

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2018 Regular Session
April 3, 2018

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Cameron Henry, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m. in Room 5, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman
Representative Mark Abraham
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative James K. Arms, III
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Lawrence A. "Larry" Bagley
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Reid Falconer
Representative Franklin J. Foil, Vice Chairman
Representative Lance Harris
Representative Bob Hensgens
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Steve E. Pylant
Representative Scott M. Simon
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Walt Leger, III

Representative Jerome Richard

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Katie Andress, Secretary
Peter G. E. Conroy, Legislative Analyst
David Zito, Legislative Analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Faye Talbot, Sergeant at Arms
Michaela Wells, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION

House Bill No. 1 by Representative Henry

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 1 were presented and discussed:

Higher Education

Mr. Daniel Waguespack, Budget Analyst, House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, 11th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-7477, presented an overview of the agency's FY 18-19 Executive Budget Review and Higher Education.

Dr. Joseph Rallo, Commissioner, Board of Regents, addressed the committee with an overview on state funding cuts over the past ten years and the importance of mandated costs.

Mr. Waguespack and Dr. Rallo answered questions from Representative Billiot regarding dedicated sources of funding, as well as questions by Representative Amedée related to net tuition, fees, and defined contribution plans.

Representative Pat Smith and Dr. Rallo discussed scholarships, degree completion within four years, and the limitation on the number of institutions within the state of Louisiana.

Mr. Waguespack and Dr. Rallo answered Representative Edmonds' questions regarding self generated funds and shared data on employability and education rankings for the state.

Mr. Terrence Ginn, Board of Regents, Finance and Administration, answered Representative Edmonds' questions on mandated costs.

Representative Bacala and Dr. Rallo discussed mandated costs for each of the entities and Representative Bacala's disagreement with the numbers.

Representative Abraham and Dr. Rallo discussed the confusion that exists where the numbers appear to be skewed on the financials. Dr. Rallo stated the national norm is 10%, and Louisiana fits within the 10% average.

Representative Gary Carter asked questions about economic investment related to education, poverty, and ACT scores which prohibit many African Americans from receiving TOPS. Mr. Ginn and Dr. Rallo addressed those qualified for TOPS reward distributions and GO Grants.

Representative Zeringue asked Dr. Rallo about the funding formula for state funding with regard to higher education in Louisiana and the funding formula based on 65% distribution of operating budget and 17.5% costs. Mr. Ginn explained that the 65% was based on the previous allocation and the 17.5% was based on the outcomes. When considering outcomes, Louisiana was rated seventh overall in the nation.

Representative Pat Smith spoke of federally funded HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) and grants awarded to schools. Dr. Rallo explained how the additional allocated dollars were used and offset.

Representative Bagley recounted the residents' buildings on the LSU Baton Rouge campus and the types of accommodations that meet the school's needs.

Chairman Henry posed several questions to Dr. Rallo regarding tuition costs, enrollment numbers, class size, and tenured positions.

Dr. Monty Sullivan, President of Louisiana Community and Technical College Systems, 265 South Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, addressed the committee on GO Grants, financial aid, the investment of Louisiana citizens, and growing the economy.

Dr. Ray Belton, President-Chancellor, Southern University System, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, (225) 771-4500, addressed the committee on building and retaining support services that define the mission of the school as well as evidence of financial stability over time that gives evidence of the state's commitment to the system.

Dr. Jim Henderson, President of University of Louisiana System, addressed the committee on the system's highest enrollment, fully-funded TOPS, and the global work force.

Dr. F. King Alexander, President, Louisiana State University, 3810 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 578-2111, addressed the committee on tuition and fees, scholarships, and attracting student population.

Dr. John Kirwan, Executive Director, LSU Pennington Medical Center, 6400 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 763-2500, addressed the committee on extending the budget over the next five years, positioning the medical center to compete in a global market, and advancing the medical mission for the health and nutrition of the state.

Special Schools and Commissions

Mr. Tim Mathis, Budget Analyst, House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, 11th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-9101, presented an overview of the agency's FY 18-19 Executive Budget Review Special Schools and Commissions.

Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired

Mr. Ralph Thibodeaux, Superintendent of Louisiana Special Schools, 2888 Brightside Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70820, (225) 757-3200, addressed the committee on the La. School of the Deaf, the La. School of the Visually Impaired, and the mission to prepare students to reach their potential in a diverse and changing society. Mr. Thibodeaux shared that the schools were anticipating a mid-year reduction (2015-2016) and the governor's expenditure freeze, which led them to carefully plan and prepare for those reductions.

Louisiana Special Education Center

Mr. Richard Bushnell, Director, Louisiana Special Education Center, 5400 Coliseum Boulevard, Alexandria, LA 71303, (318) 484-2223, addressed the committee on population of the school, staff positions, and recommendations to the center.

Representative Armes inquired about the number of positions and the amount of funds needed to be fully funded. Mr. Bushnell shared the results of a national survey commending the residential facility. Recommendations included a need for more therapists (speech, occupational, and physical) in place at the center as well as a need to equalize pay for all nurses employed by the La. Special Education Center.

Representative Pat Smith asked about partnerships in the community for the students to intern in real-life situations, to which Mr. Thibodeaux shared it was in their overall plan to do so.

Representative Amedée asked about expenditures related to vacant positions. Dr. Steve Horton, Executive Director, Louisiana School for Math Science and the Arts, 715 University Parkway, Natchitoches, LA 71457, (318) 357-2500, discussed deferred maintenance and the main administration building, which has had no renovations in 34 years, along with the need to replace fleet vehicles and to purchase textbooks.

Louisiana Educational Television Authority

Ms. Beth Courtney, Louisiana Educational Television Authority, 7733 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (800) 272-8161, addressed the committee on early childhood education, equipment, closed captioning, and infrastructure. There were no questions.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Ms. Shan Davis, Executive Director, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-5840, and Dr. Gary Jones, President, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-5840, spoke of the \$70,000 cuts they have incurred this year. There were no questions.

Department of Education

Mr. John White, Superintendent, La. Dept. of Education (LDOE), 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (877) 453-2721, and Ms. Beth Scioneaux, Chief Financial Officer, La. Dept. of Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (877) 453-2721, addressed the committee's questions on New Orleans charter schools and reconstruction of facilities.

Representative Pat Smith inquired about Recovery School District and the nonpublic educational assistance.

Representative Gary Carter inquired about grants, Jump Start, Head Start, incentives, and other topics related to the state general fund.

Mr. Mathis and Representative Amedée discussed the minimum foundation program per parish, and state activities' increase related to excess federal authority.

Representative Dustin Miller discussed childcare services for children one to three years old with Superintendent White, who shared that parents handle the challenge of childcare services for this young age group by either one parent staying at home to watch the child; another adult or family member watching the child; or, more often, parents utilize unlicensed childcare.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Armes offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 22 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Henry, Abraham, Amedée, Arms, Bacala, Bagley, Berthelot, Billiot, Gary Carter, Chaney, Edmonds, Falconer, Foil, Lance Harris, Hensgens, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Pylant, Simon, Smith, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Cameron Henry
House Committee on Appropriations