

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 134

BY SENATOR BROOME

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to examine and consider the status of school suspensions and expulsions, as well as plans to revise current school discipline policies in response to the "Supportive School Discipline Initiative" launched by the United States departments of education and justice.

WHEREAS, the stated vision of the Louisiana Department of Education is "to ensure all students are on track to attain a college degree or succeed in a professional career"; and

WHEREAS, the state's goal of preparing every student for college and careers cannot be attained without providing a safe and secure learning environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning; and

WHEREAS, heavy reliance on suspensions and expulsions to create a positive school climate is clearly not the answer, as it fails to help a student develop the skills and strategies needed to improve behavior and has a tremendous academic cost in lost learning time; and

WHEREAS, exclusionary school discipline practices are statistically proven to disproportionately impact students of color and students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, suspended students are less likely to graduate on time, are more likely to be suspended again, repeat a grade, or drop out of school and enter the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, removing a student from the classroom should be a last resort in addressing unacceptable behavior and the optimal way to intervene and improve academic and societal outcomes for these students is to identify and target the underlying causes of misbehavior; and

WHEREAS, to assist schools, school districts, and states in addressing this serious issue, the United States departments of education and justice collaboratively launched the "Supportive School Discipline Initiative" to support the use of school discipline practices

that foster safe, supportive, and productive learning environments, while keeping students in school; and

WHEREAS, the role of the Initiative has been to provide schools with effective alternatives to suspensions and expulsions as a primary means of disciplining students, with a focus on reducing the disproportionality for students of color and students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in January, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education released guidance to state, district, and school-level officials outlining principles and strategies for improving school climate and school discipline practices.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to examine and consider the status of school suspensions and expulsions, as well as plans to revise current school discipline policies in response to the "Supportive School Discipline Initiative" launched by the United States departments of education and justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board submit a written report to the Senate Committee on Education, the House Committee on Education, and the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children, not later than March 1, 2015.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES