



Honorable Governor John Bel Edwards,

The stakeholders in the Louisiana education system support responsible reforms that are designed and intended to improve student outcomes and increase stakeholder satisfaction. We are opposed to reforms that are intended to weaken the public education system, or force it into extinction. The current rapid expansion of charter schools in Louisiana not only does this, but also, essentially removes local control by simply replicating the traditional public school classroom under an independent governance that cannot be compelled to answer to the taxpayers, nor does it intend to.

The Louisiana Legislature established its intent in regards to charter schools in Revised Statute 17:3972

§3972. Intent and purpose

A. It is the intention of the legislature in enacting this Chapter to authorize experimentation by city and parish school boards by **authorizing the creation of innovative kinds of independent public schools for pupils**. Further, it is the intention of the legislature to provide a framework for such experimentation by the creation of such schools, **a means for all persons with valid ideas and motivation to participate in the experiment, and a mechanism by which experiment results can be analyzed, the positive results repeated or replicated, if appropriate, and the negative results identified and eliminated**. Finally, it is the intention of the legislature that the **best interests of at-risk pupils shall be the overriding consideration in implementing the provisions of this Chapter**.

In addition, the Louisiana Legislature established the initial chartering, revision and renewal process for submitting a charter school application, which includes who may form a non-profit organization and apply for a charter in Revised Statute 17:3983.

§3983. Chartering process by type; eligibility; limitations; faculty approval; parental approval

A.(1) Any of the following may form a nonprofit corporation for the purpose of proposing a charter as provided in this Subsection, provided that the group submitting the charter school proposal includes three or more persons holding valid and current Louisiana teaching certificates:

- (a) A group of three or more teachers.
- (b) A group of ten or more citizens.
- (c) A public service organization.
- (d) A business or corporate entity registered to do business in Louisiana pursuant to law, **excluding any business or corporate entity subject to the provisions of R.S. 18:1505.2(L) as provided in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3)**.
- (e) A Louisiana college or university, licensed by the Board of Regents, pursuant to R.S. 17:1808.
- (f) The faculty and staff of any city or parish public school or any local school board.
- (g) The state Department of Education, subject to the approval of the state board.

The stakeholders of Louisiana respectfully request that Gov. John Bel Edwards halt the approval of new charter applications and renewal of current charters via executive order when they do not meet the following criteria:

1. Charter school design shall be innovative and represent a distinct difference from the traditional public school setting which may include but not be limited to:
 - a. Scheduling that differs from traditional school hours.
 - b. Specialized curriculum such as hearing impaired, dyslexia, foreign language, or traditional arts and humanities.

- c. Licensing requirements above the minimum certification requirements for Louisiana educators.
 - d. The charter school shall not simply replicate the traditional classroom under an independent governing board. Charter schools, by definition, have independent governing boards. This characteristic, alone, shall not constitute innovation.
2. The governing board of the chartering non-profit must meet the required minimum of three Louisiana certified educators. The certified educators:
 - a. May not be employed by the charter school, or receive compensation for serving on the board.
 - b. May be retired as long as the certification is valid.
3. No business corporation, including shareholders and individual owners, that has formed a non-profit for the purposes of chartering shall participate in prohibited political activities including but not limited to campaign contributions and lobbying, as defined in Revised Statute 18:1505.2.

In addition, we are in agreement that the current accountability system does not adequately provide a method of accurately evaluating the success, or failure, of a charter school as was demonstrated in the recent renewal consideration regarding Louisiana Key Academy; a charter school established for students with dyslexia. We ask that in addition to the above reaffirmation of current statute, you also compel the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to design an accountability system that takes into consideration the special populations served by a school, the successes experienced in the classroom and parental satisfaction.

Thank you, governor, for taking the time to consider our request. We look forward to the sophomore year of your term with hopes for significant steps forward in the education of Louisiana's most valuable resource; our children.

Regards,

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Educate Louisiana