



*BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR  
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
  
YEAR FOUR REPORT*

*Submitted to the  
Governor,  
Board of Regents, and  
Board of Elementary & Secondary Education*

*May 22, 2003*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	2
SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS .....	8
SECTION 3: RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES, OUTCOMES, & TIMELINES .....	18
SECTION 4: APPENDICES .....	28
Appendix A: Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence Members .....	29
Appendix B: Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence Meetings and Activities .....	35
Appendix C: Proposed Mission Statement for Middle School Education in Louisiana .....	37
Appendix D: Proposed Grade Levels for Middle School Education .....	39

# **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE YEAR FOUR REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality was created by the Governor, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Board of Regents in 1999-2000 to identify strategies to improve the quality of teachers and principals in Louisiana. The Commission was composed of 31 individuals representing State leaders, K-12 schools, higher education, and communities. The Commission met monthly to create a document entitled *Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality Recommendations – Year One Report* that was submitted to the Governor, Board of Regents, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on May 25, 2000. The report contained one overall goal of improved PK-12 student achievement as well as four major recommendations and 60 individual actions that focused upon the: (1) creation of coordinated partnerships; (2) recruitments of teacher candidates and certified teachers; (3) preparation of quality teachers; and (4) creation of essential conditions and environments. As a result of \$3.4 million in competitive federal funds secured through a Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Program and new policies approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Regents, the majority of the recommended actions have now been implemented.

The Commission met on a monthly basis during 2000-2001 to discuss additional needs that could not be addressed by the Commission during 1999-2000. These included recruitment, preparation, retention, and support of effective principals; ongoing professional development of educators; and graduate programs for teachers. After obtaining input from a Professional Development Consortium, Educational Leadership Consortium, national leaders, and state leaders, the Commission developed 40 new actions that focused upon educational leadership and ongoing professional development. These actions were identified within the *Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality Recommendations – Year Two Report*. After being further developed by a broad-based committee, these recommendations are now to a point of implementation.

The Commission was renamed the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence in 2001-2002 and met on four occasions to monitor the implementation of the previous recommendations. In addition, the Commission identified other areas that needed to be addressed by the State pertaining to the creation of a comprehensive data base and strategies to support early childhood education.

During 2002-2003, the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence met to identify strategies to close the achievement gap between white and minority students in middle schools and high schools in Louisiana. National and state experts met with the Commission on a monthly basis to assist the Commission in identifying 27 new actions to address the four major recommendations initially identified by the Commission plus two new major recommendations: (1) provision of appropriate curriculum and (2) creation of data systems. The *2002-2003 Blue Ribbon Commission on Educational Excellence Recommendations – Year Four Report* containing these recommendations and actions will be submitted to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Regents at a joint meeting on May 22, 2003.

# **SECTION 1**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

# ***BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE BACKGROUND INFORMATION***

## **CREATION OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION**

The Blue Ribbon Commission was initially created by the Board of Regents (BoR) and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) during April 1999. It has been supported by the Governor and housed within the Governor's Office of Education. The chairperson has rotated each year between a member of the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The 2002-2003 Commission was composed of 33 members who represented each of the following areas.

### **Nine Designated Members**

- Two members of the Board of Regents
- Two members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Chairperson of the Senate Education Committee or designee
- Chairperson of the House Education Committee or designee
- Commissioner of Higher Education or designee
- Governor's Designee
- State Superintendent of Education or designee

### **Nine Members Selected by the Board of Regents**

- One University/College President/Chancellor
- One University Provost
- One Dean of a College of Education (public institution)
- One Dean of a College of Education (private institution)
- One Dean of College of Arts and Sciences
- One PK-16+ Coordinator
- One College of Education Faculty Member
- One College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Member
- One Pre-service Teacher

### **Ten Members Selected by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

- One District Superintendent (Urban)
- One District Superintendent (Rural)
- One District Director of Personnel
- One Elementary Principal
- One Middle School Principal
- One High School Principal
- One Elementary School Teacher
- One Middle School Teacher
- One High School Teacher
- One School Board Member

## **Five Members Jointly Selected by the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:**

- Three Community/Business Representatives
- One Parent.
- One Grant Facilitator

See Appendix A for a listing of the names of 2002-2003 Blue Ribbon Commission members.

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION - YEAR ONE (1999-2000)**

The 1999-2000 Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality met on a monthly basis from September 1999 to May 2000 and addressed the recruitment, preparation, retention, and support of teachers. The Chairperson of the Commission was a member of the Board of Regents, and the Vice-Chair was a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

After meeting with national and state experts, reviewing current data, and undergoing extensive discussions, the Blue Ribbon Commission identified four major recommendations and 60 actions that the State needed to address to better recruit, prepare, support, and retain teachers. The Commission determined that improved PK-12 student achievement should be a united goal for PK-12 schools and higher education with “teacher quality” being a critical factor in achieving the goal. The Commission determined that the four areas that the State needed to address were: creation of coordinated partnerships; recruitment of teacher candidates and certified teachers; preparation of quality teachers; and creation of essential conditions and environments. The Commission indicated that each of the areas impacted other areas and success would not be achieved unless the State addressed all four areas simultaneously. The specific recommendations and actions identified for year one can be found in the document entitled: *Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality Recommendations – Year One Report*.

It was also recommended that the Commission further develop the recommendation pertaining to the creation of essential conditions and environments during 2000-2001 and identify additional actions pertaining to: (1) recruitment, preparation, retention, and support of principals; (2) ongoing professional development of educators; and (3) graduate programs for teachers.

Recommendations of the 1999-2000 Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality were presented to the Governor, Board of Regents, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education at a joint meeting on May 25, 2000. The joint boards approved the acceptance of the report and directed staff to present a plan to develop policies, procedures, and activities to the individual boards during September 2000. The staff developed a grant proposal to implement twenty of the most important actions and was awarded \$3.4 million through the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Program to support the implementation of the actions over a three-year time period.

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION - YEAR TWO (2000-2001)**

The 2000-2001 Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality met on a monthly basis from September 2000 to May 2001 and addressed the areas of educational leadership and professional development. The Chairperson of the Commission was a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Vice-chair was a member of the Board of Regents.

A Professional Development Consortium composed of 29 award winning teachers as well as principals, university representatives, and parents met on five occasions from October 2000 to January 2001 to identify the best practices for the professional development of educators. After meeting with national/state experts and reviewing current information, the Consortium developed a set of recommendations that were presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission during January 2001.

An Educational Leadership Consortium composed of 50 principals of the year and university faculty responsible for teaching educational leadership courses also met from October 2000 to January 2001 to identify strategies to effectively recruit, prepare, retain, and support quality principals. After working with a national expert as a facilitator, reviewing current research, and interacting with other national experts, the Consortium developed a set of recommendations that were presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission during January 2001.

Blue Ribbon Commission members met with national experts from North Carolina, Southern Regional Education Board, and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, interacted with members of the Professional Development Consortium and Educational Leadership Consortium, reviewed data presented by state experts, and read current materials pertaining to effective practices in the areas of professional development of educators and preparation of educational leaders. After reviewing the information, a decision was made to add 41 action statements to two of the original recommendations that were identified in the *Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality Recommendations – Year One Report*. The action statements directly addressed the creation of a new certification structure for educational leadership and a new Professional Development System for all educators. It was also recommended that all graduate programs for teachers be redesigned to address components identified by the Commission, and a Professional Development Advisory Committee meet to align all professional development activities and projected costs for implementation.

The Commission also determined that they had met their original charge, and it was recommended that a Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence be formed to monitor the implementation of existing actions and recommend new actions that would directly impact the improvement of PK-16+ education in Louisiana.

Recommendations of the 2000-2001 Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality were presented to the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education at a joint meeting on May 24, 2001. The joint boards approved the acceptance of the report and directed staff to present a plan to develop policies, procedures, and activities to the individual boards during September 2001.

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION - YEAR THREE (2001-2002)**

The 2001-2002 Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence met on four occasions from September 2001 to May 2002 to monitor the implementation of 1999-2001 Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations and to identify new needs. The Chairperson of the Commission was a member of the Board of Regents, and the Vice-Chair was a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. By the conclusion of the final meeting, the Commission identified two additional areas that needed to be addressed by the state: (1) creation of a comprehensive data system that would provide the State with accurate information pertaining to educational and workforce trends and (2) development and implementation of an initiative to

improve early childhood education. The Commission recommended that they meet more frequently during 2002-2003 and address a specific charge to improve middle school education in Louisiana.

A joint meeting of the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education was not held during May 2002 and recommendations were not formally submitted to the two boards.

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION - YEAR FOUR (2002-2003)**

The 2002-2003 Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence met on a monthly basis from September 2002 to May 2003 and identified strategies to close the achievement gap between minority and white students in middle schools and high schools. The Commission members met with national and state experts to develop a set of recommendations that addressed the four major areas originally identified by the Blue Ribbon Commission (i.e., coordinated partnerships; teacher recruitment; teacher preparation; and environments conducive to learning) plus two additional areas pertaining to curriculum and data systems. (See Appendix B for a listing of speakers and meeting activities.) The following provides a brief summary of the recommended actions.

#### **Creation of Coordinated Partnerships**

Four actions involving collaborative partnerships were recommended by the Commission as first priorities. Specific actions involved the following: adoption and use of a clear mission statement for middle schools; involvement of PK-16+ Councils in identifying strategies for university and school districts to close achievement gaps in middle and high schools; creation of groups composed of minority leaders to help PK-16+ Councils identify effective strategies to close achievement gaps; and development and implementation of communication strategies to help parents, teachers, and students understand the importance of post-secondary education and mathematics. The Commission identified the following as second level priorities once first priorities: to have a senior level official in the Louisiana Department of Education lead a middle school initiative in the State and to create a Council for Middle School Excellence composed of exemplary middle school educators to advise state policy makers.

#### **Recruitment of Teacher Candidates and Certified Teachers**

Three actions pertaining to the recruitment of teacher candidates and certified teachers were recommended by the Commission as first priorities. The actions addressed the following: provision of increased salaries to retain middle and high school teachers in the profession; creation of an incentive system to assist in the placement of effective teachers in middle and high school classrooms that contain students with the greatest needs; and provision of monetary bonuses for certified middle and high school teachers to obtain certification in critical shortage areas.

#### **Preparation of Teachers**

Three actions pertaining to the preparation of certified teachers were recommended by the Commission as first priorities. The actions included the following: a strong emphasis upon the psychological, sociological, and academic needs of middle school students in all teacher preparation programs; the provision of opportunities for all “not new” middle school teachers to



attain a classification of “highly qualified” to comply with new federal regulations for the No Child Left Behind Act; and a focus upon reality-based instruction in pre-service programs to improve PK-12 student learning and close achievement gaps when working with culturally diverse and impoverished students.

### **Creation of Essential Conditions and Environments**

Seven actions pertaining to the creation of essential conditions and environments were recommended by the Commission as first priorities and two actions were recommended as second priorities. The actions recommended as first priorities included: the provision of high quality, job-embedded, professional development for middle school teachers which requires teachers to use student assessment data to strengthen the rigor of class content; identification of effective middle school models and incentives to encourage districts to replicate the models; creation of incentives to increase the number of experienced middle and high school teachers who are highly effective; creation of leadership academies to prepare future middle/high school instructional leaders; reduction of paperwork to provide more time for educators within middle and high schools to focus on student achievement; creation and implementation of a communication campaign to inform “not new” and recently certified teachers about new requirements to be classified as “highly qualified”; and provision of an annual meeting for middle school teachers to gain knowledge about best practices.

The two actions recommended as second level priorities included the redesign of counselor program in schools and universities and the creation of a process for districts to match their middle and high schools with similar schools in the state who have been successful in improving student achievement.

### **Provision of an Appropriate Curriculum**

Three actions pertaining to the provision of an appropriate curriculum for middle and high school students were recommended by the Commission as first priorities. These included: defining middle school education as grades 5-8; using high school transcripts to identify patterns and to redirect students into appropriate courses for success in post-secondary education/workforce; and conducting a curriculum audit in core subject areas to identify gaps in the curriculum.

### **Creation of Data System**

Two actions pertaining to the creation of data system were recommended by the Commission as first priorities. It was recommended that a data analysis system be created to analyze yearly gains demonstrated by PK-12 students taught by individual teachers and that research capacity be developed to monitor the implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The Commission recommended that they meet on a monthly basis during 2003-2004 and focus upon instructional leadership within schools. The 27 actions in the six recommended areas will be presented to the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education at a joint meeting on May 22, 2003. The specific recommendations and actions identified for year four can be found in the document entitled: *Blue Ribbon Commission on Educational Excellence Recommendations – Year Four Report*.

**SECTION 2**

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION #1:  
CREATION OF COORDINATED PARTNERSHIPS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to coordinate existing partnerships and create meaningful new partnerships that result in improved student achievement.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, the gap in performance of minority and white students at the Basic level on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade LEAP test will close by 1%.

**Measure:** Data collected for the state's K-12 School Accountability System.

**ACTIONS:**

**First Priorities:**

**1. Mission Statement**

Have the State and all middle schools receive and utilize a clear, coherent, and relatively brief statement describing the mission of middle schools. See Appendix A for a recommended mission statement.

**2. PK-16+ Council's & Achievement Gap**

Ask all PK-16+ Councils to identify strategies for universities and districts to jointly implement to address individual needs of students and close achievement gaps between white and minority students in districts surrounding the universities.

**3. Minority Leaders' Involvement**

Have PK-16+ Councils gather a group of minority leaders who know, appreciate, and understand academic, personal, and social needs of minority students and obtain their input regarding actions to close the achievement gaps to assist the PK-16+ Councils. Develop and implement a process for this information to be shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission.

**4. Communication - Post-Secondary Education**

Develop and implement a formal process to communicate expectations of post-secondary education and the importance of four years of mathematics to middle and high school parents, teachers, and students.

***RECOMMENDATION #1: CREATION OF COORDINATED  
PARTNERSHIPS (CONT'D)***

**Second Priorities:**

**1. State Middle School Official**

Have a senior level official in the Louisiana Department of Education who devotes 100% of his/her time to middle school education and spends 50% of the time in middle schools provide full-time leadership to facilitate middle school improvement.

**2. Council for Middle School Excellence**

Identify exemplary middle school educators, organize them into an official statewide Council for Middle School Excellence, convene them quarterly for networking, consultation, and to review existing policies and make recommendations to BESE and BoR.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:  
RECRUITMENT OF TEACHER CANDIDATES AND  
CERTIFIED TEACHERS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to actively recruit individuals into the teaching profession with a focus upon certification in teacher shortage areas.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, the number of new middle school program completers will increase from 3 per year to 75 per year.

**Measure:** Data collected by the Board of Regents pertaining to program completers.

**ACTIONS:**

**1. Higher Salaries for Middle and High School Teachers**

Retain middle and high school teachers by providing higher salaries.

**2. Incentives for Middle & High School Placements**

Create an incentives system that assists in the placement of effective teachers in middle school and high school classrooms that contain students with the greatest academic needs. This system should do the following:

- a. Identify community/state/federal funds that can be used to provide monetary incentives (e.g., personal/living incentives, six months of rent; down payment on a car, etc.) to middle and high school teachers.
- b. Develop criteria to use to select effective middle and high school teachers to receive the incentive(s).
- c. Develop criteria to use to select middle and high schools that will receive effective teachers who have been provided incentives.
- d. Require teachers who receive the incentive(s) to remain within the schools for a minimum of three years or repay the monetary value of the incentive to the school district/community.
- e. Place teachers receiving incentives in middle and high schools that have balanced faculties (e.g., experienced teachers, mid-career teachers, and new teachers).

