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The Essential  
Profession:  
Improving  
Teacher  
Quality In  
Louisiana



**FORUM**  
for Education Excellence

# FORUM

for Education Excellence





Jerry Jackson



W. Clinton Rasberry, Jr.

## The Essential Profession: Improving Teacher Quality In Louisiana

### Foreword

In recent years, education reform has become a reality in Louisiana. In 1996, Governor M.J. “Mike” Foster and the State Legislature enacted a law which mandated the creation and implementation of a public education accountability system. This system would: 1) provide citizens with the information necessary to gauge the performance of Louisiana’s students and schools; 2) utilize high stakes testing to both accurately assess what students are learning and end social promotion; 3) provide assistance to low-performing schools; and 4) offer a choice to parents whose children attend chronically low-performing schools by allowing them to attend a public school with a better performance record. For the first time in Louisiana, taxpayers have a mechanism which allows them to demand accountability for the more than two billion tax dollars which support Louisiana’s public education system each year. And at the heart of that mechanism is a reward system for schools that can deliver improved student achievement and consequences for those that cannot.

The Council for A Better Louisiana (CABL) supports accountability and was represented on the Accountability Commission which developed the system. It is apparent, however, that a fundamental gap exists in Louisiana’s education reform movement, even following the implementation of a comprehensive accountability plan and numerous other school improvement initiatives. The state has adopted higher academic standards and a rigorous testing program, but no plan to train or re-train teachers to teach to those higher standards. While Louisiana has raised the bar for its students and schools, teachers are often left without the tools needed to deliver the quality of instruction that accountability demands.

The K-12 school environment and student achievement standards have changed dramatically in recent years. Colleges of education need to prepare new teachers for the challenges they will face when they begin teaching in public schools, so that valuable instruction time is not lost while new teachers are “learning the ropes.” Veteran teachers, who need sustained, targeted professional development designed to impact student achievement, are primarily offered scattered workshops with no plan or opportunity for follow-up, feedback and evaluation of effectiveness. There is no state coordinated professional development plan for teachers, although millions of taxpayer dollars are spent annually on staff development. Teachers, the key factor in students’ academic performance, are not adequately prepared to deal with a school curriculum that changed from one of teaching basic skills to one teaching critical thinking skills. Additionally, teachers have to deal with higher expectations from parents and taxpayers, who are now armed with information.

Believing teacher quality to be the primary component in the success of the new accountability system, CABL formed the Forum for Education Excellence. With support from the BellSouth Foundation, the Forum became active in 1999. It is the only independent group in Louisiana solely focused on improved student achievement. The Forum’s first initiative is an auspicious one -- **to ensure that every child has a qualified, competent, caring classroom teacher.** While working toward this goal, the Forum will strive to elevate the teaching profession in Louisiana, supporting teachers who desire to raise their status as professionals who earn the public’s trust, respect, and higher pay.

This report identifies issues that are important for teachers and teaching in Louisiana. It contains a description of the people who teach our children and profiles obstacles blocking teachers’ pursuit of professional excellence. It also offers recommendations for removing those obstacles. The recommendations are bold and may be challenged by vested interest groups, but we must move forward. We hope this report will serve as a citizens’ blueprint for lobbying and advocacy. Teachers need our support and the state’s children deserve an excellent teacher in each and every classroom.

We would like to thank the teachers who responded to and distributed the Forum’s teacher survey. Also, many thanks to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality, Dr. Jeanne Burns, Special Projects Director in the Office of the Governor, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and the State Department of Education for providing data, and to Jayne and Kevin Thibodeaux at Thibodeaux2 Designs for the report’s design and production.

Many thanks to the BellSouth Foundation for their support in making the Forum a reality; to CABL staff members Harold Suire, Brigitte Nieland, Barry Erwin, Elain Ellerbe, and Lynda Williams for exemplary teamwork in writing and publishing this report; to intern Michael Sawyer for invaluable research assistance; to Entergy Louisiana for underwriting the report’s cost; and to the Forum steering committee for their input and continued commitment to improved public education.

Finally, we would like to thank the teachers of Louisiana, who have the most important jobs in the state.

  
 Jerry Jackson  
 Entergy Louisiana • New Orleans

  
 W. Clinton “Bubba” Rasberry, Jr.  
 Crestview Woods • Shreveport

*Access to  
competent  
teaching must  
become a new  
student right.  
Access to  
high-quality  
preparation,  
induction, and  
professional  
development  
must become  
a new  
teacher right.*

James B. Hunt, Jr.  
*Chair,  
National  
Commission on  
Teaching &  
America's Future*



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*All students  
learning at  
high levels.  
All classrooms  
staffed with  
highly qualified  
teachers. This is  
the hope. This  
is the vision.  
This is the goal  
of American  
education.*

*– Quality Teachers for  
the 21st Century,  
published by The  
Education  
Commission of  
the States*

# FORUM for Education Excellence





## THE ESSENTIAL PROFESSION: Improving Teacher Quality In Louisiana EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teaching truly is “the essential profession.” Every year Louisiana students spend more than a thousand hours in the company of teachers. Through the knowledge these educators share, they prepare Louisiana’s children for the future. It is a tremendous responsibility, and teacher quality is critical.

This is one of the reasons why in 1999 the Council for A Better Louisiana formed the Forum for Education Excellence — a private-sector organization that focuses on improving student achievement. The Forum’s effort in this arena comes at a pivotal time. Louisiana is on the brink of an education revolution. For the first time in recent memory an environment exists in the state that allows meaningful reform to take place. The result? Progress.

Over the last few years a positive story about education in Louisiana has finally begun to emerge. Test scores in fourth-grade reading are up, scores on college entrance exams are rising, and data shows that Louisiana high school students are better prepared to enter four-year universities. Thus far progress has been slow, and in some cases marginal, but it is evidence that Louisiana is moving in the right direction.

Yet, at the same time, it is fair to say that Louisiana remains an education crisis zone. A number of statistics bear this out. Louisiana’s fourth-grade reading scores are still among the lowest in the nation, the percentage of students who perform at the “proficient” level on national tests is still dismally low, and the state’s own School Performance Scores show more than 90% of Louisiana’s elementary and middle schools are performing below the national average.

For Louisiana schools to show real improvement in student performance, we must address the issue that most impacts student achievement. **That issue is teacher quality.**

*Over the last few years a positive story about education in Louisiana has finally begun to emerge.*

*Yet, at the same time, it is fair to say that Louisiana remains an education crisis zone.*

*Parents have a right to expect that their child's teacher will be qualified, and to be notified if the teacher is not.*

## Who's Teaching Our Children?

Louisiana teachers are entrusted with the education of 743,406 students in 1,483 public schools. They are charged with an awesome responsibility, but who are they? What are their qualifications? And how well are they compensated?

### Teacher Profile

There are 48,772 full-time teachers in Louisiana, and approximately 6,490 who work part-time. Of the full-time teachers, more than 80% are women, and nearly three-quarters are white. Their educational backgrounds vary. About 66% have bachelor's degrees, and 33% have some form of advanced degree. Interestingly, there are more teachers employed in Louisiana schools who have no college degree (210) than there are teachers who have doctoral degrees (159). Only 13 teachers in the state have reached the elite level of earning national certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

### Teacher Pay

Unfortunately, Louisiana teacher salaries are near the bottom of the scale in a region that lags behind the national average. The average teacher salary in Louisiana for the 1999-2000 school year was \$32,232. That compares with the southern average of \$35,168 and a national average of \$40,574. However, salary levels are not uniform across the state. The highest paying school district in Louisiana is St. Charles Parish, where teachers earn an average of \$35,925 per year. At the other end of the spectrum is Franklin Parish, where the average pay is about \$10,000 less. The average starting salary for Louisiana teachers is \$24,373.

It is important to note, however, that while salaries are low, teachers receive two benefits that most professionals do not. They receive tenure, a form of job protection unique to education. And Louisiana teachers are the only ones in the nation who are certified to teach for life. While most other professions require practitioners to periodically renew their certification and demonstrate their skills, Louisiana teachers have no such requirement.

## Who's Certified And Who Isn't?

To teach in Louisiana, a person must have a teaching certificate. Most teachers have standard certificates, but thousands teach with various types of temporary certificates that indicate they have not yet completed some aspect of their training.

Two trends are occurring in the awarding of teacher certificates, and both are alarming. First, the number of standard certificates issued annually has declined. Today more than 14% of Louisiana's teaching force has not completed the standard regimen of teacher training. What's worse is that in many parishes — particularly in rural areas — the number is much higher. **More than 57% of the teachers in Red River Parish do not have standard certification, and in 16 other parishes the number is greater than 20%.**

The other disturbing trend is our inability to keep the teachers we have. In Louisiana, more than a third of the teachers who graduate from state universities and begin teaching in our public schools leave within five years — and the number is rising. If this exodus continues, Louisiana's current shortage of certified teachers will become a permanent fixture of our education system.

Though certification does not guarantee quality, it is a minimum standard for teaching professionals. Parents have a right to expect that their child's teacher will be qualified, and to be notified if the teacher is not. State



leaders must take bold steps to ensure that only qualified people are teaching Louisiana's students.

### Who's Preparing Louisiana's Teachers?

Most Louisiana teachers get their preparation from one of the state's 19 approved colleges of education. It is difficult for most citizens to evaluate the performance of these colleges, but one can get an idea by looking at the percentage of students from each institution who pass the National Teachers Exam. Disturbingly, the passage rate statewide is on a downward slide. Even more troubling is the fact that some colleges of education have historically dismal passage rates yet are allowed to continue operating in the same way year after year. At one school, 60% of those who took the exam failed. While that case is not typical of all Louisiana colleges of education, it is clearly cause for concern. The picture is even more dismal since the cutoff score Louisiana uses to determine who passes the test is set lower than the national average.

### What Teachers Are Telling Us

Teachers often rightfully complain that they are the last ones asked when lawmakers, policy makers or other groups attempt to gain information about teachers and teaching. Therefore, one of the first projects undertaken by the Forum was to survey teachers to obtain their perspectives on their teacher preparation programs and professional development activities. In short, how ready were they for the classroom? We distributed approximately 500 surveys and received responses from well over half. Though not a scientific study, the responses provide a valuable snapshot of some of the strengths and weaknesses of Louisiana's colleges of education, and teacher preparation and professional development programs.

Overall, teachers gave their respective colleges of education good marks in preparing them for teaching. In our survey we asked teachers to grade the university program where they received their training with a letter grade, much like they do with their own students. The scores indicated general satisfaction. Our study showed the following:

Grade	Percent Responding
A .....	27%
B .....	43%
C .....	20%
D .....	8%
F .....	2%

But, teachers in our survey told us much more. They pointed out strengths in the programs that prepared them for the classroom, identified weaknesses, offered suggestions and mentioned areas where they would like additional help. What teachers want is more focus on the practical aspects of teaching — classroom management and discipline, experience in realistic settings and more instruction in specific content areas.

### What We Should Do

The problems we face in Louisiana are clear. The number of teachers without certification is rising. The passage rate for candidates taking the National Teachers Exam is declining. Each year hundreds of Louisiana's newest teachers leave the public school system. Fewer and fewer students are enrolling in colleges of education. It doesn't take an education expert to see that there is something terribly wrong. Remarkably, in the face of these statistics there are indications that student performance in Louisiana is improving, but our state has a long way to go before results begin to equal even the southern average. All of this tells us that it is critical - today - for Louisiana to focus on teacher preparation and reforms in the teaching profession.

With that in mind, the Forum offers a number of recommendations that we believe will move us closer to our goal of a competent, caring and qualified teacher in every classroom.

*There are indications that student performance in Louisiana is improving, but our state has a long way to go before results begin to equal even the southern average.*



# HOW WE CAN IMPROVE TEACHER QUALITY IN LOUISIANA

## ISSUE 1

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION REFORM/TEACHER PREPARATION

**ACTION 1** Inject accountability into higher education by holding universities responsible for the quality of teachers they graduate.

**ACTION 2** Raise admission standards for students entering colleges of education.

## ISSUE 2

### TEACHER PAY

**ACTION 1** Raise teacher pay to at least the southern average, eliminate the state salary schedule and implement a performance-based pay structure which would reward teachers for knowledge, skill and improved student achievement.

**ACTION 2** Target meaningful salary increases toward starting teachers and those in the first five years of employment.

**ACTION 3** Adopt a longer school day and year, with additional instruction time included as part of any public policy regarding higher teacher pay.

**ACTION 4** Offer a higher salary or bonus pay commensurate with the private sector to teachers who are willing to sign a 12-month, 261-day, contract.

**ACTION 5** Limit state pay raises to teachers. Do not include support or other school personnel.

**ACTION 6** Increase teacher pay, but not at the expense of other initiatives to improve student performance.

## ISSUE 3

### TEACHER SHORTAGE

**ACTION 1** Develop and implement a statewide, coordinated teacher recruitment and retention plan.

**ACTION 2** Implement incentive programs to draw teachers to low-performing or rural schools, or into shortage areas such as science, mathematics, elementary and special education.

## ISSUE 4

### TEACHER CERTIFICATION

**ACTION 1** Phase out lifetime certification for teachers by issuing renewable certificates to new teachers entering the profession.

**ACTION 2** Implement an efficient and fast-track alternative certification process, without lowering standards, for qualified people desiring to teach who hold college degrees in areas other than education.

**ACTION 3** Encourage teachers to pursue excellence by becoming nationally certified through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

## ISSUE 5

### TENURE

**ACTION 1** Reform tenure by offering teachers the option of receiving higher pay if they voluntarily forego tenure.

## ISSUE 6

### PROFESSIONAL/ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**ACTION 1** Implement a comprehensive, coordinated state plan for ongoing professional development for teachers targeted to improving student achievement.

**ACTION 2** Support alternative professional development delivery systems, and replicate successful models throughout the state.

**ACTION 3** Improve the training of school administrators, particularly principals, by implementing leadership and business management models in training programs.

## ISSUE 7

### TEACHER ORIENTATION, MENTORING AND ASSESSMENT

**ACTION 1** Institute a new teacher orientation, strengthen the state's mentoring and assessment program for first-year teachers and encourage local school districts to use a teacher evaluation model which incorporates student achievement factors in local evaluations of veteran teachers.

## THE ESSENTIAL PROFESSION: Improving Teacher Quality In Louisiana INTRODUCTION

Louisiana is on the brink of an education revolution. After years of lackluster commitment from state officials and the public, we now have the state leaders and voter support to enact meaningful education reforms, state boards of education implementing those reforms, and a public and business community getting involved with public education in unprecedented numbers. The result? Progress.

Louisiana fourth graders who scored at or above the proficient level in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) increased from 15% in 1992 to 19% in 1998. (NAEP defines proficient as demonstrating “solid academic performance.”) This improvement was significant enough to earn Louisiana a “gold star” from the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) for improvement in fourth grade reading. Also, Louisiana was recognized, along with only three other states and one city, for making “greater than expected gains in reading achievement between grades 4 and 8.” (The NAEP is a federally sponsored testing program. The 1998 reading test was given to a random sample of 31,000 students in 1,400 public and private schools in the U.S. or its territories. The NEGP is a bipartisan group set up by Congress to monitor the results of school reform initiatives.)

Louisiana students also showed modest gains in the spring 2000 administration of the state developed testing program, called LEAP 21. For the past two years, every public school 4th and 8th grade student took tests in Science, Social Studies, English/Language Arts and Mathematics. LEAP 21 became high stakes in 2000, meaning that failure in either English/Language Arts or Mathematics could result in students attending summer school, retesting and, if necessary, repeating the grade. In 1999, 44,000 students failed one or both subjects. In 2000, that number fell by 6,000, to 38,000 students. There are approximately 120,000 4th and 8th grade public school students in the state.

Likewise, students in each grade taking the Iowa Tests (nationally-normed tests given in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9) improved their scores from 1999 to 2000. With a national average composite score percentile rank of 50, Louisiana 3rd graders’ average rank was 47,

up from 45; 5th graders’ average rank was 46, up from 44; 6th graders’ average rank was 47, up from 45; 7th graders’ average rank was 46, up from 44; and 9th graders’ average rank was 46, up from 44.

At the high school level, Louisiana’s average score on the American College Test (ACT) has improved for three consecutive years, while remaining static this past year. The 2000 and 1999 state average was 19.6; in 1998 it was 19.5; and in 1997 it was 19.4. (The national average is 21 of a possible 36 maximum score.) And the *Louisiana First-Time College Freshmen State Report: Fall 1998*, published by the State Department of Education, reported that the number of college freshmen who graduated from public high schools and required remediation upon entering college slightly decreased from 1997 to 1998. Data show that the remediation rate was 46% in 1998, down from 47% in 1997.

To provide incentive for students to maintain this upward trend, there are now rewards in place for students who meet average performance standards. In 1997, the state Legislature created a program called the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) which provides free college tuition for students who fulfill “average” high school performance requirements. Additionally, the state now has a community and technical college system that can coordinate with high schools to help prepare students for either higher education or the workplace.

In short, there has been progress, but it has been slow and marginal. Still, it is evidence



*The single most important element in a child's success at learning — probably the element more important than all the others put together — is the quality of the teacher.*

that the state is headed in the right direction. For a state that traditionally scores at or near the bottom in every important education indicator, with a history of neglect and inadequate funding of public education, any improvement is significant. It is clear that the state needs to not only sustain this upward momentum by supporting existing initiatives, but also to expand what is in place by addressing the issue that most impacts student achievement. That issue is teacher quality.

### **Why Are Teachers Important?**

Polls indicate that most people believe the classroom teacher is the most important factor in, and the best predictor of, a student's academic success. The American Council on Education's Presidents' Task Force on Teacher Education has stated that "... the single most important element in a child's success at learning — probably the element more important than all the others put together — is the quality of the teacher." New data are confirming the accuracy of this common sense belief.

Studies also show that poor and minority children are more likely than other children to have unqualified or poorly qualified teachers. This is due in part to school systems' traditional practice of rewarding outstanding and experienced teachers with the "best" teaching assignments, that is, suburban schools, advanced courses, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, and other assignments where students are generally more affluent or highly motivated. The Education Trust, a Washington, D.C.-based education think tank, asserts that the minority-majority student achievement gap could be quickly closed if minority students were consistently taught by excellent teachers. Education leaders around the country are listening, and some states are considering policies to prohibit non-qualified teachers from working in low-performing schools.

In September 1996, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future issued goals and recommendations designed to create a comprehensive system of quality teacher development and assurance. The 26-member Commission included educators, state elected officials, business representatives, teacher union representatives, and community activists. The Commission released its recommendations because, after reviewing state reform efforts, they concluded that

school reform in the United States was at a standstill. They believed that most schools and teachers could not reach the goals built into new, high level student standards. Not because schools and teachers were not trying or were unwilling to make the necessary changes, but because they did not know how and had no support in learning how to reach those goals.

To reverse this impasse in school reform, the Commission identified five actions for states to take: 1) get serious about standards for students and teachers, 2) reinvent teacher preparation and professional development, 3) change the way teachers are recruited and put qualified teachers in the classroom, 4) encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill, and 5) transform schools into ones that are organized and structured for student and teacher success.

The U. S. Congress has also acted to improve teacher quality. In fall 1998, Congress re-authorized funding for higher education through the Higher Education Act and added a mandate to make states and higher education accountable for the quality of their teacher education programs. The Higher Education Act affects the approximately 1,300 colleges and universities in the country with teacher preparation programs that receive federal dollars. It calls for each state to issue a report card that includes a ranking of college and university teacher preparation programs. Rankings are determined by performance on indicators such as teacher assessments, certification and licensure. The report cards will be submitted annually to Congress for their review and action beginning April 2001. Universities that fail to meet higher standards could lose federal funding.

Louisiana, too, is now focusing its attention on teachers. The governor convened a Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality to study and make recommendations regarding teacher quality. The 31-member Blue Ribbon Commission was charged with recommending policies "that lead to a cohesive pK-16+ (from pre-kindergarten to post college degree) system that holds universities and school districts accountable for the aggressive recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of quality teachers who produce higher achieving K-12 students." The Commission began meeting in September 1999 and issued its initial findings in May 2000.

The Commission identified its primary goal as improved student achievement and made that goal a shared responsibility of K-12 schools and higher education. Believing that teacher quality is the key element in achieving this goal, the Commission released four recommendations with 60 actions targeted to improve teacher quality. The recommendations and actions focused on: 1) creating partnerships between K-12 schools and higher education; 2) recruiting qualified teachers and prospective teachers; 3) preparing quality teachers; and 4) creating conditions and environments essential for success.

The Forum for Education Excellence applauds the Blue Ribbon Commission and its work to improve teacher quality in Louisiana. The Forum will advocate for implementation of the recommendations and actions, which are faithful to the Commission's goal of improved student achievement.

However, for the Blue Ribbon Commission's efforts to be successful, they must be part of a comprehensive overall plan to change the way we train, recruit, support, place and pay teachers. Previous teacher quality initiatives have not fared well in Louisiana, succumbing to opposition from vested interest groups or an anemic state budget. In the January 2000 issue of *Education Week*, a national education journal, reviewers gave Louisiana only a C+ for its efforts to improve teacher quality. Clearly, the state has much to overcome. Furthermore, implementation of the Commission's recommendations is a long-term endeavor; years could pass before citizens see results.

## Louisiana - An Education Crisis Zone

The goal of the Forum is to ensure that every child has a qualified, competent, caring classroom teacher - and that child should have that teacher TODAY. Though the state has made some gains in student achievement, **Louisiana remains an education crisis zone.** The 1998 NAEP 4th grade reading scores show that, in spite of Louisiana's improvement, our students still only scored better than four states/territories participating in NAEP. Louisiana was ranked 37th of the 41 states/territories taking that test. The United States' average percent of students who scored at or above proficient was 31%; Louisiana's average was 19%. At the 8th grade level, the national average was 33%; Louisiana's was 18%.

Also cause for alarm is student performance on the state's own LEAP 21. This assessment program currently tests students in grades 4 and 8, and grades 10 and 11 will be added in 2001. The tests are aligned with state content standards, and student performance falls into one of five categories—Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Approaching Basic, and Unsatisfactory. The Unsatisfactory level is defined as the student not demonstrating the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next grade level. Though Unsatisfactory is the achievement level at which a student is deemed to have failed, scoring in the Approaching Basic level means that the student has only “partially demonstrated” the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next grade.

On the 2000 administration of LEAP 21, 24% of 4th grade students scored at Approaching Basic and 21% were rated Unsatisfactory in English/Language Arts, while 23% scored at Approaching Basic in Mathematics and 29% were Unsatisfactory. Eighth grade results were also disturbing. In English/Language Arts, 33% scored at Approaching Basic and 14% were at the Unsatisfactory level, while 21% were at Approaching Basic and 33% were Unsatisfactory in Mathematics. In short, **45% of 4th grade students and 47% of 8th**

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*The accountability plan forces intervention only for students who lag the farthest behind (those scoring at the Unsatisfactory level), not for all who need help.*

grade students tested in English/Language Arts did not have the fundamental knowledge and skills required to succeed in the next grade. The same is true for 52% of 4th grade students and 54% of 8th grade students tested in Mathematics.

Improvement is evident when compared with the 1998-99 LEAP 21 results, but almost one-third of the state's 4th and 8th graders failed one or both subjects, and many more are being promoted to the next grade without the knowledge and skills necessary for success. The accountability plan forces intervention only for students who lag the farthest behind (those scoring at the Unsatisfactory level), not for all who need help.

The Iowa Tests' results are also disturbing. Though students showed improvement in 2000, all grade levels tested scored below the national average. The same is true of Louisiana ACT scores. At 19.6, the state average composite score is the fifth lowest in the nation.

In September 1999, the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) released the first round of accountability School Performance Scores. (These scores are for K-8 schools only; secondary school accountability will begin in 2001.) These initial scores give the public a clear picture of how Louisiana's elementary and middle schools are faring. Of the 1,191 schools scored, only one was deemed a school of academic excellence, 15 earned the label of school of academic distinction, 94 were schools of academic achievement (this label equates to the national student performance average), 525 were ranked as above state average, 499 were below state average, and 57 were academically unacceptable. **In short, 1,081 of Louisiana's 1,191 elementary and middle schools are performing below the national average.**

Built into the state's accountability system is an expectation that every school will be at the national average in 10 years. But how can we help our students during those 10 years? A crisis demands immediate action. Considering the importance of the classroom teacher to a student's academic achievement, some immediate measures should be undertaken to recruit, train, and re-train teachers who can help students reach their maximum potential.

### Who's Teaching Our Children?

Louisiana teachers are entrusted with the education of 743,406 students in 1,483 public schools located in 66 school districts. Who are the people charged with this awesome responsibility? What are their qualifications? What do they need to do the best jobs possible? How are they compensated?

### Teacher Profile

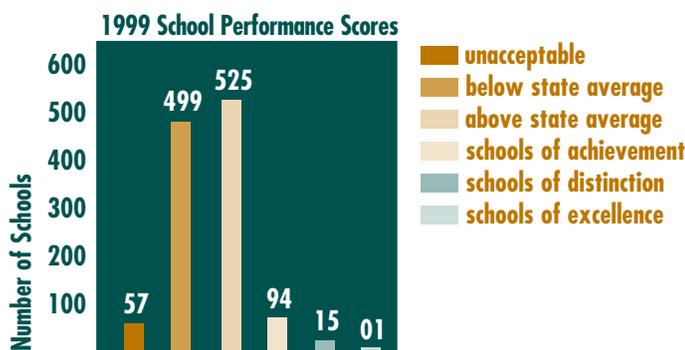
There are 48,772 full-time public school teachers in Louisiana — 8,963 are male; 39,809 are female; 10,616 (21.8%) are black females; 2,547 (5.2%) are black males; 28,898 (59.3%) are white females; 6,310 (12.9%) are white males; and 295 female teachers have other than a black or white ethnic origin (0.6%), as do 106 males (0.2%).

Though state law mandates that all teachers must have earned a college degree, 210 teachers (0.4%) are employed without a bachelor's degree; 32,360 (66.3%) have a bachelor's degree; 10,177 (20.9%) have a master's degree; 5,447 (11.2%) have a master's degree plus 30; 419 (0.9%) have education specialist degrees; 159 (0.3%) have Ph.D.s or Ed.D.'s; and 13 have attained national certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

### Teacher Pay

The average teacher salary in Louisiana for 1999-2000 was \$32,232. The southern average pay for teachers, as identified by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), is \$35,168, while the national average is \$40,574. Louisiana teachers rank 46th in the nation in average teacher pay.

