular visits to a dentist.

10 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
11 does hereby urge and request that the Department of Education and Board of Elementary and
12 Secondary Education, availing themselves as necessary of resources obtainable through the
13 Louisiana Dental Association, endeavor to expand and enhance oral health education in
14 Louisiana public schools through a greater emphasis on, and more comprehensive curricula
15 requirements for, oral health care education, with a goal of all Louisiana children possessing
16 a fundamental working knowledge and understanding of basic oral hygiene, effective
17 preventive strategies, and common oral diseases and their consequences before all their
18 permanent teeth have erupted.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
20 superintendent of the Department of Education and the president of the Board of Elementary
21 and Secondary Education.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alan Miller.

DIGEST

Thompson

SR No. 106

Requests that the Dept. of Education and BESE endeavor to expand and enhance oral health education in La. public schools through a greater emphasis on, and more comprehensive curricula requirements for, oral health care education, with a goal of all La. children possessing a fundamental working knowledge and understanding of basic oral hygiene, effective preventive strategies, and common oral diseases and their consequences before all their permanent teeth have erupted.