



News Release

For Immediate Release

For More Information Call: Education's Next Horizon Chief Executive Officer, John Warner Smith (225-383-3844)

**COALITION RALLIES IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION
LINKING TEACHER EVALUATIONS TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**
*Results of Survey Indicate Louisiana Voters Also Support
Tying Student Progress to Teacher Assessments*

BATON ROUGE, May 10, 2010 – A coalition representing teacher, principal, business and good government groups is calling on Louisiana's lawmakers to pass House Bill 1033, which proponents say will ensure there is an effective teacher in every Louisiana classroom.

The measure will require teachers to be evaluated annually partially based on the progress their students make during the course of the school year. Teachers who are identified as ineffective based on the measurement will be placed in an intensive assistance program, and those who consistently fail to make improvements will be subject to dismissal. Existing law only requires teachers to be formally evaluated every three years, and informally evaluated every year. Current evaluation methods are based primarily on classroom observations.

The bill, authored by Representative Frank Hoffman, is part of Governor Bobby Jindal's legislative package and won unanimous support from members of the House Education Committee. It is scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives Monday afternoon.

The coalition advocating for new teacher assessment measures is led by Education's Next Horizon, a non-profit organization focused on PreK-12 education issues, as well as other state education groups, including the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents (LASS), Alliance for Education, Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (A+PEL), Louisiana Association of Principals (LAP) and Black Alliance for Education Opportunities (BAEO). The coalition also includes Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL), Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI), Advance Innovative Education (AIE) and the Greater Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC).

“There is nothing more important to a child’s education than the teacher in the classroom,” says Dr. Phillip Rozeman founder and President of Education’s Next Horizon. “HB 1033 is about improvements to teacher evaluation and professional development in Louisiana. Currently, more than one-third of our students are not at grade level. Yet, less than 1% of Louisiana’s teachers are rated as ‘needing improvement’ on performance assessments, a statistic that is not realistic for teaching or any other profession. Clearly, the current teacher evaluation system in Louisiana is not working.”

Other members of the Coalition echoed Rozeman’s sentiments.

“Louisiana has the highest dropout rate in the country, yet across this state last year, nearly 99% of tenured teachers were rated as *satisfactory* – the highest rating given. Our state holds students accountable to high standards, and most of us in our roles are held accountable for the outcomes of our work. Teachers should not be the exception. If we are fundamentally going to advance public education in this state, we need a system that fairly measures and supports the effectiveness of our teachers,” Council for a Better Louisiana President Barry Erwin said.

HB 1033 calls for fifty percent of teacher evaluations to be based on "value-added" data beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. The new evaluation system will be phased-in over two years, teachers and administrators will be provided with data during that time. The value-added measurement will be based on how well students perform on standardized state exams, such as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP).

Value-added measurements are calculated by measuring the growth students make compared to the expectations outlined for student achievement. However, the method of measurement considers various factors, such as whether or not students begin the year behind their peers as well as the socio-economic status of students.

“We have studied the proposed measurement, and in fact, educators across the state have been involved in the development of the evaluation tool,” said Kathy Campbell, Executive Director of A+PEL, an association to which more than 7,000 Louisiana educators belong. “As educators, we support the bill’s intentions to effectively boost individual performance through targeted professional development and improve school performance by assuring all educators are effective at raising student performance.”

Gary Jones, Rapides Parish Superintendent and President of the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents said, “I’ve been advocating for value-added data for more than a decade. It is a true measure of student, school, and educator performance because it measures growth over a year. This data will give me the ability to better prepare my teachers and make critical decisions of how to best allocate scarce educational resources. Louisiana has been touted nationally for its approach to value-added. This is not a new process for us, and we must make it an official part of how we evaluate schools and educators.”

Louisiana is recognized as a national leader in its current use of the value-added model. It is used in 75 schools in more than 12 districts through Louisiana’s Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and the value-added pilot. Additionally, the Value-Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model evaluates the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in Louisiana by tying student growth measures to the teachers and colleges and universities that trained those teachers.

“Value-added will move us in the right direction,” said Andrea Martin, Executive Director of the Louisiana Association of Principals. “This will dramatically improve the relationship and partnership between principals and teachers in the school building. Now, educators will be able to come together to make data-driven decisions. Principals look forward to participating in the continuing phase-in of value-added. ”

“A student’s educational-attainment progress is paramount, especially for children who are significantly behind their grade-level peers. Incorporating performance into the evaluation process empowers teachers and administrators to focus on student improvement, which is where a teacher’s true value is seen,” said Adam Knapp, BRAC’s President and CEO. “This bill provides schools a better process for identifying and rewarding the most effective teachers, which will translate into increased student achievement.”

House Bill 1033 was endorsed unanimously by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). “We have worked diligently over the past decade to develop better measures of teacher effectiveness so that we could give teachers the tools they need and want to help their students achieve,” said Glenny Lee Buquet, chair of the Quality Leaders/Educators Committee of BESE. “Reforming teacher evaluations in a way that leads to targeted professional development based on evidence and fact is something all teachers will appreciate.”

The Coalition's call for linking student growth to teacher evaluations parallels a survey released Friday by Stand for Children, a nationwide grassroots education reform group. According to the release, a poll of 600 registered voters in Louisiana conducted from April 30 to May 2 showed that Louisiana voters support improving teacher performance through reforming the current method of evaluation and providing targeted professional development. Global Strategy Group and The Strategy Group conducted the survey.

Major findings of the survey:

1. Nearly half of Louisianans are not confident that schools are adequately preparing our students for college or careers (45%)
2. An overwhelming number believe that some teachers in their local schools are ineffective (78%)
3. Louisianans believe the current evaluation system of teachers needs to be overhauled (66%)
4. Louisianans feel the best way to improve education is to hold teachers accountable for their students' performance (22%, the highest response) and provide targeted professional development (18%, second highest response)
5. Louisianans want more frequent teacher evaluations (59%) and the use of student performance in teacher evaluations (52%).

Copies of the survey results and press statement released by Stand for Children are attached.

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