

LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2012

EDUCATION

The Education agenda for the 2012 legislative session was different from prior sessions. Recently re-elected Governor Bobby Jindal took education reform as the # 1 priority for his entire 2nd term. As such, his staff [wrote the major reform bills to be presented](#) rather than the usual process of having individual legislators write proposed legislation. Representative Steve Carter (R-Baton Rouge), Chair of the House Education Committee, and Senator Conrad Appel (R-Metairie), Chair of the Senate Education Committee sponsored most of this legislation.

The bills in the Governor's package included:

HB 976 and SB 597, mirror bills which expand school choice, including a voucher program called Scholarships for Excellence, pathways for charter schools, the providers who can offer courses to K-12 students, and a "parent trigger" for failing schools.

Position/Outcome:

HB 976 became the bill that made its way through the legislature. The concept used in this legislation is called the "Dollar follows the Child," and it was a huge omnibus bill that included many aspects of education delivery. CF1 approved the bill and testified in support but sought [amendments to the voucher program](#). The bill passed out of committee but an amendment by Rep. Neil Abramson on the House floor required the Department of Education to establish criteria for the program and another amendment by Rep. Jim Fannin gave priority to students in D and F schools. These amendments addressed two of CF1's concerns. It was signed into law as Act 2.

HB 974 and SB 603, mirror bills which linked teacher tenure to performance, make effectiveness the primary criterion for personnel decisions, and grant authority for hiring and placement of personnel to school superintendents.

Position/Outcome:

HB 974 became the bill that made its way through the legislature. CF1 testified in support of this bill. It passed the legislature and was signed into law as Act 1.

HB 933 and SB 581, mirror bills which outline a framework for a single coordinated early childhood education system with accountability for academic outcomes.

Position/Outcome:

SB 581 became the bill that made its way through the legislature. CF1 supported the concept and testified in support of the bill; however, there were concerns with the reliability of testing at early ages. The bill was amended on the House floor by Walt Leger to allow the evaluation process established by the bill to be submitted to the legislature for final approval. This bill passed the legislature and was signed into law as Act 3.

HB 969 by Rep. Kirk Talbot (R-River Ridge) would give a rebate for individuals and corporations who make donations to organizations that provides scholarships.

Position/Outcome: CF1 did not take a position on this bill. It passed the legislature and *became* Act 25.

HB 716 by Rep. Cameron Henry (R-Metairie) which would repeal tenure for all new school bus drivers beginning in July 1, 2012, was subsumed by HB 293 by Rep. Joe Harrison (R-Gray).

Position Outcome: CF1 did not take a position on this bill. It passed and became Act 704.

HB 292 by Rep. Stephen Pugh (R-Ponchatoula) would place school board term limits as an option for voters on local ballots across the state in the November 2012 elections.

Position/Outcome: CF1 did not take a position on this bill. Passed the Senate and became Act 386.