Nix Questioning
Creationism Cost

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Instruction in creation science is going to cost state government a lot of money — something the Legislature and Gov. Dave Treen apparently didn't consider, Education Superintendent Killy Nix says.

The state will have to come up with $1.8 million — and maybe as much as $8 million — so Louisiana students get classes in the theory, which parallels the biblical account of man's creation, Nix said in an interview Wednesday.

The Legislature approved a bill requiring that scientific creationism be taught if the theory of evolution is taught.

In signing the bill into law Tuesday, Treen reasoned that it was vague and to veto it would harm academic freedom and foil the will of the Legislature.

“Academic freedom can scarcely be harmed by inclusions; it can be harmed by exclusions,” Treen said of the bill.

Nix said, “We’re not exactly sure what all is going to be involved or what has to be replaced in our libraries or what books we might need, but we’re looking at a minimum of $1.8 million.”

He said the ultimate cost will depend on how the “equal treatment” section in the act is interpreted. The only other state with a similar law is Arkansas.

“If we have to go into our libraries and put a scientific creationism book next to all those that discuss evolution and have to come with curriculum revisions in all courses that even touch on evolution, then we’re talking about big money,” he said.

Nix said the cost could run as high as $8 million before the law takes effect with the 1982-83 school year.

“We’re approaching it head strong and just want to have the best courses of its kind in the country,” said Nix, an outspoken foe of the law.

Nix said his top administrators will hold a session on Monday to get more information on the problems teachers and local districts will face under the bill signed into law Tuesday by Treen.

The group will get a briefing from a Louisiana State University professor who has taught courses in evolution and scientific creationism for the past several years.

Don McGee, science supervisor for the department, said as much as $7 million may have to be diverted from other subjects — such as reading and math — to implement the law.

“I’m very disappointed over the action the governor took,” said McGee.