

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 167

BY SENATOR BROOME

A RESOLUTION

To direct the governing authority of each public elementary school to report to the state Department of Education regarding all alternative behavioral strategies and interventions utilized to address undesirable student behavior prior to suspending or expelling a child in prekindergarten through fifth grade out of school.

WHEREAS, persistent discipline problems are often the manifestation of deeper underlying issues that need to be addressed in order for a child to overcome his challenges and learn to exhibit positive behaviors conducive to his learning and that of his classmates; and

WHEREAS, educators, medical doctors, and mental health professionals generally agree that suspending or expelling a child out of school does not produce the desired improvement in student behavior and can actually initiate and perpetuate a cycle that ultimately results in a child withdrawing socially, dropping out of school, and entering the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, some research indicates that eliminating the use of out-of-school suspension and expulsions for children in younger grades and instituting positive and proactive alternative discipline practices can redirect a child's undesirable behavior and foster a more conducive learning environment for all students; and

WHEREAS, during the 2013-2014 school year, approximately thirty-one thousand Louisiana students in grades Pre-K through five were suspended or expelled, and it is an inescapable fact that a child cannot learn if he is not in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, the large number of young students suspended or expelled raises the question as to whether schools place a high priority on keeping a child in the classroom where learning takes place, reserving out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for the most severe disciplinary infractions; and

WHEREAS, a report prepared by the state Department of Education in response to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 134 of the 2014 Regular Session notes that although suspension and expulsion rates in Louisiana have remained relatively stable, there are large differences in these rates across school systems, indicating a lack of knowledge or resources regarding best practices to address student discipline that needs to be identified and redressed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby direct the governing authority of each public elementary school to report to the state Department of Education regarding all alternative behavioral strategies and interventions utilized to address undesirable student behavior prior to suspending or expelling a child in prekindergarten through fifth grade out of school.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state Department of Education shall compile the information provided in these reports and submit a summary report to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the state superintendent of education for dissemination to the governing authority of each public elementary school, along with instructions and guidelines for submission of the required reports.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE