

FACT SHEET: Gov. Jindal's Education Reform Plan

The Situation

- 44% of schools in Louisiana are receiving a D or F, which means that up to **two-thirds of students** at those schools are below grade level.
- On a per student basis, **roughly one-third of students—or 235,000—are below grade level statewide** and half of students in our three largest cities, Shreveport, New Orleans and Baton Rouge.
- Between Fiscal Year 2008 and today, **the state has increased funding to K-12 education**—through the state formula, or MFP—by **\$289 million or 9.3%**.
- If 44% of schools are receiving a D or F and the state pays on average 65% of the MFP, annually we are **spending nearly \$1 billion per year on failing schools**.
- Louisiana's standards are relatively low when compared nationally. For example, comparing the Louisiana score for "passing" and the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) score of "passing" the fourth grade reading test, 71% of students are passing Louisiana's test while **only 18% are passing NAEP**.

The Reality

- Too many students are below grade level.
- Funding is not the issue. We have increased funding to the MFP over the last four years by 9.3% while the state's budget as a whole has decreased by 26%.
- By national standards, even our A and B schools can achieve at higher levels than they are today.

- ⇒ **This plan does not cost additional dollars; it leverages the dollars we have today more effectively.**
- ⇒ **This plan does not penalize effective teachers; it empowers them by removing bureaucracy and rewarding them for performance.**
- ⇒ **This plan does not put mandates on districts; it gives them tools to get the job done.**
- ⇒ **This plan does not create a one-size-fits-all system for all parishes; it creates more choices and expands access to choices so that parents can pick and choose what is right for them.**

Governor Jindal's Reform Plan Empowers Teachers and School Leaders

The Situation

- All teachers are treated the same by the system regardless of performance.
- The superintendents and principals running our public schools are disempowered to actually manage their school buildings.
- Districts are burdened with red tape and bureaucracy that takes time and money away from the classroom.
- In 2010, Louisiana created a "value-added" evaluation system for teachers, principals, and superintendents that evaluates teachers comparing where students started to where students ended at the end of each school year.
- The state board of education created three designations based on the new evaluation system: highly effective (top 10%), effective (middle 80%) and ineffective (bottom 10%).

The Plan

- Tie teacher, principal, and superintendent certification to effectiveness.
- Empower superintendents and principals with total hiring, firing, and teacher placement power.

- Give districts more flexibility over teacher pay to structure their salary schedules based on what they need—such as math teachers, teachers to work at high poverty schools, or performance—and stop automatic pay raises to ineffective teachers.
- Tie tenure to effectiveness by raising the bar for winning tenure, lowering the bar for losing tenure, and creating a process for professional development to help teachers improve.
 - Teachers win tenure after five years of highly effectiveness ratings.
 - Teachers lose tenure after one year of ineffectiveness, districts start dismissal proceedings after two years of ineffectiveness, and the state removes certification after three years of ineffectiveness.

Governor Jindal’s Plan Empower Parents and Students in a Total Choice System

The Situation

- We have many types of educational options today in Louisiana: traditional public schools, charter public schools, private schools, virtual education, higher education dual enrollment, and business and industry course work.
- These choices are funded separately and often on top of the \$3.31 billion going to K-12 education through the MFP. The system doesn’t leverage dollars effectively or make it easy for parents to take advantage of all the options.
- Parents have very few levers to effect change in their schools: they can move, they can vote for different school board members, or they can pay for private school.
- The MFP is a weighted per pupil formula where low income and special education students, for example, receive additional dollars. However, there is no accountability once the dollars leave Baton Rouge that the money is being spent on the students for whom it was allocated.
- With 44% of schools rated D or F, far too many students are stuck in failing schools today.

The Plan

Expand the choices we have today by:

- Expanding tuition assistance for private school (the Scholarship Program) to students attending C, D, and F schools at 250% of Federal Poverty Level statewide;
- Expanding access to virtual, postsecondary, and workforce based course work by allowing per course providers authorized by the state board of education;
- Streamlining the application process for high performing charter schools;
- Creating a new local charter school authorizer option to emphasize community involvement; and
- Allowing charter applicants in D and F districts to apply directly to the state board of education.

Give parents more levers by:

- Creating a rebate for individual or corporate donations made to nonprofits that provide tuition assistance to students at 250% of Federal Poverty Level or below to attend private school;
- Creating a Parent Trigger so that if 50% of parents vote to do so, an F rated school can be eligible for state intervention by the Recovery School District after three instead of four years; and
- Holding local school boards accountable for choosing a superintendent that has a plan in D and F districts by requiring performance targets in the superintendent’s contract.

Leverage dollars more effectively by:

- Having dollars follow the child as a financial backpack to any option they choose.
- Breaking the per student amount into chunks so that students can choose *courses* as well as schools from various providers.

- Making sure the additional dollars (“weights”) that go to low-income, special education, and other types of students follow the child to the option they choose.

Governor Jindal’s Plan Creates an Early Childhood System Focused on Kindergarten Readiness

The Situation

- There are many full time and part time early childhood educational and health programs that receive a total of \$1.4 billion in state and federal funds per year plus an additional \$150 million for Head Start.
- The system is regulatory and focused on inputs, making it difficult for early childhood providers—public and private—to navigate.
- There is no measure of quality that gives parents actionable information, such as a letter grade, on which to make a decision about where to send their child.
- The taxpayer has no accountability for the dollars it spends on early childhood programs.

The Plan

- Streamline and reduce red tape for providers so that the dollars flow more easily and the system is easier to navigate according to a set of aligned program standards.
- Create an accountability system for providers receiving public funds that is based on assessing whether students graduating from these programs are Kindergarten ready or on track to being Kindergarten ready.
- Establish a clear label of quality in a letter grade based on Kindergarten readiness for parents to navigate the system.
- Pay for quality by tying funding to performance, yanking licensure for low-performance, and basing the School Readiness Tax Credits on Kindergarten Readiness.