

To Members of the Louisiana Board of Elementary & Secondary Education (BESE),

In the unprecedented times we are facing, particularly in Louisiana, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is imperative that the impacts to the education of our state's children are as minimal as possible. For this to happen, it will take strong leaders who are sensitive to the needs of all students and who effectively manage and leverage systems to help obtain equitable outcomes. We are pleased that BESE and LDOE have shown this type of responsive and compassionate leadership without having a true rubric to follow. It has been encouraging.

This letter is a request that BESE continue to exude strong leadership as it relates to your search for the next State Superintendent of Education. It will take courage and judgment, among other traits, for the board to make a decision that will inevitably have a profound impact on the students across our great state for decades to come. It will also take transparency. As an elected or appointed representative of Louisiana citizens, it is incumbent upon each of you to seek out the voices of your constituency and amplify those voices in the decision-making process. This is very different from merely trying to be "the voice" of your constituents. Prioritizing citizen engagement just as much as you prioritize efficiency and expediency will show the true strength of your leadership.

Since the search committee has already reduced the candidate pool from twenty-four to seven and is moving forward with narrowing the field even more in the coming week, we implore you to make the remainder of this process as engaging as possible for the public. We suggest the following actions be taken:

1. Take a survey of people's priorities for their next State Superintendent and use this data in decision-making
2. Solicit questions from the public and ask the most pressing ones during the final interviews
3. Make the interviews of the final 2-3 candidates available for public viewing

All these requests are reasonable and easy to implement. BESE already has communication capabilities to ensure maximum opportunity for engagement with citizens. Each of you should also be willing to exhaust all individual avenues to guarantee that the voices of students, parents, educators, support personnel, school/district level administrators and staff, etc. are heard and valued.

The futures of our state's students hinge upon the decision you must make to find a capable, equity-minded State Superintendent of Education. Please give Louisiana's citizens the opportunity to actively participate and engage in this process. Again, the true strength of your leadership is being revealed, and we are here with hopeful anticipation that you will do what is best for the citizens of Louisiana.

Best,  
The Education Trust and Partners  
ASAP Worldwide  
Algiers Charter School Association (ACSA)  
Black Education for New Orleans (BENOLA)  
New Orleans Youth Alliance  
Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN)  
Seedlinks Inc.  
South Louisiana Coalition for Education (SLCE)  
The Education Game  
The Urban League of Louisiana