



LATEACH
Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children

Join Fellow LaTEACH Members!

Put on your Purple

BESE needs to hear your voice!

August 7, 2015

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) meets next week.

WHEN: **August 11-12, 2015**

WHERE: **Claiborne Building
The Louisiana Purchase Room (1-100)
1201 N. Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802**



BESE members need to hear from you before they consider the following issues most relevant to students with disabilities:

1. Funding to Schools

Do you think state and local funding to schools should be based on student needs?

Act 467 requires funding to all schools, traditional and charter, to be based on student needs. The state share of funding for schools for the 2015-16 year will be distributed based on student needs; however, local funds for charter schools will continue to be allocated for each student regardless of the student's level of need. The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council requested that all local funding be allocated according to student need as indicated by weighted student characteristics in the MFP formula.

Why are funding levels to schools based on student needs so important?

Louisiana recognizes that on average schools need 2.5 times as much money to educate a student with a disability than is needed for a student without a disability. Two major problems are caused by different funding formula across schools:

1. School receiving a flat rate have a financial incentive to avoid enrolling students with high cost needs (i.e., students with disabilities)
2. School systems serving high rates of students with disabilities have inadequate resources.

Do you think reporting of funding should be transparent so everyone can see how funding allocations are calculated?

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) changed how it reports funding to charter schools. The Council has requested transparency by reporting tables previously shared for school enrollments and funding levels.

2. Special Education Student enrollment in Charter School Performance Compacts

Do you think more should be done to ensure charter schools are enrolling students with disabilities at similar rates found in traditional school systems?

Act 467 requires charter schools to serve no less than 85 percent of the average percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in the local public school districts from which the charter school enrolls its students. BESE will consider revisions to the [Charter School Performance Compact](#), which provides clear expectations, oversight, and feedback to charter schools. The Charter School Performance Compact only awards one point (out of 100) for a charter school to enroll students with disabilities at a rate reflecting local averages.

3. Parental Voice in Policies - Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Do you think more parental input is needed in developing special education policies and practices?

Over the past few years the opportunities for parental input in special education policies and practices have diminished, with SEAP the only remaining stakeholder group. LaTEACH and the Council have repeatedly advocated for increased parental involvement when creating policies and practices related to students with disabilities. As LDOE presented a plan for monitoring special education to SEAP at the July meeting, LDOE reported that the selection of critical indicators and targets to guide monitoring visits was done without any parental input. Too often policies and recommendations from LDOE are not presented to SEAP or other stakeholder groups in a manner that offers an opportunity for adequate feedback and input. SEAP and other parent advocates have requested meaningful opportunities for parental input.

If you don't have a purple LaTEACH shirt, contact your [LaTEACH Regional Leader](#) and we will provide one for you at the BESE meeting.

BESE Agendas

Click the links below to see the agenda for August 2015 BESE Committees and Board meeting.

Tuesday, August 11th

9:30 AM [Administration and Finance Committee](#)

8.1 - Discussion on Act467 (SB267) of the 2015 Legislative session

10:30 AM [School Innovation and Turnaround Committee](#)

2.2 - Charter School Performance Compact

1:30 PM [Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee](#)

6.1 - SEAP - recommendation for increased parent involvement

Wednesday, August 12th

9:00 AM [Full Board](#)

Contact your BESE member to tell them how you feel about these issues. Click [HERE](#) for the list of BESE Members by district.

Additional Information

Another School Funding Issue

BESE will discuss whether schools received the correct amount of funding last year (2014-15).

At the June BESE meeting the Louisiana School Boards Association and the Louisiana Superintendents' Association presented data produced by the Louisiana Department of Education indicating school systems have not received the correct amount of funds based on actual students enrolled in schools. The MFP requires school systems to receive funding based on student characteristics, such as having a disability; however, data revealed that when the MFP formula was applied to the actual characteristics of students enrolled in traditional and charter schools, the money was not following the students based on the students' needs as indicated in the MFP.

Two factors caused funding to not follow students in accordance with their need or in accordance with the MFP. First, different funding formula were used to determine how much money a traditional school system should receive (i.e., based on student needs) than was used to determine how much money to reduce from the traditional school system and send to charter schools (i.e., based on a per student basis). Second, charter school student populations differed from the student populations found in traditional school systems. Predominantly charter school systems were not serving students with high cost needs at the same rate found in traditional school systems.

A request was made for BESE to make an adjustment in the final payment to school systems for 2014-2015 correcting the funding allocations based on enrolled students' characteristics. This request was made regardless if SB267, now Act 467, passed or not, since many believe Act 467 merely clarifies how calculations for school funding should have been made all along.

LDOE produced a [legal opinion](#) of the timing and effect of SB267.

Did You Take Action?

Please let us know if you contacted your BESE Member or attended a BESE meeting by emailing us at info@lateach.org.



Any questions?

If there are any questions about the information in this alert, contact LaTEACH at:

Email: info@lateach.org
Phone: 1-800-450-8108
Phone: 1-800-894-6558
Website: www.lateach.org



LaTEACH is an initiative of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.