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Legislative Update 2014

**Child Welfare**

**HB 1256** **- Harrison** - Provided for the merger of DHH with DCFS to allow for constitutional space for a Department of Elder Affairs. NASWLA was in opposition. The bill was involuntarily deferred. This legislation did not attempt to improve operations but simply to merge the two departments. The author then went with two bills that would call for constitutional amendments that would increase the number of constitutionally allowed departments to 21 instead of 20 and then one to create the Department of Elder Affairs.

**HB 46 - Burns** Requires judges to print and sign names on judgments.

**HB 1028 – Schexnayder -** Allowing access to original birth certificate for adult adoptees. It was amended from its original version but was defeated in Senate committee. We will continue to see this type of legislation.

**HB 187 – Lopinto -** Surrogacy Bill was again introduced after the version that passed last year was vetoed by the Governor. The legislators (Rep. Joe Lopinto and Senator Gary Smith) made some changes to the 2013 version. The Family Forum initially supported the bill once significant amendments were made. Finally, the Family Forum changed its mind and urged the Governor to again veto which he did.

**HB 445 (Act 169) – Landry -** The title of the bill indicated that it provides for court-ordered criminal background checks in connection with certain adoptions and provides for the petition for intrafamily adoptions. The finalized legislation no longer has any language that dealt with court ordered criminal background checks. This legislation that become effective August 1, 2014 now changes the requirement that the petitioner in an intrafamily adoption be related through the child’s parents having parental rights to the petitioner be related to the child’s mother or father who is filiated to the child.

**SB 586** **– Dorsey-Colomb** - Provides relative to adoptions and prohibits the re-homing of a child. This legislation creates the crime of “re-homing” of a child. This would be defined as:

1. A transaction, or any action taken to facilitate such transaction, through electronic means or otherwise by a parent or any individual or entity with custody of a child who intends to avoid or divest himself of permanent parental responsibility by placing the child in the physical custody of a nonrelative, without court approval, unless proposed law otherwise applies. Actions include but are not limited to transferring, recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, soliciting, or obtaining a child for such transaction.
2. The selling, transferring, or arranging for the sale or transfer of a minor child to another person or entity for money or anything of value or to receive such a minor child for such payment or thing of value.
3. Assisting, aiding, abetting, or conspiring in the commission of any act described in the pending law by any person or entity, regardless of whether money or anything of value has been promised to or received by the person.

It would not include placements made with a relative, stepparent, licensed adoption agency, licensed attorney, or the DCFS. Placements made by the parents or custodians for designated short-term periods with a specified intent and time period for return of the child, due to incarceration, military service, medical treatment, or incapacity of a parent; and the placement of the child in another state in accordance with the requirements of the ICPC.

**SB 290 – Johns -** Provides relative to safety plan order for child in need of care. This legislative instrument is the result of a pilot project undertaken in the Lake Charles area. Safety plans for children remaining in their parent’s homes following a valid finding of abuse and neglect or for those children who have been removed and it address conditions for contact between the child and the parents. If the DCFS determines that plans that are in place for the safety of a child are not being followed, then the DCFS can request a temporary restraining order, protective order, or an instanter. As a result of this legislation, many of the family services cases of DCFS will now have a court ordered safety plan.

**SB 248 (Act 383) – Morrish -** This legislation provides guidance to the court relative to visitation by a child with an incarcerated parent. There are several conditions identified that must be considered in determining the best interest of the child as it relates to maintaining contact with the incarcerated parent. In addition, if the court had previously prohibited visitation and now has approved restricted visitation, the court shall include restrictions, conditions and safeguards as are necessary to protect the mental and physical health of the child and minimize risk of harm to the child.

**SB 589 – Walsworth - E**xtends termination date of Children’s Cabinet until August 15, 2018. Passed.

**SCR 69 – Murray** - Creates the "Erin's Law" task force, on the prevention of sexual abuse of children within the Department of Children and Family Services. NASWLA has a seat on this task force. The namesake of this legislative instrument was sexually abused and began a crusade her senior year of high school in 2004. Her intent was to end the silence and shame around sexual abuse. She was instrumental in getting legislation passed in her home state of Illinois to address sexual abuse of children. It is now a national movement known for its namesake.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**: The bills drew the attention of anti-domestic violence advocates earlier this session. House Bill 753 would prohibit anyone who has been issued an injunction or protective order stemming from a domestic violence incidence from carrying a gun until the order is lifted. House Bill 750 expedites protective orders and directs officers to arrest abusing parties in domestic disputes. House Bill 747 would add domestic abuse aggravated assault to the state’s list of violent crimes. The bill would also increase the potential penalty for offenders convicted of second offense domestic abuse battery from six months to one year. HB 1142 which has been dubbed “Gwen’s Law,” was also a legislative instrument this session. Named for Gwen Salley, who was killed in an apparent murder-suicide. It creates a “cooling off” period for those accused of domestic violence by requiring protective orders be issued at the time of bail in some cases.

**Child/Family Health**

**Executive Budget - HB 1 – Fannin** The only significant increase ($26 million) is for services for the disabled. The Senate Finance Committee had reduced the proposed increase in order to fund a car race in New Orleans but the funds were restored on the Senate floor. Some $10 million was added to maintain the community clinics in New Orleans that were developed after Katrina. The budget is based on about $1 billion in one-time financing that will create a major hole in the 2015-6 budget. It also relies on at least $70 million in savings recommended by Alvarez and Marsal, a consulting firm. One of the recommendations is to allow payment for Medicaid births in birthing centers. Since Medicaid patients are generally deemed high risk, encouraging births outside of hospitals is not good practice.

Medicaid Expansion: At least eight bills were filed to take advantage of the Affordable Care Act expansion of Medicaid. Under current federal law, some 250,000 Louisiana adults would be eligible for Medicaid if the state were to agree to expand the program. The cost would be borne totally by the federal government for the first three years and after that the state would be required to provide a ten percent match. It is estimated that the expansion could bring in $16 billion in new revenues over the first ten years with $64 million of that in the next state fiscal year. None of these bills passed.

During the Session, the Governor released his alternative to the federal law that he called “America Next.” Senator Nevers took one of his Medicaid expansion bills and amended it to include the provisions of “America Next”. He called his plan, “Louisiana First, America Next” and his bill (SB 682) was enacted. The bill includes high risk insurance pools, subsidies for low-income residents, creation of health savings accounts and a crackdown on fraud and lawsuit abuse. There is virtually no cost information as there are insufficient details to provide a basis to determine cost. It would require block grants from the federal government and potential changes to state laws. DHH is to provide a plan of action by September. The Senator may never see a single Louisiana citizen benefit from his legislation but he made a definite point when he pondered aloud why the Governor would submit a plan to the nation that he hasn’t tried in his own state.

In addition to the proposed bills to expand Medicaid, several bills were filed to opt the state out of the Affordable Care Act. None of those bills were approved.

Charity Hospital Privatization: The administration has moved to close or privatize all but one of the state’s charity hospitals. Earl K. Long has been closed and the state has contracted with Our Lady of the Lake to care for charity patients in Baton Rouge. W.O. Moss inpatient and emergency room care has been discontinued and those patients are now seen at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital. In New Orleans, Houma, Bogalusa and Lafayette, the state has identified a community hospital to lease and operate the state facility. Huey P. Long is scheduled to close, although a lawsuit has been filed challenging the legislative approval, and St. Francis Cabrini and Rapides General Hospitals will provide care in the Alexandria area. Both the Shreveport and Monroe hospitals are now operated by a Foundation affiliated with the LSU Medical School. Lallie Kemp in Independence will remain as the lone state-operated charity hospital.

Financing for the privatized services depends heavily on the use of disproportionate share Medicaid funding. This funding has traditionally been provided to compensate hospitals that care for a disproportionate number of indigent patients and the new federal law would reduce the need (and the actual dollars) for those patients because they would be eligible for Medicaid. When the law was enacted, there was no expectation that states would refuse to expand Medicaid. Further, the arrangements require state plan amendments to be approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). During the Legislative Session, CMS announced that they would not approve use of $280 million in up front lease payments as match for Medicaid and the state had to scramble to submit a revised state plan amendment. If it is not approved, the state could have serious budget problems in the next fiscal year, and a very uncertain safety net for indigent patients.

Senator Mills filed SCR 87 to create a working group to study the future of health care funding in LA because disproportionate share dollars from the federal government will be decreasing in future years. The resolution was approved.

Rep. Havard tried again with legislation to provide for reviews of privatization plans to assure that the state is making good decisions and getting value for its investments but his effort was not successful.

State Group Benefits – State group benefits was privatized and premiums were reduced last year. This provided an initial savings for both state employees and retirees but also for state agencies that provide the match. The private contractor is using reserves to the tune of about $10 million per month and the program has now announced a 5% rate increase beginning July 1, 2014.

Health Related Issues that Failed in the Legislature:

Medical marijuana – efforts to allow dispensing for medical purposes and to reduce prison sentences for possession failed. Medical marijuana is used to treat serious seizure disorders in children.

Surrogacy – although surrogacy is not illegal in Louisiana, there is no statutory protection related to surrogacy contracts. For the second year, major efforts were mounted to provide for surrogacy contracts and concessions were made the LA Family Forum that “neutralized” their opposition. After the bill passed, the Family Forum determined that there were issues with the legislation and asked the Governor to veto it and he complied.

Raw Milk – legislation to allow for the sale of raw milk to the public was defeated.

Epinephrine auto-injectors – a bill to allow authorized prescribers to prescribe epinephrine injectors to entities where allergens capable of causing anaphylaxis may be present ran into difficulty and the author converted his effort into a study resolution which failed in the last days after an unrelated, controversial amendment was added.

Alcohol-infused ice cream – this bill failed mainly because of concerns about children having access to the product.

Sex ed instruction and sex questions on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Risk Based Behavior Survey – Despite the high rates of teen pregnancy and incidence of sexually transmitted disease, bills to mandate sex education and to allow for the state to include questions related to sexual behavior on CDC’s national survey were defeated.

**House Bills Enacted by the 2014 Louisiana Legislature Related to Child/Family Heath**

**HB 63 – Leger** - Revises terminology in present law referring to persons with disabilities and other persons with exceptionalities by deleting and making substitutions for obsolete, derogatory, or offensive terms. Substitutes person with intellectual disability for mental retardation; person with physical disability for handicapped person; person with mental illness for the mentally ill. Note: HR 3 by Leger addresses same language changes in House Rules.

**HB 185 – Havard** - Revises requirements relative to care provided by direct service workers and criteria relative to individuals receiving certain home- and community-based long- term care services.

**HB 305 – Hoffmann** - Prohibits providers of elective abortions and their affiliates from delivering instruction or materials on health topics, including but not limited to human sexuality or family planning, in schools.

**HB 370 – Thompson** – Prohibits the use of cell phones and other wireless devices (except those permanently affixed to a motor vehicle) in active school zones.

**HB 512 – Henry** – Requires DHH to provide information concerning velocardiofacial syndrome and 22q11.2 deletion syndrome to early intervention services providers.

**HB 733 – Jackson** – Requires and provides guidelines for instruction in public schools regarding child assault awareness and prevention and how students may safely and confidentially report abuse or assault.

**HB 746 – Moreno** – Prevents a tanning facility from claiming that use of a tanning device is safe and prevents persons under 18 from using any tanning equipment.

**HB 802 – Barrow** - establishes a task force to lead development of comprehensive policies and to promote best practices concerning mitigation of toxic mold and the adverse health effects caused by this unique threat to public health.

**HB 833 – Foil** – Creates the ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Account savings program for persons with significant disabilities in order to assist individuals and families in saving private funds for the purpose of supporting persons with disabilities.

**HB 891 – Stokes** – Authorizes access to investigational treatments for terminally ill patients known as “Right to Try Act”.

**HB 978 – Greene** – Requires that notice be given to principal and all parents/guardians when certain acts of obscenity occur near a school.

**HB 1025 – Abramson** - Provides relative to human trafficking, trafficking of children for sexual purposes, and offenses involving commercial sexual exploitation, and provides relative to the victims of these offenses.

**HB 1058 – Harrison** – Requires DHH to provide information concerning Down syndrome to healthcare providers and on its website. Requires that the information not engage in discrimination based on disability or genetic variation by explicitly or implicitly presenting pregnancy termination as a neutral or acceptable option when a prenatal test indicates a probability or diagnosis that the unborn child has Down syndrome or any other health condition.

**HB 1065 – Pope** – Provides relative to the practice and regulation of optometry, and authorizes optometrists to perform certain ophthalmic surgery procedures.

**HB 1068 – Smith** - Requires certain agencies to meet and review state programs aimed at reducing teen pregnancy and preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases; to require the agencies to review available programs aimed at reducing teen pregnancy and preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases; to require a written report to the legislature; and to limit recommendations to the provisions of the current law for sex education.

**HB 1105 – Hodges** - Requires posting of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline in outpatient abortion facilities.

**HB 1254 – Simon** - Provides relative to the right to treatment for a person with a terminal condition and prohibits health plan denial of coverage based upon a terminal diagnosis.

**HB 1267 – Stokes** - Authorizes the fire marshal to require carbon monoxide alarm systems in certain hotels where a potential carbon monoxide poisoning threat exists.

**HB 1274 – Badon** – Requires interpretations of the provisions of law regarding declarations concerning life-sustaining procedures and for physician scope of treatment for pregnant women whose fetus is 20 weeks or more gestation be made to preserve the life of an unborn child.

**HCR 81 – Pearson** – Directs DHH to submit a report to the House Health and Welfare Committee evaluating the health benefits and healthcare costs of adding adrenoleukodystrophy to the mandatory screenings to be performed on newborns.

**HCR 109 – Williams** – Requests DHH to study the feasibility, desirability, and practicality of a mode of transportation other than an ambulance to transport a patient in a nonemergency situation.

**HCR 170 – T. Burns** - Directs each state agency, prior to the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any rule, including any emergency rule, related to services for persons with disabilities to consider specified effects on a provider and to issue a provider impact statement that addresses the effect on staffing, costs and ability to provide the same level of service.

**HCR 193 – Hodges** - Creates a task force to study and evaluate the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention and education programs in public schools.

**HCR 201 – Broadwater** – Requests DHH to study the feasibility of providing a choice of fiscal/employer agents, including a Louisiana-based option, to Medicaid enrollees who hire a direct service worker as a home-based attendant through a waiver program administered by the department.

**HR 199 – Johnson** – Creates a working group to study the impact of nurse practitioners on enhancement of access to health care in medically underserved areas.

**Senate Bills Enacted by the 2014 Louisiana Legislature Related to Child/Family Health**

**SB 12 – Gallot** - Prevents sale of alternative nicotine products (E-cigarettes) to persons under 18 years of age.

**SB 28 – Heitmeier** - Extends deadline from July 1, 2014 to July 1, 2016 for the construction of breastfeeding rooms in state buildings. Also extends number of buildings to have such rooms from 10 to 20 and prevents use of state general funds for their construction.

**SB 71 – Morrell** – Amends law relative to Behavior Analyst Practice Act to include denial or revocation of line technician; requires line technician to be at least 18 and have high school diploma or equivalent; and requires criminal background check for line technician; and provides for supervision of trainees.

**SB 128 – Martiny** – Provides for licensure of specialists in school psychology and defines their scope of practice.

**SB 258 – Johns** – Amends Sanitary Code to require reporting of cases of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) when tests are conducted by a laboratory or hospital.

**SB 309 – Broome** – Amends requirements for testing of pregnant women to include a follow-up test for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV during the third trimester.

**SB 489 – Heitmeier** – Amends law relative to diabetes action plan to require DHH to include the most current editions of the standards of medical care in diabetes by the American Diabetes Association and the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.

**SB 513 – Heitmeier** – Creates the Louisiana Obesity Prevention and Management Commission within DHH.

**SB 514 – Heitmeier** – Prohibits smoking on property around public and private elementary and secondary schools.

**SB 682 – Nevers** - Provides for the creation, implementation and administration of the Louisiana First America Next Freedom and Empowerment Plan; provides for access to basic health insurance coverage for Louisiana citizens. Note: This bill is based on a plan proposed by Governor Jindal as a substitute for the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and has been dubbed (Bobbycare).

**SCR 13 – Cortez** – Requests the LA State Medical Society and the LA Academy of Family Physicians to educate its members about state and federal programs available to children with developmental disabilities and advise parents and guardians of such programs when a diagnosis is made.

**SCR 20 – Heitmeier** – Directs DHH to submit a state plan amendment to the US Dept. of Agriculture for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), to provide for the use of WIC cash value vouchers at farmers' markets.

**SCR 21 – Heitmeier** - Creates a joint legislative committee to study and make recommendations with respect to obesity in LA.

**SCR 39 – Heitmeier** – Requests DHH to study the most effective means to ensure the proper utilization of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder medications in LA.

**SCR 44 – Dorsey-Colomb** – Directs DHH to declare youth violence a public health epidemic and the Department of Education to establish a statewide trauma-informed education program.

**SCR 47 – Heitmeier** - Request DHH to study the feasibility of allowing ambulance personnel to divert emergency patients to sites other than hospital emergency rooms.

**SCR 48 – Long** - Provides for legislative approval of the closure of Huey P. Long Medical Center to facilitate a new model of health care delivery in the Alexandria and Pineville area.

**SCR 62 – Mills** – Requests DHH to seek a Medicaid state plan amendment from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to include as a Medicaid service the Tdap vaccine (for pertussis/whooping cough) for pregnant women and to provide a cost analysis to the legislature for providing this Medicaid service.

**SCR 87 – Mills** - Direct DHH to create a working group to study the future of health care funding in LA because disproportionate share dollars from the federal government will be decreasing in future years and the newly established hospital public-private partnerships depend on that funding.

**SCR 94 – Heitmeier** - Requests the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Education to cooperatively implement a statewide Farm to School Program that assists schools with local procurement options for fresh fruit, vegetables, meats, and seafood.

**SCR 96 – Heitmeier** – Requests DHH and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to jointly to assess water accessibility in Louisiana schools and report its findings to the legislature by February 1, 2015.

**SR 29 – Heitmeier** – Directs DHH to create a working group to develop strategies to decrease primary care utilization in emergency rooms in hospitals across Louisiana.

**Early Education**

**House Concurrent Resolution 61 – Leger - *Creation of a Model for Early Childhood Care and Education Funding*** Passed. HCR 61 urges and requests the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a statewide model for the funding of, and the equitable distribution of, public funds for quality early childhood care and education for Louisiana children, ages birth to five, and to submit a report with recommendations to the legislature no later than sixty days prior to the 2015 Session.

**SB 524 - Walsworth - *Transfer of Licensure and the Child Care and Development Fund*** (CCDF)***Block Grant from the Department of Children and Family Services*** (DCFS) ***to the Department of Education*** (LDE) Passed. This bill moves responsibility for the licensure of child care centers and registration of family child day care homes from DCFS to LDE. The bill maintains from the law passed in 2013 the creation of three new Types of licensure, Type I (roughly current Class B), Type II (roughly current Class A not taking Child Care Assistance) and Type III (roughly current Class A taking Child Care Assistance and Head Start/Early Head Start programs). It also tightens the state central registry and criminal background check requirements. As originally written, the bill completely deleted the current statute providing for the Advisory Council to DCFS on Child Care and Early Education without restoring it in LDE. The bill also moves the $80 million federal CCDF Block Grant from DCFS to LDE.

As passed, there are a number of different effective dates for the provisions of the bill. The move of licensure of child care centers to LDE is effective October 1, 2014. The move of registration of family child day care homes is effective February 1, 2015. Finally, the move of the CCDF Block Grant will take place no later than July 1, 2015, with a cooperative endeavor agreement between the two departments, which must be submitted for review to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, to determine the specific administration of these funds in the interim.

A number of important amendments were added to this bill, including an amendment that will allow child care programs that do not have public funds to participate in the new quality rating system; whereas, the original bill restricted the new rating system (and hence possibly the tax credits or other supports) to only publicly funded programs. Given the drastic cuts in the Child Care Assistance Program, many centers are not able to access public funding for their families. Another amendment reinstated the Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education as CCDF block grant moves to the Department of Education. The new Council will advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and all regulations, standards, the state plan for the CCDF block grant and other matters related to early care and education must be presented to the Council before they are considered by BESE. The bill now requires in-depth reporting on CCAP participation rates and funding, as well as child care centers’ licensing violation history, to be posted on the Department of Education’s website.

**HB 954 – Leger - *Re-Establishment the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program*** Passed. This bill repeals the current LA 4 statute but maintains the current funding structure of LA 4, whereby only school districts can apply to the state for the program. The bill does, however, delete the old formula for determining how much each district will receive, and provides that the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will develop a method for equitably distributing the LA 4 funds based on demand.

The high quality standards of the current LA 4 program will remain in statutory language, including the requirements for certified teachers, a full-day program, low adult to child ratios, as well as statutory requirements for professional development, technical assistance and an on-going evaluation of the program. None of these was included in the original bill, but was left to be defined by regulation. Also through the Partnership’s advocacy, the requirement that a percentage of any new funding for LA 4 should be spent in community-based settings (diverse delivery) was retained.

**SB 533 - LaFleur - *Provides for a Coordinated Local Enrollment Process for Publicly Funded Early Care and Education Programs*** Passed. As originally written this bill provided for a neutral entity to inform families about all publicly funded early childhood care and education programs in their community, collect family preferences, develop and use a common application process, and make recommendations to the Department of Education for the distribution of the available slots. After amendments, the local enrollment coordinator no longer must be neutral, and the bill now specifically permits the school districts to be the coordinators. An amendment by the Head Start Association specifies that nothing in the law will prevent a Head Start or Early Head Start grantee from complying with federal laws and regulations and their grant requirements, and that Head Start programs “shall fund their respective recruitment, selection, and enrollment system” and shall “collaborate with local schools and early learning centers to conduct combined recruitment enrollment activities….”

Another important set of amendments will ensure that the funding for the new local enrollment coordinators will not be disproportionately taken from the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant; rather, now under the bill the funding for the Local Coordinators will be proportionately taken from each funding stream based on the number of children enrolled from each program.

***In securing the amendments to all three of the above bills, the Partnership worked closely with the bills’ authors, Representative Walt Leger, Senator Mike Walsworth and Senator Eric Lafleur, as well as the Department of the Education itself, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their support and assistance.***

**SB 657 - Buffington - *Authorizes Public or Private Entities to Replace State General Funds in the LA 4 Program with “Privately Funded Scholarships”*** Passed. The LA 4 program is currently funded by both State General Funds and funds from the federal TANF Block Grant. This bill provides for replacing the State General Funds (not increasing the overall amount of funds going into the program) by private donations.

The Partnership was concerned because $6 million of the State General Funds in the LA 4 Program actually serve as state match for the $80 million federal Child Care Development Fund Block Grant. The Partnership was successful in securing an amendment to the bill that specifically mandates that nothing in such a transaction will be implemented in a way that will cause the loss of any federal or other funding for any early childhood programs or services including the Child Care and Development Fund.

**HB 248 – Price - *Provides for Improving Access to Child Care for Homeless Families*** Passed. The bill seeks to address eligibility factors for Child Care Assistance that may be a barrier for homeless families trying to access child care. It requires a defined grace period for a homeless family to be authorized to receive child care assistance pending submission of birth certificates and immunization records. It also provides that the state shall waive work and school requirements, for a period of not less than ninety days and not more than one hundred eighty days, for homeless families who demonstrate that they are seeking employment or participating in a transitional living program.

***The work on HB 248 was led by Louisiana Progress, and the Partnership would like to thank them and Representative Price for their efforts on behalf of homeless families in our state.***

**SB 50 – Nevers - *Sought to Provide Universal Access for the LA4 Program*** Never heard in Committee. SB 50 provided that the legislature shall annually appropriate sufficient monies to fully fund the cost of providing access to LA 4 classes to every child eligible to participate in the program. The fiscal note on the bill found that state general fund expenditures would increase by a minimum of $121.6 million in FY 14-15 and increase to $132.3 M in FY 18-19 to provide universal LA-4 pre-K classes.

**SB 598 – Erdey - *Authorizes Certain Early Childhood Learning Centers to Engage in Cooperative Purchasing*** Passed. This bill amends the cooperative purchasing laws to allow child care centers and Head Start or Early Head Start programs to participate in cooperative purchasing.

**SB 622 – Appel - *Requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a statewide educational technology plan for public elementary and secondary schools*** Passed. This bill provides that the state Department of Education (LDE) shall develop and implement a statewide educational technology plan that ensures that every public elementary and secondary school and classroom has the infrastructure and capacity necessary to provide a high-quality, digital instructional environment. Presumably pre-k classrooms in the schools will be covered by this plan; however, community based programs (child care centers and Head Start/Early Head Start programs) will not. The Partnership discussed with the author and LDE the possibility of adding the community based early childhood programs into the bill, but it was decided it would not be a good fit, as the bill focuses on technology used by the students themselves, as well as the teachers. For the early childhood programs, what is needed is technology for the teachers to be able to implement the assessments of the children. It is hoped that the costs of this technology will be included in the cost model to be developed under HCR 61 above.

**Budget**

The summary of information concerning the Louisiana budget is presented by the Louisiana Budget Project and their report is found in your attendee materials (pocket folder).

**Vulnerable Families**

**SB 526 (Alario) and HB 1033 (Kleckley)** - the Workforce and Innovation for a Stronger Economy Fund – or WISE Fund is a $40 million performance based formula that will reward and incentivize the credentials that are most in demand in Louisiana (according to occupational forecasting and industry sources). To receive these funds, institutions will have to partner with private industry by recruiting at least a 20 percent private match in cash or in kind, such as technology and equipment.

**SB 652 – Guillory** - named the Classroom Protection Act Provides would allow a classroom teacher who is in reasonable apprehension that he or a student in his classroom is in danger, may contact law enforcement and have the student removed immediately from the classroom and placed in the custody of the appropriate law enforcement agency. The bill never made it back onto the legislative calendar after advocates worked to rally support to kill the bill because they felt it did not give students any due process and school administrators would be unable to intercede.

A coalition of nonprofits, business leaders and many others worked together to push measures that would give judges leeway to impose lighter sentences for people convicted of nonviolent crimes such as marijuana possession, make more inmates eligible for parole, and move sick, elderly inmates from prisons to nursing homes.

**SB 532** **– Guillory -** would create specialized Veteran’s Treatment Court Programs throughout Louisiana to assist veterans overcoming drug and substance abuse issues and any mental health issues contributing to involvement with the criminal justice system.

**HB914** **– Leger** - now HCR 146 Community Corrections Performance Incentive Act and applies cost savings from reduced incarceration costs to building up community-based corrections. This bill provides for an annual calculation of savings from reduced recidivism and applies a portion of these savings to implementing practices that are demonstrated to further reduce recidivism. The Bill was turned into a study resolution.