

**House Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Education**

Minutes of Joint Meeting
2018 Third Extraordinary Session
December 19, 2018

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Nancy Landry, co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Joint Education, called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Nancy Landry, co-chairman
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Joseph Bouie, Jr.
Representative Stephen F. Carter
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Reid Falconer
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Mark Wright
Senator Dan W. "Blade" Morrish, co-chairman
Senator Conrad Appel
Senator Gerald Boudreaux
Senator Beth Mizell
Senator Michael A. Walsworth

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Kendricks "Ken" Brass
Representative Stephanie Hilferty
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Scott M. Simon
Representative Polly Thomas
Senator John Milkovich, vice chairman
Senator Mack A. "Bodi" White, Jr.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Y. Jolly, senior legislative analyst
Elizabeth L. Borne, senior legislative analyst
Jacqueline Snowden, secretary
Cheryl M. Serrett, legislative analyst
Jeanne C. Johnston, senior legislative research analyst
Aimee D. Richard, secretary

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Danny Leming, sergeant at arms
James Bullock, sergeant at arms
Eugene Ledoux, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION**Pursuant to Article VII, Section 10.8(C)(3)(g) of the state constitution and R.S. 17:3805, to consider for legislative approval the plans submitted by schools and school systems for the expenditure of Education Excellence Fund (the EEF) monies.**

Erin Bendily, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA, presented a PowerPoint (Exhibit A), and two spreadsheets, regular account (Exhibit B) and investment account (Exhibit C), that explained the Education Excellence Fund and how monies from the fund were allocated and used by state educational agencies.

Beth Scioneaux, deputy superintendent for management and finance, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 342-3617, spoke for information only.

Kenya Jenkins, Education Excellence Fund administrator, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA, spoke for information only.

Ms. Bendily stated that the Louisiana constitution mandates that before funds can be disbursed to each eligible entity, they must have their plans approved by the Louisiana Department of Education (the department) and then by the legislative committee. She stated that the department was seeking House education committee approval of school and school system plans and will work to get requested funds as soon as possible, sometime in early January, since many of the systems had specific uses for the funds in their plans.

Representative Edmonds asked how remediation instruction funds were used. Ms. Bendily said the funds were used to pay staff to provide extended day instruction, for supplies for students, and for whatever met the academic needs of students.

Senator Appel asked if there was an accountability mechanism to ensure funds were expended as designated. Ms. Bendily said audits were performed. She said expenditures for purposes other than requested in a district's plan required approval. Senator Appel asked for verification of the EEF's efficacy and suggested an overall program be offered to all schools rather than individualized efforts at separate districts.

Representative Smith addressed Senator Appel's one-program suggestion. She said the legislature traditionally supported local control and autonomy at school districts. She discussed the build-up of dollars at nonpublic schools and asked if a report existed that tracked improvement of the students and addressed why those dollars weren't being spent if the students' scores were not improving.

Senator Morrish inquired about payments on the Millenium Trust Fund and expressed his concern about how much longer the payments would continue. He agreed with Senator Appel's suggestion on verification of the efficacy of the EEF. He said it would help districts to know how long they could depend on monies from the EEF. Ms. Bendily said she would follow up with the office of the state treasurer on funds availability.

Representative Steve Carter asked if laboratory schools were eligible for the EEF. Ms. Bendily said the EEF legislation would have to be amended to include disbursement to such schools. Representative Steve Carter asked if unspent money could be funneled to early childhood education. Ms. Bendily said many schools already were funding early childhood education from the EEF.

Senator Mizell asked how funds were applied to early childhood education. Ms. Bendily said instruction costs for early childhood education were paid by the EEF. Ms. Jenkins directed the committee to review Exhibit B, EIC 14, and said those funds were spent on early childhood education.

Senator Walsworth asked if the EEF monies could be used as match dollars. Ms. Scioneaux answered no. Senator Walsworth expressed his concern that per-pupil funds put rural areas at a funding disadvantage. Ms. Bendily explained that the Louisiana constitution mandates that 30% of the fund is divided equally among the school districts with the remaining 70% allocated per pupil.

Representative Wright said he agreed with Senator Morrish that the committee should know when the EEF terminated. He asked for statistics on what Louisiana spends relative to other states on early childhood education. Ms. Bendily said she would research and get the information to him.

Representative Smith explained that the EEF monies weren't truly being used for early childhood education since early childhood was defined as ages 0-3. She said the money actually was being

spent on pre-k, which starts at age four. Ms. Bendily agreed and added that schools could use the funds for younger-aged children if that was so designated in the approved application.

Senator Morrish suggested changing the legislative meeting date for approval of the funds to give applicants more time to apply and the department more time to allocate monies from the EEF. Ms. Scioneaux replied that the process worked well, and districts could use other funds, then replace/reimburse them with the EEF when those funds were deposited.

Senator Morrish asked what the result was if a request for the EEF was denied. Ms. Jenkins said the department typically did not deny requests; rather, they worked to align requests with the available budget.

Representative Smith offered a motion to approve Education Excellence Fund plans as presented by the Louisiana Department of Education. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Nancy Landry, Amedée, Bouie, Steve Carter, Edmonds, Emerson, Smith, and Wright voted yea and Senators Morrish, Appel, Boudreaux, Mizell, and Walsworth voted yea.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

There were no other matters to consider.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Nancy Landry, House Committee on Education
Chairman Dan W. "Blade" Morrish, Senate Committee on Education
Joint Committee on Joint Education

Date adopted: