

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 191

BY SENATOR MCPHERSON

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the governing authority of each public elementary and secondary school to consider implementing the salary supplement, as provided in law, for national board certified school psychologists, speech-language audiologists and pathologists, and school social workers, in the form of a salary increase.

WHEREAS, school psychologists, speech-language audiologists and pathologists, and school social workers are school professionals employed by local school boards who specialize in working with at-risk and special needs children and adolescents, as well as their teachers and families, and are critical to ensuring that students have a positive and rewarding educational experience, while helping to strengthen connections between home and school; and

WHEREAS, with specialized training in education, psychology, social work, speech-language pathology, these professionals employ their training and skills in collaboration with educators, parents, and other professionals to help every student to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally and to learn in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical shortage of these professionals who have earned advanced academic degrees and are national board certified in their respective areas of expertise; and

WHEREAS, these school professionals are important to the overall success of the student at school and a priority should be placed on compensating those professionals who have achieved a national board certification in their profession; and

WHEREAS, the process to attain national board certification is considered very rigorous and time consuming and can be very costly for these professionals; and

WHEREAS, the salaries for such employees are eligible for funding through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act administered by the United States Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, such school professionals are required to provide services to students at school for a ten-month period, while the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires them to be available to students, parents, and the community on a year-round basis; and

WHEREAS, an increase in salary of five thousand dollars is justified to reward these professionals for the quality services they provide to at-risk and special needs students in Louisiana schools; and

WHEREAS, state law requires local school boards to reward these school professionals with salary supplements as an incentive to increase the number of full-time national board certified school psychologists, speech-language audiologists and pathologists, and school social workers; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 17:421.9 requires that an employing school board pay an annual salary supplement not to exceed five thousand dollars per year to a full-time school psychologist who holds both a valid Louisiana ancillary certificate and a National Certified School Psychologist credential issued by the National School Psychology Certification Board, however, the school board will be reimbursed by the state Department of Education only if funds are appropriated for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 17:421.10 requires that an employing school board pay an annual salary supplement of five thousand dollars per year to a full-time school social worker who holds both a valid professional ancillary certificate in school social work and the Certified School Social Work Specialist credential issued by the National Association of Social Workers, however, the school board will be reimbursed by the state Department of Education only if funds are appropriated for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 17:421.11 provides that the employing school board shall pay an annual salary supplement of five thousand dollars per year to a full-time school speech-language pathologist or audiologist who holds both a valid Louisiana credential, a license issued by the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, and a Certificate of Clinical Competence issued by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, however, the school board will be reimbursed by the state Department of Education only if funds are appropriated for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, school psychologists, speech-language audiologists and pathologists, and school social workers have a positive impact on at-risk and special needs students and take an active role in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies that enable students to gain the maximum benefit from the normal educational classroom environment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the governing authority of each public elementary and secondary school to consider implementing the salary supplement, as provided in law, in the form of a salary increase of five thousand dollars for national board certified school psychologists, speech-language audiologists and pathologists, and school social workers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to take such steps as may be necessary with regard to the classification of such employees to ensure that the professionals are paid for a ten month budget period.

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 to the Louisiana School Boards Association.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE