

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 13

BY REPRESENTATIVE MAGEE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Terrebonne Parish School Board not to close Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School but to take all necessary measures to support and strengthen the school; to provide that the House of Representatives will consider withholding COVID-19 relief funding from the school board if it continues to close schools unnecessarily; to commend the administration, faculty, staff, students, families, and community supporters for their dedication to the preservation of the school and its traditions; and to recognize and record for posterity the singular place this beloved school holds in the community and in the history of Terrebonne Parish.

WHEREAS, the Terrebonne Parish School Board is considering the closure of Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, this school, which serves students in prekindergarten through fourth grade, many of whom are of Native American heritage, is inextricably woven into the fabric of the Pointe-Aux-Chenes community; and

WHEREAS, the mission statement of this school is "success begins when teachers, parents, and community members work together to ensure student achievement and promote positively awesome citizens"; and

WHEREAS, Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School is small but vibrant; there is a long history of community involvement that still thrives; parents and community members partner with the school as vital stakeholders, preparing students for their future as stewards of this unique bayou community; and

WHEREAS, the school's teachers and parents, Native American Tribal leaders, and local business owners all play a part in enriching the lives of the students; they provide activities and presentations that not only prepare students for future careers but also develop a knowledge and sense of belonging to the rich culture into which they were born; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School received one of the top honors in the nation when it was named a 2015 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education in recognition of its substantial progress in closing the achievement gap among students; it was one of only six schools in the state to earn this prestigious honor that year; and

WHEREAS, the "Gulf Guardian Award" was awarded to the school in recognition of the students' involvement in environmental issues, which is crucial in this part of the state and develops their leadership in the fight to preserve their heritage and home; and

WHEREAS, the proposal to shutter Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School, if approved, would not only disrupt the education of its students but would decimate a longstanding community and school traditions in this extremely tight-knit community; and

WHEREAS, requiring the students of Pointe-Aux-Chenes to travel to Montegut Elementary School, as is being proposed, could place them in harm's way, as travel between the two locations, despite the relatively short distance, can be treacherous; and

WHEREAS, parents, many of whom are alumni of the school, report feeling blindsided by this proposal; and

WHEREAS, closing this school would have a disproportionately negative impact on a school that has one of the largest Native American and French-speaking populations in all of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, there is both a strong need and passionate community support for keeping Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School open in order to meet the needs of its students; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana and Terrebonne Parish will be receiving substantial funding for education, especially for underserved and vulnerable populations; Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School, a Title I school where approximately 75% of the students are economically disadvantaged, serves the very populations targeted by the federal American Rescue Plan; and

WHEREAS, this proposal to close Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary could place the Terrebonne Parish School Board in jeopardy of losing federal funds; and

WHEREAS, the Pointe-Aux-Chenes community is unified in raising its voice to protest this proposal and the Louisiana House of Representatives joins its protest.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Terrebonne Parish School Board not to close Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School but to take all necessary measures to support and strengthen this beloved school so that its legacy of excellence in education can continue for future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives will consider withholding COVID-19 relief funding from the Terrebonne Parish School Board if it continues to unnecessarily close schools against the will of its constituents and to the detriment of the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives does hereby commend the administration, faculty, staff, students, families, and community supporters of Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School for their unwavering dedication to the preservation of the school and all of its traditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives does hereby recognize and record for posterity the singular and special place this school holds in the community and in the history of Terrebonne Parish and the tremendous pride and honor it brings to its community and to the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the Terrebonne Parish School Board, the superintendent of the Terrebonne Parish School District, and the principal of Pointe-Aux-Chenes Elementary School.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES