

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Governmental Concerns Committee _____

Name of Committee

Robert Slater _____

Person Submitting Report

2/19/20 _____

Date

Members:

Gwen Leigh, gtl6893@louisiana.edu

Salah Massoud, ssmassoud@louisiana.edu

Candice May, ckm5363@louisiana.edu

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Robert Slater, slater99@gmail.com (Chair)

Kari Smith, kjs9673@louisiana.edu

Task of Committee (please indicate the task of your committee here):

“The Governmental Concerns Committee shall call to the attention of the Senate issues pending before governmental bodies which affect higher education and shall furnish the Senate with information necessary to understanding such issues.”

Progress Report:

#	Since the last Faculty Senate Meeting, the following has been accomplished:
1.	We are monitoring upcoming legislation for the 2020 Legislative session

The 2020 Regular Legislative Session will convene at noon on Monday, March 9, 2020. Final Adjournment no later than 6:00 pm on Thursday, June 1, 2020.

Some URLs that might prove useful:

Louisiana Legislature main website:

<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx>

House Committee on Education:

http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Cmtes/Education.aspx

Here’s how this committee’s jurisdiction reads:

To this committee shall be referred, in accordance with the rules, all legislative instruments, messages, petitions, memorials and other matters relating to the following subjects: Education generally; Schools and secondary education; School employees, administrators, teachers, bus drivers and others; School employees' and teachers' pay, except where an appropriation of state funds is required; Colleges and universities; Employees of colleges and universities, including pay, except where an appropriation of state funds is required; Vocational technical education; Employees of vocational technical education schools, including pay, except, where an appropriation of state funds is required; College or university agricultural extension service; Adult education; School lunch program; Special schools; State and public libraries; Educational television.

Senate Education Committee:

<http://senate.la.gov/Education/Default.asp>

Legislative instruments and other matter referred to this committee shall encompass the following subject matter:

- Adult education
- College or university agricultural extension service
- Colleges and universities
- Cultural affairs

- Education generally
- Educational television
- Employees of colleges and universities, including pay, except where an appropriation of state funds is required
- Employees of vocational-technical education schools, including pay, except where an appropriation of state funds is required
- Museums
- Preservation of historic landmarks and objects
- School employees, administrators, teachers, bus drivers and others
- School employees and teachers pay, except where an appropriation of state funds is required
- School lunch program
- Schools and secondary education
- Special Schools
- State and public libraries

Committee Members Present at Committee Meetings: N/A

Anticipated Future Plans

#	Before the next Faculty Senate Meeting, the following actions are planned:
1.	<i>Meet with the members of the Committee to discuss and monitor legislation and report to Senate</i>

Action Required by the Faculty Senate (list any action that needs to be taken by the Faculty Senate as a result of this report)

No action required

Here is a recent news story that will give some background:

Louisiana governor seeks millions in new education spending

- By MELINDA DESLATTE Associated Press
- Feb 7, 2020

- Feb 7, 2020

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BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Gov. John Bel Edwards' administration Friday proposed a \$32 billion Louisiana budget for next year that pours millions of new dollars into education and keeps most other government programs on an even keel, using money that isn't yet available to spend under the law.

The Democratic governor prioritized education as he campaigned last year for reelection to his second term. Although one of his education talking points centered on the need to raise teacher pay to the Southern average, Edwards didn't include specific dollars for the salary hikes in his [spending recommendations](#) for the 2020-21 financial year beginning July 1.

Release of the budget proposal kicks off months of financial negotiations with the majority-Republican Legislature. Lawmakers likely won't finish crafting next year's spending plan until near the end of the three-month regular legislative session that begins March 9.

“This is the starting point,” Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne, the governor's chief budget adviser, told the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. “This is the beginning of what will be a very long process.”

Among the \$285 million in proposed boosted spending, nearly half would finance increases across education programs. Those increases would come on top of new investments in education the governor and lawmakers made this year.

Edwards recommends steering more than \$65 million of the new cash to the K-12 financing formula for public schools, \$25 million for early learning programs for children from birth to 3 years old and \$35 million for public colleges. *Spending on the TOPS college tuition program would grow to cover all eligible students.*

But Edwards' budget proposal doesn't explicitly include another pay raise for public school teachers who received one this year. When asked about the absence, Dardenne said some of the increased dollars proposed for the K-12 financing formula could be used for pay hikes.

“It would be left to the local school districts to decide,” he said.

Other new dollars would pay for Louisiana's juvenile lock-up facilities to house more teenagers, to account for a law change raising the age of adult prosecution, and would finance required civil service pay raises for rank-and-file state workers. Political appointees in the governor's Cabinet would be in line for salary hikes as well.

The proposal includes \$23 million to cover spending that lawmakers approved last year: pay raises for judges and parish district attorneys; increased payments to sheriffs for housing state inmates in parish jails; and a Medicaid expansion to cover more children with developmental disabilities.

With years of fights over budget cuts behind them, the response from lawmakers Friday was muted. Republican Rep. Larry Bagley of Stonewall said he wants a larger increase in a need-based aid program for college students. Senate President Page Cortez, a Lafayette Republican, wanted to see more spending on transportation.

“Infrastructure doesn't seem to be on this radar,” said a disappointed Republican Sen. Heather Cloud of Turkey Creek.

Dardenne said the governor will propose spending a significant slice of the last year's surplus cash on roadwork, bridge repairs and rural water system upgrades.

“Stay tuned, because there's going to be a lot of discussion,” Dardenne told Cloud.

Edwards' spending proposal is a wish list of sorts. The governor used income projections that aren't included in Louisiana's official forecast because the Legislature's new Republican leaders wouldn't adopt them. That includes billions of dollars agencies expect to receive from fees, fines and other revenue sources, along with a \$103 million increase in tax collections economists anticipate will arrive in the treasury.

Cortez and House Speaker Clay Schexnayder refused to support the projections, wanting only a tiny increase for next year's forecast instead of the \$103 million. The disagreement stalled forecast changes. Both GOP legislative leaders defended their approach.

“I really feel that that would have been a better way to start this process,” Schexnayder said.

Still, the House speaker and Cortez struck a compromising tone with Dardenne.

“I feel like we will get to a number,” Cortez said.

The governor's recommendations also would spend \$25 million that Republican state Treasurer John Schroder has said he won't transfer for general operating expenses. Edwards sued Schroder over the money Friday, asking a judge to declare the treasurer's actions illegal.

Newly-formed state panel discuss teacher pay, early education needs in Louisiana

- [BY WILL SENTELL | Staff writer](#)



[Will Sentell](#)



The revamped Senate Education Committee on Monday, Feb. 10, 2020, met for the first time and heard from public school and college and university leaders. Shown here are, from right, Sens. Robert Mills, R-Bossier City; Bodi White, R-Central, chairman Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge and Katrina Jackson, D-Monroe. Testifying at left is Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed.



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Close

The revamped state Senate Education Committee on Monday got a briefing on some of the challenges faced by colleges, universities and public schools, including sub-par faculty salaries, buildings in disrepair and children going without early child care and education.

The five-hour orientation session included comments from Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed, state Superintendent of Education John White, leaders of the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, University of Louisiana System President Jim Henderson and others.

[New players enter Louisiana's public school debates: 'We don't know where they stand'](#)

Louisiana's education landscape has a new look in 2020, including the key state lawmakers who will decide the fate of bills on charter schools...

The committee, five of whose seven members are new to the panel, also heard from officials of a wide range of education advocacy groups, including the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, Louisiana Association of Educators and the Louisiana School Boards Association.

The 2020 regular legislative session begins March 9.

One of the recurring themes of higher education leaders Monday was the need for dollars to boost faculty pay, which was not included in Gov. John Bel Edwards' \$32 billion operating budget proposal outlined on Friday.

Reed said that, when she hears from college and university officials, "faculty pay is always at the top of the list" of needs.

She said it would cost the state \$36 million to boost average pay to the 16-state average set by the Southern Regional Education Board.

Thomas Galligan Jr., interim president of LSU, listed faculty pay as one of the school's three priorities, including funds to address mandated costs like retirement and health insurance and the backlog of deferred maintenance, including a new library.

Sen. Bodi White, R-Central, a member of the committee, said addressing campus building needs is often mentioned by school leaders but little noticed by taxpayers.

"We hear it all the time," said White, is is also chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. "Most people that pay taxes don't see that."

Henderson, whose system includes the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and University of New Orleans, said it would take \$20 million to raise faculty pay at his nine schools to the regional average.

"These folks have options and they are more mobile than ever before," he said of faculty members.

Reed said that, of 100 white students who begin the 9th grade, only 18 will earn a post-secondary credential and eight black students will do the same.

"Those statistics are unacceptable in our state," she said.

The state produces about 40,000 credentials per year – below the national average – with a newly-announced goal of 85,000 annually by 2030.

Early childhood education gaining steam politically 'like apple pie and the Fourth of July'

After years of fits and starts, 2020 may be the year for a major breakthrough in state aid for early childhood education.

Edwards has recommended a boost of \$25 million for early childhood education, which would reduce the number of children on the state's waiting list for care and education by about 4,000.

The governor has said for months that early childhood aid would be his top priority for new education spending.

A state panel called the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission this year and in 2019 has urged the state to boost aid by nearly \$86 million per year for 10 years.

State getting \$33 million from federal government to improve early childhood education

The state is getting a \$33 million competitive grant from the federal government to widen access to early childhood education, state officials...

Doing so, commission officials said, would provide coverage for 173,000 children from birth to age 3, who represent about two-thirds of the number of children those ages in Louisiana.

A total of 97% of infants, 93% of one-year-olds, 90% of two-year-olds and 66% of three-year-olds are unserved today, according to figures provided to the committee by the state Department of Education.