**3. Bonuses for Certification in Teacher Shortage Areas**

Provide monetary bonuses for certified middle and high school teachers to obtain content specific (e.g., mathematics, biology, chemistry, etc.) master's degrees, complete appropriate courses, and/or pass additional PRAXIS examinations in critical shortage areas (e.g., mathematics, chemistry, physics, etc.) to become certified in additional areas.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:  
PREPARATION OF QUALITY TEACHERS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to prepare teachers who possess the in-depth core knowledge and teaching skills to effectively educate higher achieving K-12 students.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, 97% of the middle school program completers will pass all parts of the middle school PRAXIS examinations and provide overall ratings of 3.2 or higher when evaluating the extent to which their universities prepared them for their first year of teaching.

**Measure:** Data collected for the state's Teacher Preparation Accountability System.

**ACTIONS:**

**1. Middle School Preparation**

Incorporate into all new pre-service middle school teacher education programs a strong emphasis upon the psychological, sociological, and academic needs of middle school students.

**2. Highly Qualified Middle School Teacher**

Provide opportunities for all "not new" middle school teachers to complete a predetermined number of professional development hours, pass a PRAXIS specialty content examination, or have a major in a content area to be classified as a "highly qualified" middle school teacher as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

**3. Reality-based Instruction**

Have all new pre-service middle school teacher education programs focus upon providing effective reality-based instruction to close achievement gaps and improve the academic performance of culturally diverse (e.g., African-American, Hispanic, etc.) and/or impoverished students.

**RECOMMENDATION #4**  
**CREATION OF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to create environments and conditions that support and retain highly effective pre-service teachers, new teachers, and experienced teachers.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, a 1% increase will be demonstrated each previous year in the percentage of middle school public school teachers who remain in the teaching profession after their first 3 years of teaching.

**Measure:** Data collected by the Louisiana Department of Education pertaining to retention.

**ACTIONS:**

**First Priorities:**

**1. Assessment Job-Embedded Professional Development**

Provide middle school teachers with high quality, job-embedded, professional development that requires teachers to examine student assessment data (EPAS, LEAP, Iowa, etc.) and work collaboratively to strengthen the rigor of class content and address the knowledge and skills for success in post-secondary education and the workplace.

**2. Middle and High School Models**

Identify school models that provide highly effective middle and high school teachers with a balanced schedule to successfully teach high achieving K-12 at-risk students while mentoring (pre-service, new, and ineffective) teachers and provide incentives for schools to use the models.

**3. Teacher Incentives to Support Effectiveness**

Create incentives (e.g., six hours of graduate credit, 150 hours of professional development over 5 years, etc.) to increase the number of experienced middle and high school teachers who are highly effective (e.g., National Board Certified, LaSIP trained, etc.).

**RECOMMENDATION #4:  
CREATION OF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS (CONT'D)**

**First Priorities (Cont'd):**

**4. Leadership Academies**

Create a leadership academy to prepare future middle/high school instructional leaders and university (academia and curriculum) leaders who are prepared to be more visible within classrooms to move all middle and high school students to higher standards and close the achievement gaps.

**5. Paperwork Reduction**

Reduce unnecessary paperwork required by the State to provide more time for teachers, counselors, support staff, and principals within middle schools to focus upon improved student achievement.

**6. Communication Campaign Regarding “Highly Qualified” Teachers**

Create and implement a communication campaign to inform “not new” and recently certified new teachers regarding the new requirements. to be “highly qualified.”

**7. Annual Meeting for Middle School Teachers**

Provide an annual meeting and other forms of professional development for middle school teachers and university faculty to meet to obtain new information pertaining to best practices for the teaching of middle school students, grant writing, and other topics.

**Second Priorities**

**1. Redesign of Programs for Counselors**

Redesign counselor programs in schools and universities to change the role of counselors to include more actual academic, personal, career, and social counseling; hire clerks to do paper work and record keeping.

**2. Matching of Middle and High Schools**

Create a process for districts to match their middle and high schools with similar schools in the state and work with school personnel who have been successful in improving student achievement in middle & high schools.



**RECOMMENDATION #5**  
**PROVISION OF AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to provide students with a challenging and inquiry-based curriculum to be successful in middle and high school.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, 75% of the students who plan to attend a post-secondary institution will be enrolled in the appropriate high school courses to be successful in post-secondary education.

**Measure:** Data collected by the Board of Regents and Louisiana Department of Education.

**ACTIONS:**

**1. Middle School Grades**

Define middle school education as grades 5-8. See Appendix C for a proposed definition.

**2. High School Transcript Data**

Use high school transcript data to better counsel students for post-secondary education.

a. Analyze high school transcripts to determine the following:

- 1) What courses are high school students taking in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade?
- 2) What percent of students are taking mathematics?
- 3) What “tracks” are now being offered in high school and what courses do students take when enrolled in those ‘tracks’?

b. Use the high school transcript data to identify patterns and develop strategies to direct high school students toward courses that will better prepare them for post-secondary education.

c. Have schools use EPAS data to identify specific courses that students will need to take to be successful when taking the ACT and attending post-secondary education.

**3. Curriculum Audit**

Conduct a curriculum audit of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade courses in core subject areas (e.g., English, mathematics, science, and social studies) to determine the rigor of the courses being taught, and compare the findings of the curriculum audit with EXPLORE and PLAN data from ACT pertaining to knowledge and skills that students must know to be successful on the ACT and when attending post-secondary education and identify gaps in what students need to know and what they are being taught.

**RECOMMENDATION #6**  
**CREATION OF DATA SYSTEMS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to create a data system to assess the extent to which gaps in white and minority achievement are being closed.*

**Outcome:** By 2006-2007, a data report will be made available to the public that identifies achievement gains made by white and minority K-12 students taught by graduates of teacher preparation programs.

**Measure:** Data collected by the Louisiana Department of Education and Board of Regents.

**ACTIONS:**

**1. Data System for Gaps and Progress**

Create a data analysis system that will do the following:

- a. Build upon existing models that already examine the performance of middle and high school students taught by individual teachers.
- b. Analyze gains demonstrated by ethnic groups in individual academic areas. The system should do the following:
  - 1) Utilize data from a variety of sources (e.g., LEAP, Iowa Tests, NAEP, ACT, EPAS, PASS-PORT, etc.).
  - 2) Set specific benchmarks in content areas to close the gap for ethnic groups.
  - 3) Provide longitudinal data for ethnic groups in individual content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, English, reading, etc.)
  - 4) Annually report progress in closing gaps between ethnic groups in individual content areas.
- c. Analyze academic growth of middle and high school students taught by individual teachers each year. This system should do the following:
  - 1) Identify academic strengths and weakness of middle and high school teachers based upon student performance.
  - 2) Provide longitudinal data on individual middle and high school teachers.
  - 3) Examine other factors using multivariate analysis: socioeconomic status, school districts, schools, curriculum, etc.

**RECOMMENDATION #6**  
**CREATION OF DATA SYSTEMS (CONT'D)**

**1. Data System for Gaps and Progress (Cont'd)**

- d. Evaluate the performance of teacher preparation programs by using a value added data system to determine the amount of academic growth exhibited by students taught by university graduates. This system should be clearly defined and do the following:
  - 1) Clearly define the meaning of “value added”.
  - 2) Examine content curriculum of university graduates and relate content preparation of university graduates to performance of K-12 students taught by graduates (e.g., mathematics major of teacher and performance of high school students on 10<sup>th</sup> grade ACT).

**2. Data Monitoring of No Child Left Behind**

Develop data and research capacity to monitor and understand annually (1) the proportion of funds under each NCLB title used by middle schools, or which others are using on behalf of middle school students; (b) the activities for which middle schools are using funds available under the NCLB titles, (c) how effectively middle schools are using NCLB funding and requirements to increase student achievement, and (d) the extent to which middle schools are meeting the NCLB adequate yearly progress requirements, and how they respond when they do not meet them.

## **SECTION 3**

**ACTIONS, CURRENT STATUS,  
OUTCOMES, TIMELINES, &  
PERSONS RESPONSIBLE**

**ACTIONS, CURRENT STATUS, BENCHMARKS, TIMELINES, & PERSONS RESPONSIBLE**

**RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATION OF COORDINATED PARTNERHIPS**

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to coordinate existing partnerships and create meaningful new partnerships that result in improved student achievement among middle school students.*

**A. FIRST PRIORITIES**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Benchmarks for 2006-07</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
1. Have the State and all middle schools receive and utilize a clear, coherent, and relatively brief statement describing the mission of middle schools. See Appendix C for a recommended mission statement.	A clear mission for middle schools does not exist in the state.	A clear mission statement will be presented to BESE/BoR and disseminated to middle schools.	September 2003	BESE, SDE, & BoR
1. Ask all PK-16+ Councils to identify strategies for universities and districts to jointly implement to address individual needs of students and close achievement gaps between white and minority students in districts surrounding the universities.	PK-16+ Councils are not currently addressing this need.	All PK-16+ Councils will address this area at their meetings.	September 2003	BoR, BESE, & SDE
3. Have PK-16+ Councils gather a group of minority leaders who know, appreciate, and understand academic, personal, and social needs of minority students and obtain their input regarding actions to close the achievement gaps to assist the PK-16+ Councils. Develop and implement a process for this information to be shared with the Blue Ribbon Commission.	A group has not been formed and a communication process does not exist.	Input from PK-16+ Councils pertaining to input from minority leaders will be presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission once communicated through a formal process.	April 2003	PK-16+ Councils, BoR, BESE, & SDE
4. Develop and implement a formal process to communicate expectations of post-secondary education and the importance of four years of mathematics to middle and high school parents, teachers, and students.	A formal process does not currently exist.	All parents, teachers, and students will receive information pertaining to the importance of post-secondary education and mathematics.	September 2004	BESE, SDE, & BoR

**RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATION OF COORDINATED PARTNERHIPS (CONT'D)**

**B. SECOND PRIORITIES**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Benchmarks for 2006-07</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
1. Have a senior level official in the Louisiana Department of Education who devotes 100% of his/her time to middle school education and spends 50% of the time in middle schools provide full-time leadership to facilitate middle school improvement.	A senior level official to lead middle school improvement does not currently exist within the Louisiana Department of Education.	A senior level official will be hired.	July 1, 2004	SDE
2. Identify exemplary middle school educators, organize them into an official statewide Council for Middle School Excellence, convene them quarterly for networking, consultation, and to review existing policies and make recommendations to BESE and BoR.	A formal council composed of exemplary middle school educators does not exist to advise state decision makers.	A Council for Middle School Excellence will start meeting.	August 1, 2004	SDE

## RECOMMENDATION 2: RECRUITMENT OF TEACHER CANDIDATES AND CERTIFIED TEACHERS

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to actively recruit individuals into the teaching profession with a focus upon middle school preparation.*

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
1. Provide middle and high school teachers with the necessary salaries to keep them within the profession.	Teacher salaries are below the SREB average	Increase middle and high school teacher salaries to the SREB average.	July 1, 2006	Governor, Legislature, BESE, SDE, & BoR
2. Create an incentives system that assists in the placement of effective teachers in middle school and high school classrooms that contain students with the greatest academic needs. This system should do the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify state/federal funds that can be used to provide monetary incentives to middle and high school teachers.</li> <li>b. Identify community funds that can be used to provide personal/living incentives (e.g., six months of rent in a new apartment, down payment on a car, etc.).</li> <li>c. Develop criteria to use to select effective middle and high school teachers to receive the incentive(s).</li> <li>d. Develop criteria to use to select middle and high schools that will receive effective teachers who have been provided incentives.</li> <li>e. Require teachers who receive the incentive(s) to remain within the schools for a minimum of three years or repay the monetary value of the incentive to the school district/community.</li> <li>f. Place teachers receiving incentives in middle and high schools that have balanced faculties (e.g., experienced teachers, mid-career teachers, and new teachers).</li> </ol>	Incentives do not currently exist.	Legislation will be passed to provide monetary incentives to effective middle school teachers who work in schools where students have the greatest needs.	July 1, 2005	Governor, Legislature, BESE, SDE, & BoR
3. Provide monetary bonuses for certified middle and high school teachers to obtain content specific (e.g., mathematics, biology, chemistry, etc.) master's degrees, complete appropriate courses, and/or pass additional PRAXIS examinations in critical shortage areas (e.g., mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, and special education) to become certified in additional areas.	Bonuses do not exist at a state level to encourage certified teachers to obtain additional areas of certification.	Legislation will be passed to provide bonuses for middle and high school teachers who become certified in additional critical shortage areas.	July 1, 2005	Governor, Legislature, BESE, SDE, & BoR

### RECOMMENDATION 3: PREPARATION OF QUALITY TEACHERS

To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to *prepare teachers who possess the in-depth core knowledge and teaching skills in effectively educate higher achieving middle school students.*

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
1. Incorporate into all new pre-service middle school teacher education programs a strong emphasis upon the psychological, sociological, and academic needs of middle school students.	11 out of 19 public and private universities have designed pre-service/alternate certification programs for middle school certification.	Middle school programs with a strong middle school emphasis will exist in all 13 public universities.	July 1 2006	BoR
2. Provide opportunities for all “not new” middle school teachers to complete a predetermined number of professional development hours, pass a PRAXIS specialty content examination, or have a major in a content area to be classified as a “highly qualified” middle school teacher as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.	Approximately 3,700 certified middle school teachers in Louisiana cannot be classified as “highly qualified” based new guidelines developed by the U.S. Department of Education.	All middle school teachers will meet state requirements to be classified as “highly qualified.”	July 1, 2006	BESE, SDE, & BoR
4. Have all new pre-service middle school teacher education programs focus upon providing effective reality-based instruction to close achievement gaps and improve the academic performance of culturally diverse (e.g., African-American, Hispanic, etc.) and/or impoverished students.	Pre-service teachers are taught “about” cultural differences but often lack opportunities to apply instructional strategies that best address the academic needs of culturally diverse learners.	All middle school teachers will complete programs demonstrating competencies (knowledge, dispositions, and skills) to use effective instructional strategies to close achievement gaps and help culturally diverse students learn.	July 1, 2005	BoR



## RECOMMENDATION 4: CREATION OF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to create environments and conditions that support and retain highly effective pre-service teachers, new teachers, and experienced teachers in middle schools.*

### A. FIRST PRIORITIES

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
1. Provide middle school teachers with high quality, job-embedded, professional development that requires teachers to examine student assessment data (EPAS, LEAP, Iowa, etc.) and work collaboratively to strengthen the rigor of class content and address the knowledge and skills for success in post-secondary education and the workplace.	168 schools in Louisiana are currently participating in the LINC program which requires teachers to study assessment data and work in faculty study groups to address educational needs.	Professional development opportunities specifically developed for middle school teachers will be available for every teacher in every school district.	July 1, 2004	BESE, SDE, & BoR
2. Identify school models that provide highly effective middle and high school teachers with a balanced schedule to successfully teach high achieving K-12 at-risk students while mentoring (pre-service, new, and ineffective) teachers and provide incentives for schools to use the models.	Models have not been identified and incentives do not exist.	Criteria will be used to identify school models in Louisiana and incentives for other schools to replicate the models.	January 1, 2005	BESE, SDE, & BoR
3. Create incentives (e.g., six hours of graduate credit, 150 hours of professional development over 5 years, etc.) to increase the number of experienced middle and high school teachers who are highly effective (e.g., National Board Certified, LaSIP trained, etc.).	Additional incentives have not been identified.	New incentives will be used to increase the number of teachers who are recognized as being highly effective.	January 1, 2006	BESE, SDE, & BoR
4. Create a leadership academy to prepare future middle/high school instructional leaders and university (academia and curriculum) leaders who are prepared to be more visible within classrooms to move all middle and high school students to higher standards and close the achievement gaps.	A leadership academy for middle/high school leaders and university leaders does not currently exist.	A leadership academy for middle/high school leaders and university leaders that involves middle/high school students will exist.	June 2005	BESE, SDE, & BoR
5. Reduce unnecessary paperwork required by the State to provide more time for teachers, counselors, support staff, and principals within middle schools to focus upon improved student achievement.	A clear understanding does not exist regarding the amount of paperwork required of middle schools.	Paperwork required for middle schools will be reduced by 25%.	September 2006	BESE, SDE, & BoR

**RECOMMENDATION 4: CREATION OF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS (CONT'D)**

**A. FIRST PRIORITIES (CONT'D)**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Benchmarks for 2006-07</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
6. Create and implement a communication campaign to inform “not new” and recently certified new teachers regarding the new requirements to be “highly qualified.”	New requirements are now being approved and many teachers do not have accurate information pertaining to “highly qualified” requirements.	A communications campaign will be implemented that reaches all schools in the state.	September 2003	BESE & SDE
7. Provide an annual meeting and other forms of professional development for middle school teachers and university faculty to meet to obtain new information pertaining to best practices for the teaching of middle school students, grant writing, and other topics.	State led activities do not currently exist for middle school teachers and university faculty.	An annual meeting and a schedule of activities will occur on a yearly basis.	October 2005	BESE, SDE, & BoR

**B. SECOND PRIORITIES**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Benchmarks for 2006-07</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
1. Redesign counselor programs in schools and universities to change the role of counselors to include more actual academic, personal, career, and social counseling; hire clerks to do paper work and record keeping.	Paper work and record keeping currently consume a large portion of a counselor’s time.	A new structure will exist for counselors in schools and existing counselor education programs will be redesigned.	June 2007	BESE, SDE, & BoR
2. Create a process for districts to match their middle and high schools with similar schools in the state and work with school personnel who have been successful in improving student achievement in middle & high schools.	A formal process for personnel at high performing schools to work with other schools does not currently exist.	A system will exist to match low and high performing middle and high schools that have similar demographics.	June 2005	BESE & SDE

## RECOMMENDATION 5: PROVISION OF AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to provide middle school students with a challenging and inquiry-based curriculum to be successful in middle and high school.*

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
<p>2. Define middle school education as grades 5-8. See Appendix D.</p>	<p>A clear definition does not exist in the state for middle school education.</p>	<p>A definition for middle school education will be approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education</p>	<p>September 2003</p>	<p>BESE, SDE, &amp; BoR</p>
<p>2. Use high school transcript data to better counsel students for post-secondary education.</p> <p>a. Analyze high school transcripts to determine the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) What courses are high school students taking in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade?</li> <li>(2) What percent of students are taking mathematics?</li> <li>(3) What “tracks” are now being offered in high school and what courses do students take when enrolled in those ‘tracks’?”</li> </ol> <p>b. Use the high school transcript data to identify patterns and develop strategies to direct high school students toward courses that will better prepare them for post-secondary education.</p> <p>c. Have schools use EPAS data to identify specific courses that students will need to take to be successful when taking the ACT and attending post-secondary education.</p>	<p>A formal process does not exist to analyze high school transcripts, identify patterns within transcript data, and use EPAS data to inform instruction.</p>	<p>A process to analyze high school transcripts and identify patterns within the data will exist; plus, all middle and high schools will use EPAS data to determine future courses for success in post-secondary education.</p>	<p>July 1, 2004</p>	<p>BESE, SDE, &amp; BOR</p>
<p>3. Conduct a curriculum audit of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade courses in core subject areas (e.g., English, mathematics, science, and social studies) to determine the rigor of the courses being taught, and compare the findings of the curriculum audit with EXPLORE and PLAN data from ACT pertaining to knowledge and skills that students must know to be successful on the ACT and when attending post-secondary education and identify gaps in what students need to know and what they are being taught.</p>	<p>A curriculum audit has not been conducted and comparisons have not been made.</p>	<p>A curriculum audit will be conducted within all schools in Louisiana and EXPLORE/PLAN results will be compared to the curriculum audit to identify and address weaknesses in programs.</p>	<p>July 1, 2005</p>	<p>BESE, SDE, &amp; BoR</p>

## RECOMMENDATION 6: CREATION OF DATA SYSTEM

*To have state agencies, universities, and districts work collaboratively to create a data system to assess the extent to which gaps in white and minority achievement are being closed.*

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
<p>1. Create a data analysis system that will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Build upon existing models that already examine the performance of middle and high school students taught by individual teachers.</li> <li>b. Analyze gains demonstrated by ethnic groups in individual academic areas. The system should do the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Utilize data from a variety of sources (e.g., LEAP, Iowa Tests, NAEP, ACT, EPAS, PASS-PORT, etc.).</li> <li>5) Set specific benchmarks in content areas to close the gap for ethnic groups.</li> <li>6) Provide longitudinal data for ethnic groups in individual content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, English, reading, etc.)</li> <li>7) Annually report progress in closing gaps between ethnic groups in individual content areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Analyze academic growth of middle and high school students taught by individual teachers each year. This system should do the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Identify academic strengths and weakness of middle and high school teachers based upon student performance.</li> <li>5) Provide longitudinal data on individual middle and high school teachers.</li> <li>6) Examine other factors using multivariate analysis: socioeconomic status, school districts, schools, curriculum, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>A comprehensive data system does not currently exist to address these needs.</p>	<p>A comprehensive system will be developed and implemented.</p>	<p>July 2004</p>	<p>BESE, SDE, &amp; BoR</p>

**RECOMMENDATION 6: CREATION OF DATA SYSTEM (CONT'D)**

Actions	Current Status	Benchmarks for 2006-07	Timelines	Lead Agency
<p>1. Create a data analysis system that will do the following (Cont'd):</p> <p>d. Evaluate the performance of teacher preparation programs by using a value added data system to determine the amount of academic growth exhibited by students taught by university graduates. This system should be clearly defined and do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Clearly define the meaning of "value added".</li> <li>2) Examine content curriculum of university graduates and relate content preparation of university graduates to performance of K-12 students taught by graduates (e.g., mathematics major of teacher and performance of high school students on 10<sup>th</sup> grade ACT).</li> </ol>				
<p>2. Develop data and research capacity to monitor and understand annually (1) the proportion of funds under each NCLB title used by middle schools, or which others are using on behalf of middle school students; (b) the activities for which middle schools are using funds available under the NCLB titles, (c) how effectively middle schools are using NCLB funding and requirements to increase student achievement, and (d) the extent to which middle schools are meeting the NCLB adequate yearly progress requirements, and how they respond when they do not meet them.</p>	<p>A data and research system has not yet been developed.</p>	<p>A data and research system will exist.</p>	<p>July 2004</p>	<p>BESE, SDE, &amp; BoR</p>

**SECTION 3**  
**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR  
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE  
MEMBERS**

**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
**MEMBERS**  
**2002/2003**

**CHAIRPERSONS**

Co-Chairperson	Glenny Lee Buquet Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	1309 Bayou Black Drive; Houma, LA 70360; (TEL) 985-876-5216; (FAX) 985-868-7919; E-mail: <a href="mailto:Glennyb@mobiletel.com">Glennyb@mobiletel.com</a>
Co-Chairperson	Frances T. Henry Board of Regents	945 East Hart's Mill Lane; Baton Rouge, LA 70808; (TEL) 225-766-2589; (FAX) 225-763-6346; E-mail: fhenry@bellsouth.net

**DESIGNATED MEMBERS**

Board of Regents	Pat A. Strong Board of Regents	519 Adams Street, Franklin, LA 70538; (TEL) 337-923-7215; (FAX) 337-923-6848; E-mail: <a href="mailto:patstrong@chitimacha.gov">patstrong@chitimacha.gov</a>
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	Donna Contois Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	24355 Lowe Davis Road; Covington, LA 70435; (TEL) 985-809-0002; (FAX) 985-809-7308; E-mail: <a href="mailto:onedonna@starband.net">onedonna@starband.net</a>
Governor's Designee	Michael Wang Education Policy Advisor	Office of the Governor; P. O. Box 94004; Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004; (TEL) 225-342-4557; (FAX) 225-342-0002; E-Mail: <a href="mailto:wangm@gov.state.la.us">wangm@gov.state.la.us</a>
President of the Senate Designee	Senator Gerald Theunissen State Senator	P. O. Box 287, Jennings, LA 70546-0287; (TEL) 337-824-0376; (FAX) 337-824-4780; E-Mail: <a href="mailto:theunisg@legis.state.la.us">theunisg@legis.state.la.us</a> Local: TEL (225-342-2040) (FAX) 225-387-8823
Chairperson, House Education Committee	Representative Carl Crane State Representative	836 Bancroft Way, Baton Rouge, LA 70808; (TEL) 225-765-2428; (FAX) 225-765-2388 (TEL @ Capitol) 225-342-6945; (FAX @ Capitol) 225-342-8336
Commissioner of Higher Education	E. Joseph Savoie Board of Regents	1201 N. 3 <sup>rd</sup> St, Suite6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802; (TEL) 225-342-4253; (FAX) 225-342-9318; E-mail: <a href="mailto:commish@regents.state.la.us">commish@regents.state.la.us</a>
State Superintendent of Education	Cecil J. Picard Louisiana Department of Education	P. O. Box 96064, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064; (TEL) 225-342-3607; (FAX) 225-342-7316; E-mail: <a href="mailto:cpicard@mail.doe.state.la.us">cpicard@mail.doe.state.la.us</a>



**APPENDIX A**  
**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
**MEMBERS**  
**2002/2003**

<b>MEMBERS SELECTED BY BOARD OF REGENTS</b>		
University President	Dr. Sally Clausen President University of Louisiana System	1201 N. 3 <sup>rd</sup> St, Baton Rouge, LA 70802; (TEL) 225-342-6950; (FAX) 225-342-6473; E-mail: <a href="mailto:sclausen@uls.state.la.us">sclausen@uls.state.la.us</a>
University Provost	Dr. Brenda Birkett Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Southern University at Baton Rouge	Southern University Branch Post Office, P. O. Box 9820, Baton Rouge, LA 70813 (TEL) 225-771-2360; (FAX) 225-771-2018 E-mail: <a href="mailto:bbirkett@subr.edu">bbirkett@subr.edu</a>
University Deans	Dr. Andolyn Harrison College of Education Grambling University  Dr. Rosalind Hale College of Education Xavier University  Dr. Jane Collins College of Arts and Sciences Louisiana State University	P. O. Drawer 1181; Grambling, LA 71245; (TEL) 318-274-2231; (FAX) 318-274-2799; E-mail: <a href="mailto:HarrisonA@alpha0.gram.edu">HarrisonA@alpha0.gram.edu</a>  Division of Education; One Drexel Dr Box 59A; Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, LA 70125; (TEL) 504-483-7536; (FAX) 504-485-7909; E-mail: <a href="mailto:rhale@xula.edu">rhale@xula.edu</a>  Louisiana State University; Baton Rouge, LA 70803; (TEL) 225-578-8273; (FAX) 225-578-6447; E-mail: <a href="mailto:Collins@lsu.edu">Collins@lsu.edu</a>
University Faculty Members	Dr. Vic Schneider College of Arts/Sciences University of Louisiana at Lafayette  Dr. Pat B. Caillouet College of Education Nicholls State University	Department of Mathematics; P. O. Box 41010; Lafayette, LA 70504; (TEL) 337-482-5295; (FAX) 337-482-5346; E-mail: <a href="mailto:yps3252@louisiana.edu">yps3252@louisiana.edu</a>  Nicholls State University; Thibodaux, LA 70310; (TEL) 985-448-4315; (FAX) 985-448-4926; E-mail: <a href="mailto:TE-PBC@nicholls.edu">TE-PBC@nicholls.edu</a>
PK-16+ Coordinator	Dawn Bassinger PK-16+ Coordinator Louisiana Tech University	P. O. Box 3161, Ruston, LA 71272 (TEL) 318-257-3950; (FAX) 318-257-2960 E-mail: <a href="mailto:dbasing@woodard.latech.edu">dbasing@woodard.latech.edu</a>
Pre-service Teacher	Chrissy Sphar	8939 Jefferson Hwy., #1129, Baton Rouge LA 70809; (TEL) 225-231-1295; E-mail: <a href="mailto:chrissybrowneyes@hotmail.com">chrissybrowneyes@hotmail.com</a>

**APPENDIX A (CONT'D)**  
**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
**MEMBERS**  
**2002/2003**

<b>MEMBERS SELECTED BY BOARD OF ELEMENTARY &amp; SECONDARY EDUCATION</b>		
District Superintendent – Urban	Elton Lagasse Jefferson Parish	501 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058-4495; (TEL) 504-349-7802; (FAX) 504-349-7960; E-mail: <a href="mailto:Elton.lagasse@jppss.k12.la.us">Elton.lagasse@jppss.k12.la.us</a>
District Superintendent – Rural	Walter Lee DeSoto Parish Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	2007 Urban Dale Drive; Shreveport, LA 71118; (TEL) 318-872-2836; (FAX) 318-872-1324; E-mail: <a href="mailto:wlee@mail.desoto.k12.la.us">wlee@mail.desoto.k12.la.us</a>
Elementary Principal of the Year	Timothy Thompson Stockwell Place Elementary School	5801 Shed Road, Bossier City, LA 71112; (TEL) 318-549-5820; (FAX) 318-549-5833 E-mail: <a href="mailto:5825@tc1.bossier.k12.la.us">5825@tc1.bossier.k12.la.us</a>
Middle School Principal of the Year	Shirley James St. Landry Parish Sunset Elementary School	236 Church Hill Street, Sunset, LA 70584 (TEL) 337-662-3194 (FAX) 337-662-3478 Email: <a href="mailto:SBJ48@aol.com">SBJ48@aol.com</a>
High School Principal of the Year	Leroy Helire, Jr. Northdale Alternative Magnet Academy	10755 Cletus Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70815; (TEL) 225-272-2036; (FAX) 225-273-2125 E-mail: <a href="mailto:lhelire@ebrpss.k12.la.us">lhelire@ebrpss.k12.la.us</a>
Elementary School Teacher of the Year & Representative of Louisiana Association of Educators	Grace Sibley Plaisance Elementary	3264 Highway 167, Opelousas, LA 70570 (TEL) 337-826-3335 or 318-363-9353; (FAX) 337-826-7062 E-mail: <a href="mailto:gvs1286@slp.k12.la.us">gvs1286@slp.k12.la.us</a>
Middle School Teacher of the Year & Representative of Louisiana Federation of Teachers	Ann Cook Sallie Humble Elementary School	2711 McClellan Street, Monroe, LA 71201; (TEL) 318-325-7659; (FAX) 318-361-9448; E-mail: <a href="mailto:ann_cook@msn.com">ann_cook@msn.com</a>
High School Teacher of the Year & Representative of Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana	Janet Cundiff Istrouma High School and Technology Magnet East Baton Rouge Parish School Board	410 Magnolia Wood, Baton Rouge, LA 70808; (TEL) 225-769-0973; (FAX) 225-359-9807; E-mail: <a href="mailto:kajns@cox.net">kajns@cox.net</a>
Personnel Director	Linda Busfield Assistant in Human Resources St. Charles Parish	46 Rosedown Drive, Destrehan, LA 70047; (TEL); 985-785-7232; (FAX) 504-785-2578; E-mail: <a href="mailto:lbusfield@stcharles.k12.la.us">lbusfield@stcharles.k12.la.us</a>
School Board Member	Roger Moser East Baton Rouge Parish School Board	School Board Office, 1050 S. Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806; (TEL) 225-922-5567; (FAX) 225-769-1095; E-mail: <a href="mailto:rmoser@ebrpss.k12.la.us">rmoser@ebrpss.k12.la.us</a>

**APPENDIX A (CONT'D)**  
**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
**MEMBERS**  
**2002/2003**

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED BY THE  
BOARD OF REGENTS & BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Community Representatives	<p>Dan Juneau Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI)</p> <p>Stephanie Desselle, Senior Vice President Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL)</p> <p>Jim Brandt, President Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc.</p> <p>Bonita Crawford, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President State Parent Teachers Association</p> <p>Dr. Kerry Davidson Grant Generator</p>	<p>P. O. Box 80258, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0258; (TEL) 225-928-5388; (FAX) 225-929-6054; E-mail: <a href="mailto:danj@LABI.org">danj@LABI.org</a></p> <p>P. O. Box 4308; Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4308; (TEL) 225-344-2225; (FAX) 225-338-9470; E-mail: <a href="mailto:desselle@cabl.org">desselle@cabl.org</a></p> <p>P. O. Box 14776; Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4776; (TEL) 225-926-8414; (FAX) 225-926-8417; E-mail: <a href="mailto:jimbrandt@la-par.org">jimbrandt@la-par.org</a></p> <p>295 Patton, Shreveport, LA 711105; (TEL) 318-868-3684; (FAX) 318-868-5119; E-mail: BonnieC222@aol.com</p> <p>1201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 6-200 Baton Rouge, LA 70802 (TEL) 225-342-4253; (FAX) 225-342-6926 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Davidson@laregents.org">Davidson@laregents.org</a></p>
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**APPENDIX A (CONT'D)**  
**BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
**STAFF**  
**2002/2003**

<i>AGENCIES</i>	<i>NAMES</i>	<i>ADDRESSES &amp; TELEPHONE NUMBERS</i>
Board of Regents	Dr. Jeanne M. Burns Associate Commissioner for Teacher Education Initiatives	Board of Regents/Governor's Office of Education, P. O. Box 94004; Baton Rouge, LA 70804; (TEL) 225-342-0162; (FAX) 225-342-5326; E-mail: <a href="mailto:burnsj@gov.state.la.us">burnsj@gov.state.la.us</a>
Louisiana Department of Education	Dr. Carol Whelan Assistant Superintendent, Office of Quality Educators	Louisiana Department of Education, P. O. Box 94064, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064; (TEL) 225-342-3562; (FAX) 225-342-3283; E-mail: <a href="mailto:cwhelan@mail.doe.state.la.us">cwhelan@mail.doe.state.la.us</a>
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	Weegie Peabody Executive Director of Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	P. O. Box 94064, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064; (TEL) 225-342-5840; (FAX) 225-342-5843; E-mail: <a href="mailto:mpeabody@doe.state.la.us">mpeabody@doe.state.la.us</a>
Office of the Governor	Linda Marino Administrative Assistant	Governor's Office of Education; P. O. Box 94004, Baton Rouge, LA 70804; (TEL) 225-342-0162; (FAX) 225-342-5326; E-mail: <a href="mailto:marinol@gov.state.la.us">marinol@gov.state.la.us</a>

## **APPENDIX B**

# **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

**2002-2003**

<b>DATES</b>	<b>LOCATIONS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
Thursday, September 12, 2002	Governor's Press Room State Capitol – 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: <i>Acknowledging National And State Achievement Gaps</i> Speaker: Kati Haycock, Director Education Trust Washington, DC
Thursday, October 10, 2002	Room 1-136 (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: <i>Using State Data to Identify Solutions to Close Achievement Gaps</i> Speaker: John Gwillim, American College Testing Program Dr. Stan Chadick Northwestern Louisiana University
Thursday, November 14, 2002	Room 1-136 (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: <i>Reforming Middle School Education</i> Speaker: Hazes Mizell, Director Program for Student Achievement Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Thursday, February 13, 2003	Room 1-136 (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: <i>Middle School Models</i> Speakers: Principals from Model Middle Schools in the Nation and Louisiana
Thursday, April 10, 2003	Room 1-136 (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: <i>New Issues Pertaining to Teacher Quality</i> Jeanne M. Burns & Carol Whelan, Co-Directors, Blue Ribbon Commission
Thursday, May 8, 2003	Room 1-136 (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: Final Development of the Blue Ribbon Commission's Recommendations
May 22, 2003	Board Room (First Floor) Claiborne Building 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA	Topic: Presentation of the Blue Ribbon Commission's Recommendations to the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence Website:**

[http://www.gov.state.la.us/educ/blue\\_ribbon.html](http://www.gov.state.la.us/educ/blue_ribbon.html)

## **APPENDIX C**

# **PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA**

**APPENDIX C  
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION  
FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

**PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT FOR  
MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION  
IN LOUISIANA**

Louisiana middle level students will be provided academically excellent and developmentally responsive learning experiences in socially equitable environments supported by structures that impact students' learning to develop their full potential so that all master the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary to successfully complete higher levels of education and become economically and socially productive members of society.



# **APPENDIX D**

## **GRADE LEVELS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION**

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### BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

#### PROPOSED GRADE LEVELS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

##### BACKGROUND

The Blue Ribbon Commission for Teacher Quality recommended a new certification structure in their initial report that changed the certification configuration from certification in grades 1-8 and grades 7-12 to certification in grades PK-3, grades 1-6, grades 4-8, and grades 7-12. At the middle school level, all grades 4-8 teachers were exposed to a stronger curriculum in the areas of mathematics, science, English, and social studies and required to pass a generic PRAXIS content area examination for middle school teachers that addressed all four content areas. In addition, grades 4-8 teachers were required to pass the Principles of Learning and Teaching PRAXIS examination developed for middle school teachers. Universities in Louisiana have redesigned their undergraduate and alternate certification teacher preparation programs to address the above guidelines for middle school certification. Teachers have already enrolled in the middle school alternate certification programs and will start to enroll in middle school undergraduate programs during the 2003-2004 academic year.

As a result of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation, the State has been informed that middle school teachers must pass individual content area examinations in each area in which they teach in order for teachers to be classified as “highly qualified.” Thus, the current middle school generic examination for all four content areas cannot be used by teachers to be classified as “highly qualified.”

The state must define grade levels for middle school and require teachers to take the individual content tests in the areas in which they teach for those grade levels. The National Middle School Association defines middle school as grades 5-8 while states define middle school as different grade levels (i.e., 4-8, 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, etc.). Thus, if middle school is defined by Louisiana as grades 5-8, teachers in our state would be required to pass the individual content tests to be classified as “highly qualified” when teaching grades 5-8; teachers in the state would be allowed to take the generic PRAXIS examination for elementary teachers only if teaching grades 1-4. In contrast, if middle school is defined as grades 6-8, teachers in our state would be required to pass the individual content tests to be classified as “highly qualified” when teaching grades 6-8; teachers in the state would be allowed to take the generic PRAXIS examination for elementary teachers only if teaching grades 1-5.

