

CHAPTER 42. CHARTER SCHOOL DEMONSTRATION
PROGRAMS LAW
PART I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

§3971. Short citation

This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Charter School Demonstration Programs Law".

Acts 1995, No. 192, §1, eff. June 14, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997.

§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.

B.(1) The purposes of this Chapter shall be to provide opportunities for educators and others interested in educating pupils to form, operate, or be employed within a charter school with each such school designed to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

(a) Improve pupil learning and, in general, the public school system.

(b) Increase learning opportunities and access to quality education for pupils.

(c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods and a variety of governance, management, and administrative structures.

(d) Require appropriate assessment and measurement of academic learning results.

(e) Account better and more thoroughly for educational results.

(f) Create new professional opportunities for teachers and other school employees, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

(2) It is not a purpose of this Chapter to permit establishment of a charter school to be used as the means of keeping open an existing public school that otherwise would be closed. Such a circumstance, however, shall not preclude approval of a proposed charter that otherwise fulfills a purpose of this Chapter and for which the proposal clearly demonstrates that the educational program proposed to be offered will improve the achievement levels of the students enrolled in that school.

(3) It is not a purpose of this Chapter to provide a means of funding for nonpublic schools or any home study program.

Acts 1995, No. 192, §1, eff. June 14, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 14, §1; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999.

§3973. Definitions

As used in this Chapter, the following words, terms, and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed to them in this Section except when the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

(1) "At-risk pupil" means any pupil about whom at least one of the following is true:

(a) Is eligible to participate in the federal free or reduced lunch program by demonstrating that he meets the income requirements established for participation in the program, not necessarily by participating in the program.

(b) Is under the age of twenty and has been withdrawn from school prior to graduation for not less than one semester.

(c) Is under the age of twenty and has failed to achieve the required score on any portion of the examination required for high school graduation.

(d) Is in the eighth grade or below and is reading two or more grade levels below grade level as determined by one or more of the tests required pursuant to R.S. 17:24.4.

(e) Has been identified as an exceptional child as defined in R.S. 17:1943 not including gifted and talented.

(f) Is the mother or father of a child.

(2)(a) "Charter school" means an independent public school that provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both, established pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter to provide a learning environment that will improve pupil achievement. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prohibit a Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, or Type 4 charter school from having a residential component.

(b) Charter schools shall be one of the following types:

(i) Type 1, which means a new school operated as the result of and pursuant to a charter between the nonprofit corporation created to operate the school and a local school board. Within such type 1 charter schools, only pupils who would be eligible to attend a public school operated by the local school board within the same city or parish will be eligible to attend as provided in the charter.

(ii) Type 2, which means a new school or a preexisting public school converted and operated as the result of and pursuant to a charter between the nonprofit corporation created to operate the school and the

State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Prior to the creation of such a charter to convert a preexisting school, it shall be approved by the professional faculty and staff of the preexisting school and by the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school as provided in R.S. 17:3983(C). Within such type 2 charter schools, pupils who reside within the state will be eligible to attend as provided in the charter. Creation of a type 2 charter school shall comply with the provisions of R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(i).

(iii) Type 3, which means a preexisting public school converted and operated as the result of and pursuant to a charter between a nonprofit corporation and the local school board. Prior to the creation of such a charter, the local school board may require approval of a proposal to create such a charter by the members of the faculty and staff of the preexisting school who are certified by the state board and by the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school as provided in R.S. 17:3983(C). Within such Type 3 schools, only pupils who would be eligible to attend a public school operated by the local school board granting the charter, or pupils from the same area as those permitted to attend the preexisting school will be eligible to attend as provided in the charter.

(iv) Type 4, which means a preexisting public school converted and operated or a new school operated as the result of and pursuant to a charter between a local school board and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Prior to the creation of such a charter to convert a preexisting school, the state board may require approval of a proposal to create such a charter by the professional faculty and staff of the preexisting school and by the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school as provided in R.S. 17:3983(C). Within such Type 4 schools, unless an agreement with another city, parish, or other local public school board is reached to allow students to attend the charter school, only pupils who would be eligible to attend a public school operated by the local school board or pupils from the same areas as those permitted to attend the preexisting school will be eligible to attend as provided in the charter.

(v)(aa) Type 5, which means a preexisting public school transferred to the Recovery School District pursuant to R.S. 17:10.5 or 10.7 and operated as the result of and pursuant to a charter between a nonprofit corporation and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, or between a nonprofit corporation and a city, parish, or other local school board or other public entity in the case of the renewal of a Type 5 charter of a school that has been transferred back to the jurisdiction of the local school board or other public entity pursuant to R.S. 17:10.5(C). The chartering authority shall review each Type 5 charter proposal in compliance with the Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Except as otherwise provided in R.S. 17:10.7 or 1990, and notwithstanding

the provisions of R.S. 17:3991(B)(1), within such Type 5 charter school, only pupils who would have been eligible to enroll in or attend the preexisting school under the jurisdiction of the city, parish, or other local public school board or other public school entity prior to its transfer to the Recovery School District may attend. However, all such pupils shall be eligible to attend notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter to the contrary.

(bb) In addition to pupils who are eligible to enroll pursuant to the provisions of Subitem (aa) of this Item, any student who is eligible to participate in a school choice program established by the prior system shall be permitted to enroll in a Type 5 charter which has capacity for another student in the appropriate grade. Maximum capacity by grade shall be provided in the charter agreement.

(cc)(I) No member of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall be a member of the governing or management board of any Type 5 charter school. No member of any city, parish, or other local public school board shall be a member of the governing or management board of any Type 5 charter school within the jurisdictional area of such city, parish, or other local public school board.

(II) No member of a governing or management board of any Type 5 charter school shall be an elected official as defined by R.S. 42:1102(9). No member of such a board shall have been an elected official for a period of at least one year prior to appointment to such board.

(3) "Chartering authority" means either a local school board or the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(4) "Local school board" means any city, parish, or other local public school board.

(5) "Public service organization" means any community-based group of fifty or more persons incorporated under the laws of this state that meets all of the following requirements:

(a) Has a charitable, eleemosynary, or philanthropic purpose.

(b) Is qualified as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and is organized for a public purpose.

(6) "State board" means the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Acts 1995, No. 192, §1, eff. June 14, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 14, §1; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 1210, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1339, §1, eff. July 12, 1999; Acts 2003, No. 9, §1, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2005, 1st Ex. Esss., No. 35, §1, eff. Nov. 30, 2005; Acts 2009, No. 278, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 324, §1, eff. July 1, 2010; Acts 2011, No. 181, §1.

PART II. STATE CHARTERING AUTHORITY

§3981. State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; powers and duties relative to charter schools

The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall:

(1) Administer loans as provided in Part VI of this Chapter for assisting in meeting the costs required to establish a charter school as well as the costs of operation.

(2) Enter into any proposed charter that complies with this Chapter and the rules adopted pursuant to the authority in this Chapter that the board determines is a valid, complete, financially well-structured, and educationally sound proposal that offers potential for fulfilling the purposes of this Chapter.

(3) Adopt, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, such rules as the board determines is necessary to efficiently, effectively, and fairly undertake its duties.

(4) Review each proposed charter in a timely manner and in the order in which submitted and determine whether each proposed charter complies with the law and rules and whether the proposal is valid, complete, financially well-structured, educationally sound, whether it provides for a master plan for improving behavior and discipline in accordance with R.S. 17:252, whether it provides a plan for collecting data in accordance with R.S. 17:3911, and whether it offers potential for fulfilling the purposes of this Chapter. The board shall engage in an application review process that complies with the latest Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, and shall provide for an independent evaluation of the charter proposal by a third party with educational, organizational, legal, and financial expertise.

(5) Determine the policy and provide direction to the state Department of Education for providing the oversight of the operation of charter schools chartered with the board.

(6) Upon the request of any school system with fewer than five thousand students, provide technical assistance to the system in determining the potential financial impact of any proposed charter school on the operation of the system.

Acts 1995, No. 192, §1, eff. June 14, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 2006, No. 630, §1; Acts 2009, No. 123, §1, eff. June 26, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 756, §1, eff. June 29, 2010.

§3982. Local school boards; duties

A.(1)(a)(i) Local school boards shall comply with R.S. 17:3983 and shall review and formally act upon each proposed charter within ninety days of its submission and in the order in which submitted. In doing such review, the local school board shall determine whether each proposed charter complies with the law and rules, whether the proposal is valid,

complete, financially well-structured, and educationally sound, whether it provides for a master plan for improving behavior and discipline in accordance with R.S. 17:252, whether it provides a plan for collecting data in accordance with R.S. 17:3911, and whether it offers potential for fulfilling the purposes of this Chapter. The local board shall engage in a transparent application review process that complies with the latest Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, and shall provide for an independent evaluation of the charter proposal by a third party with educational, organizational, legal, and financial expertise.

(ii) A local school board may accept charter proposals until February twenty-eighth of each year and shall provide written notification of its final decision to the chartering group. Notifications of charter proposals denied shall include written explanation of the reasons for such denial.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph, school boards which govern a local system that has been declared to be in academic crisis, as defined in R.S. 17:10.6, shall not consider, review, or act upon charter applications for a Type 1 charter school and shall notify the proponents of any pending Type 1 charter proposal or any newly submitted Type 1 charter proposal that the board is ineligible to act on such applications and that each such application may, therefore, be submitted to the state board as a Type 2 proposal pursuant to R.S. 17:3983(A)(2)(a)(ii).

(2) The local school board shall make public through its website, and in printed form upon request, the guidelines for submitting a charter proposal, all forms required for submission of a charter proposal, the timelines established for accepting and reviewing charter proposals, the process that will be used to review charter proposals submitted to the board, and the name and contact information for a primary point of contact for charter proposals. If no final decision is received within ninety days after the submission of the proposal, then the chartering group may submit its proposal to the state board for its review.

B. Local school boards shall make available to chartering groups any vacant school facilities or any facility slated to be vacant for lease or purchase up to fair market value. In the case of a Type 2 charter school created as a result of a conversion, the facility and all property within the existing school shall be made available to that chartering group. In return for the use of the facility and its contents, the chartering group shall pay a proportionate share of the local school board's bonded indebtedness to be calculated in the same manner as set forth in R.S. 17:1990(C)(2)(a)(i). If such facilities were constructed at no cost to the local school board, then such facilities including all equipment, books, instructional materials, and

furniture within such facilities shall be provided to the charter school at no cost.

Acts 1995, No. 192, §1, eff. June 14, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 447, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 14, §1; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 2005, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 35, §1, eff. Nov. 30, 2005; Acts 2009, No. 123, §1, eff. June 26, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 334, §1; Acts 2010, No. 722, §1; Acts 2010, No. 756, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

PART III. CHARTERING PROCESS, REVISION, AND RENEWAL

§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.

(2)(a)(i) Each proposal for a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school shall first be made to the local school board with jurisdiction where the school is to be located, except in the case of a local system in academic crisis as provided for in Item (ii) of this Subparagraph, involving the submission of a written proposal. If, after review as required by R.S. 17:3982, the local school board denies the proposal, or if conditions placed on the proposal by the local school board, as provided in Paragraph (B)(2) of this Section, are not acceptable to those proposing the charter, then a proposal for a Type 2 charter school may be made to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(ii) A proposal for a Type 1 charter school that would otherwise be made to a local school board except that the local system is in academic crisis shall, in the discretion of the proponents of the proposal, be made to the state board as a Type 2 proposal.

(b) All proposals for a Type 4 charter school shall be made to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(c) All proposals for a Type 5 charter school shall be made to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and such proposals may be considered by the state board only upon the recommendation of the administering agency of the Recovery School District.

(3)(a) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall accept applications for charters only from April first through October thirty-first of each year. The board shall review and take action on every application it receives. The board shall not approve any charter application before May first of each year as provided in Paragraph (A)(4) of this Section.

(b) For Type 2 charter school proposals, the state board shall notify the local school board of the district in which the proposed charter school is to be located about the receipt of such proposal. The local board, as well as other interested groups, shall be allowed to provide written information regarding the proposal and allowed to present information at a scheduled public meeting of the state board prior to any determination being made by the state board.

(c) Each proposal received by the state board shall be carefully reviewed and shall be approved only after there has been a specific determination by the board that the proposed school will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations, that the accounting and financial practices to be used are sound and in accordance with generally accepted standards for similar entities, and that the educational program to be offered will comply with all requirements of this Chapter and be based on generally accepted education research findings applicable to the pupils to be served, including but not limited to school discipline practices and policies that incorporate positive behavior interventions and supports, restorative justice, and other research-based discipline practices and classroom management strategies and otherwise conform to the model master discipline plan required in accordance with R.S. 17:252.

(4)(a) A local school board may enter into any charter it finds valid, complete, financially well-structured, and educationally sound after meeting the requirements of this Chapter. Each such charter entered into shall be reported by the local school board to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education not less than two business days following the event.

(b) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may approve applications for charters as it has determined acceptable pursuant to R.S. 17:3981(2). Applications may be approved only from May first through January thirty-first of each year.

(c) A charter school shall begin operation by not later than twenty-four months after the final approval of the charter, unless such charter school is engaged in desegregation compliance issues and therefore must begin operation by not later than thirty-six months. However, upon request, the chartering authority may extend the time period within which any charter school must begin operation. If such operation does not occur, the charter for that school shall be automatically revoked although a new charter may be proposed.

(d) Prior to the consideration of a charter school proposal by any local school board or the state board, each charter applicant shall be afforded the opportunity to revise and resubmit the proposal based on the independent evaluation conducted in accordance with R.S. 17:3981(4) and R.S. 17:3982(A)(1)(a)(i). However, if a proposal is not approved by the local school board and then also not approved by the state board within the same approval cycle, then the proposal shall be submitted to the local school board for its consideration during the next approval cycle prior to being submitted to the state board.

(e) A charter school, once approved, shall not begin operation sooner than eight months after such approval is granted, unless the chartering authority agrees to a lesser time period.

(5) Repealed by Acts 2003, No. 9, §3, eff. Nov. 6, 2003.

B.(1) Each application for a charter, except for a Type 4 charter school, shall be submitted to the pertinent chartering authority by a nonprofit corporation established in accordance with the laws of this state.

(2) Additionally, each approved charter may be approved subject to whatever other resolatory or suspensive conditions the chartering authority requires provided those entering into the charter agree with the conditions.

C.(1)(a) Approval by the faculty and staff who are certified by the state board of a preexisting school proposed to be converted to a charter school requires a favorable vote of the majority of the members of such faculty and staff, voting together each with one vote, at the preexisting school at an election held for such purpose. The number needed for approval shall be determined by the number of eligible employees assigned to such school on October first preceding the election. The election shall be held by secret ballot.

(b) Such an election may be repeated in any school for approval of the same or a different charter proposal; however, such an election may occur no more often than once in any school year.

(2) Approval by the parents or guardians of pupils attending a preexisting school proposed to be converted to a charter school requires a favorable vote of the majority of the parents or guardians of pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the election who are voting, provided the number of votes cast equals at least fifty percent of the number of pupils.

There shall be one vote for each pupil enrolled in the school which may be cast by one parent or guardian for each pupil.

D. Prior to approving a charter for a Type 1 or Type 3 school, the local school board considering the proposal shall hold a public meeting for the purpose of considering the proposal and receiving public input. Such meeting shall be held after reasonable efforts have been made by the board to notify the public of the meeting and its content.

E.(1) Approval by a local school board shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the membership of the board.

(2) Approval by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall require an affirmative vote of at least six members.

F. As it relates to Type 5 charters:

(1) The limitations specified in R.S. 17:3991(B)(1) and (3) and the provisions of Subparagraphs (A)(3)(a) and (4)(b) and (e) and Subsections C and D of this Section shall not apply to or limit or restrict the number of such charters.

(2) No proposal for operating such a charter school shall be approved nor shall such a school be operated by any person, whether a natural person or artificial entity, who or which has less than five years of significant experience, as determined by the state board, operating or working for or with a person who operates a public, private, or charter school, a public or private postsecondary institution, or a for-profit business or a non- or not-for-profit entity which provides academic instruction to students.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 14, §2; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 1339, §1, eff. July 12, 1999; Acts 2001, No. 991, §1, eff. June 27, 2001; Acts 2003, No. 9, §§1, 3, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2005, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 35, §1, eff. Nov. 30, 2005; Acts 2008, No. 350, §1; Acts 2009, No. 123, §1, eff. June 26, 2009; Acts 2009, No. 292, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 756, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2010, No. 861, §8; Acts 2011, No. 131, §1; Acts 2011, No. 213, §1, eff. June 27, 2011.

PART IV. CHARTER CONTENTS, RENEWAL, AND REVOCATION AND CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND LIMITATIONS

§3991. Charter schools; requirements; limitations; renewal; amendment; revocation

A.(1)(a) Except for a Type 4 charter school, a charter school approved and established in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under applicable state and federal laws.

(b) Should a charter school be established with a governing or management board, the members of such shall receive no compensation

other than reimbursement of actual expenses incurred while fulfilling duties as a member of such a board.

(c)(i) A charter school shall be prohibited from employing, in any manner, any member of the governing or management board of such school.

(ii) Not more than twenty percent of the members of any governing or management board of a charter school shall be members of the same immediate family. Members of the same immediate family shall include a board member and any other board members to whom he is related as defined in R.S. 42:1102(13) and any other board members to whom any of them are so related.

(iii) Each charter school shall be in full compliance with the provisions of this Subparagraph by not later than January 1, 2004.

(2) Consistent with the provisions of this Chapter, a charter school and its officers and employees may exercise any power and perform any function necessary, requisite, or proper for the management of the charter school not denied by its charter, the provisions of this Chapter, or other laws applicable to the charter school.

B. Each proposed charter shall contain or make provision for the following:

(1)(a)(i) That for Type 1 and Type 2 charter schools created as new schools, the percentage of the total number of pupils enrolled in the charter school based on the October first pupil membership who are at risk, in the manner provided in R.S. 17:3973(1)(a), shall be equal to not less than eighty-five percent of the average percentage of pupils enrolled in the local public school districts from which the charter school enrolls its students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program. The remaining number of pupils enrolled in the charter school which would be required to have the same percentage of at-risk pupils as the percentage of pupils in the district who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced cost lunch program may be comprised of pupils who are at risk as is otherwise provided in R.S. 17:3973(1). For the purposes of fulfilling the provisions of this Section, the at-risk percentage for the city or parish school system shall remain fixed during the term of the approved charter at the percentage which existed during the school year that the charter proposal was approved, unless otherwise specified in the charter that the charter school will reflect the current year's at-risk percentage.

(ii) Except as provided in Subitem (cc) of this Item, the requirements of Item (i) of this Subparagraph shall not apply to any charter school which is established with the educational mission of meeting the needs of pupils who are the dependent children of military personnel provided that all of the following conditions are met:

(aa) The charter school predominantly enrolls pupils who, at the time of enrollment, are the dependent children of military personnel.

(bb) All dependent children of military personnel who seek admission to the school and who are at risk as defined in R.S. 17:3973(1) are admitted to the school.

(cc) In the enrollment of pupils from the general population in the community where the charter school is located who are not dependent children of military personnel, the charter school shall comply with the provisions of Item (i) of this Subparagraph, except that the requirements contained therein shall apply to and be based upon only such general population pupils admitted.

(b)(i) That for Type 2 charter schools created as a result of a conversion, Type 3 and Type 4 charter schools, the percentage of the total number of pupils enrolled in the charter school based on the October first pupil membership who are at-risk, in the manner provided in R.S. 17:3973(1)(a), unless otherwise agreed to as part of the charter agreement by the chartering authority, shall be equal to not less than the percentage of the total of pupils enrolled in the school in the school year prior to the establishment of the charter school that were eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced cost lunch program.

(ii) Notwithstanding the provisions of Item (i) of this Subparagraph, that for Type 2, Type 3, and Type 4 charter schools in Richland Parish, the percentage of the total number of pupils enrolled in the charter school based on the October first pupil membership who are at risk, in the manner provided in R.S. 17:3973(1)(a), shall be, as near as practicable, not more than the percentage of the total number of pupils enrolled in the public elementary and secondary schools and in the state-approved nonpublic elementary and secondary schools located in the local public school district in which the charter school is located who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program. However, in no case shall the initial enrollment of such a school nor the cohort of students enrolled for each new school year have, as near as practicable, fewer than fifty percent students who are at risk in the manner provided in R.S. 17:3973(1)(a).

(c) For the purposes of this Section, students holding a valid passport from the country of France shall not be counted when calculating the overall at-risk percentage of the charter school.

(d) The provisions of this R.S. 17:3991(B)(1) and (3) shall not apply to Type 5 charters.

(2) A statement of the school's role, scope, and mission.

(3) Admission requirements, if any, that are consistent with the school's role, scope, and mission may be established. Such admission requirements shall be specific and shall include a system for admission decisions which precludes exclusion of pupils based on race, religion,

gender, ethnicity, national origin, intelligence level as ascertained by an intelligence quotient examination, or identification as a child with an exceptionality as defined in R.S. 17:1943(4). Such admission requirements may include, however, specific requirements related to a school's mission such as auditions for schools with a performing arts mission or achievement of a certain academic record for schools with a college preparatory mission. No local board shall assign any pupil to attend a charter school.

(4)(a) A description of the jurisdiction within which a pupil shall reside or otherwise be eligible to attend a public school in order to be eligible for admission.

(b) A description of the geographic boundaries circumscribing the neighborhood immediately surrounding the charter school from which students residing within may be given preference for enrollment as provided in Subsection C of this Section.

(5) A financial and accounting plan sufficient to permit a governmental audit.

(6) A description of how the proposed charter school fulfills one or more of the purposes specified in this Chapter.

(7) A description of the education program offered by the school and how specifically that program will meet the needs of the at-risk pupils to be served.

(8) The specific academic and other educational results to be achieved, the timelines for such achievement, and how results will be measured and assessed.

(9) An agreement to provide a report at the end of each semester to parents of pupils enrolled in the school, the community, the local school board and the state board indicating progress toward meeting the performance objectives as stated in the charter.

(10) The organizational, governance, and operational structure of the school. Any qualifications required of charter school administrators and governing board members shall be as prescribed in the charter school agreement.

(11) Policies, programs, and practices to ensure parental involvement.

(12) Personnel policies and employment practices applicable to the school's officers and employees.

(13) Manner in which teachers and other school employees will be evaluated.

(14) School rules and regulations applicable to pupils including disciplinary policies and procedures that incorporate research-based discipline programs, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports and restorative justice principles in accordance with R.S. 17:252.

(15) Information concerning the school location and the adequacy of its facilities and equipment. Such information shall include a statement of the procedures to be followed and disposition of facilities and equipment should the charter be terminated or not renewed.

(16) Management and accounting practices to be employed.

(17) Provisions regarding liability issues.

(18) Types and amounts of insurance coverage provided.

(19) The methods and procedures to be used for monitoring the charter school by the chartering authority. Such methods and procedures shall be established through agreement by all parties and shall include the right of the chartering authority and its designated officer to visit and inspect the charter school on a reasonable basis.

(20) A requirement that curriculum shall be focused on the intellectual domain with intellectual development defined as acquisition of discrete technical and academic skills. No curriculum at a charter school shall be offered that would limit in any way the ability of a pupil to attend the school in the public school system that the student would otherwise attend if not enrolled at the charter school.

(21) A requirement that charter schools regularly assess the academic progress of their pupils, including the participation of such pupils in the state testing programs, and share such information with parents. The state Department of Education shall work directly with each charter school regarding the implementation of the state testing program in those schools.

(22) A requirement that a pupil shall have a mastery of grade-appropriate skills before the pupil can be recommended for promotion or promoted.

(23) Provisions regarding the security of the school. If a local school board provides security services for its schools then it shall make such services available to any of its type 1, 3 or 4 charter schools on terms as provided within the charter agreement.

(24) A plan for collecting data in accordance with R.S. 17:3911.

C. A charter school shall:

(1)(a) Enroll an eligible pupil who is eligible under the residency requirements established in the charter as required in Paragraph B(4) of this Section and who submits a timely application unless the total number of eligible applicants exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school.

(b) An application shall be timely if it is submitted within the period designated by the charter school, which period shall not be less than one month nor more than three months. There shall be an established application period for each successive school year.

(c)(i) Except as is provided in Items (ii) and (iii) of this Subparagraph, the charter school shall admit no pupil during the application

period, but shall wait until the period has ended. If fewer eligible pupils have applied than is the maximum the school can admit, then all eligible pupils shall be admitted and additional pupils may apply and be admitted for the school year to which the application period applies until the maximum number is admitted, except as is necessary to meet the requirements of Paragraph B(1) of this Section. If the total number of eligible applicants exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school, admission to the program, class, grade level, or school shall be based on an admissions lottery conducted from among the total number of eligible applicants done in such a fashion as to assure compliance with Paragraph B(1) of this Section.

(ii) In the case of the creation of a charter by the conversion of a preexisting school, pupils enrolled in the preexisting school shall be given preference over all other applicants and the applications procedure shall be established in a fashion that provides ample opportunity for such pupils to exercise the right for preferential admission.

(iii) A charter school may modify its enrollment procedures in order to give preference to students previously enrolled in the school and their siblings and to give preference to siblings submitting their applications to enroll in the school for the first time, as long as there is compliance with the provisions of Paragraph (B)(1) of this Section.

(iv) Unless otherwise provided for within the charter, charter schools may not enroll in any given year more than one hundred twenty percent of the total number of students which had been approved in their charter without formally amending their charter.

(d) Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, each elementary and middle charter school, other than a Type 2 charter school, may request from and be granted by its chartering authority the authority to give preference in its enrollment procedures to students residing within the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school. The geographic boundaries of the neighborhood immediately surrounding such school shall be determined by the school's chartering authority.

(2) Conduct the pupil assessments required by the state board for pupils in other public schools pursuant to R.S. 17:24.4.

(3) Be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the city or parish school system.

(4) Comply with the criteria set forth in *Brumfield, et al. v. Dodd, et al.*, 425 F. Supp. 528.

(5) Be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, and employment practices.

(6)(a)(i) Except for Type 5 charter schools to which the requirements provided in Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph apply, employ teachers certified by the state board or the French Ministry of Education for

at least seventy-five percent of the instructional staff employed by the charter school.

(ii) The remaining portion of the instructional staff shall meet at least one of the following requirements and shall be subject to all provisions of state law relative to background checks applicable to the employment of public school personnel:

(aa) Be authorized under law or state board regulation to teach temporarily while seeking a regular teaching certificate.

(bb) Have at least a bachelor's degree or at least ten years of experience related to the teaching position for which he is being hired, demonstrate exemplary skills in his field of expertise, and be providing instruction under the supervision of a certified teacher. Any individual who makes an application for employment under this Item shall be employed based on a determination of the applicant's qualifications by the charter school.

(b) A Type 5 charter school shall:

(i) Beginning no later than the second school year of operation, have not less than the percentage of teachers certified by the state board than was the case in the school prior to its transfer to the Recovery School District.

(ii) Beginning no later than the third school year of operation, have a teacher certified by the state board teaching every core subject. Core subject shall be defined by the state board by rule.

(iii) All other instructional staff employed in a Type 5 charter school shall meet the same requirements as provided in Item (a)(ii) of this Paragraph.

D.(1) A charter school may negotiate with the local school board in whose jurisdiction it is located for use of facilities and the operation and maintenance thereof, for pupil transportation, and for other support services provided by the board to other public schools in the system.

(2)(a)(i) Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S. 17:158(A), if the local school board is requested to provide transportation services to a charter school student pursuant to R.S. 17:158, then the charter school receiving the transportation services shall reimburse the local school board for the actual cost of providing such transportation.

(ii) Providing transportation services pursuant to the provisions of this Paragraph and the amount reimbursed to the local school board by a charter school for such services shall be in accordance with a written agreement entered into for this purpose by the charter school and the local school board prior to any transportation services being provided by the board for students at the charter school.

(iii) By not later than ninety days following the end of each fiscal year, the local school board shall provide the charter school with an

itemized accounting of the actual cost of transportation services provided to the charter school students.

(b) The provisions of this Paragraph shall not apply to any contract or agreement for providing transportation services between a charter school and the local school board which is in effect on August 15, 2007.

E. A charter school shall not:

(1) Be supported by or affiliated with any religion or religious organization or institution; however, a charter school may receive from any such organization or institution support or student services including but not limited to mentoring, volunteering, fundraising, or tutoring.

(2) Result from the conversion of any private school or any home study program, as defined in R.S. 17:236.

(3) Charge any pupil any tuition or an attendance fee of any kind.

(4) Discriminate among potential employees, employees, or pupils in violation of any state or federal law.

(5)(a) Hire a person who has been convicted of or has pled nolo contendere to a crime listed in R.S. 15:587.1(C) as a teacher, substitute teacher, bus driver, substitute bus driver, janitor, or a school employee who might reasonably be expected to be placed in a position of supervisory or disciplinary authority over school children unless approved in writing by a district judge of the parish and the district attorney. This statement of approval shall be kept on file at all times by the school and shall be produced upon request to any law enforcement officer.

(b) The board shall establish regulations, requirements and procedures consistent with the provisions of R.S. 15:587.1 under which the school systems shall determine whether an applicant or employee has been convicted of or pled nolo contendere to crimes listed in R.S. 15:587.1(C), except R.S. 14:74. Included in this regulation shall be the requirement and the procedure for the submission of a person's fingerprints in a form acceptable to the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information prior to employment of such person. A person who has submitted his fingerprints to the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information may be temporarily hired pending the report from the bureau as to any convictions of or pleas of nolo contendere by the person to a crime listed in R.S. 15:587.1(C), except R.S. 14:74.

F. Except for a type 4 charter school, a local school board shall not assign any pupil or employee to a charter school or interfere in any way with the operation and management of a charter school except as provided by the approved charter, the provisions of this Chapter, or other law applicable to the charter school or its officers or employees.

G. Any pupil enrolled in a charter school who decides not to attend such charter school shall be permitted by the local school board to attend

the public school that the pupil would otherwise attend if not enrolled at the charter school.

H. Any assets acquired by a Type 1, 2, 3, or 5 charter school are the property of that charter school for the duration of that school's charter agreement. Any assets acquired by a Type 4 charter school are the property of the local school board. If the charter agreement of any Type 1, 2, 3, or 5 charter school is revoked or the school otherwise ceases to operate, all assets purchased with any public funds become the property of the chartering authority. Charter schools are to maintain records of any assets acquired with any private funds which remain the property of the nonprofit organization operating the charter school.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 14, §1; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 1210, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1339, §1, eff. July 12, 1999; Acts 2001, No. 453, §1, eff. June 21, 2001; Acts 2001, No. 592, §1, eff. June 22, 2001; Acts 2003, No. 9, §1, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2003, No. 381, §1; Acts 2008, No. 458, §1, eff. July 1, 2008; Acts 2009, No. 123, §1, eff. June 26, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 756, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2011, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 41, §1, eff. June 12, 2011.

§3991.1. Corporate partners; enrollment preferences and board membership

A. The legislature finds and declares that:

(1) The economic vitality of the state is dependent upon the education of its people, including its current and future workforce.

(2) The performance of Louisiana's public education system is critical in providing every Louisiana child with the ability to graduate equipped to enter college or the workplace, obtain a rewarding and self-sustaining career, and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

(3) High-quality educational options are essential to the academic growth of Louisiana's students and the ability of the state to attract businesses, a highly talented workforce, and expand existing businesses.

(4) Partnerships between businesses and the state's public education system can result in positive outcomes for children, providing much needed resources for schools and rich experiences for students to help prepare them to be effective employees and productive citizens.

B.(1) Notwithstanding geographic or other requirements for enrollment contained in this Chapter, a charter agreement may provide, initially or by amendment, for the enrollment of and an enrollment preference for dependent children of permanent employees of a corporate partner as defined by Subsection C of this Section. Up to fifty percent of the school's maximum enrollment may be reserved for the enrollment of such children. The charter agreement shall specify both the school's

maximum enrollment and the maximum proportion set aside for implementation of this enrollment preference.

(2) A charter agreement may provide, initially or by amendment, for a corporate partner to have representation on its governing or management board; however, such representation may not constitute a majority of the board. Such membership is subject to all other provisions of law except any contrary provision in this Chapter.

C. For purposes of this Section, a corporate partner is any legal entity, whether for profit or not for profit, registered with the secretary of state, except a corporation identified in R.S. 18:1505.2(L)(3), that has, acting individually or as part of a consortium of corporations, donated one or more of the following to the school:

(1) The land on which the school is built.

(2) The school building or the space the school occupies. If the corporate partner is leasing the building or space to the school, the enrollment preference or board membership may only be provided in the charter agreement if the lease provides that the building or space is made available without cost and if the term of the lease is not less than the duration of the charter agreement.

(3) Major renovations to the existing school building or other capital improvements including major investments in technology. For purposes of this Paragraph, a major renovation to the existing school building means changes that provide significant opportunities for substantial improvement including but not limited to a structural change to the foundation, roof, floor, or interior or exterior walls or extension of an existing facility to increase its floor area; or an extensive alteration of an existing facility, such as a change in its function or purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change to the facility. A major investment in technology includes but is not limited to a donation of hardware, software, Internet access, Internet hardware, enterprise systems, software licenses, smart board technology, or audiovisual equipment. The value of a major renovation or of an investment of technology shall be equal to at least fifty percent of the per pupil allocation of state funds by the minimum foundation program formula for that year for the parish in which the school is located multiplied by the school's enrollment as defined in the charter agreement.

D. For the duration of the enrollment preference specified in Paragraph (B)(1) of this Section, the corporate partner shall enter annually into a memorandum of understanding with the charter school with which it has entered into a partnership which memorandum shall specify the methods by which the corporate partner shall support the charter school, including but not limited to internships for students, career counseling, academic tutoring, or enrichment activities.

E.(1) An enrollment preference pursuant to Paragraph (B)(1) of this Section shall not be implemented in a way that displaces children enrolled at the school at the time the charter agreement or amendment providing for the preference is authorized.

(2) Enrollment at the school shall otherwise be as provided by this Chapter except that the requirement of R.S. 17:3991(B)(1)(a)(i) shall apply to and be based upon only students who are not dependent children of permanent employees of a corporate partner.

Acts 2011, No. 417, §1, eff. July 12, 2011.

§3992. Charter revision and renewal

A.(1) Unless revoked as provided for in Subsection C of this Section, an approved school charter shall be valid for an initial period of five years, contingent upon the results of the reporting requirements at the end of the third year as provided in R.S. 17:3998(A)(2), and may be renewed for additional periods of not less than three nor more than ten years after thorough review by the approving chartering authority of the charter school's operations and compliance with charter requirements. The process for renewing a school charter shall be the same as for initial charter approval, with a written report being provided annually to the chartering authority regarding the school's academic progress that year. The chartering authority shall notify the chartering group in writing of any decisions made relative to the renewal or nonrenewal of a school's charter not later than January thirty-first of the year in which the charter would expire. A notification that a charter will not be renewed shall include written explanation of the reasons for such non-renewal. Pursuant to Subsection C of this Section and using such annual review process, a charter may be revoked for failure to meet agreed-upon academic results as specified in the charter.

(2)(a) No charter shall be renewed unless the charter renewal applicant can demonstrate, using standardized test scores, improvement in the academic performance of pupils over the term of the charter school's existence.

(b) Each charter school shall be provided by its chartering authority with the criteria and procedures that will be used when considering whether to renew a school's charter.

(c) A charter school which has met or exceeded for the three preceding school years the benchmarks established for it in accordance with the school and district accountability system, has demonstrated growth in student academic achievement for the three preceding schools years, and has had no significant audit findings during the term of the charter agreement shall be deemed a high-performing school, and such school's charter shall be automatically renewed.

(3) A Type 2 charter school that has been renewed as provided in this Subsection shall be funded by the state as provided in R.S. 17:3995(A)(6).

B. Subsequent to approval, a school charter may be amended by the approving chartering authority by an affirmative vote of at least a majority of the membership of the chartering authority when such amendment is proposed by the charter school's governing authority and the amendment will better permit the charter school to achieve its stated objectives. No amendment shall be the basis of extending the duration of the original charter.

C. A school charter may be revoked by the authority that approved its charter upon a determination by an affirmative vote of at least a majority of the local board membership or upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, whichever approved the charter, that the charter school or its officers or employees did any of the following:

(1) Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures provided for in the approved charter.

(2) Failed to meet or pursue within the agreed timelines any of the academic and other educational results specified in the approved charter.

(3) Failed to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management.

(4) Violated any provision of law applicable to a charter school, its officers, or employees.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 2004, No. 735, §1; Acts 2008, No. 202, §1, eff. June 13, 2008; Acts 2010, No. 334, §1; Acts 2010, No. 722, §1.

§3993. Liability

A. The local school board and its members individually are immune from civil liability for any damages arising with respect to all activities related to the operation of any type of charter school they may authorize as a chartering authority, except as is otherwise specifically provided in a charter.

B. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and its members individually are immune from civil liability for any damages arising with respect to all activities related to the operation of any type of charter school they may authorize as a chartering authority, except as is otherwise specifically provided in a charter.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997.

PART V. OPERATION OF A CHARTER SCHOOL

§3994. Litigation costs

In the event litigation is necessary to recover any public funds paid to a charter school under authority of this Chapter, the charter school shall be liable for all court costs, attorney fees, and expenses.

Acts 2001, No. 991, §1, eff. June 27, 2001.

§3995. Charter school funding

A.(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, for the purpose of funding, a Type 1, Type 3, and Type 4 charter school shall be considered an approved public school of the local school board entering into the charter agreement and shall receive a per pupil amount each year from the local school board based on the October first membership count of the charter school. Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, Type 2 charter schools shall receive a per pupil amount each year from the state Department of Education using state funds specifically provided for this purpose. Type 2 charter schools authorized by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education after July 1, 2008, shall receive a per pupil amount each year as provided in the Minimum Foundation Program approved formula. The per pupil amount provided to a Type 1, 2, 3, or 4 charter school shall be computed annually and shall be equal to no less than the per pupil amount received by the school district in which the charter school is located from the following sources based on the district's October first membership count:

(a) The state-funded per pupil allocation received by the district pursuant to the most recent legislatively approved minimum foundation program formula resolution, including all levels.

(b)(i) Local revenues received during the prior year by the school district from the following sources:

(aa) Sales and use taxes, less any tax collection fee paid by the school district.

(bb) Ad valorem taxes, less any tax collection fee paid by the school district.

(cc) Earnings from sixteenth section lands owned by the school district.

(ii) For the purposes of this Subparagraph, local revenues shall exclude any portion which has been specifically dedicated by the legislature or by voter approval to capital outlay or debt service.

(iii) For the purposes of this Subparagraph, local revenues of the Orleans Parish School Board also shall exclude the amounts set forth in R.S. 17:1990(C)(2)(a)(iii) until such provisions relative to the specified amounts expire.

(c) The provisions of this Paragraph permitting the calculation of the per pupil amount to be provided to a Type 1, 2, 3, or 4 charter school to exclude any portion of local revenues specifically dedicated by the legislature or by voter approval to capital outlay or debt service, shall be

applicable only to a charter school housed in a facility or facilities provided by the district in which the charter school is located.

(2)(a) Initial allocation of the per pupil amount required in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall be based on estimates provided by the state Department of Education using the most recent projected prior year local revenue data and projected pupil counts available. Allocations shall be adjusted during the year to reflect actual pupil counts and actual prior year local revenue collections.

(b) In order to provide for adjustments in allocations made to Type 2 charter schools as a result of changes in enrollment, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may provide annually for a February fifteenth pupil membership count to reflect any changes in pupil enrollment that may occur after October first of each year. Any allocation adjustment made pursuant to this Subparagraph shall not be retroactive and shall be applicable for the period from March first through the end of the school year. The provisions of this Subparagraph relative to an allocation adjustment shall not be applicable to any Type 2 charter school that has had an increase or decrease in student enrollment of five percent or less in any school year for which the February fifteenth membership count occurs.

(3) Repealed by Acts 2010, No. 370, §2, eff. July 1, 2010.

