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# A RESOURCE FOR LOUISIANA PARENTS

## -- ABOUT NEW STATE EDUCATION LAWS ENACTED IN 2018 --

(All laws were enacted in the 2018 Regular Session unless otherwise indicated.)

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### PARENT LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

**Act 547:** Expands the Louisiana Parents' Bill of Rights for public schools, which affirms parents' rights in the following new ways:

- receiving a child's education records within 10 business days of the parent's request;
- accessing the final school calendar at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the school year;
- viewing a complete listing of all school fees, the purpose of each fee, and how economic hardships can be addressed;
- viewing any school uniform requirements on the school's website; and
- being informed if their child is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade level.



**ACTION:** Parents should review and become familiar with the full, updated Louisiana Parents' Bill of Rights in order to support their child's education. Look for additional information on your school's website.

**Act 646:** Beginning October 1, 2018, the membership of the board of each charter school located in a parish with a population of between 325,000 and 375,000, based on the most recent federal decennial census (as of now, Orleans Parish), must include at least one member who is a parent, legal guardian, or grandparent of a student enrolled in the charter school or an alumnus of the school.<sup>1</sup> Each charter school board must adopt a policy prescribing the process and timeline for membership, and the policy must be provided to the parents of each child enrolled in the school and published on the school's website.



**ACTION:** Parents wishing to serve on their child's school board should review the board membership policy on the school's website and contact school administration with any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Historical Census Information, Louisiana State Census Data Center, "1900 to 2010 State and Parish Census Counts," [www.louisiana.gov/Explore/Historicla\\_Census/](http://www.louisiana.gov/Explore/Historicla_Census/), (2010)

## ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

### Literacy/Reading

**Act 688:** Within the first 30 days of school, Louisiana public schools must administer a literacy screening to each second and third grade student. The new law requires that students scoring below grade level must be considered for additional resources, while students scoring above grade level must be considered for evaluation into a gifted program.



**ACTION:** If parents do not receive a copy of their child's literacy screening results, they should request a copy from their child's teacher or the school administration and ask about any additional supports or evaluations planned for their child in order to meet his or her unique needs.

### Foreign Languages

**Act 89:** For several years, Louisiana law has allowed local school districts to award a State Seal of Biliteracy on students' high school diplomas if they demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. Act 89 revises the requirements for earning the seal, making criteria more aligned with tests that effectively measure students' proficiency in a world language.



**ACTION:** Parents of high school students who are proficient in another language or studying to be proficient should inquire as to whether their child's school is participating in this program and will award a seal of biliteracy on their child's diploma if requirements are met.

**Act 622:** Strengthens current law, which allows parents to petition their local school board to establish a world language immersion program or school, particularly in French and Spanish. If sufficient signatures are received and other requirements met, the school board must make such a program or school available.



**ACTION:** Parents wishing to petition their local school board for a world language immersion program or school within their school district should follow the process outlined in state law (**R.S. 17:273.3**). Contact [beverly.diaz@la.gov](mailto:beverly.diaz@la.gov) with any questions about world language immersion programs.

**House Resolution 12 (of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Session):** Building on legislation passed over the past three years regarding fees charged to students, this resolution establishes the Task Force on Student Fees to study and make recommendations relative to the assessment of fees to students attending public and certain non-public schools. The task force will consider school board policies relative to student fees, the purpose and use of such fees, and how families can address economic hardships.



**ACTION:** Parents should visit their school board or school system website to review a local policy regarding student fees. Contact [leslie.hill@la.gov](mailto:leslie.hill@la.gov) with questions regarding past reports on student fees or about the new task force.

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**Act 517:** Requires the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to release the results of state LEAP tests to school systems no later than June 30 of each year, unless extenuating circumstances arise. Test result reports must contain specified information that can be used by teachers and parents to support student learning.



**ACTION:** Parents should expect to receive their child's test results from their school soon after June 30 of each year. Visit the LDOE's [Family Support Toolbox Library](#) for parent resources related to state tests and how to use test results.

**Act 522:** Requires that any time the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education significantly revises the criteria, methodology, or manner of calculating school and school system performance scores and letter grades, the state must publish side-by-side scores using the previous methodology and the new methodology for easy comparison.



**ACTION:** Parents should visit <http://www.louisianaschools.com> to access school and school system performance scores, letter grades, and other information about school offerings in their community.

**Act 555:** Requires schools having state-required and approved school improvement plans – designed to address schoolwide performance challenges and/or low academic performance for certain student subgroups – to present such plans to parents at a school meeting, following notice given to parents at least one week in advance. The LDOE must publish a list of such schools on its website.



