

2016 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 353

BY SENATOR BISHOP AND REPRESENTATIVE HILFERTY

SCHOOLS. Provides for the Louisiana Expectant and Parenting Students Act. (8/1/16)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:221.7 and 3996(B)(42), relative to dropout prevention programs for high school students; to provide for the Louisiana Expectant and Parenting Students Act; to provide for a purpose for the Act; to require public high school governing authorities to adopt policies that support expectant and parenting students; to provide for reporting requirements and criteria; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:221.7 and 3996(B)(42) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§221.7. Dropout prevention and recovery for expectant and parenting students

A. The Louisiana Legislature recognizes the need to ensure that all students graduate from high school, despite the many challenges they may face. The legislature acknowledges that pregnancy is consistently the most common family-related reason given by female students who drop out of high school. Further, the legislature finds that federal Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects the rights of expectant and parenting students, and encompassed in that protection is the right to a safe and supportive school

1 environment that promotes high school graduation.

2 B. Basic legal obligations of any education program or activity receiving
3 federal financial assistance under federal Title IX of the Education
4 Amendments of 1972 include:

5 (1) Prohibiting discrimination against a student based on pregnancy,
6 childbirth, false pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions.

7 (2) Prohibiting illegally excluding a pregnant student from participating
8 in any part of an educational program.

9 (3) Excusing a student's absence because of pregnancy or childbirth for
10 as long as the doctor deems the absence medically necessary.

11 (4) Permitting a female student to return to the same academic and
12 extracurricular status as before her medical leave began.

13 C. (1) Each governing authority of a public secondary school receiving
14 federal financial assistance shall adopt a policy that complies with the
15 requirements of federal Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and
16 shall submit a copy of such policy to the state Department of Education.

17 (2) In addition to the basic legal obligations under federal Title IX of the
18 Education Amendments of 1972, the following key provisions shall be included
19 in a school governing authority's policy regarding expectant and parenting
20 students:

21 (a) Maintaining student confidentiality.

22 (b) Ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.

23 (c) Promoting academic success.

24 (d) Implementing sensible attendance policies.

25 (e) Utilizing liaisons to share information.

26 (3) The state Department of Education shall review each policy
27 submitted pursuant to this Section for compliance with applicable federal law,
28 rules and regulations.

29 (4) The state Department of Education shall also collect data from each

(Adds R.S. 17:221.7 and 3996(B)(42))