

June 2009

BESE BRIEF

A Summary of Several Key Actions Taken by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on May 21, 2009

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Presentation

Ms. Leslie Jacobs, a former member of BESE and a supporter of education reform in Orleans Parish, gave a presentation to the Board entitled, "Public Schools in New Orleans." Ms. Jacobs' presentation noted the following:

- Orleans Parish students showed tremendous growth in academic performance in 4th grade English and Math and 8th grade English and Math from 2005 to 2008.
- Orleans Parish is the only Katrina impacted parish to show growth in performance from 2005 to 2008.
- Significant gains were realized in 4th and 8th grade LEAP from 2005 to 2009.
- Performance growth in New Orleans outpaced the State.
- Factors contributing to performance growth include the Recovery School District, BESE quality chartering, attracting quality educators (Teach for America) and a no excuses philosophy.

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Report by Paul G. Pastorek, State Superintendent of Education

Superintendent Pastorek highlighted the following in his remarks to the Board.

- In late April the Department hosted conferences around each of the key state initiatives: Literacy and Numeracy, High School Redesign, and Career and Technical Education.
 - More than 4,000 educators participated in the four-day Literacy and Numeracy Conference that was held in Baton Rouge and a waiting list had to be created because so many people wanted to be involved.
 - More than 600 educators from 64 local districts and charter schools participated in the High School Redesign Summit.
- The Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning conducted the evaluations of Louisiana's K-12 Literacy and Learning programs and the results "are promising." After two years, the percentage of students in K-12 literacy pilot schools that scored Basic or above in the Reading sub-score portion of the ILEAP test increased from 50.4 percent to 55.7 percent. The percentage of students who scored Basic or above on the LEAP test increased from 56 percent to 63 percent for 4th grade students and 49 percent to 51 percent for 8th grade students.
- In an effort to keep more students in high school, the Department has worked closely with higher education over the last few years to strengthen Career and Technical Education - in terms of offering students more options and expanding opportunities for students to participate in CTE programs.
- Through collaborative efforts, dual enrollment across Louisiana will more than double for the 2008-2009 school year - from 5,761 to 12,043 -- and that does not consider LCTCS enrollment.
- The number of students receiving Industry Based Certifications will increase by more than 70 percent - from 3,676 to 6,235 students.

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Board Approved Action

- The Board allocated over \$3 million to High School Redesign focused grants for the upcoming school year. The 34 grants awarded to 24 schools across the state range from \$45,000 to \$200,000. BESE's High School Redesign grant projects for students in grades 8-12 are designed to help students make more successful transitions to high school or provide early dropout intervention, academic catch-up, dual enrollment/advanced credit opportunities or career technical education expansion.
- The Board recognized and congratulated the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Regional Academy and Jefferson Parish School System for being selected as one of only twelve nationwide recipients of the Cable Leaders in Learning General Excellence Award. Cable Leaders in Learning Awards recognize outstanding educators, administrators, policymakers, and other community leaders at the forefront of innovation in education. This prestigious awards program, in its fifth year of operation, is administered by the cable industry and its national education foundation, Cable in the Classroom.
- The Board approved House Resolution 147, which requests BESE to study and identify disparities among starting salaries of teachers in local school systems, especially economically distressed systems. The Resolution also directs the Department to provide an analysis of options for economically distressed districts that exhibit teacher salary disparities.
- The Board received the report on charter school application, process, and timelines for schools opening in the 2010-2011 school year, including schools eligible for transfer to the Recovery School District.

The next meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be held Thursday, June 18, 2009, 9:00 A.M., in the Claiborne Building located at 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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