

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 209

BY REPRESENTATIVE WESLEY BISHOP

EDUCATION/SPECIAL: Requests the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education and the La. Developmental Disabilities Council to study issues relative to high school graduation rates for special education students

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in
3 collaboration with the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, to study issues
4 relative to the high school graduation rates for special education students in
5 Louisiana and to submit a written report of study findings and recommendations to
6 the House Committee on Education by not later than January 15, 2016.

7 WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana provides that it is the goal of the public
8 educational system "to provide learning environments and experiences, at all stages of
9 human development, that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that
10 every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential"; and

11 WHEREAS, according to *Education Week's* "Diplomas Count 2015" annual report,
12 Louisiana's special education graduation rates were among the worst in the United States in
13 2013; and

14 WHEREAS, the report reveals that only thirty-seven percent of the special education
15 students enrolled in Louisiana public high schools graduated with a diploma – trailing
16 regular education students by over thirty-five percent; and

17 WHEREAS, the report also showed that on average across the United States, special
18 education students had a nineteen point graduation deficit compared to regular education
19 students; and

1 WHEREAS, special education students in high school are increasingly expected to
2 perform to high academic standards and to prepare for further education or training and a
3 productive role in the workplace; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2014, Act No. 833 was enacted by the legislature to provide
5 alternative pathways for grade promotion and graduation for certain special education
6 students who do not pass standardized tests; and

7 WHEREAS, according to advocates for special education students and for this
8 legislation, this law represented a major shift in policy and a monumental departure from
9 being among the states with the most stringent and restrictive policies for grade promotion
10 and graduation to joining many states in recognizing the role a student's Individualized
11 Education Program should have in determining student outcomes; and

12 WHEREAS, this effort was a collaborative approach by parents of special education
13 students, special education administrators, policymakers, and advocacy organizations who
14 worked together to ensure that each student has the opportunity to maximize his potential
15 and earn a diploma; and

16 WHEREAS, although this legislation was a large step in the right direction in
17 providing special education students this opportunity and providing them with proper
18 recognition of their achievements, further study is needed in order to determine the reasons
19 for the state's low graduation rate for these students and further solutions for increasing the
20 rate.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
22 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and
23 Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities
24 Council, to study issues relative to the high school graduation rates for special education
25 students in Louisiana and to submit a written report of study findings and recommendations
26 to the House Committee on Education by not later than January 15, 2016.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such study shall include but not be limited to the
28 following:

29 (1) The reasons for Louisiana's low graduation rate for special education students.

- 1 (2) Ways to improve the graduation rate.
- 2 (3) Any policies or further legislation that may be necessary to address these issues.
- 3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted
- 4 to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state
- 5 superintendent of education, and the executive director of the Louisiana Developmental
- 6 Disabilities Council.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 209 Original

2015 Regular Session

Wesley Bishop

Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the La. Developmental Disabilities Council, to study issues relative to the high school graduation rates for special education students in the state and to submit a written report of study findings and recommendations to the House education committee by Jan. 15, 2016.