Due to the new federal regulations, the Blue Ribbon Commission discussed various options when proposing grade levels for middle school education in Louisiana. The Commission first voted for Option 1 which is listed on the next page. Due to a split in the vote, the Commission further discussed the issues and voted upon Option 2 which is listed on the next page. A majority of the Commission members voted for Option 2.

Advantages and disadvantages for both options have been listed. In addition, costs have been provided for PRAXIS examinations when teachers are required to pass the individual PRAXIS content examinations in each content area they teach.

##### 1. CURRENT MIDDLE SCHOOL CERTIFICATION

Grade Levels	Curriculum	PRAXIS Content Tests
<b>4-8</b> <i>(Departmentalized School Setting or Self-Contained School Setting)</i>	<b>Generic</b> (All Four Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English) <b>OR</b> <b>Two Focus Areas</b> (Select Two Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English)	Middle School: Generic Test – Grades 5-9 (Math, English, Science, and Social Studies)

**2. OPTION #1: DISCUSSED BY BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**a. Definitions and Certification Levels**

Definition of Levels for U.S. Department of Education	Certification Levels in Louisiana
Early Childhood: PK-3	PK-3
Elementary: 1-5	1-5
Middle School: 6-8	5-8
High School: 9-12	7-12

**b. Curriculum and Tests**

- (1) Grades PK-3, 1-5, and 7-12 - No changes to new university curriculum and PRAXIS tests.
- (2) Grades 5-8

The following changes would be needed.

Certification Levels	Curriculum	PRAXIS Content Tests
<b>5-8 (Departmentalized)</b>	<b>Two Focus Teaching Areas:</b> Select Two Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English.	<b>Tests Required to Teach Within Departmentalized Classroom Placements – PRAXIS Specialty Examinations:</b>  Teacher candidates take TWO of the following middle school specialty content tests that correspond to the two selected focus areas:  Middle School: Math Test Middle School: English Test Middle School: Science Test Middle School: Social Studies Test
<b>5-8 (Self-Contained)</b>	<b>Two Focus Teaching Areas:</b> Select Two Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English.	<b>Tests Required to Teach Within Self-Contained Classroom Settings:</b>  Teacher candidates take two of the following specialty content tests prior to graduation and district pay for the other two tests once hired:  Middle School: Math Test Middle School: English Test Middle School: Science Test Middle School: Social Studies Test

**BENEFITS:** Individuals can teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade either by obtaining an elementary degree and becoming certified to teach in all four content areas in self-contained settings (Note: Teachers must pass the PRAXIS grades 1-6 test to be certified.) or by obtaining a middle school degree and becoming certified to teach by taking individual content specialty examinations in their teaching areas. This provides more flexibility for districts when placing teachers and still meets the U.S. Department of Education requirement for individualized tests to be administered to the middle school grades (grades 6-8) as defined by the State.

**DISADVANTAGES:** The definition for middle school (6-8) which determines at what grade levels individual content tests must be administered differs from the certification levels (5-8).

**COMMISSION VOTE:** The Blue Ribbon Commission had a mixed reaction to Option #1. Nine (9) members voted in favor of Option #1, 4 members voted in opposition to Option #1, and 5 members were undecided.

**3. OPTION #2: VOTED FOR BY BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**a. Definitions and Certification Levels**

Definition of Levels for U.S. Department of Education	Certification Levels in Louisiana
Early Childhood: PK-3	PK-3
Elementary: 1-4	1-4
Middle School: 5-8	5-8
High School: 9-12	7-12

**c. Curriculum and Tests**

- (1) Grades PK-3, 1-5, and 7-12 - No changes to curriculum and PRAXIS tests.
- (2) Grades 5-8

The following changes would be needed.

Certification Levels	Curriculum	PRAXIS Content Tests
<b>5-8 (Departmentalized)</b>	<b>Two Focus Teaching Areas:</b> Select Two Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English.	<b>Tests Required to Teach Within Departmentalized Classroom Placements – PRAXIS Specialty Examinations:</b>  Teacher candidates take TWO of the following middle school specialty content tests that correspond to the two selected focus areas:  Middle School: Math Test Middle School: English Test Middle School: Science Test Middle School: Social Studies Test
<b>5-8 (Self-Contained)</b>	<b>Two Focus Teaching Areas:</b> Select Two Areas: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English.	<b>Tests Required to Teach Within Self-Contained Classroom Settings:</b>  Teacher candidates take ALL of the following specialty content tests:  Middle School: Math Test Middle School: English Test Middle School: Science Test Middle School: Social Studies Test

**BENEFITS:**

The definitions and certification levels are aligned (with the exception of high school). This fits the grade levels identified by national associations for middle schools. This is consistent with the grade levels for state content standards and the LEAP tests.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

Option #2 provides less flexibility for school districts to place teachers. This will increase the number of teachers in the state who will not be “highly qualified” since many are certified in grades 1-8 and will only be “highly qualified” in grades 1-4. Option #2 will increase the expense of tests that teachers must take to become certified.

**COMMISSION VOTE:**

The majority of the Blue Ribbon Commission members voted in favor of Option #2. Twelve (12) members voted in favor of Option #2, and 5 members voted in opposition to Option #2.

**4. NEW RECOMMENDED ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION TESTS & CURRICULUM**

<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>PRAXIS Content Tests</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>
<b>5-8 (Departmentalized)</b>	<p><i>Teacher candidates must pass TWO of the following middle school specialty content tests to enter into the alternate certification program for middle school teachers:</i></p> <p>Middle School: Math Test                      Middle School: English Test                      Middle School: Science Test                      Middle School: Social Studies Test</p>	Only change in alternate certification curriculum: Methodology courses and the internship must address the two focus areas that correspond to the two PRAXIS middle school tests passed for admission to the middle school program.
<b>5-8 (Self-Contained)</b>	<p><i>Teacher candidates must pass ALL of the following middle school specialty content tests to enter into the alternate certification program for middle school teachers:</i></p> <p>Middle School: Math Test                      Middle School: English Test                      Middle School: Science Test                      Middle School: Social Studies Test</p>	No change in curriculum.

**5. CURRENT GRADES 4-8 ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION TEACHERS**

Grades 4-8 (middle school) candidates/teachers who are already enrolled in the middle school curriculum for alternate certification and have already taken the generic PRAXIS middle school examination (e.g., 0146) will exit the program certified to teach in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. However, they will be required to take the specialty content examinations for middle school in order to be classified as “highly qualified” in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8.

**6. TEST COSTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**a. CURRENT REQUIREMENTS (Grades 4-8)**

**Self-Contained or Departmentalized School Setting**

Reading, Writing, Mathematics	\$75 (PPST)	OR	\$130 (CBT)
Principles Learning & Teaching	\$80		80
Middle School Generic Content Exam	\$70		70
	—		—
	<b>\$225</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>\$280</b>

**6. TEST COSTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**b. NEW REQUIREMENTS (Grades 5-8)**

**(1) Tests for Departmentalized School Settings**

Reading, Writing, Mathematics	\$75 (PPST)	OR	\$130 (CBT)
Principles Learning & Teaching	\$80		\$80
#1 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
#2 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
	—		—
	<b>\$315</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>\$370</b>

**(2) Tests for Self-Contained School Settings**

Reading, Writing, Mathematics	\$75 (PPST)	OR	\$130 (CBT)
Principles Learning & Teaching	\$80		\$80
#1 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
#2 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
#3 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
#4 Middle School Content Exam	\$80		\$80
	—		—
	<b>\$475</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>\$530</b>