Louisiana teacher salaries are near the bottom of the scale in a region that lags behind the national average. However, most wages in Louisiana are out of sync with the southern



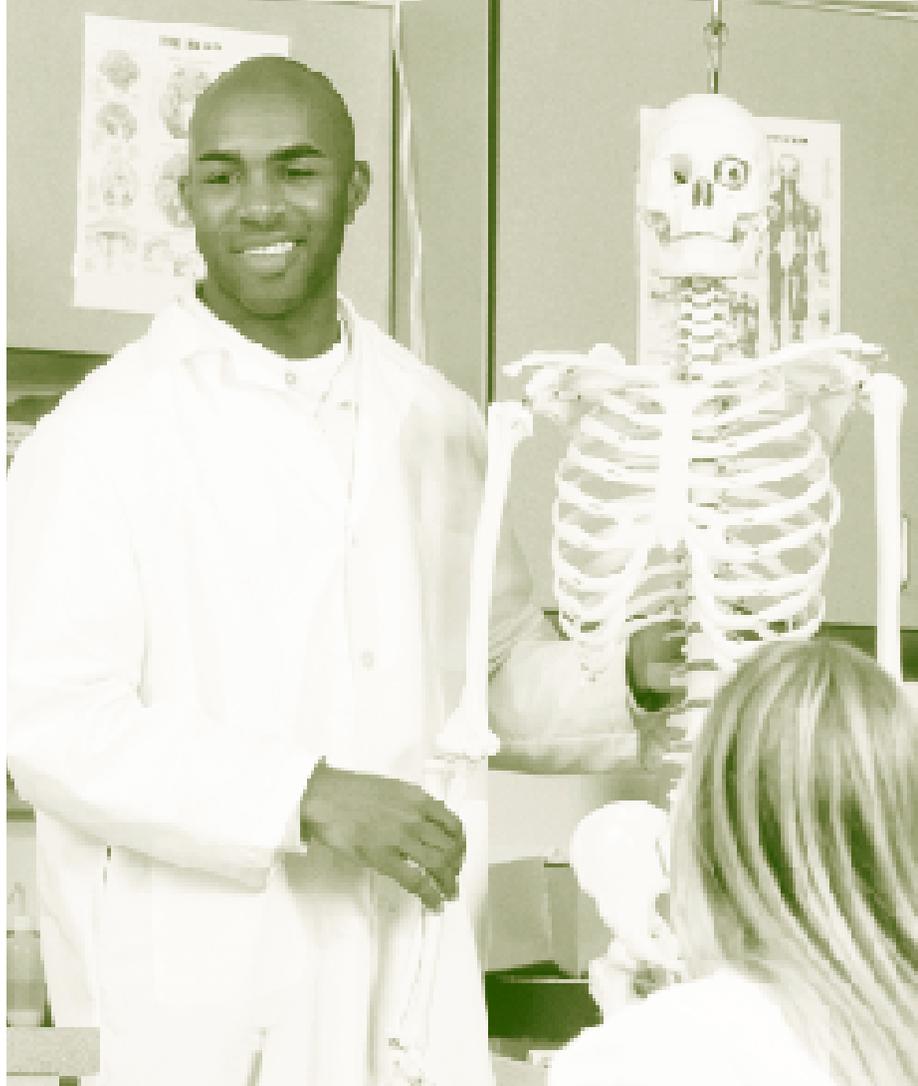
region and nation. Over 18% of Louisiana’s citizens live in poverty, compared to a national rate of 12.6%. According to 1998 U.S. Census data, the median household income (one or more wage earners) in Louisiana was \$32,317. Additionally, more than one-quarter of the state’s wage earners earned less than \$10,000, and 64% earned \$30,000 or less (adjusted gross income).

Teacher salaries are based on 175 student instruction days. After three years of teaching, state law awards teachers tenure, which means that teachers can only be fired for “willful neglect of duty, or incompetency or dishonesty, . . . if found guilty after a hearing by the school board of the parish or city. . .” (La. R.S. 17:443) Tenure is job protection and, after receiving tenure, teachers are “declared to be regular and permanent teachers in the employ of the school board . . .” (La. R.S. 17:442)

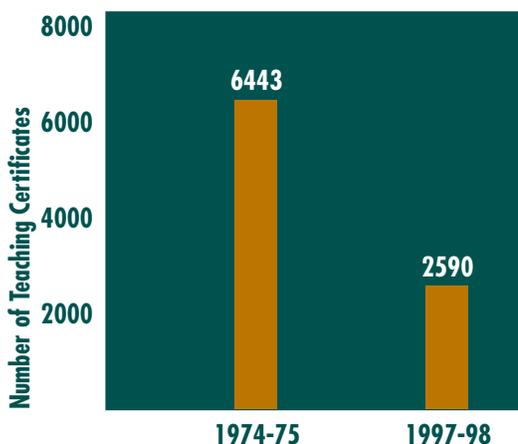
### Who’s Certified And Who Isn’t?

To teach in Louisiana, a person must have a teaching certificate. Three standard certificates are issued by the State Department of Education. All require a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) (on a 4.0 scale), earned at an accredited university, and successful completion of the National Teacher’s Examination (NTE) or PRAXIS, the new test used for licensure. Louisiana is one of the 43 states that requires tests for teacher licensure.

A Type C certificate is issued to a teacher who has earned a baccalaureate degree and has completed a teacher education program. A Type C certificate is an authorization for employment for three years. Following three years of teaching, a teacher is issued a Type B certificate which is valid for life. If a teacher earns a master’s or higher level degree and has five years of teaching experience, he or she



receives a Type A certificate, also valid for life. In 1974-75, 6,443 standard certificates were issued by the State Department of Education. That number has decreased to 2,590 in 1997-98. This is an alarming trend, especially when data show that the number of teachers needed will continue to rise. One solution implemented to address teacher supply and demand is to allow people to teach on non-standard, or emergency, teaching certificates. This practice began in the 1970s. Using the word “emergency” in conjunction with these certificates is a misnomer, as the response to this “emergency” has become institutionalized after 30 years of practice.



There are six types of nonstandard teaching certificates. The first, called a 665 (from Circular 665, the *Interim Emergency Policy for Hiring Full-time, Part-time Noncertified School Personnel*), is a work permit issued to persons who may have completed a teacher education program but have not passed the NTE. The Emergency Permit (EP) is issued to persons who meet all certification requirements except the NTE, but have scored within 10% of the required passing score. The Temporary Employment Permit (TEP) is issued to persons who meet all certification require-

*State leaders need to take bold steps to ensure that only qualified people are teaching Louisiana's students.*

ments except the NTE, but have passed three of the four required sections of the NTE with an aggregate score equal to or above the required score on all four tests.

The Temporary Teaching Assignment (TTA) certificate is issued to persons who have passed the NTE, but lack course work and therefore cannot be issued a standard certificate. A TTA/Standard certificate is issued to teachers who are certified in one area but are teaching out of their field of certification.

The Out-of-State Provisional (OP) Certificate is issued to teachers certified in another state who wish to teach in Louisiana, but who have not taken the NTE.

In 1974-75, 2,032 nonstandard teaching certificates were issued. That number has increased to 7,914 in 1999-2000 (this number does not include OPs). To employ a teacher on a nonstandard certificate, the superintendent of the local school district must verify that no teacher holding a standard certificate was available for employment.

Of the 55,619 full and part-time teachers working in 1999-2000, 3,007 were teaching on 665 permits, 3 were teaching on emergency permits (EP), 2,394 had TTA certificates, 2,432 were teaching out of their area of certification, and 78 were working under temporary employment permits (TEP).

**These 7,914 uncertified or out-of-field teachers represent 14.23% of the state's teaching force, and the numbers are growing.** The uncertified teacher rate has increased incrementally each year for the past five years. Parents have a right to expect that their child's teacher will be qualified, and to be notified if the teacher is not. State leaders need to take bold steps to ensure that only qualified people are teaching Louisiana's students. Though certification does not assure quality, it is at this time a minimum standard for teaching professionals. It is also state policy, and should be enforced.

### Why Are There So Many Uncertified Teachers In Louisiana?

This is a critical question and demands the serious attention of law and policy makers. Enrollment figures suggest that enough students enter teacher preparation programs to mitigate, if not eliminate, Louisiana's teacher shortage problem (see Chart 3 in the

Appendix). However, data indicate that less than 20% of those enrolled graduate from colleges of education.

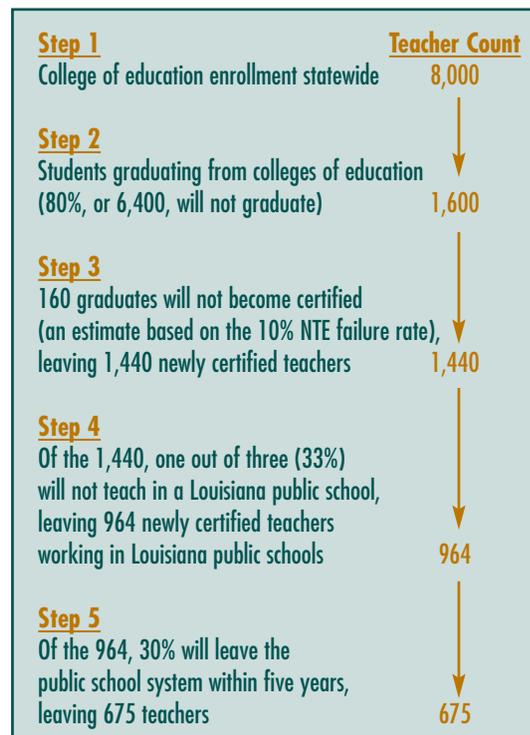
Of the students that do graduate, some will not be able to become fully certified due to failure on the PRAXIS exam or incomplete course work. Even if a teacher does become certified, he or she may be assigned to teach in an area outside of his or her field of certification.

Of the number of new teachers who do become fully certified, one out of three will not teach in Louisiana public schools. Finally, of the new teachers who teach in public schools, almost 30% will leave within five years.

We are losing teachers at every possible step. To illustrate the magnitude of the situation, following is a hypothetical (numbers only) description of what is happening to our new teachers. It is based on the new teacher enrollment/completion data in Chart 3 in the appendix.

Of the 8,000 students originally enrolled in teacher education programs, only 675 will become certified Louisiana public school teachers and remain in Louisiana classrooms longer than five years.

Unless steps are taken immediately, classroom teachers, already on the endangered list, may become extinct.



## Who's Preparing Louisiana's Teachers?

Most Louisiana teachers receive their preparation at one of the state's colleges of education. Thirteen of those are public, and six are private. The Louisiana Board of Regents has oversight over higher education in Louisiana, but BESE approves college of education programs. BESE conducts a program review for each college of education every five years, but has never withdrawn approval.

To enter a teacher preparation program, a candidate must have a 2.2 (on a 4.0 scale) GPA. A candidate must also take and pass a part of the NTE called the pre-professional skills test prior to entering the program. University college of education deans have the option to admit up to 10% of the college's enrollment without a pre-professional skills test score.

The number of education students from each university passing the NTE is one indicator of the quality of a teacher education program. Disturbingly, the passage rate has been on a downward slide. In 1995-96, 91.9% of those taking the NTE passed; in 1996-97, the passage rate was 89.9%; in 1997-98, it was 87.5%. Included in the Appendix are NTE passage rates by university and average ACT and SAT scores, by institution, of students enrolled in teacher education programs.

## What Teachers Are Telling Us

Teachers often rightfully complain that they are the last ones asked when lawmakers, policy makers or other groups attempt to gain information regarding teachers and teaching. Therefore, one of the Forum's first projects was to survey classroom teachers to gain their perspectives on teacher preparation programs and professional development activities. In short, how ready were they for the classroom when they began teaching, and, while teaching, what kinds of professional development were the most beneficial to them?

We distributed approximately 500 surveys; 277 were returned. Though not a scientific study, the teachers' responses gave us insight into the strengths and weaknesses of Louisiana's colleges of education and teacher preparation programs, as well as professional development being offered in the state. This teachers' "focus group" was invaluable, helping to lay the foundation for *The Forum's* program of work.

Surveys were returned by 235 females and 35 males; seven did not identify their gender. Thirty-seven identified themselves as African-American, five as Asian, three as Hispanic, three as Native American, two as Other, 215 as White, and 11 did not respond.

## Strengths of Teacher Preparation Programs:

- *Early experiences in the field*
- *Variety of teaching settings*
- *Up-to-date content*
- *Emphasis on teaching reading*
- *Technology integration*



## *Weaknesses of Teacher Preparation Programs:*

- *Not enough on classroom discipline*
- *Need more early contact with students*
- *Too much theory, not enough practice*
- *Not prepared for real-life challenges of different students*
- *No real teaching in real schools with real children*

Of the 277 survey respondents, 119 had been teaching 0-5 years, 41 6-10 years, 30 11-15 years, 30 16-20 years, 31 21-25 years, 25 26 years or more, and one respondent did not answer. Our survey respondents came from 43 of the 66 school districts in Louisiana.

Regarding Louisiana certification, 213 were fully certified, 63 were not, and one respondent did not answer.

One hundred fifty-one taught at the elementary level (grades K-5), 77 at the middle school level (grades 6-8), and 37 taught high school (grades 9-12). Twelve did not respond.

To attempt to learn whether or not teachers have knowledge of business and the workplace, we asked the survey respondents if they had any professional experience in a field other than education. Ninety-two did, 163 did not, and 22 did not answer.

Two hundred seventeen of the 277 had all or at least part of their higher education in Louisiana. Also, 239 passed the NTE or PRAXIS on their first attempt, 25 did not, and 13 did not respond.

We asked the teachers to tell us what they believed were the strengths and weaknesses of their teacher preparation programs and to assign a grade from A to F to their university's program. All 19 Louisiana teacher preparation programs were graded by former students. Sixty-three respondents gave their university an A, 98 a B, 46 a C, 18 a D, 4 an F, and 48 did not respond.

When asked to list the strengths of their teacher preparation programs, respondents said: NTE preparation; early field experiences; teaching to the individual student; variety of teaching settings and capabilities of students; up-to-date content; technology integration; accommodating alternate degrees in the certification program; integrated theory and practice; strong emphasis on how to teach reading; hands-on training; able to form relationships with peers; involvement in special education classes; constant feedback on performance in the classroom from peers, professors, and supervising teachers; content knowledge; and emphasis on core subjects over college of education courses.

When asked to list weaknesses in their teacher preparation programs, teachers told us: need more on classroom management/discipline; more content area requirements; more experience in the classroom; more early contact with students; technology; special edu-

cation readiness for regular education teachers; too much theory, not enough practice; how to meet needs of all students at the same time; how to assess students for weaknesses; identifying and making modifications for special education students wasn't geared towards reality; not prepared for real-life challenges of different students; how to create an IEP (Individual Education Plan) for special education students; no training on how to teach reading and writing to high school students; professors don't have knowledge of what is actually happening in the classroom; NTE before graduation; classes no longer relevant; inadequate preparation for the NTE; some instructors never taught; too easy-not enough is expected from potential educators; and **no real teaching in real schools with real children.**

One teacher from Orleans Parish expressed frustration that her "Classes were wonderful preparation to teach at an all-white, upper middle class private school. To teach in a poor, black, under-resourced inner city school, theories and applications must be focused differently."

We asked teachers to make suggestions on how to improve teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. Responses included: increase standards; teach regular and special education students in one classroom; reading disabilities; behavior management; designing alternative assessments; curriculum development; incorporate various learning styles; involvement with community groups-business partners-parents; and professional development centers with flexible hours and focused skill development.

We also wanted to know what kinds of professional development teachers would find the most valuable, specifically in helping their students reach higher achievement levels. Teachers told us that they needed staff development focused on specific subject content; observations and feedback; discipline and classroom management; mentoring; designing effective lesson plans; technology; and how to motivate students.

Many teachers wanted information regarding their legal rights and responsibilities, an unfortunate but realistic reflection of our state's propensity for litigation. Assistance with grant writing was high on several teachers' lists, reminding us of the reality of the state's many under-resourced classrooms.

**Finally, teachers told us they want respect as professionals.**

## *Suggestions for Improving Teacher Preparation Programs:*

- *Increase standards*
- *Teach in settings with both special ed and regular ed students*
- *More emphasis on teaching students with reading disabilities*
- *More focus on behavior management*
- *Offer professional development that addresses teachers' needs*

## What We Should Do:

**Parents** — Support your child's education by getting involved. Ask administrators about the school's student achievement goals. Ask teachers what your child is learning, and what will be required on the Iowa and LEAP 21 tests. Read with your child, talk to your child's teachers about school assignments, and help with homework. School administrators often cite lack of parental involvement as a primary reason that children do not do well in school. By getting involved in their child's education, parents will eliminate that excuse for a student's poor academic performance.

**Teachers** — Believe that every child can learn. Assume as your personal goal and responsibility significant student achievement for every child in your classroom. Set an example for your students by engaging in ongoing professional development. Strive for excellence at every level and remain inspired.

**Community** — Education reform truly happens at the local level. Statewide, laws can be passed and policies can be adopted, but without local support, laws and policies are mere words. The Legislature can flow tax

dollars into schools, but without communities setting education priorities and targeting funds to impact student achievement, taxpayers see little result for their tax dollars. **It has been said that every community, through its actions or inactions, gets the public schools it deserves. Ask yourself if your community deserves its schools.**

**Business and Industry** — Become strong advocates for public education. Participate in community and business coalitions that promote high expectations and standards for students and schools. Communicate the message that education philanthropy is a business investment with an expected return, and support initiatives that affect student achievement. Insist on assessment and data collection to identify need and gauge progress.

**Local School Boards and Administrators** — Take responsibility for the education of the students entrusted to you. School board members, superintendents and principals form the leadership team that drives change.

**State Lawmakers and Policy Makers** — The Forum believes the following would result in improved public education in Louisiana.

## *Suggested Professional Development Areas:*

- *Specific subject content*
- *Observations and feedback*
- *Discipline and classroom management*
- *Mentoring*
- *Technology*
- *Motivating students*



*We must place education as the state's number one priority, recognize it as the most powerful economic development, workforce development, and human development tool available.*

## ISSUE 1

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION REFORM/TEACHER PREPARATION

**ACTION 1** Inject accountability into higher education by holding universities responsible for the quality of teachers they graduate.

**WHY?** In February 1999, the Louisiana Board of Regents made review of the state's colleges of education the highest priority for its academic staff. It has been 17 years since a comprehensive review of teacher education programs has been conducted. The Board of Regents and BESE have worked with the Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality to create a model for higher education accountability which was endorsed by both boards in May 2000. The new accountability model will require that universities re-create their colleges of education, incorporating the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission into all teacher preparation programs.

Universities throughout the nation, in response to the Higher Education Act requirements and a report released in October 1999 by the American Council on Education (ACE), are revising teacher preparation

programs to meet the public's demand for teacher quality. The Council's Task Force on Teacher Education called for a transformation of the way teachers are being prepared in their report *To Touch the Future-Transforming the Way Teachers are Taught*. Recognizing that the United States will need 2.5 million new teachers within the next decade, these college and university presidents made a recommendation that all of higher education move teacher preparation to the top of every institutional priority list.

Higher education officials in Louisiana should heed ACE's advice. In a report card on teacher quality released by the Fordham Foundation in November 1999, called *The Quest for Better Teachers: Grading the States*, Fordham stated that Louisiana's teacher quality system is "sorely inadequate." Universities should be able to guarantee a teacher's competency upon graduation from a teacher preparation program. Several Louisiana universities are utilizing a "warranty" system for their students who become teachers. This warranty allows a teacher to return to college free-of-charge to get additional assistance if the teacher or school district determines it is needed.



**ACTION 2** Raise admission standards for students entering colleges of education.

**WHY?** Louisiana citizens can not expect to have high quality teachers when admission standards into the state's colleges of education require only below-average university performance. State law mandates that universities require a 2.2 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) for entrance into colleges of education. In Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, a 2.5 GPA is required.

In response to The Forum's survey, one teacher wrote: "Let's quit 'dumbing down' our (college of education) students. It only hurts the state to do this. We need to have high expectations and demand respect."

## ISSUE 2

### TEACHER PAY

**ACTION 1** Raise teacher pay to at least the southern average, eliminate the state salary schedule and implement a performance-based pay structure which would reward teachers for knowledge, skill and improved student achievement.

**WHY?** In Louisiana, the best teachers get paid the same as the worst. The current teacher salary schedule in Louisiana takes into account only two criteria when calculating teacher pay: 1) how many years a teacher has been teaching, and 2) how many college degrees a teacher has earned. Though experience and advanced higher education are valuable components of teacher quality, these two criteria should not be the exclusive determinants of a teacher's salary.

The best teachers should be rewarded, and weaker teachers should have incentive to improve. Louisiana should move toward differential pay based on teacher performance with student achievement as the major indicator. Salary increases or bonuses should be awarded to teachers who have demonstrated the ability to help students achieve. Nationally, there is discussion of schools giving teachers the option of having a lower salary with the potential to earn large bonuses if they can improve student performance. Advocates for this incentive plan argue that this type of performance pay will encourage better teachers to teach classes of poor achieving students because those students have the most potential for improvement. In other

professions merit is recognized. Why not in education?

**ACTION 2** Target salary increases toward starting teachers and those in the first five years of employment.

**WHY?** One of the most critical problems Louisiana faces is that we lose too many qualified teachers soon after they graduate from college. Some are recruited by neighboring states that offer higher starting salaries, while others choose to leave the profession within the first few years. Beginning teacher salaries cannot compete with many starting salaries in other professions. Making a significant financial impact on the front end will help Louisiana keep its best young teachers in the state and encourage them to stay in the profession.

**ACTION 3** Adopt a longer school day and year, with additional instruction time included as part of any public policy regarding higher teacher pay.

**WHY?** More pay for teachers should be tied to more time in the classroom, and should be part of the equation when comparing teacher salaries in Louisiana to other states. Louisiana students are required to be in class 175 days per year, and a minimum of six hours per day (or 63,000 minutes per school year). Students in most southern states are required to have more instructional time. Most of these states' teachers are paid more than teachers in Louisiana, but work longer school years, days or both. **Increases in teacher pay should be tied to additional time on the job.**

**ACTION 4** Offer a higher salary or bonus pay commensurate with the private sector to teachers who are willing to sign a 12-month, 261-day, contract.

**WHY?** With the onset of high stakes testing, it is imperative that good teachers are available to teach summer school. Twelve-month, 261-day contracts would ensure that more teachers are in the classroom for summer school and provide opportunities for teachers to earn additional pay.

**ACTION 5** Limit state pay raises to teachers. Do not include support or other school personnel.

**WHY?** Louisiana's state budget has seen regular shortfalls in recent years, and

*The best teachers should be rewarded, and weaker teachers should have incentive to improve.*

*In other professions merit is recognized.*

*Why not in education?*

*The overriding question when considering measures to increase teacher pay should be: What's in it for the students?*

government officials have had to make cuts in state services. With no increased state revenue in sight, pay raises should be limited to teachers only. Teachers' salaries have been increased three times since 1996. The first raise also went to school support personnel, and the second provided for a one-time bonus for support staff. If state officials are considering difficult budget cuts or raising taxes to provide for higher teacher salaries, any new revenue should go into areas that directly impact classroom instruction. The overriding question when considering measures to increase teacher pay should be: What's in it for the students?

**ACTION 6** Increase teacher pay, but not at the expense of other initiatives to improve student performance.

**WHY?** For accountability to be successful, adequate funding must be available for remediation and summer school, reading and math programs, and technology. Any general increase in teacher pay would be wrong if it takes away critical state funding for initiatives targeted to helping students learn and improve.

### **ISSUE 3**

#### **TEACHER SHORTAGE**

**ACTION 1** Develop and implement a statewide, coordinated teacher recruitment and retention plan.

**WHY?** One in three Louisiana college of education graduates do not teach in Louisiana public schools. Louisiana actually graduates enough new teachers each year to alleviate some state shortages, but with one-third choosing not to teach in our state, the shortages continue to worsen each year. Over fourteen percent of the teachers in Louisiana are either uncertified or teaching a subject in which they are not certified. The state, as well as the nation, is in the midst of a severe teacher shortage, which will escalate as record numbers of teachers become eligible to retire. In Louisiana, over 15,000 teachers could retire today (1997-98 data). The state should focus on teacher recruitment and retention now in order to mitigate current shortages as well as prepare for vacancies that will be created as more teachers reach retirement age.

**ACTION 2** Implement incentive programs to draw teachers to low-performing or rural



schools, or into shortage areas such as science, mathematics, elementary and special education.

**WHY?** Teacher shortages are exacerbated in poor, under-resourced areas. To alleviate teacher shortages in critical areas, school districts across the country are offering private-sector style employment incentives. Some of these incentives are: higher pay; bonuses; state income tax credits; scholarships; school loan forgiveness; and mortgage and housing assistance. Louisiana should follow suit with creative pay plans that include incentives encouraging teachers to work in under-resourced schools or to gain certification in subject areas where there is an identified critical need.

#### ISSUE 4

### TEACHER CERTIFICATION

**ACTION 1** Phase out lifetime certification for teachers by issuing renewable certificates to new teachers entering the profession.

**WHY?** It is unreasonable to expect any professional to stay current and at the top of his or her field without ongoing, continuous professional development. Doctors, lawyers, architects and accountants must take courses to maintain their professional licenses. If teaching is to be elevated to a higher level of professionalism, there must be some increased responsibility on the part of the professional. It is reasonable to expect teachers to periodically demonstrate that they remain qualified to teach, and to hold them to the same standards of professional development as is required in other professions.

As one teacher from Livingston Parish stated on the Forum survey: “A renewable teaching certificate is imperative to change in education in Louisiana. We (teachers) want to be accountable!!! If some are able to skim by without really making changes when needed, we will be in the same shape we are in now.”

**ACTION 2** Implement an efficient and fast-track alternative certification process without lowering standards, for qualified people desiring to teach who hold college degrees in areas other than education.

**WHY?** In its report, *The Quest for Better Teachers: Grading The States*, the Fordham Foundation gave Louisiana a “D” for its efforts to improve teacher quality. Regarding alternative certification, Fordham accused

Louisiana of having “no real alternative certification programs.” Supporting Fordham’s accusation are examples of other states’ successful alternative teacher education programs. Texas’ program has trained over 19,000 new teachers since 1995. Another success story comes from New Jersey. In 1982, faced with a severe teacher shortage, New Jersey officials instituted measures that allowed them to hire only certified teachers in mathematics, science, English, social studies, and foreign languages, while at the same time raising standards for teachers. The key to New Jersey’s success? They welcomed college graduates who had degrees in subjects other than education into the teaching profession.

The Blue Ribbon Commission has recommended a new alternative certification process, which BESE approved in August 2000. The Commission’s proposed “practitioner” program is more flexible and fast-track than the current alternative route. However, opposition from higher education representatives has already arisen, and the program has not yet been implemented. It is also questionable that it will be far-reaching enough to have a significant impact on uncertified teacher rates.

**ACTION 3** Encourage teachers to pursue excellence by becoming nationally certified through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**WHY?** The National Board certification process is recognized as exemplary and demanding. Only about half of the teachers who begin the process are able to attain this specialized certification. Incentives are in place to encourage teachers to attempt National Board certification — BESE allocates money to pay program fees and teachers earn an additional \$5,000 annually once they have completed the two-year process. Louisiana currently has only 13 nationally certified teachers, while other southern states (with the exception of Arkansas at 11) have more. Tennessee has 21; Texas has 16; Kentucky has 34; South Carolina has 34; Alabama has 46; Georgia has 57; Mississippi has 354; and Florida has 557.

#### ISSUE 5

### TENURE

**ACTION 1** Reform tenure by offering teachers the option of receiving higher pay if they voluntarily forego tenure.

**WHY?** When a teacher is granted tenure,

*“A renewable teaching certificate is imperative to change in education in Louisiana. We (teachers) want to be accountable!!!”*

– Livingston Parish public school teacher

*The message is clear – when it comes to education, our state has a long way to go.*

the net effect is assured lifetime employment. Tenure discourages productivity, is outmoded, at odds with the concept of professionalism, and hurts teaching professionals by eliminating the need for merit and performance incentives. Teachers should be given a choice between tenure or performance-based contracts that include due process provisions.

Other states are already moving in this direction. In 1999, Georgia became the first state in the nation to repeal tenure for new teachers.

## ISSUE 6

### PROFESSIONAL/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**ACTION 1** Implement a comprehensive, coordinated state plan for ongoing professional development for teachers targeted to improving student achievement.

**WHY?** Teachers tell us they need the tools to become more effective in the classroom and professional development is critical to quality teaching. Teachers should be provided with continuous professional development opportunities which address their individual needs. Professional development should be focused on mastery of subject content and how to teach that subject content.

**ACTION 2** Support alternative professional development delivery systems, and replicate successful models throughout the state.

**WHY?** Alternative professional development providers such as the Louisiana Resource Center for Educators (LRCE), located in Baton Rouge, and the Center for Development and Learning (CDL), in Covington, are able to respond quickly and efficiently to teachers' and principals' requests for assistance. They are also able to provide training outside of class time. That flexibility contributes to the constant demand for these types of services.

Cost-effective and results-oriented, the LRCE and CDL models should be replicated in other school districts to broaden access to other teachers around the state.

**ACTION 3** Improve the training of school administrators, particularly principals, by implementing leadership and business management models in training programs.

**WHY?** In a recent study by the Heritage Foundation, *Seven Common Elements of High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools*, the Foundation cited effective principals as the number one common trait among very successful schools with high poverty student enrollments. The Foundation found that the flexibility to be innovative with budgets, curricula and hiring are key to a principal's success. Further, leadership skills and familiarity with management models are essential characteristics needed in a school's top administrator. A principal, whose skills are tested every time his or her students are tested, can be greatly helped through quality leadership development programs.

## ISSUE 7

### TEACHER ORIENTATION, MENTORING AND ASSESSMENT

**ACTION 1** Institute a new teacher orientation, strengthen the state's mentoring and assessment program for first-year teachers and encourage local school districts to use a teacher evaluation model which incorporates student achievement in local evaluations of veteran teachers.

**WHY?** Strong induction and mentoring programs for new teachers are vital to their retention. Most teachers who leave the profession do so within the first three years. With support, assistance, and proper placement, retention statistics should improve.

Teacher evaluations for first-year teachers are conducted through a program administered by the State Department of Education. Following the first year, local school districts conduct annual evaluations. All teacher assessment should be designed to improve a teacher's performance and student learning, and should incorporate student achievement as a primary assessment indicator.



## CONCLUSION

**If there is one issue that will define Louisiana's future, it's the quality of education our public schools provide.** The message is clear - when it comes to education, our state has a long way to go. If Louisiana is ever to compete educationally or economically within the southern region, within the United States, or internationally, law and policy makers must make positive changes in the way we educate our students and prepare our teachers. We must develop a comprehensive strategy to recruit, prepare and re-train teachers who can meet the demands of a technologically sophisticated global economy, as well as deal with societal problems such as poverty and violence, which surface daily in classrooms across the state.

Teachers must be professionals and should be treated and supported as such. Though there is no readily available definition or consensus of what makes a "quality teacher," our recommendations constitute an aggressive plan of action that, if implemented, would begin to restore Louisiana citizens' faith in teachers and public education.

Schools do not improve merely because laws and policies are passed. Children do not automatically learn more because tests are made more difficult. Educational success in Louisiana requires a cultural and attitudinal shift by its citizens. We must place education as the state's number one priority and recognize it as the most powerful economic development, workforce development, and human development tool available.

Education reform in Louisiana has traditionally been a story of starts and stops. Meaningful reforms have been enacted, only to have them watered down or destroyed altogether. Those who want to maintain the status quo work at it full time. Those who want our education system to work must do no less.

We must continue to raise expectations and change Louisiana's mind-set from one of expected failure to anticipated success. We must be able to guarantee that all of Louisiana's children will have opportunity. Finally, we must move forward, secure in the knowledge that educating our children will alter our future, building a better, stronger Louisiana.

**Only with a total commitment will Louisiana ever be what it is capable of becoming — prosperous, filled with opportunity, and envied by other states around the nation.**

*Good teachers  
don't need  
tenure, and  
bad teachers  
don't deserve it.*

**—Roy E. Barnes,  
Georgia Governor**



# A P P E N D I X

**Chart 1 • Louisiana Uncertified Teachers, 1990-2000**

(Note: Includes both full and part-time teachers.)

	<u>90-91</u>	<u>91-92</u>	<u>92-93</u>	<u>93-94</u>	<u>94-95</u>	<u>95-96</u>	<u>96-97</u>	<u>97-98</u>	<u>98-99</u>	<u>99-00</u>
Total No. of Teachers	50,562	51,143	51,822	52,358	52,982	53,330	53,711	54,248	54,782	55,619
Teachers w/o NTE	2,041 4.0%	2,040 4.0%	1,509 2.9%	1,312 2.5%	1,511 2.9%	1,587 3.0%	1,767 3.3%	2,056 3.8%	2,487 4.5%	3,088 5.5%
Teachers Lacking Courses	1,260 2.5%	1,526 3.0%	1,684 3.2%	1,783 3.4%	1,941 3.7%	2,009 3.8%	2,068 3.9%	2,073 3.8%	2,191 4.0%	2,394 4.3%
Out-of-Field Teachers	2,594 5.1%	2,651 5.2%	2,830 5.5%	2,918 5.6%	2,834 5.3%	2,772 5.2%	2,649 4.9%	2,625 4.8%	2,484 4.5%	2,432 4.37%
Total No. of Uncertified Teachers	5,895	6,217	6,023	5,993	6,286	6,368	6,484	6,754	7,162	7,914
Percent Not Certified	11.65%	12.0%	11.62%	11.44%	11.86%	11.94%	12.07%	12.45%	13.07%	14.23%



**Chart 2 • Louisiana 1999-2000 Uncertified Teacher Rate By School District**

(Note: Chart does not include teachers with Out-of-State Provisional certificates.)

<u>School District</u>	<u>No. of Teachers</u>	<u>No. of teachers who have not passed the NTE</u>	<u>No. of teachers lacking required courses</u>	<u>No. of teachers certified but teaching Out-of-Field</u>	<u>Percent not certified or teaching Out-of-Field</u>
Acadia Parish	788	47	43	28	14.97%
Allen Parish	362	44	14	30	24.31%
Ascension Parish	1,096	31	20	26	7.03%
Assumption Parish	355	56	37	16	30.70%
Avoyelles Parish	509	28	19	29	14.93%
Beauregard Parish	472	21	12	43	16.10%
Bienville Parish	223	17	0	15	14.35%
Bossier Parish	1,305	38	16	51	8.05%
Caddo Parish	3,453	18	308	104	12.45%
Calcasieu Parish	2,463	49	7	83	5.64%
Caldwell Parish	150	10	0	13	15.33%
Cameron Parish	169	0	8	8	9.47%
Catahoula Parish	167	24	2	8	20.36%
Claiborne Parish	222	34	18	9	27.48%
Concordia Parish	299	25	2	20	15.72%
DeSoto Parish	413	22	18	26	15.98%
East Baton Rouge Parish	4,192	433	140	206	18.58%
East Carroll Parish	143	23	6	8	25.87%
East Feliciana Parish	213	59	14	23	45.07%
Evangeline Parish	499	24	11	32	13.43%
Franklin Parish	312	24	16	21	19.55%
Grant Parish	274	18	15	7	14.60%
Iberia Parish	1,122	40	70	35	12.92%
Iberville Parish	401	39	0	9	11.97%
Jackson Parish	212	19	4	11	16.04%
Jefferson Parish	3,761	183	201	137	13.85%
Jefferson Davis Parish	440	8	9	27	10.00%
Lafayette Parish	2,123	27	28	63	5.56%
Lafourche Parish	1,288	83	90	3	13.66%
LaSalle Parish	197	3	4	5	6.09%
Lincoln Parish	532	14	12	28	10.15%
Livingston Parish	1,265	13	13	31	4.51%
Madison Parish	182	47	2	16	35.71%
Morehouse Parish	415	41	52	18	26.75%
Natchitoches Parish	504	7	6	26	7.74%
Orleans Parish	5,035	436	366	234	20.58%
Ouachita Parish	1,298	37	24	88	11.48%
Plaquemines Parish	374	41	20	23	22.46%
Pointe Coupee Parish	230	22	14	17	26.52%
Rapides Parish	1,783	128	5	83	12.11%
Red River Parish	177	42	31	29	57.63%

# A P P E N D I X

**Chart 2 continued**

<u>School District</u>	<u>No. of Teachers</u>	<u>No. of teachers who have not passed the NTE</u>	<u>No. of teachers lacking required courses</u>	<u>No. of teachers certified but teaching Out-of-Field</u>	<u>Percent not certified or teaching Out-of-Field</u>
Richland Parish	311	36	12	28	24.44%
Sabine Parish	342	27	4	31	18.13%
St. Bernard Parish	674	36	44	34	16.91%
St. Charles Parish	864	6	4	13	2.66%
St. Helena Parish	112	24	8	10	37.50%
St. James Parish	321	9	12	18	12.15%
St. John the Baptist Parish	486	32	59	11	20.99%
St. Landry Parish	1,175	118	66	95	23.74%
St. Martin Parish	644	54	74	26	23.91%
St. Mary Parish	799	34	82	20	17.02%
St. Tammany Parish	2,477	4	8	119	5.29%
Tangipahoa Parish	1,189	26	13	55	7.91%
Tensas Parish	95	18	5	3	27.37%
Terrebonne Parish	1,552	61	129	63	16.30%
Union Parish	244	49	6	14	28.28%
Vermilion Parish	684	7	8	15	4.39%
Vernon Parish	761	28	51	54	17.48%
Washington Parish	364	25	8	15	13.19%
Webster Parish	549	26	12	28	12.02%
West Baton Rouge Parish	275	36	13	6	20.00%
West Carroll Parish	201	10	4	13	13.43%
West Feliciana Parish	205	4	3	6	6.34%
Winn Parish	236	6	9	5	8.47%
Monroe City	737	49	25	29	13.98%
Bogalusa City	241	21	28	14	26.14%
Dept. of Corrections	104	2	0	1	2.88%
Special School District #1	99	0	0	3	3.03%
Special School District #2	65	23	6	4	50.77%
LA School for Math, Science & the Arts	50	0	0	0	0.00%
LA School for the Deaf	90	2	4	6	13.33%
LA School for the Visually Impaired	22	0	0	0	0.00%
LA Special Education Center (Alexandria)	17	0	0	0	0.00%
LSU Lab School	65	0	0	1	1.54%
Southern Lab School	40	0	4	0	10.00%
LSU Board of Supervisors	5	0	0	0	0.00%
St. Landry Charter School	30	18	0	0	60.00%
New Vision Learning Academy	15	2	1	1	26.67%
Milestone Academy of Learning Experiences	13	3	1	2	46.15%
Northwood Preparatory High School	19	3	8	0	57.89%
Right Step Academy of Excellence	9	3	0	0	33.33%
The Street Academy Charter School	14	3	6	0	64.29%
Education 2000 Charter School	5	0	0	0	0.00%
Glencoe Charter School	1	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55,619</b>	<b>3,088</b>	<b>2,394</b>	<b>2,432</b>	<b>14.23%</b>

**Chart 3 • New Teacher Enrollment/Completion Data**

(Note: Data provided by the Louisiana Board of Regents.)

Program	Enrollment			Completed Program		
	95-96	96-97	97-98	95-97	96-97	97-98
Elementary Education	6,278	6,655	7,097	1,158	1,117	1,146
Foreign Languages	32	36	32	16	4	4
Mathematics	203	172	126	35	40	28
Preschool/Kindergarten	773	674	728	83	98	70
Science (includes Biology, General Science Teacher Ed., Chemistry, and Physics)	137	145	126	20	23	31
Special Education (includes general Special Education & Ed. of the Speech Impaired)	812	775	774	126	133	96
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,235</b>	<b>8,457</b>	<b>8,883</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>1,375</b>

**Chart 4 • NTE Reports, 1995-1998**

(Note: This data is currently self-reported. A plus sign (+) means that the number was not reported; a double plus sign (++) indicates that the report was incomplete; and a (P) indicates that the institution is private. \*Tulane no longer offers a teacher education program.)

University	95-96		96-97		97-98	
	Took the NTE	Passage Rate %	Took the NTE	Passage Rate %	Took the NTE	Passage Rate %
Grambling	59	72.9%	69	59.4%	64	64.1%
LSU—Baton Rouge	154 +	79.9%	110	85.5%	202	98.0%
LSU—Shreveport	95	97.9%	97	97.9%	99	97.0%
Louisiana Tech	48	93.8%	77	94.8%	70	97.1%
McNeese	357	94.7%	301	95.0%	288	96.2%
Nicholls	192	98.0%	198	95.5%	200	95.0%
University of Louisiana at Monroe	162	90.7%	155	95.5%	111	91.9%
Northwestern	111	91.0%	137	94.2%	158	89.2%
Southeastern	220	96.0%	231	98.3%	342	93.9%
Southern—Baton Rouge	47 ++	53.2%	109	50.5%	128	53.9%
Southern—New Orleans	50 ++	40.0%	115	45.2%	228	39.9%
University of New Orleans	235	97.4%	228	95.2%	222	96.8%
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	236	100%	213	100%	221	98.2%
Centenary (P)	13	100%	26	100%	24	100%
Dillard (P)	18	83.3%	26	80.8%	20	100%
Louisiana College (P)	26	100%	36	97.2%	21	95.2%
Loyola (P)	26	100%	27	100%	31	100%
Holy Cross (P)	46	89.1%	31	96.8%	42	85.7%
Tulane (P)*	32	100%	39	97.4%	30	96.7%
Xavier (P)	22 ++	100%	39	100%	10	100%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,149</b>	<b>91.9%</b>	<b>2,264</b>	<b>89.9%</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>87.5%</b>

**Chart 5 • University Average ACT/SAT Scores, 1997-1998**

(Note: This self-reported data was collected by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Average scores were determined using 1997-98 undergraduate student reports. Students may score a maximum of 36 points on the ACT, and 1600 on the SAT.)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Teacher Education • ACT/SAT Average</u>	<u>Institution • ACT/SAT Average</u>
Centenary	Data Not Provided	Data Not Provided
Dillard	Data Not Provided	Data Not Provided
Grambling State	Data Not Provided	Data Not Provided
Louisiana College	Data Not Provided	Data Not Provided
LSU—Baton Rouge	22.50 ACT	23.40 ACT
LSU—Eunice	18.02 ACT	18.13 ACT
LSU—Shreveport	19.36 ACT	19.96 ACT
Louisiana Tech	23.00 ACT	22.50 ACT
Loyola	22.70 ACT 1079.5 SAT	23.70 ACT 1127.4 SAT
McNeese State	18.90 ACT	19.40 ACT
Nicholls State	19.62 ACT	19.76 ACT
Northwestern State	19.03 ACT	19.72 ACT
Holy Cross	19.40 ACT	21.10 ACT
Southeastern Louisiana	19.05 ACT	19.19 ACT
Southern University-Baton Rouge	16.00 ACT	16.20 ACT
Southern University-New Orleans	15.60 ACT	15.10 ACT
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	18.50 ACT	19.40 ACT
University of Louisiana at Monroe	16.16 ACT	15.54 ACT
University of New Orleans	20.60 ACT	20.90 ACT
Xavier	18.33 ACT	20.95 ACT



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