

House Committee on Education

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 5, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Raymond E. Garofalo, Jr., chairman of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Raymond E. Garofalo, Jr., chairman
Representative Kendrick "Ken" Brass
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Barbara Reich Freiberg
Representative Patrick O. Jefferson
Representative Charles Anthony Owen
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Vincent "Vinney" J. St. Blanc III
Representative Phillip Eric Tarver
Representative Mark Wright, vice chairman
Representative Tanner D. Magee, ex officio

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Stephanie Hilferty

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth L. Borne, legislative analyst
Lisa Lovello, legislative analyst
Jacqueline Snowden, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Kylan Melancon, clerk
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt a three-minute rule. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 132 by Representative Pierre

Representative Pierre presented House Bill No. 132, which requires newly constructed public school buildings and those undergoing major plumbing renovations to be equipped with water bottle filling stations.

Ashley Hebert, American Heart Association, 2644 South Sherwood Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, (337) 298-1778, spoke in support of House Bill No. 132.

Representative Garofalo offered amendments to House Bill No. 132 that would:

1. Further define a "water bottle filling station" as a "drinking fountain" for purposes of the Louisiana Building Code.
2. Replace criteria triggering applicability of proposed law from a "major renovation" to a "major plumbing renovation".

Representative Garofalo offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, stated that with the adoption of the amendments, the association would support and not oppose House Bill No. 132.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report House Bill No. 132 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 132 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 8 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 411 by Representative Hughes

Representative Hughes presented House Bill No. 411, which provides relative to student discipline.

Gina Womack, executive director, Family and Friends of Louisiana Incarcerated Children, no address given, New Orleans, LA 70113, (504) 481-2376, spoke in support of House Bill No. 411.

Jennifer Coco, Center for Learner Equity, 4014 North Villere Street, New Orleans, LA 70117, (847) 602-2818, spoke in support of House Bill No. 411.

Representative Garofalo offered amendments to House Bill No. 411 that would exempt certain school boards with schools returned from the Recovery School District from the student expulsion process provided for in proposed law. Representative Garofalo offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Elizabeth Murrill, office of the Louisiana attorney general, 1885 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 326-6766, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 411.

Representative Edmonds offered amendments to House Bill No. 411 that would exempt students receiving virtual instruction at home from mandatory recommendation for expulsion. Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Matthew Green, 103 Rue Conge, no city given, (704) 564-7173, spoke in support of House Bill No. 411.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 411.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Bill No. 411 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 411 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 12 in support, and 2 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 421 by Representative Emerson

Representative Emerson presented House Bill No. 421, which authorizes public school governing authorities to establish learning pods for the purpose of providing small group instruction for students enrolled in public schools.

Representative Edmonds offered amendments to House Bill No. 421 that would add that proposed law is not applicable to learning pods formed and operated by parents. Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Ethan Melancon, state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (985) 859-4649, spoke in support of House Bill No. 421.

Representative Wright offered a motion to report House Bill No. 421 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 421 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 7 in support, 2 in opposition, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 635 by Representative Glover

Representative Glover presented House Bill No. 635, which provides relative to core curriculum requirements for Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS).

Tamika Green, executive director, Equity and Student Support, St. Charles Parish Public Schools, no address given, (985) 785-3113, spoke in support of House Bill No. 635.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Bill No. 635 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 635 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 by Representative Glover

Representative Glover presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 28, which requests that the Board of Regents and the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education study the possibility of allowing a course in African American Studies to satisfy certain curriculum requirements.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Brass, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 322 by Representative Freeman

On behalf of Representative Freeman, Representative McKnight presented House Bill No. 322, which provides for the sharing of limited student information for the purpose of administering certain federal food assistance programs.

Shavana Howard, assistant secretary, Department of Children and Family Services, 627 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 400-3311, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 322.

John Schroder, no witness card submitted, Louisiana state treasurer, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 322.

Laura Boudreaux, director of data privacy and research, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, no witness card submitted, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 322.

Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana commissioner of higher education, Louisiana Board of Regents, 1201 North 3rd Street, Suite 6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4253, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 322.

Dannie Garrett, Louisiana School Boards Association, 635 Main Street, #3, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, (225) 382-0333, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 322.

Representative Freiberg offered amendments to House Bill No. 322, relative to sharing student information for purposes of the food assistance programs, to authorize the sharing of additional student information and to add a sunset of December 31, 2022. Representative Freiberg offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Freiberg offered amendments to House Bill No. 322 that would add provisions relative to sharing student information with certain entities for purposes related to postsecondary education. Representative Freiberg offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Freeman offered a motion to report House Bill No. 322 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 322 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 16 in support and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 556 by Representative DeVillier

On behalf of Representative DeVillier, Representative Wright presented House Bill No. 556, which creates and provides for a program to provide state funding for the education of students not enrolled in public school.

Representative Wright offered amendments to House Bill No. 556 that would revise student eligibility criteria. Representative Wright offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Magee, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Wright offered amendments to House Bill No. 556 that would prohibit account funds from being claimed as a credit, deduction, exemption, or rebate. Representative Wright offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Magee, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Wright offered a motion to report House Bill No. 556 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 556 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays.

Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Magee, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support and 7 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

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

Representative Garofalo commented that the committee had approved the Education Excellence Fund allocation in December 2020. He noted said the Louisiana Department of Education had returned to the committee to testify on a part of the fund that had not been allocated. Dr. Keith Leger, Louisiana Department of Education, Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (337) 590-9441, noted that the department was seeking approval for the Baton Rouge diocese separately.

Representative Garofalo offered a motion to approve the allocation of EEF monies. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Garofalo announced that he had voluntarily deferred House Concurrent Resolution No. 49, which requests that the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education collect, analyze, and report data relative to certain high and low performing schools, and House Bill No. 563, which provides relative to the sharing of certain student data.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Garofalo, Edmonds, Freiberg, Magee, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Raymond E. Garofalo, Jr.
House Committee on Education

Date adopted: