



ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS of LOUISIANA

May 19, 2010

Dear Editor:

The Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (A+PEL) has a long history of supporting Louisiana educators who are committed to providing students the best possible education. We support legislation that empowers educators and gives them the appropriate tools to best serve their students. To that end, A+PEL supports H.B. 1033, value-added legislation under consideration by the state senate, which will spur efforts to have an effective teacher in every classroom.

For more than 30 years, 98% of all Louisiana teachers receive “satisfactory” ratings under the current teacher evaluation system, even in schools where students consistently fail to meet basic academic standards. As educators, we cannot sit idly by while over 200,000 school children – one-third of all Louisiana school children – are performing below grade-level. H.B. 1033 addresses this disconnect and establishes a more quantitative and less subjective evaluation system for all educators.

Despite widespread misinformation, H.B. 1033 does not impact teacher pay nor does it rely solely on student test scores. Instead, the bill requires value-added assessment that levels the playing field by focusing on student growth rather than achievement. Using a complex statistical analysis of test scores, it tracks individual student improvement year to year and uses that progress to estimate the effectiveness of individual teachers, principals, and schools. This model of teacher assessment is growing nationwide, and research has shown that H.B. 1033 is on track with what other states are already doing. Further, the value-added model has been successfully used in 75 schools in Louisiana for the past three years.

For subjects and grades where tests or value-added data are not available, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) will determine other measures of student growth that will be just as quantifiable as those in tested grades and subjects. Additionally, the assessment data will be useful for educators, helping to identify and focus on specific professional development activities that will give them meaningful opportunities to improve their instruction and impact student learning.

As a professional educators’ organization, A+PEL seeks to strike the delicate balance between the needs of educators and the needs of students. The data clearly shows that we need to improve how we are educating children, and Louisiana voters are demanding it. Elected officials are showing the political will to challenge the opposition and make decisions that put children first. We are indeed at a tipping point in education. As educators, we firmly believe that we must be part of the solution.

Sincerely,
Kathy Campbell
Executive Director