**ACTION:** Parents may access a list of schools having state-approved academic improvement plans (schools labeled in need of “comprehensive improvement” during the 2017-2018 school year) in the [Family Support Toolbox](#). Parent meetings should be scheduled by each school early in the Fall 2018 semester. The list of schools with improvement plans will be updated each fall as new school performance scores are released by the LDOE. Contact [hunter.brown@la.gov](mailto:hunter.brown@la.gov) with any questions.

**Act 459:** Current state law requires school systems to offer families the choice of attending a school rated “A,” “B,” or “C,” in their school district if their child's school has received a school performance letter grade of “D” or “F” for the most recent school year, provided that sufficient capacity exists. This new law requires school boards to post their school choice law on their website no later than September 30, 2018.



**ACTION:** Parents of students assigned to attend a school that has received a rating of “D” or “F” should contact the school board or school system office to inquire about this policy and what school choice(s) exist. Visit <http://www.louisianaschools.com> to access school and school system performance scores and letter grades.

## STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Act 196:** Requires students who are entering eleventh grade or who are age 16 and entering any grade to provide satisfactory evidence of current immunization against meningococcal disease as a condition of school entry. The law retains the ability of students to be waived of this requirement by his or her parent or legal guardian based on religious or other personal reasons.



**ACTION:** Parents should consult their child's physician for more information about this immunization and should provide written notice to the school if they do not wish for their child to be immunized.

**Act 262:** Requires each school system to provide information, obtained from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and LDOE, to families regarding influenza and immunization against the influenza virus.



**ACTION:** Parents should review the information provided by their school system on the influenza immunization and consult their child's physician with any questions. Read more at the [Louisiana Department of Health's website](#).

**Act 369:** Requires the LDOE to prepare information to be distributed by schools to parents regarding the dangers of sexually charged cyberbullying, the addictive and destructive nature of pornographic and illicit materials, the dangers of internet interaction with strangers, and resources available to parents regarding child safeguards and free internet filters for home computers.



**ACTION:** Parents should carefully review the [internet safety flyer](#) in order to safeguard against content that could be harmful to their children.

**House Concurrent Resolution 11:** Requests the LDOE to annually survey and report on the status of health and physical education in public schools, including the extent to which schools are complying with requirements for daily minimum time for student physical activity.



**ACTION:** Parents may contact [mike.comeaux@la.gov](mailto:mike.comeaux@la.gov) for information relative to the state law requiring daily minimum for student physical activity, school survey results, and this annual report.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 79:** Requests each school system to take certain actions to help students avoid injury due to the use of heavy backpacks.



**ACTION:** Parents should contact their school principal to discuss concerns related to this issue and may reference this legislative resolution.

**Senate Resolution 154:** Requests the LDOE to establish a committee to study and develop mechanisms and processes whereby all students are served a meal at school, regardless of the student's ability to pay.



**ACTION:** Parents interested in this study committee should contact [melissa.campbell@la.gov](mailto:melissa.campbell@la.gov) for more information.

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## STUDENT BEHAVIOR

**Senate Resolution 213:** Requests school systems to annually publish on its website information relative to classroom management, student guidance and discipline, positive behavior supports, conflict resolution, mediation, cultural competence, restorative practices, guidance and discipline and adolescent development.



**ACTION:** Parents should review this information to be aware of school policies, practices, and supports available to students with behavior needs. If this information cannot be located on their school board's website, parents should contact the school board or school system office to inquire.

**Act 696:** Prevents public schools from prohibiting a behavioral health provider from providing services to a student at school, during school hours, if the student's parent or legal guardian requests such services pursuant to a policy adopted by the school board, which must be enacted no later than January 1, 2019.



**ACTION:** Parents of students needing such services should review their school board's new policy and speak with their school's administration about specific provider needs.

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## STUDENT AND SCHOOL SAFETY

**Act 168:** State law requires each public school to have a crisis management and response plan that is jointly developed with local law enforcement, reviewed annually, and rehearsed within the first 30 days of each school year. Act 168 further requires schools to include parental notification within such plans, in the event of a school shooting or other violent incident or emergency situation.



**ACTION:** Parents may contact their school administrators to inquire as to how parents will be informed of an emergency situation at their child's school, per their updated crisis management and response plan.

**Act 523:** Allows students to wear, carry or possess a bulletproof backpack on school property or on a school bus. Previous law did not allow for these types of backpacks to be worn on public school campuses.



**ACTION:** Parents should research the benefits of using such backpacks and decide if their use is appropriate for their child.

**Act 629:** Provides that a person who has a valid concealed handgun permit may carry the concealed handgun within 1,000 feet of any school campus.



**ACTION:** Parents should be aware of this new law and should contact their school's administration with any questions about school safety or security.