

House Committee on Education

Minutes of Meeting
2019-2020 Interim
December 12, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr., vice chairman of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr., vice chairman
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Kendrick "Ken" Brass
Representative Stephen F. Carter
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Polly Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Joseph Bouie, Jr.
Representative Reid Falconer
Representative Stephanie Hilferty
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Scott M. Simon

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Y. Jolly, legislative analyst
Elizabeth L. Borné, legislative analyst
Lisa Lovello, legislative analyst
Jacqueline Snowden, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

None

III. DISCUSSION

Receive an update from the state Department of Education on the 2018-2019 school performance results, including but not limited to Orleans Parish.

John White, state superintendent of education, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, presented information from a PowerPoint, "Snapshot of Public Schools in New Orleans", which is included in the records of this meeting as Exhibit A. He noted that 78 of the 86 public schools in Orleans Parish were supervised by NOLA Public Schools and were charter schools, seven were supervised by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and the creative arts school was under the supervision of the Legislature of Louisiana and serviced students beyond New Orleans who lived in southeast Louisiana.

A companion presentation detailing pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina statistics was distributed to committee members and is included in the records of this meeting as Exhibit C.

Representative Gary Carter asked how schools are measured to ensure equivalency from 2005 to now. He noted that pre-Hurricane Katrina, 62% of students were enrolled in F-graded schools; in 2019, nine percent of students in Orleans Parish attended F-graded schools. Superintendent White said a star rating system existed prior to 2010 and letter grades replaced the star system. The result is equivalent measures.

Superintendent White stated that funding for vocational courses, including healthcare and craft trades, was doubled from the standard six percent to 12% in recognition of the greater cost of operation for those classes. He urged the legislature to promote dual enrollment and workplace-based career preparation.

Representative Smith expressed her desire for the same discussions that occurred for Orleans Parish to be held for parishes that other members of the committee represented.

Representative Amedée said she received phone calls from colleges having difficulty finding those who would teach students to become nurses or other healthcare or craft trades because the salaries to teach were far below the amounts individuals would make actually working in those careers.

Representative Steve Carter thanked Superintendent White on the improvements made in Louisiana in education during Mr. White's eight-year tenure. He said quality teachers and administrators needed to be recruited and attracted to Louisiana to improve the overall teaching pool. Superintendent White noted that Louisiana was the first state to mandate that the senior year of college for teacher candidates would be spent as resident apprenticeships under a mentor.

Mary Garton, assistant superintendent of administration, New Orleans Public Schools, 820 4th Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, presented information from a PowerPoint, "Update on NOLA Public Schools", which is included in the records of this meeting as Exhibit B. She said NOLA Public Schools is composed entirely of charter schools, with approximately 44,000 students served in 78 schools.

Ms. Garton said in 2018-2019, NOLA Public Schools closed four schools that failed to meet performance standards. Representative Gary Carter asked what help was given to students who had to transfer to higher-performing schools when their failing school was closed.

Dina Hasiotis, chief school support and improvement officer, New Orleans Public Schools, 3938 Chestnut Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, (315) 256-1557, answered Representative Gary Carter's question and said tiered systems of support were in place at NOLA Public Schools to gauge, from the beginning of a school year and through its duration, the level of learning of each student. She said the administration recognized that students from failing schools could be behind and worked to remediate them through the charter school's academic improvement plan.

Receive an update from the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the state Department of Education relative to implementation of the minimum foundation program formula for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3 as approved by the legislature.

Tony Davis, BESE District 4 representative, member, Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) task force, P.O. Box 94064, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064, (318) 348-1318, said for fiscal year 2019-2020, BESE approved a 1.375% increase in the Level 1 per-pupil formula; a \$1,000 pay raise for certificated teachers and a \$500 pay raise for non-certificated teachers; and a retirement match for both certificated and non-certificated teachers. He said BESE authorized the Department of Education to amend and make technical edits to the MFP where necessary.

Representative Gary Carter asked when the process for the next year's MFP would begin. Mr. Davis said it already had begun and there likely would be a meeting in January 2020 to get the process going.

Representative Smith said BESE's commitment to send retirement money along with the raise was an issue. She said there would be individuals who received a retirement match who were not employed but held the certificate. John White, state superintendent of education, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, said his department followed the law as prescribed by the legislature. He disagreed with Representative Smith's assertion that payments were being made to individuals who should not receive them.

Representative Thomas asked that a definition of "instruction" from BESE policy be sent to her, along with everything that was included in instruction. Mr. Davis agreed to do so.

Receive an update from the state Department of Education relative to funding for early childhood education.

Representative Gary Carter noted that the legislature had allocated \$20 million in state general funds to early education. He wanted to know how those funds were being expended and requested an explanation of the children on the child care assistance program (CCAP) waiting list.

Jessica Baghian, assistant state superintendent of assessment, accountability, analytics and early childhood, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, said the department was excited about the expansion in funding for early education, which was the first expansion funding in over a decade. CCAP voucher rates were at \$18-\$20 per day, raised from the 9th percentile of what the child care market charged to the 25th percentile. She said in June, August, and October, children were removed from the waitlist and were receiving services, a benefit of the expansion. She said the department was close to the end of its waitlist.

Rep. Brass asked how the waitlist was prioritized. Ms. Baghian said it was first-come-first-served. Ms. Baghian said the legislature also directed that children aged birth to three be prioritized in the expansion funding.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vice Chairman Gary M. Carter, Jr.
House Committee on Education

Date adopted: