

Regular Session, 2004

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

BY REPRESENTATIVES JANE SMITH, BADON, CROWE, DOWNS, FANNIN, FUTRELL, HONEY, HUDSON, M. POWELL, T. POWELL, RITCHIE, BALDONE, BAUDOIN, BAYLOR, BEARD, BOWLER, BROOME, BRUCE, BURRELL, R. CARTER, CURTIS, DOERGE, DORSEY, ERDEY, FAUCHEUX, FLAVIN, FRITH, GLOVER, GRAY, E. GUILLORY, HAMMETT, HEATON, HILL, HOPKINS, HUNTER, HUTTER, JACKSON, JEFFERSON, JOHNS, KATZ, KENNARD, KENNEY, MARCHAND, MARTINY, MCDONALD, MONTGOMERY, MORRELL, MORRISH, MURRAY, PITRE, QUEZAIRE, RICHMOND, ROBIDEAUX, ROMERO, SALTER, SHEPHERD, SMILEY, GARY SMITH, JACK SMITH, JOHN SMITH, ST. GERMAIN, THOMPSON, TOWNSEND, TRAHAN, WADDELL, WALKER, WHITE, WOOTON, AND WRIGHT AND SENATORS MOUNT AND NEVERS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to revise Louisiana's definition of "highly qualified" teacher that was developed and adopted by the board as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, to be similar to such definitions established in the states of Ohio and Arkansas and to submit a written report on the status of such revision to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education by not later than June 1, 2004.

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires every state to develop plans to reach the goal that "all teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year"; and

WHEREAS, to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind and to assure that highly qualified instructors teach students in Louisiana classrooms, policymakers and educators from across the state have defined policy and practice to guide Louisiana's highly qualified educator initiative; and

WHEREAS, in February 2003, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education officially adopted the Louisiana definition of "highly qualified" teacher; and

WHEREAS, this definition applies to all public elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers and specifies the requirements for new teachers as well as veteran teachers; and

WHEREAS, No Child Left Behind provides certain guidelines for states to use in defining "highly qualified" for new teachers, but the federal law allows states more flexibility in defining "highly qualified" for veteran teachers; and

WHEREAS, the federal law requires that veteran teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree, but allows such teachers either to meet the other requirements for a new teacher (demonstrate relevant subject knowledge by passing a test or completing at least the equivalent of an undergraduate academic major or advanced certification in the subject taught) or demonstrate competence in all academic subjects that the teacher teaches based on a "High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation" (HOUSSE) that meets certain specified criteria; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the HOUSSE criteria, the state of Ohio has developed a "Highly Qualified Teacher Rubric" that assigns points to teachers depending on their years of experience teaching in the assigned area, college course work in the content area and in pedagogy related to the content area, professional development and related activities in the content area, and awards, publications, or other recognition related to the content area; and

WHEREAS, along the same lines as Ohio, the state of Arkansas, through its HOUSSE, provides veteran teachers with options in demonstrating content area competencies including, among others, the following:

(1) Having a minimum of five years of teaching experience in the content area in which the teacher teaches.

(2) Having ninety hours of professional development that meets certain criteria; and

WHEREAS, although No Child Left Behind provides a general framework for defining "highly qualified" teacher and states are allowed to develop their own definitions within this framework, some states are still struggling to do so; and

WHEREAS, although the teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind are pushing states and school districts to develop needed policies and systems, implementation is proceeding slowly as it relates to the "highly qualified" teacher requirement; and

WHEREAS, one area of concern is that states are reporting vast differences in the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development, perhaps reflecting varying definitions of the quality and difficulties in counting and tracking the number of teachers meeting their definition.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to revise Louisiana's definition of "highly qualified" teacher that was developed and adopted by the board as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, to be similar to such definitions established in the states of Ohio and Arkansas and to submit a written report on the status of such revision to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education by not later than June 1, 2004.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE