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LOUISIANA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRE-K EDUCATION

Baton Rouge, LA - The Louisiana School Boards Association (LSBA) has again been an active and vocal participant in this week's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting by providing an effective voice of leadership for public education in Louisiana. The school boards were represented by their LSBA Executive Director, Scott Richard.

Several important agenda items were addressed during deliberations held Tuesday and Wednesday in Baton Rouge.

Thanks, in large part, to the quick response and outreach by school board members to BESE, the Louisiana School Boards Association was successful in helping to convince BESE members and State Superintendent John White to not reduce PreK funding for the 14-15 school year.

The decision was a welcomed reversal from BESE's original recommendation to reduce the stable and reliable funding stream of 8g funds. These are the funds many districts depend upon to provide much needed prekindergarten classes to at-risk four year olds.

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BESE's original plan was to reduce the block grant status of the funding stream so they could place those dollars into a competitive grant category. That move would have negatively impacted local school districts and classrooms.

Scott Richard expressed the appreciation of local school boards, from throughout Louisiana, to BESE members for their change in direction and thanked members for their unanimous vote of support.

"Their change," said Richard, acknowledged the many calls from local education leaders of local school boards. The PreK program for at-risk four year olds program is one issue on which we all agree is vitally important to improving public education in Louisiana."

Other LSBA items that found support from BESE were recommendations to receive more assistance from the Louisiana Department of Education to local school systems as we transition to Common Core State Standards and national assessments.

"LSBA clearly articulated the need for a more strategic and supportive transition plan that will assist in the implementation of the initiatives in Louisiana school districts," said Richard.

"There must be a thorough, strategic plan developed at the state level that provides a seamless transition and clearly outlines how all of the new education initiatives work together without negative consequences as we transition," Richard said. "BESE cannot continue to ask more of our class-room teachers and expect our schools to raise student achievement without first working to ensure proper support and guidance - especially from the state level - as we adopt new standards and prepare for national tests next school year."

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