

JULY 1, 2014

We are here today as business leaders, teachers, civic leaders and parents to urge BESE to move forward with whatever actions are necessary to bring legal clarity to the issue of who has ultimate authority over academic standards and student testing.

Our groups are strongly committed to continuing to implement Common Core standards and nationally-comparable testing in 2014-2015. We were extremely disappointed to see the governor abandon his original support for both of these critically important education initiatives. We believe he is attempting to move Louisiana in a direction that our Legislature and BESE do not want us to go with respect to the education of our children, and we believe he is utilizing inappropriate executive overreach to try to achieve that. In doing that he is challenging the legal authority of BESE to do its job.

Because of that we are asking that BESE take the appropriate steps today to resolve whatever real or perceived issues there may be about its legal authority by seeking a judgment from the courts. We believe that is the absolutely critical next step.

We also recognize there has been discussion about adopting a "Plan B." It is our view that a "Plan B" is not needed because the current direction to continue the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments is a far better course of action for the education of our children than any other alternative. Beyond that, there is no need to spend any time on discussion of a "Plan B" until the issues surrounding the governor's all-out assault on "Plan A" are resolved. That would be little more than a pointless waste of time.

At the same time it is also our desire to express our tremendous appreciation to the Legislature, BESE and Superintendent John White for standing strong on their principles, standing strong for children and standing strong for higher standards. Throughout this process the political pressure from the "coalition for the status quo" has been intense. Much of the rhetoric has been inappropriate, intentionally misleading or just flat wrong.

But they have stood strong in the face of tremendous political adversity and we are here to stand strong with them. Our groups are diverse and represent thousands of businesses, teachers, citizens and parents. We are not backing down and we are not going away.

We support Common Core and nationally-comparable student testing for one reason only. It will help our kids learn at higher levels so they can compete for a job or in a university setting with students from anywhere in the country and the world. There are many additional benefits that accrue from that to our state, our workforce and our entire social fabric, but it all starts with providing every child an opportunity to lead a prosperous and productive life.

With all of our low national rankings in education outcomes we cannot afford to go backwards. We cannot afford to have confusion and chaos in our schools. And we cannot afford to delay a better education for all of our children.

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

Blueprint Louisiana

**Black Alliance for Educational
Options**

Bossier Chamber of Commerce

**Business Council of New Orleans
and the River Region**

Cajun Industries, LLC

**Center for Development and
Learning**

Chamber Southwest Louisiana

Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

Committee of 100

Council for A Better Louisiana

**Cowen Institute for Public Education
Initiatives, Tulane University**

Dr. James Madden, Mathematician

Dr. Phillip Rozeman, Cardiologist

Educate Now!

Education's Next Horizon

Fleur de Lis New Orleans Cuisine

**Greater Lafayette Chamber of
Commerce**

Greater New Orleans, Inc.

**Greater Shreveport Chamber of
Commerce**

ISC Constructors, LLC

Jefferson Business Council

Jefferson Chamber of Commerce

La Coste Consulting, LLC

**Louisiana Association of Business
& Industry**

**Louisiana Association of Public
Charter Schools**

**Louisiana Association of
Teachers of Mathematics**

Louisiana Core Advocates Teachers

**Louisiana Council Supervisors of
Math**

**Louisiana Science Teachers
Association (LSTA)**

**Louisiana Association of Science
Leaders (LASL)**

Monroe Chamber of Commerce

New Schools for Baton Rouge

New Schools for New Orleans

**River Region Chamber of
Commerce**

Robert Evans, Con-Tech International

**Shreveport-Bossier Business
Alliance for Higher Education**

Stand for Children Louisiana

United Way of Southeast Louisiana

**Urban League of Greater New
Orleans**