

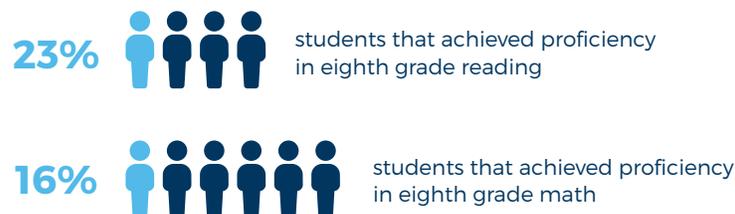
A QUALITY EDUCATION

FOR EVERY LOUISIANA RESIDENT

Louisiana cannot have a bright economic future without a workforce equipped with the skills and training necessary to compete in a 21st century economy. Revamping Louisiana's educational system stands as an economic imperative—and a moral one, too. Ensuring that every child has access to a high-quality education of their choosing will help ensure that every Louisiana resident, regardless of his or her socioeconomic standing, has the chance to succeed.

THE PROBLEMS

Louisiana's public education system has made dramatic gains over the past decade, but many children still fail to achieve important measures of progress. In eighth grade reading, Louisiana's most recent test scores lagged behind 41 other states; in eighth grade math, the state's performance ranked below 48 states. Fewer than one in four (23%) of students achieved proficiency in eighth grade reading; one in six (16%) achieved proficiency in math. Only 2% of Louisiana eighth grade students—one in fifty—achieved advanced levels of performance in reading.



Louisiana's poor overall performance on nationwide tests masks even greater achievement disparities for poor students and students of color. In both math and reading, eighth grade African-American students scored 27 points lower than their white counterparts. The achievement gap between children who qualified for free or reduced-price school lunches and more affluent students has remained constant in both eighth grade reading and math for nearly two decades. And the percentage of eighth grade African-American students who achieved advanced levels of performance in reading literally "rounds to zero."

Often, government bureaucrats or union officials prevent parents from selecting the best educational options available for their children. In one case, a union official claimed that low-income parents have "no clue" how to select the proper school for their children.

THE SOLUTIONS

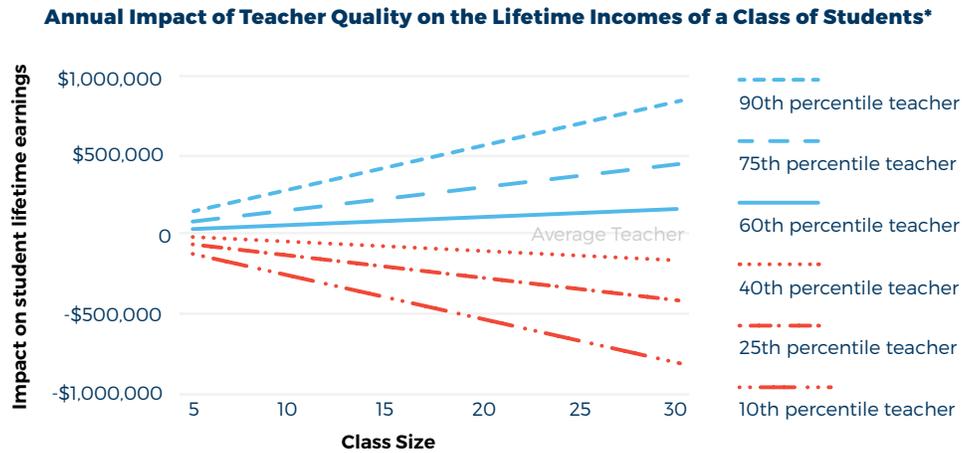
Empower parents by expanding school choice programs.

In New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, the rapid expansion of charter schools and school choice scholarship programs reduced the percentage of New Orleans students in failing schools from 65 percent to 4 percent within a decade. Expanding school choice scholarships to all Louisiana students, and introducing new options like Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs), would turbo-charge that progress. And promoting Course Choice initiatives would allow all students to attend classes that children in rural or smaller school districts might not have access to.

Empower quality, high-performing teachers.

Reforms like merit pay, and changes to teacher tenure, reward the teachers that have the greatest impact on Louisiana students. Transforming schools—so that all public schools function with the same type of flexibility, and accountability, as charter schools—would give teachers more freedom from government restrictions that impede innovation.

Effective Teachers Raise Students' Earnings



*Compared to an average teacher

Source: www.educationnext.org/valuing-teachers/

Encourage new educational options.

Fostering high-quality career and technical educational programs would ensure that businesses have the skills the next generation of workers will need—and give students who complete these programs a fast track from their schooling right into well-paid careers. Exploring a move to competency-based education would make sure students receive the skills they need during their schooling. Because no two children are alike, each Louisiana child should have the chance to pursue quality educational options that meet their interests and skill sets.

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