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Subject: School of Choice

This is what Derek was talking about

Schools of choice exempt from state laws and regulations

SECTION 17. Article 1, Chapter 19, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-19-350. (A) A local school district board of trustees of this State desirous of creating an avenue for new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating children within their district, may create a school of choice within the district that is exempt from state statutes which govern other schools in the district and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education. To achieve the status of exemption from specific statutes and regulations, the local board of trustees, at a public meeting, shall identify specific statutes and regulations which will be considered for exemption. The exemption may be granted by the governing board of the district only if there is a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board for each exemption and the proposed exemption is approved by the State Board of Education.

(B) In seeking exemptions, the local board of trustees may not exempt:

(1) federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;

(2) health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as are applied to other public schools operating in the district;

(3) minimum student attendance requirements;

(4) state assessment requirements; and

(5) certification requirements for teachers in the core academic areas as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Public Law 107-110; however, up to twenty-five percent of the teaching staff of the school may be employed if the individual possesses a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject he is hired to teach.

(C) Any school created pursuant to this section shall admit all children eligible to attend the school subject to space limitations and may not limit or deny admission or show preference in admission decisions to any individual or group of individuals.

(D) A local school district that provides exemptions pursuant to subsection (A) shall provide the State Department of Education with documentation of the approved exemptions and shall submit evaluation documentation to be reviewed by the State Board of Education after three years of the exemption to ensure that the district continues to meet the needs of its students. Upon review, if the State Board of Education determines the continuation of the exemption does not meet the needs of the students attending the district school of choice, the board may suspend exemptions granted by

the local board of trustees with a two-thirds vote. Before suspending the exemptions, the State Board of Education shall notify the district and provide the district with any opportunity to defend the continuation of approved exemptions."

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