(4)(a) A chartering authority may annually charge each charter school it authorizes a fee in an amount equal to two percent of the total per pupil amount as defined by this Subsection that is received by a charter school for administrative overhead costs incurred by the chartering authority for considering the charter application and any amendment thereto, providing monitoring and oversight of the school, collecting and analyzing data of the school, and for reporting on school performance. Such fee amount shall be withheld from the per pupil amount in monthly increments and shall not be applicable to any federal money or grants received by the charter school. Administrative overhead costs shall not include any cost incurred by the chartering authority to provide purchased services to the charter school. As provided by Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph, a chartering authority or the Recovery School District, if applicable, may provide other services for a charter school and charge the actual cost of providing such services, but no such arrangement shall be required as a condition for authorizing the charter school.

(b) A charter school may contract with the chartering authority, or with the Recovery School District for a Type 5 charter school, for the direct purchase of specific services in addition to those included in administrative overhead costs, including but not limited to food services, special education services, transportation services, custodial and maintenance services, media services, technology services, library services, health services, and health benefits for active and retired employees. Such services shall be provided

to the charter school at the actual costs incurred by the chartering authority or the Recovery School District as applicable. The amount paid by a charter school for such purchased services shall be in accordance with a written agreement entered into for this purpose by the charter school and the chartering authority or the Recovery School District as applicable. Such agreement shall be negotiated and executed prior to the beginning of each school year. Absent such an agreement as provided by this Subparagraph, the chartering authority or, if applicable, the Recovery School District shall have no authority to withhold from the charter school any funds relative to providing such services.

(c) At least thirty days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, each charter school shall be provided by its chartering authority with a projected budget detailing anticipated administrative overhead costs and planned uses for fees charged for such costs. By not later than ninety days following the end of each fiscal year, each charter school shall be provided by its chartering authority an itemized accounting of all administrative overhead costs. Additionally, by not later than ninety days following the end of each fiscal year, each charter school shall be provided by its chartering authority or the Recovery School District, if applicable, an itemized accounting of the actual cost of each purchased service provided to the charter school.

(5) Within fifteen days of the receipt of any state, local, or other funding to which the charter school is entitled or which came as a result of students enrolled in the charter school, the chartering authority shall ensure that those funds are available for use by such charter schools.

(6)(a) A Type 2 school which has been renewed as provided in R.S. 17:3992(A) annually shall be funded in the full amount calculated as provided for in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection. Such full funding shall be provided as a priority prior to the allocation of state funding to any other charter school funded by the state.

(b) The full funding required in this Subsection shall include in any calculation all pupils enrolled pursuant to any authority of a renewed Type 2 charter to increase the enrollment of such school whether caused by increasing the number of pupils in authorized grades or by adding sequential grades pursuant to the school's charter or other authority granted by the state board.

B. For each pupil enrolled in a charter school who is entitled to special education services, any state special education funding beyond that provided in the minimum foundation program and any federal funds for special education for that pupil that would have been allocated for that pupil shall be allocated to the charter school which the pupil attends. Any type 2 charter school shall be considered the local education agency for the purposes of any special education funding or statutory definitions, while the

local school board shall remain the local education agency for any type 1, 3, or 4 charter school.

C. Any approved charter school shall be eligible for any other federal, restricted state, and unrestricted state funding for which the school or its pupils qualify. Each charter school shall receive at a minimum their per pupil share for any state or federal grant program such as any funding provided for technology, teacher supplies, kindergarten through third grade reading and mathematics, summer school, and other remediation funding, as well as any other state or federal grant program where funding is distributed on a per pupil basis and a charter school is eligible to receive the funding under the terms of the grant. The charter school shall comply with the terms of the grant. The chartering authority shall ensure that such funds are made available for use by any charter school no less than fifteen days after the chartering authority receives such funding from the state or the federal government, provided the chartering authority applied for such funding directly. A charter school may apply for and receive funding directly from the state or federal government.

D. Any approved charter school may solicit, accept, and administer donations or any other financial assistance in the form of money, grants, property, loans, or personal services for educational purposes from any public or private person, corporation, or agency and comply with rules and regulations governing grants from the federal government or from any other person or agency, which are not in contravention of the constitution and any other law.

E. If any charter school fails to open and serve pupils or closes for any reason, the charter school shall refund all equipment and cash on hand which can be attributed to state or local funding to the state or to the local school district as appropriate.

F. Every pupil enrolled in a charter school shall be counted in the school's total pupil count for purposes of funding including each pupil who is pursuing a high school diploma or participating in a pre-general education development skills program as defined by policy adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. No child enrolled in a prekindergarten program offered by a charter school shall be counted for purposes of funding pursuant to the provisions of Subsection A of this Section unless such funding is specifically provided for such purpose. However, such school shall be eligible for any other funding that may become available pursuant to the provisions of Subsection C of this Section for children enrolled in prekindergarten programs.

G. In addition to any other funds received, each charter school created as a new school rather than as a conversion school shall receive for each student based on average daily membership in the charter school for the first five years of its existence an amount equaling the average per

student budgeted amount for each of those five years by the district in which the charter school is located for facility acquisition and construction services. The provisions of this Subsection shall apply only if and to the extent that funds are appropriated therefor by the legislature.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 1210, §1; Acts 2001, No. 988, §1, eff. June 27, 2001; Acts 2001, No. 991, §1, eff. June 27, 2001; Acts 2001, No. 1076, §1, eff. June 28, 2001; Acts 2003, No. 260, §1; Acts 2004, No. 735, §1; Acts 2005, No. 305, §1; Acts 2008, No. 202, §1, eff. June 13, 2008; Acts 2008, No. 744, §1, eff. July 6, 2008; Acts 2009, No. 292, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 370, §§1, 2, eff. July 1, 2010; Acts 2010, No. 861, §8.

§3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

A. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be exempt from all rules and regulations of the state board and those of any local school board that are applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for the following rules and regulations otherwise applicable to public schools regarding:

- (1) Building maintenance.
- (2) Facility accessibility.
- (3) Asbestos detection and abatement.
- (4) The Sanitary Code.
- (5) Pesticide use and safety.
- (6) Fire safety.
- (7) Safe work environments.
- (8) The possession and safe use of weapons and hazardous materials.
- (9) Adolescent health initiatives and school health centers.
- (10) Hearing and vision screenings.
- (11) Immunizations and health records.
- (12) Communicable disease prevention.
- (13) Drug use prevention.
- (14) Eye safety and the use of protective goggles.
- (15) Missing children identification procedures.
- (16) Teacher certification, except as provided in R.S. 17:3991(C)(6).
- (17) School and district accountability system.

B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved

charter, a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

- (1) School entrance age, R.S. 17:222.
- (2) Corporal punishment and suspension of students, R.S. 17:223.
- (3) Expulsion of students, R.S. 17:224.
- (4) School year, R.S. 17:154.1(A)(1) and 236.
- (5) Attendance reporting, R.S. 17:232.
- (6) Admission of home study students, R.S. 17:236.2.
- (7) Unauthorized use of electronic communication devices, R.S. 17:239.
- (8) Smoking, R.S. 17:240.
- (9) Open meetings, R.S. 42:11 et seq.
- (10) Public records, R.S. 44:1 et seq.
- (11) Teaching regarding the United States Constitution, R.S. 17:261.
- (12) Teaching regarding the Federalist Papers and the Declaration of Independence, R.S. 17:268.
- (13) Repealed by Acts 2010, No. 327, §2.
- (14) Teaching regarding Civics and Free Enterprise, R.S. 17:274.1.
- (15) Teaching regarding sex, R.S. 17:281.
- (16) Religious liberty of students, R.S. 17:2115 et seq.
- (17) Pupil assessment, R.S. 17:24.4.
- (18) Any school and district accountability system required by law of a public school of similar grade or type.
- (19) Public bids for the erection, construction, alteration, improvement, or repair of a public facility or immovable property, Part II of Chapter 10 of Title 38 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.
- (20) Code of Governmental Ethics, R.S. 42:1101 et seq., with the exception of R.S. 42:1119 as it applies to any person employed by a charter school prior to August 15, 2003.
- (21) Electronic communication by an employee at a school to a student enrolled at that school, R.S. 17:81(Q).
- (22) Teaching regarding the state's safe haven relinquishments law, R.S. 17:81(R).
- (23) Inspection and operation of fire safety and prevention equipment, R.S. 17:81(S).
- (24) Teaching regarding dating violence, R.S. 17:81(T).

(25) Reporting by a school bus operator employed by the governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school of his arrest for one or more of the specified offenses relative to operating a vehicle, R.S. 17:491.3.

(26) School master plans for supporting student behavior and discipline, R.S. 17:252.

(27) Data collection system, R.S. 17:3911.

(28) Reporting by a school employee employed by the governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school of his arrest for one or more of the specified offenses relative to sexual morality affecting minors, R.S. 17:16, any of the crimes provided in R.S. 15:587.1, or any justified complaint of child abuse or neglect on file in the central registry pursuant to Article 615 of the Children's Code.

(29) Seclusion and physical restraint of students with exceptionalities, R.S. 17:416.21.

C. A charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter shall comply with state and federal laws and regulations otherwise applicable to public schools with respect to civil rights and individuals with disabilities. Any Type 2 or Type 5 charter school shall be considered the local education agency for the purposes of any special education funding or statutory definitions, while the local school board shall remain the local education agency for any Type 1, 3, or 4 charter school.

D. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement entered into by the local school board in whose jurisdiction the charter school is located shall apply to a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees, except as otherwise provided for in the approved charter.

E. To graduate from a charter high school, pupils shall be able to demonstrate competency in the content of every course required for high school graduation. The state board shall provide by rule relative to a determination that such competencies have been acquired. In addition, any examination required by the state board or by law as a requirement for graduation from public high schools shall apply to pupils at charter high schools. Charter schools choosing to have their students demonstrate course competencies in a manner different from the traditional Carnegie unit approach where students take specific courses shall describe in their charter proposal how the school plans to work with the public higher education management boards regarding the acceptance by public institutions of higher education of such competencies.

F. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions

of this Chapter shall be subject to appropriate financial audits in accordance with R.S. 24:513 et seq.

G. All charter schools established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter shall comply with the provisions of R.S. 39:1301 through 1315. Each Type 1, 3, and 4 charter school annually shall submit its budget to the local school board that approved its charter, and such board shall submit the charter school's budget to the state superintendent of education in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 17:88. Each Type 2 and Type 5 charter school annually shall submit its budget directly to the state superintendent of education.

H. In addition to the requirements of Subsection G of this Section, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall adopt rules and regulations for prescribing forms and practices for budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting, both interim and annual, for Type 2 and Type 5 charter schools.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 821, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 2001, No. 991, §1, eff. June 27, 2001; Acts 2003, No. 9, §1, eff. Nov. 6, 2003; Acts 2003, No. 381, §1; Acts 2009, No. 214, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2009, No. 284, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2009, No. 413, §1, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 321, §1, eff. July 1, 2010; Acts 2010, No. 327, §§1, 2; Acts 2010, No. 533, §1, eff. June 24, 2010; Acts 2010, No. 756, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2011, No. 267, §1, eff. June 28, 2011; Acts 2011, No. 328, §1, eff. June 29, 2011.

§3997. Charter school employees

A.(1)(a) The governing authority of any charter school may employ such faculty and staff members as it deems necessary. All potential charter school employees shall be notified of the specific benefits they will be offered, as specified in the school's charter agreement.

(b) The nonprofit organization shall have exclusive authority over all employment decisions at the charter schools. However, as provided for in the charter, a nonprofit organization may enter into a contract with a for-profit organization to manage the charter school and may delegate to the for-profit organization such authority over employment decisions at the charter school as the nonprofit organization deems necessary and proper. Any delegation of this authority must be specifically delegated in a service provider agreement.

(c) The governing authority of any Type 5 charter school may bargain and enter into a collectively bargained contract on behalf of all or any group of its employees. The provisions of this Subparagraph supersede the provisions of R.S. 17:3996(D) as it relates to Type 5 charter schools.

NOTE: Effective until the Teachers' Retirement System receives a private letter ruling from the Internal Revenue

Service that Act No. 999 will not adversely affect the system's status as a qualified governmental plan. See Acts 2010, No. 999, §4.

(2) Employees employed by any charter school who, previous to employment in the charter school, were employees of a local school board shall, if such employees desire, be placed on leave of absence pursuant to Subsection B of this Section. However, for the duration of such leave each such employee shall contribute to and be eligible for the school employees' and teachers' retirement systems, and service time for the accrual of retirement benefits. However, service time while employed by a charter school shall not accrue toward the acquisition of permanent status.

(3) Employment in any charter school for all employees other than those provided for in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection shall be deemed to be employment in a public elementary or secondary school in the state regarding eligibility for any or all benefits which would otherwise accrue under state law to such an employee in any other elementary or secondary school, including but not limited to the school employees' and teachers' retirement systems. However, participation of the charter school and its employees in such benefit programs shall be contingent upon provisions contained in the school's approved charter.

NOTE: Effective upon receipt by the Teachers' Retirement System of a private letter ruling from the Internal Revenue Service that Act No. 999 will not adversely affect the system's status as a qualified governmental plan. See Acts 2010, No. 999, §4.

(2) Employees employed by any charter school who, previous to employment in the charter school, were employees of a local school board shall, if such employees desire, be placed on leave of absence pursuant to Subsection B of this Section. However, for the duration of such leave each such employee shall continue to contribute to and be a member of the school employees' or teachers' retirement system, and earn service credit for the accrual of retirement benefits. However, service time while employed by a charter school shall not accrue toward the acquisition of permanent status.

(3) Employment in any charter school for all employees other than those provided for in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection shall be deemed to be employment in a public elementary or secondary school in the state regarding eligibility for any or all benefits which would otherwise accrue under state law to such an employee in any other elementary or secondary school, including but not limited to membership in the school employees' and teachers' retirement systems. However, participation of the charter school and its employees in such benefit programs shall be contingent upon provisions contained in the school's approved charter. These provisions

may require only teachers employed by the charter school who, previous to employment in the charter school, were employees of a local school board to continue active membership in the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana for the duration of their employment as charter school teachers, regardless of their leave status.

(4) With regard to participation in the public retirement systems:

(a) The compensation that the teacher or school employee would have received if employed by the local public school system shall be used to determine employee and employer contribution levels of the respective retirement systems.

(b) Any compensation paid to a teacher or school employee which exceeds the salary that would have been received if employed by the local school system shall not be deemed as compensation solely for the purpose of the calculation of future retirement benefits.

B.(1)(a) A local school board shall grant a leave of absence, not to exceed three years, to any employee in its school system requesting such leave in order to be employed in a charter school.

(b)(i) The provisions of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph shall be in effect through June 30, 2010.

(ii) A leave of absence granted by a local school board pursuant to the provisions of this Section prior to July 1, 2010, shall continue to be governed by all applicable provisions of this Section.

(2)(a) At the end of the first year of leave authorized by this Subsection, an employee may return to his former teaching position with the local school board.

(b) At the end of the second year of leave authorized by this Subsection, an employee may make a written request to the local school board to return to the school system to a comparable position from which the leave was granted. Upon such request, the employee shall be permitted to return to a comparable position even if such return necessitates a reduction in force by the local school board in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 17:81.4.

(c)(i) Except as otherwise provided by Item (ii) of this Subparagraph, at the end of the third year of leave authorized by this Subsection, an employee shall either make a written request to the local school board to return to the school system in a comparable position, if one is available, or resign from the position from which the leave was granted. Any employee requesting to return to the school system in a comparable position shall be permitted to return even if such return necessitates a reduction in force by the local school board in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 17:81.4.

(ii)(aa) Any employee granted a three-year leave of absence pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection and who

would otherwise be required to take, during the 2007-2008 school year or the 2008-2009 school year, one of the actions specified in Item (i) of this Subparagraph relative to returning to or resigning from the school system granting leave may request, in lieu of taking such action, an additional leave of absence from the local school board not to exceed two years. The request for additional leave shall be made in the same manner and in accordance with the same timeline as applicable to a request to return to the school system. A request for additional leave pursuant to the provisions of this Item shall be granted by the local school board.

(bb) At the end of the additional leave period authorized by this Item, an employee shall either make a written request to the local school board to return to the school system in a comparable position, if one is available, or resign from the position from which the leave was granted. Any employee requesting to return to the local school system in a comparable position shall be permitted to return even if such return necessitates a reduction in force by the local school board in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 17:81.4.

(3) The local school board may require that any request to return to the city or parish school system be made at least ninety days before the employee would otherwise have to report for duty.

(4)(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, upon the return of a teacher to the city or parish school system such teacher shall retain permanent status gained in the public school system prior to the leave authorized by this Subsection even if the teacher is terminated by the charter school.

(b) Upon the return of an employee to the city or parish school system, such employee shall not lose any right of retirement or salary status or any other benefits to which the employee would have been entitled had he not taken a leave of absence to teach in a charter school.

(5) Each local school board shall permit any employee granted leave under this Subsection to continue to participate in any group insurance program in which he was otherwise entitled to participate subject to the same conditions and costs.

C.(1)(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsections A and B of this Section and in addition to those provisions, the state board or any local school board may contract with any charter school to provide all or any portion of the faculty and staff of such school. In such a case, any such faculty and staff members shall be employees of the contracting state or local board and shall continue as such employees to receive all the same benefits as other such employees, except as otherwise specified in the charter.

(b) No state or local board employee may be assigned by his employer to serve in a charter school involuntarily. No action taken or

assignment made regarding any employee of a state or local board in any charter school shall affect the status of the employee as an employee of the board.

(2) The governing authority of the charter school shall have complete and exclusive control over all decisions regarding assignment, responsibilities, and conduct when such an employee is hired to work at, or is employed in, its charter school.

D.(1)(a) Each governing authority of a charter school annually shall evaluate every teacher and administrator employed at the school using the value-added assessment model and measures of student growth as determined by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education pursuant to R.S. 17:3902(B)(5).

(b) The governing authority of a charter school shall terminate the employment of any teacher or administrator determined to be ineffective for three consecutive years pursuant to the evaluation required by this Section.

(2) By the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, fifty percent of each teacher and administrator evaluation conducted pursuant to Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall be based on evidence of growth in student achievement using the value-added assessment model as determined by the state board for grade levels and subjects for which value-added data is available. For grade levels and subjects for which value-added data is not available, the state board shall establish measures of student growth. The model shall take into account important student factors, including but not limited to special education, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, student attendance, and student discipline. The state board shall develop and adopt a policy to invalidate such student growth data for any teacher for any school year in which there is a natural disaster or any other unexpected event that results in the temporary closure of the school.

(3) The state superintendent of education shall make available to the public the data specified in R.S. 17:3902(B)(5) as may be useful for conducting statistical analyses and evaluations of educational personnel, but shall not reveal information pertaining to the evaluation report of a particular employee. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, such public information may include school level student growth data as specified in R.S. 17:3902(B)(5).

(4)(a) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may request that the state Department of Education monitor evaluation programs established pursuant to this Section as necessary. The method to be used in monitoring such programs shall be established by the department with the approval of the board and shall be sufficient to determine the extent to which any programs have been implemented, and whether such programs comply with the provisions of this Section.

(b) If, in conducting such monitoring, the department determines that the governing authority of a charter school has failed to implement its evaluation program or has otherwise failed to comply with the provisions of this Section, the department shall notify the charter school governing authority of such failure, and the charter school governing authority shall correct such failure within sixty calendar days after receiving such notification. The department also shall notify the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education of such failure, by the charter school governing authority.

(c) If the failure is not corrected within the prescribed sixty calendar days, the department shall notify the board of such continued failure and shall recommend to the board whatever sanctions against such charter school governing authority the department deems appropriate, which may include withholding funds distributed pursuant to the minimum foundation program formula until the corrections are made. The board shall act upon such recommendation within sixty calendar days after its receipt of the notification.

E.(1) The provisions of this Section apply to all charter schools except for Type 4 charter schools. The employees in Type 4 charter schools are in all respects employees of the local school board entering into the charter and shall be entitled to the benefits, and be subject to conditions of employment, as prescribed by the local school board within the charter.

(2) The transfer of an employee of a local school board to a Type 4 charter school shall be governed by the transfer policy of the local school board.

F.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, hereinafter referred to as the "board", shall develop and administer a process for consideration and settlement of claims by former employees of the Northwood Preparatory High School, a nonprofit corporation domiciled in Amite, Louisiana, hereinafter referred to as the "school", for earned but unpaid wages and benefits as the board deems appropriate, subject to the provisions of this Subsection and pursuant to the availability of funds as provided in Paragraph (4) of this Subsection.

(2)(a) The board shall develop and administer a process for determining eligibility for settlement and payment of claims for unpaid wages and benefits by former employees of the school, as well as determining the amounts due each claimant and the execution of settlements with respect to claims. While the board shall establish the criteria for eligibility for settlement of a claim, at a minimum, a claimant shall have been employed by the school at the time of its closure and shall make a claim in accordance with the requirements of the board no later than July 30, 2003. Any former employee of the school who makes a claim for unpaid wages and benefits, who is determined by the board to be eligible

for consideration for payment of unpaid wages and benefits shall execute a receipt, release, and waiver of any past, present, or future cause of action against the state and its departments, agencies, subdivisions, boards, and commissions, and the Tangipahoa Parish School Board with respect to earned but unpaid wages and benefits, hereinafter referred to as a "settlement agreement". Such settlement agreements shall contain a clause which provides that neither the state nor any of its departments, agencies, subdivisions, boards, and commissions, nor the Tangipahoa Parish School Board shall bear any liability to pay any compensation to a claimant unless the provisions of Subparagraphs (b) and (c) of this Paragraph are met:

(b) After all settlements have been executed by the board with all claimants who made a valid claim by July 30, 2003, the board shall certify that a settlement has been effected with every person who was employed at the school at the time of its closure.

(c) The cooperative endeavor agreement executed by the Louisiana Department of Education and the Tangipahoa Parish School Board on March 25, 2003, has been amended to extend the effective date of the contract through December 31, 2003, and to expand the purposes of the contract to include payments either in whole or in part to the former employees of the school who have entered into settlement agreements with the board.

(3) The board shall complete its consideration and settlement of claims as provided herein no later than September 30, 2003. If the conditions of Subparagraphs (b) and (c) of Paragraph (2) are met, the board shall then transmit a copy of all settlement agreements not later than December 1, 2003, to the Tangipahoa Parish School Board for its use in determining the payments to be made to the former employees.

(4) In the event the conditions of Subparagraphs (b) and (c) of Paragraph (2) and Paragraph (3) of this Subsection are met, the Tangipahoa Parish School Board shall make payments to satisfy the settlement agreements, to the extent that monies are available from the cooperative endeavor agreement with the State Department of Education, with the amount of each payment made at the discretion of the Tangipahoa Parish School Board based on monies available.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 1999, No. 1210, §1; Acts 2001, No. 20, §1, eff. May 22, 2001; Acts 2003, No. 944, §1, eff. July 1, 2003; Acts 2005, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 35, §1, eff. Nov. 30, 2005; Acts 2008, No. 497, §1, eff. June 25, 2008; Acts 2010, No. 54, §1, eff. May 27, 2010; Acts 2010, No. 324, §1, eff. July 1, 2010; Acts 2010, No. 861, §8; Acts 2010, No. 999, §2.

§3998. Reports

A.(1) Each chartering authority shall report to the state board on the number of schools chartered, the status of those schools, and any recommendations by July first of each year.

(2) Each charter school shall provide a comprehensive report to its chartering authority at the end of the third year. If the charter school is achieving its stated goals and objectives pursuant to its approved charter, then the chartering authority shall extend the duration of the charter for the additional two-year period as provided in R.S. 17:3992(A)(1).

B. The state board shall review information regarding the laws, regulations, and policies from which charter schools were exempt pursuant to this Chapter to determine if the exemptions assisted or impeded the charter schools in meeting their stated goals and objectives.

C. The state board shall report to the governor and to the Senate and House Committees on Education no later than January 1, 2001, on its initial findings including recommendations to modify, expand, or terminate the approach.

D. In preparing the report required by this Section, the state board shall compare to the extent statistically possible the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other schools who are enrolled in academically comparable courses, including a fiscal and programmatic analysis based on the total per pupil funding in each charter school in relation to the total per pupil funding in the respective local public school system that has been invested in instruction.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999.

§3999. Application of Chapter

All charter schools shall be governed by the law in effect on August 15, 2003. Thereafter, if the provisions of this Chapter are amended, all charter schools shall comply with the law as amended within ninety days of its effective date.

Acts 1997, No. 477, §1, eff. June 30, 1997; Acts 1999, No. 757, §1, eff. July 2, 1999; Acts 2003, No. 381, §1.