

Education Reform Issues in Louisiana

2012 Legislative Session

I. ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

- A. The Impact of NCLB & Race to the Top on curricula.
 - 1. Narrows to only basic skills and relies too heavily on testing.
 - a. Invention and creativity require developing the questions. (Synth/Eval)
 - b. *Life in multiple choice format?*
 - 2. Has strong potential to remove public input. (NYC)
 - a. Mayoral control & *you're fired!*
 - b. What is bad with due process?
 - 3. Unprecedented federal involvement
 - a. Influenced by mega rich foundations.
- B. Charters.
 - 1. Purpose.
 - a. **Was:** within schools, specialized training, experienced required.
 - b. **Was:** to report back what works.
 - c. **Now:** money, recruitment and public relations are key.
 - d. **Now:** Lottery enrollment provides *choice* to whom?
 - i. Minnesota Law School report.¹
 - 2. Approval process.
 - a. Why ignore panel designed to approve applications?
 - b. Moving too quickly.
 - c. Only **1 out of 6** charters do better than p.s.² on average.
 - 3. Virtual charter schools.
 - a. Enrollment is *not* open all year like public school.
 - b. Lawsuit: K12 Inc.
 - c. Try a *blended solution* using LVS & public schools.
- C. Vouchers and choice.
 - 1. Is history repeating itself?
 - a. Climate after *Brown v Board of Education (1954)*.
 - b. Milwaukee, WI since 1990.

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2. Impossible promise.
 - a. Not enough seats.
 - b. Target price? *Who pays the difference?*
- D. Current reform efforts lack common sense approaches.
 1. *Variety is the spice of life.* (job ready & academics)
 2. *The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.* (Value added?)
 - a. The same expectations for all, really?
 - b. Unacceptable margin of error (as high as +/- 35%).
 3. School improvement is not realized by turning your back to it.
 4. Music & foreign language are LA schools. Let's see more.

II. EDUCATE YOURSELF, STAY INFORMED & PARTICIPATE.

A. Guiding Questions.

1. From where is the financial support coming?
2. Is accountability applied equitably to all schools receiving \$?
3. Will monitoring occur within private structures?
4. Has *it* been tried elsewhere before? Results?
5. Has the U.S. ever performed well on international tests? Now?
6. Do foreign students still seek admission to U.S. universities?

B. Contact Now document. (See Attachment #2)

III. SOLUTIONS

A. Guiding principle: *beware of silver bullets.* (Ravitch)

B. *Though no guarantees, are we using curricula with proven success?*

C. Three Point Reform Plan. (See attachment #1)

Footnotes:

1. *The State of Public Schools in Post-Katrina New Orleans: The Challenge of Creating Equal Opportunity.* A report by the Institute on Race and Poverty, at the University of Minnesota Law School. May 15, 2010.
2. public schools.

ATTACHMENT #1

POSITIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Replace letter grade rating systems for schools and districts with an up ↑ or down ↓ arrow indicating an enrollment increase or decrease from the previous year.

+Allows for easy and accurate year-to-year comparisons by all. Avoids changing definitions that cause confusion.

+ALL schools in LA could easily and inexpensively incorporate with no additional testing or funding needed.

+DHH, LDE, DEQ, and LWC would receive, collectively analyze and respond to an annual report identifying all schools with ten or more consecutive years of increasing or decreasing enrollment to determine the contributing factors.

STRONG K-8 CURRICULUM

ALL students in grades K-8 will have access to learning a foreign language and playing a musical instrument in addition to core subjects and physical education.

+Bilingual student in Louisiana have a dropout rate near zero.

+Learning to play and read music is a universally accepted method to improve cognition in all students and has been proven consistently to increase scores on standardized tests.

+Redirect most testing funds to purchase instruments for schools and hire foreign language teachers.

ONE DIPLOMA

CAREER: Robust vocational and technical options for students choosing to be job ready after graduation.

COLLEGE: Rigorous academic coursework and research opportunities for students choosing college after graduation that prepare them for selective and highly selective college admission standards.

+Endorsements allow for variety without complexity.

+BOTH utilize and collaborate with Louisiana's network of technical colleges and universities.

+BOTH accommodate students who wish to graduate in less than 4 years by offering DUAL ENROLLMENT course options at every high school.

+BOTH allow for a more custom fit and choice without confusion.

Attachment #2:

Louisiana state officials, policy makers, associations and advocates for education¹.

Make YOUR voice count!

| Send requests for a copy to: edresearcher4lapublicschools@gmail.com | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Who? | How? | Why? | NOTES.... |
| LA and U.S. representatives and senators NEXT Legislative session begins in MARCH . CONTACT TODAY | 1. Go to: http://www.legis.state.la.us/ 2. Type your address and zip code. 3. click CONTACT US . 4. click FIND OUT! It determines who you need to contact for you! ----- For a full list of all LA House of Representative members: http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/H_Reps_FullInfo.asp ----- PLEASE call or write as often as you can (see below for examples) | Next Legislative session begins March 12, 2012! | Our reps and senators depend on hearing from us to know how to vote. CALL and EMAIL. |
| BESE Board Members CONTACT TODAY | http://doe.louisiana.gov/bese/meet_the_board.html | BESE serves as the 'school board' for the entire state. | Question to ask: <i>Have you taken money from Gov Jindal in any way to run your campaign or get elected?</i> |
| State Superintendent of Education, John White | By toll free number: 1.877.453.2721 By email: johnwhite@la.gov | His proposed policies are not proven to work. | |
| Governor Bobby Jindal | Email: http://www.gov.la.gov/index.cfm?md=form&tmp=email_governor Phone number: (225) 756-7969 | His proposed policies are not proven to work. | |
| Send requests for a copy to: edresearcher4lapublicschools@gmail.com | | | |
| Who? | How? | Why? | NOTES.... |
| LFT | Louisiana Federation of Teachers: http://la.aft.org/index.cfm?action=article&articleID=37a9a90a- | EASY to use. | EASY to use. |

Footnote: 1. Not a complete list.

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| S.O.S. | Save Our Schools http://www.saveourschoolsmarch.org/ | EASY to use. | Outstanding resource. |
| Zack Kopplin | Sign the petition to protect science education in Louisiana: http://www.repealcreationism.com/ (Look to the right side of webpage to SIGN PETITION) | EASY to use. | Zack is a Louisiana student. |
| | | | |
| Who? | How? | Why? | NOTES.... |
| COALITION for PUBLIC EDUCATION | Follow them on facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Coalition-for-Louisiana-Public-Education/191154510928448 | LARGEST assembly of concerned educators in LA. | |
| Louisiana Educator by Mike Deshotels | http://louisianaeducator.blogspot.com/ | NO corporate sponsors. Only concerned educators. | |
| Geaux Teacher by Lee Barrios | http://www.geauxteacher.com/ | NO corporate sponsors. Only concerned educators. | |
| LSBA | Louisiana School Boards Association: http://www.lsba.com/Links/Links.asp | Good resource. | |
| LAE | Louisiana Association of Educators: http://www.lae.org/cms/Government+Relations/10.html | Good resource. | |
| LASE | Louisiana Association of School Executives: http://www.laschexec.org/legislativeUpdates.htm | Has House & Senate Ed Committee info | |

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