

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 243

BY REPRESENTATIVE PRICE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to reconvene a Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) task force to determine the actual cost of providing public education in Louisiana and identify all potential funding mechanisms to enable school systems to meet this cost and to submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education not later than February 1, 2017.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana requires that the legislature provide for the education of the people of the state and further requires that the legislature establish and maintain a public education system; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana further provides that it is the goal of the public education system to provide learning environments and experiences at all stages of human development that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has the constitutional responsibility of annually developing, adopting, and submitting to the legislature for its approval and funding a formula to be used to determine the cost of a Minimum Foundation Program of education in all public elementary and secondary schools as well as to equitably allocate the funds to local school systems; and

WHEREAS, the constitution provides that the legislature may not amend the formula that is adopted by the board and submitted to the legislature for its consideration but may only return an unsatisfactory formula to the board along with recommendations to the board for an amended formula; and

WHEREAS, for the purpose of providing BESE with advisory recommendations for the MFP formula for 2014-2015 and beyond, BESE formed a MFP task force that met from September of 2013 through January of 2014 and adopted several recommendations relative to the formula; and

WHEREAS, House Resolution No. 220 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature urged and requested BESE to reconvene this task force, and at its August 2014 meeting, BESE authorized the reconvening of the task force to develop recommendations for the 2015-2016 MFP formula; and

WHEREAS, the reconvened task force held its final meeting on December 16, 2014, and adopted the following recommendations: a 2.75 percent rate increase in 2015-2016 base per pupil funding; additional funding for special education; increased funding for dual enrollment and other course choices; an in-depth study of the formula, including a determination of actual costs of providing education and the formula's efficacy in meeting constitutional mandates; and consultation with administrative and legislative leadership relative to how the formula's student count is accounted for in the budget; and

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution No. 18 of the 2015 Regular Session of the Legislature, which provided for legislative approval of the 2015-2016 MFP formula, was deferred by the Senate Committee on Education; and

WHEREAS, during the 2015 Regular Session, the legislature appropriated approximately \$3.7 billion for the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) that funds public K-12 education; and because the legislature did not approve a new MFP resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 55 of the 2014 Regular Session remains in effect; and

WHEREAS, the appropriation provided additional funding outside the formula, including \$36.2 million, which is equivalent to a 1.375% increase in the base per pupil cost, to sustain certificated teacher pay raises and \$8 million to expand educational initiatives created in 2014; and

WHEREAS, in December 2015, the MFP Task Force approved a set of policy recommendations for the Board of Elementary and Second Education (BESE) to consider when developing the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 MFP resolution; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations include incorporating the additional funds appropriated into the new formula, in accordance with House Concurrent Resolution No. 231 of the 2015 Regular Session; and

WHEREAS, providing additional funding for the MFP will be particularly challenging in the 2016 Regular Session as legislators work to pass a budget that addresses a shortfall projected for the upcoming fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, many education stakeholders feel that various issues relative to the MFP formula warrant further study so that the needs of students and the school systems that educate them are sufficiently met; and

WHEREAS, in order to fulfill the state's constitutional duty of affording every student an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential, it is imperative that there be continued study of the Minimum Foundation Program formula so that determinations can be made as to how the state can best provide experiences and opportunities to students that help them succeed in all aspects of life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to reconvene a Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) task force to determine the actual cost of providing public education in Louisiana and identify all potential funding mechanisms to enable school systems to meet this cost and to submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education not later than February 1, 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force include but not be limited to individuals representing BESE, the state Department of Education, the Louisiana School Boards Association, the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, the Louisiana Association of School Business Officers, Council for a Better Louisiana, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, the Louisiana Association of Educators, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, and the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state superintendent of education.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES