



ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS of LOUISIANA

January 7, 2010

Dear A+PEL Member,

You are probably aware that the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is applying for Race to the Top (R2T) funding, a competitive federal grant which could land our state up to \$300 million dollars. School districts and charter schools have the option to participate, making them eligible to receive funds intended to implement and advance specific reforms. Although some districts have reasons not to participate, all districts will benefit through various statewide initiatives made possible by R2T.

Detailed information about R2T can be found on the LDOE website www.louisianaschools.net or the A+PEL website www.apeleducators.org.

Much publicity and discussion throughout the state's education community has spurred questions and concerns about this federal program. In order to make a sound decision before declaring our position as an organization, accurate information was needed. A+PEL's state staff carefully reviewed the federal guidelines, explored the pros and cons, attended summits, corresponded and met with State Superintendent Pastorek and his staff, and worked closely with your Board of Directors.

On Monday, January 4, members of the Board of Directors and staff participated in a conference call with Superintendent Pastorek and his team so that various issues could be addressed. Questions were answered, concerns were expressed, and issues were clarified. Following the call, the Board voted to support the reform initiative R2T and to work in collaboration with the LDOE and other stakeholders during the development and implementation phases.

Unlike programs in the past, the R2T initiative encourages direct involvement of teachers and education leaders as details are addressed. From the beginning, the LDOE has engaged stakeholders in the discussions. It is our intent as an organization to be proactive and make certain that we are kept in the loop each step of the way.

The ultimate goal is student achievement made possible by effective teachers. A+PEL has always been at the forefront of any program focused on high student achievement, strong professional development, and increased accountability from all stakeholders. The members of our organization have a vested interest in any effort that encourages and assists teachers and leaders to be more effective and provides opportunities for every student in every classroom to receive the education they deserve.

As events related to R2T develop, we will keep you informed. To better serve you, it would be most beneficial if you would provide a valid email address (both work and personal) by going to the Members Only section on our website or emailing apel@apeleducators.org. Please visit our website for specific answers to questions you might have, or contact the state office by phone or email.

On behalf of your leaders, I wish you the best for a successful year in 2010.

Kenneth Jenkins
State President