



## LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

### NEWS RELEASE

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## LASS Seeks to Unify Discussion and Actions to Improve Public Education in Louisiana

**BATON ROUGE, La.** – As the top executives of the state’s public education systems, members of the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents (LASS) announced they are taking action to unify and strengthen efforts to improve K-12 education in the state.

“Because we serve over 680,000 students throughout the state of Louisiana, superintendents can serve as the unifying voice aimed at advancing student learning and accountability in our districts and schools,” said LASS President Dr. Cade Brumley, who is also superintendent of DeSoto Parish Schools.

“Superintendents are in a unique position to shape the course of education in our state. We are the CEOs of this business – our plan is to step up and create a common strategic platform for the continuous improvement of education,” Brumley said.

Brumley said the first task of LASS in the coming year will be to go to the table with the state’s business and industry leaders, educators, parents and state officials to develop better standards that have universal support across the state.

“We plan to be in constant interaction with these stakeholders to develop strong relationships and find common ground,” Brumley said. “We are the senior educational leaders in our communities and do not take our responsibilities lightly.”

“We can provide information that all stakeholders can utilize in order to fully understand what makes a successful school. We deal each day with many factors that impact outcomes; but right now, the only factor for identifying a successful school are assessments. By putting such an emphasis on assessments, we have left out many things that are very important to parents and communities,” LASS Secretary/Treasurer Richard Strong said. Strong serves as superintendent of the West Carroll Parish Public School System.

Central Community School System Superintendent Michael Faulk, who was recently hired to become executive director of LASS in January 2018, said the association presented a plan to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) that its membership believed was a reasonable approach to raising the accountability standards.

“We sought to modify the degree, not change the direction of improving standards,” Faulk said. He said the plan approved by BESE is projected to increase the number of “F”

schools in the state next year by 59 – jumping from 104 to 163 – while decreasing the number of “A” schools for 2018 by 99 – dropping 263 to 164.

“It’s time we take a holistic approach to improving education and we include those factors that are not being considered in today’s accountability standards,” said Faulk. “The painful roller coaster ride has to stop.”

“Louisiana is unique. There is not a ‘one-size-fits-all plan’ that works evenly across the state. It’s time that local and regional perspectives be factored into the state’s standards,” he said, noting that superintendents are keenly aware of the various cultural and geographic factors that have a tremendous impact of communities and their school systems.

Faulk said those factors may include transportation issues, available resources, access to technology, access to higher learning, and the religion and culture of a region.

“Our push is not about drumming up excuses. Our superintendents are pushing for higher standards. It’s about implementing fair solutions that get real results, and not about continuing to play around with bureaucratic analyses and moving targets,” Faulk said.

LASS Vice President Dr. Kelli Joseph, superintendent of St. Helena Parish Schools, iterated that state superintendents support higher standards. She said superintendents believe student success should be better recognized, learning opportunities should be more equitable, efforts to enhance academic success for struggling students should be increased, greater transparency in grading should be implemented, and an accountability system that has credibility with all its stakeholders should be established.

“It’s time LASS take a seat at the table and work to bring about a strong, common sense accountability system that can truly strengthen our state’s public education systems,” Joseph said. “For us to succeed, we must be united and consistent in our efforts. We must be willing to carry the torch, no matter the difficulty of the trail to which it may lead. It is imperative that we have a united voice concerning issues that affect state-wide education.”