



The Bulletin Board

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CITIZENS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE



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2016 LEGISLATIVE GAMES

"FOR IT'S ONE, TWO, THREE STRIKES"



Three back-to-back legislative sessions (*1st Special, Regular and 2nd Special*), spanning the five months from February to June, felt like a long at-bat. It consisted of strikes, balls and possibility of a strikeout, and like any good hitter we persevered, defended our position at the plate and scored runs of our own. Here's the recap.



1ST SPECIAL SESSION – "BATTER UP!"

The *1st Special Session* was called by Gov. John Bel Edwards almost immediately after taking office in January to confront the state's looming \$1 Billion deficit in the then current 2016 Fiscal Year. Legislators vigorously argued and passed temporary tax increases and debated a host of budget cuts—including severe reductions to nonpublic school programs. At one point during the session virtually all items in the *Nonpublic Educational Assistance* budget appropriation were drastically reduced. We stood firm at the plate, and with the help of legislators friendly to nonpublic schools we ended with a strike against the *Required Services* program but only in the amount of \$1 Million, or 6.5%. Given the state's dire fiscal straits we felt very fortunate that this was the only reduction we sustained.

REGULAR SESSION – "STEP OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX, AND WAIT FOR YOUR PITCH!"

While the special session dealt with the 2016 shortfall, the *Regular Session* had to run the bases again for FY 2017. New revenues generated by tax increases passed in the special session were expected to bring in \$1 Billion—or half of the \$2 Billion needed to balance the FY 2017 budget—forcing additional cuts. With limited options due to constitutionally protected programs, the Edwards administration proposed deep cuts in HB1 (General Appropriations Bill) to the *Nonpublic Educational Assistance* unit and *Student Scholarships*. The shortfalls in nonpublic school programs were -\$8 Million to *Required Services* (\$15M down to \$7M), -\$7 Million to *School Lunch Salary Supplements* effectively zeroing out the program, and -\$6 Million to *Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence* (\$42M down to \$36M).

When the *Regular Session* ended we had to step outside the box and wait. The governor had announced a call for a *2nd Special Session* that would convene 30 minutes following adjournment of the *Regular Session*.

2ND SPECIAL SESSION – "IT AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER!" (YOGI BERRA)

With FY 2017 nonpublic school programs severely underfunded, we slugged it out again in the *2nd Special Session* and went to bat for all our programs. House Bill 69 became the instrument for amending a number of line items in HB1, and fortunately, by the time the session ended most of our funds were restored, essentially saving two programs though having to take a significant reduction to a third.

When the three sessions finally were over, a writer with New Orleans' The Times-Picayune named his picks for winners and losers and deemed private and parochial schools winners. We share this win with all our constituents who responded to our VoterVoice alerts and contacted their legislators. Thank you!

FY 2016-17 STATE FUNDING FOR SECULAR PROGRAMS IN NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

After all the gamesmanship to finalize the FY 2016-17 state budget, the historic hard-fought secular education programs benefitting private and parochial school students were funded as follows:

\$40,115,707	Louisiana Scholarship Program
8,744,383	Required Services Reimbursements
7,530,930	School Lunch Salary Supplements
6,632,236	Early Childhood Development
2,911,843	Textbooks
2,183,498	Education Excellence Trust Funds
1,023,338	8(g) Program
	• Diocesan Systems [\$634,019]
	• Independent Schools [\$389,319]
405,000	Scholarships for Students with Exceptionalities
171,865	Textbook Administration
\$69,718,800	TOTAL

2016-17 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

We're excited to announce that this **publication and membership campaign mark our 50th year!** Since 1967 CEC and its predecessor CEF have lobbied in support of tax justice for private and parochial school parents, and have obtained nearly \$1 Billion in state funding for the secular services of nonpublic schools.

Please continue to support our efforts in 2016-17. We request two memberships from each school which may be in the name of the school, parent or booster club, church, alumni organization, etc. A membership card is included with this newsletter and is also available on our website.

Thank you for your previous support. The final FY 2015-16 Membership Roster is also included with this newsletter and posted on our website.



Celebrating



1967 - 2017

Citizens for Educational Choice

is the voice of nonpublic schools before the Louisiana Legislature and state government, and represents the interests of those schools in legislative or policy matters that could impact their mission. CEC seeks state budget appropriations for secular educational purposes.