



**Testimony of Jeanne M. Burns  
Before the U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Labor**

**Hearing on  
Supporting America's Educators: The Importance of  
Quality Teachers and Leaders**

**May 4, 2010**

Good afternoon, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Kline, and members of the Committee. My name is Jeanne Burns, and I am the Associate Commissioner for Teacher and Leadership Initiatives for the Louisiana Board of Regents. I am also an Associate Professor at Southeastern Louisiana University and on loan to the State of Louisiana to support our teacher and leader initiatives. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you at this hearing to tell Louisiana's story and address Supporting America's Educators: The Importance in Quality Teachers and Leaders.

I am testifying today on behalf of the Louisiana Board of Regents; however, I will be addressing a successful collaborative partnership that has existed in the State of Louisiana during the last ten years to improve the effectiveness of teachers and educational leaders. This initiative has been supported by three governors (Governor Bobby Jindal, Governor Kathleen Blanco, and Governor Mike Foster), two Commissioners of Higher Education (Dr. Sally Clausen and Dr. E. Joseph Savoie), two State Superintendents (Paul Pastorek and Cecil Picard), Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Louisiana Department of Education, university presidents/chief academic officers/college of education deans/faculty, private providers, and school districts.

Our state is also fortunate to possess a strong partnership among the college of education deans at all public universities and private universities (including our historically Black institutions). They have freely exchanged best practices across their campuses and worked collaboratively to help all institutions produce effective new teachers and leaders. Their leadership and hard work has been a critical component of our success.

As a result of these and other collaborative partnerships, Louisiana is now leading the nation in its ability to link growth of student learning to university and private provider programs that prepare new teachers. Through the use of a Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment, developed by Dr. George Noell at Louisiana State University and A&M College, it is now possible for our state to predict the growth of achievement of individual grades 4-9 students, examine the actual achievement of individual students from the end of one year to the end of the next year, link the growth of achievement of students to new teachers who taught the students, and link the growth in achievement to the teacher preparation programs that prepared the new teachers.

Evidence of our success includes the following:

The overall passage rates for Louisiana's universities on the state teacher certification examinations have increased from 89% in 1999-2000 to 99.9% in 2008-2009. Our historically Black institutions had passage rates of 33%, 38%, and 65% for their 1999-2000 program completers, and they now have passage rates of 100%.

The overall number of teacher candidates who failed to meet all teacher certification requirements at the point of graduation has decreased from 230 in 2000-2001 to only 3 in 2008-2009. At the point that Hurricane Katrina hit our state, the number of new teachers being produced by our universities was at its highest demonstrating that it was possible to increase quality and numbers at the same time. Our numbers dropped after Hurricane Katrina, and our state has been working to increase the numbers through our universities, Teach for America, and private providers like The New Teacher Project and the Louisiana Resource Center for Educators. In 2001-2002, the percentage of teachers certified to teach in Louisiana was 84.39%. The percentage of Louisiana teachers identified as having standard certificates to teach in 2009-2010 is 95.2%.

We are proud of our success, and we could not have done it without the support and commitment of our many partners.

## **Background**

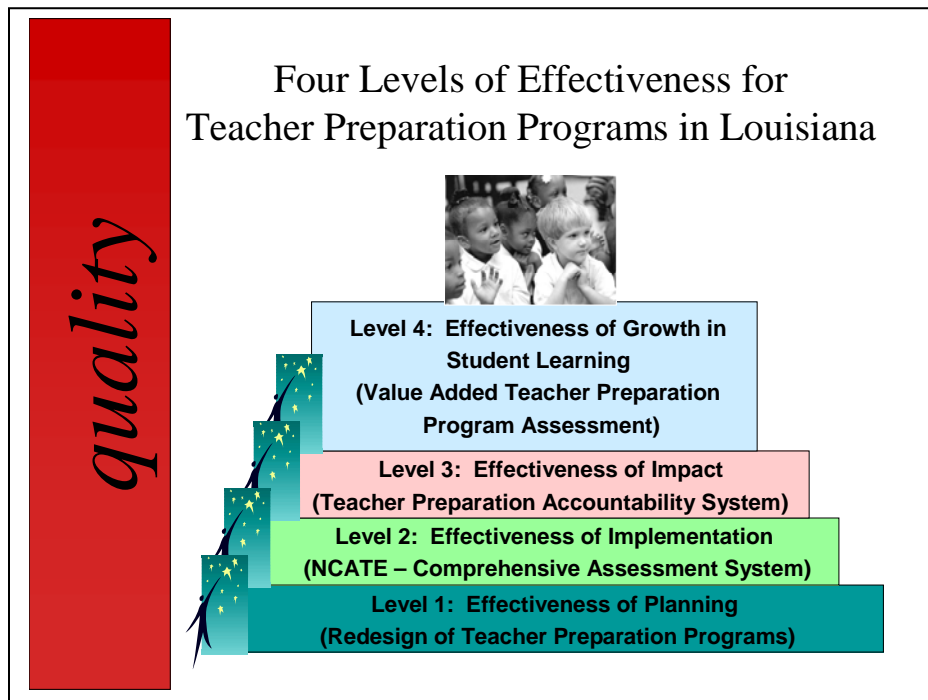
Louisiana looked very different in 1999-2000 when it made a decision to form a Blue Ribbon Commission for Teacher Quality to develop recommendations to improve the recruitment, preparation, and retention of quality teachers and principals. This Commission is still in operation today as the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence and is recognized nationally as an example of a best practice. The Commission is co-chaired by a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Glenny Lee Buquet) and a member of the Board of Regents (Mary Ellen Roy – Current Co-Chair; Frances Henry – Previous Co-Chair). It is composed of 36 members who represent state, university, district, school, teacher, community, and parent leaders and meets six times a year. It has a specific focus each year and uses the expertise of national and state experts to guide it in the development of new recommendations that are presented each May at a joint meeting of the two boards. In 1999-2000, the Commission identified 60 recommendations to improve teacher quality. In 2000-2001, it identified 40 recommendations to improve educational leadership.

As a result of these recommendations, new policies were approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to strengthen teacher and leader certification. More rigorous teacher certification structures were implemented, new content examinations and higher cut-off scores for licensure were adopted, ongoing professional development over five years for relicensure was mandated, and new pathways for alternate and undergraduate teacher preparation were approved.

The recommendations of the Commission were also used to attain a \$3.4 million Title II Teacher Quality State Grant from the U.S. Department of Education during 2000-2004, a \$4.2 million

grant from The Wallace Foundation during 2004-08, an \$800,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York during 2007-2009, and a \$3.4 million grant from The Wallace Foundation during 2008-2010 to support the implementation of the new teacher and leader reforms at the state, university, district, and school levels

In response to the new PK-12 policies, the Board of Regents implemented new policies that required all universities to align undergraduate and alternate teacher preparation programs with the new state certification structures for teachers and educational leaders, PK-12 state/national content standards, PK-12 state/national teacher and leader standards, PRAXIS examination expectations, and national accreditation expectations. In addition, they required all universities to address four levels of teacher preparation effectiveness.



The first level of effectiveness pertains to effectiveness in planning, and all universities were required to create redesign teams composed of College of Education, College of Arts/Sciences, College of Business, and school personnel and chaired by a PK-16+ Coordinator to redesign all undergraduate and alternate teacher and educational leadership preparation programs to address the new BESE and BoR policies. All redesigned and new programs were evaluated by national experts to ensure quality across all preparation programs. Universities and private providers had to address all stipulations of the national consultants to attain approval to implement the programs. Universities and private providers that failed to address the expectations were not allowed to admit new candidates to their programs after specific deadline dates. Redesigned and new teacher preparation programs are now being offered by 20 universities, two private providers for teacher preparation, and three private providers for educational leadership preparation.

The second level of effectiveness pertains to effectiveness of implementation, and national accreditation was used as a measure of accomplishment. All public and private universities were required to attain national accreditation of their teacher preparation programs. At the present time, 18 of the 20 public and private universities in Louisiana are NCATE accredited. The two remaining universities are new. One is pursuing NCATE accreditation, and the other is pursuing TEAC accreditation. Thus, this expectation is being met by all public and private universities in Louisiana.

The third level of effectiveness pertains to effectiveness of impact, and a new Teacher Preparation Accountability System was implemented to determine accomplishment. A Teacher Preparation Performance Score was calculated for each university based upon multiple measures for an Institutional Performance Index and Quantity Index that rewarded universities that produced new teachers in teacher shortage areas and rural districts. Universities were labeled as Exemplary, High Performing, Satisfactory, At-Risk, and Low Performing based upon their scores. Due to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita impacting schools and universities in Louisiana, the baselines for the Quantity Index had to be recalculated. As a result, the state's Blue Ribbon Commission has revised the Teacher Preparation Accountability System to include the new Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment scores and new baselines. The revised system will be piloted in the upcoming months. Three universities entered into corrective action when the system was first implemented. By 2004-2005, 14 universities were labeled as Exemplary and one university was in corrective action. After Hurricane Katrina, the one institution reconstituted its program and concentrated its efforts upon the preparation of grades PK-3 and grades 1-5 teachers.

Thus, all universities in Louisiana have successfully addressed the first three levels of teacher preparation effectiveness and have now moved beyond universities in most other states to address the highest level of effectiveness which is growth of achievement of students taught by the teacher preparation programs that prepared the new teachers.

### **Development of Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment**

Louisiana first recognized the need to link student achievement to teacher preparation programs in 2000-2001 when the Blue Ribbon Commission recommended a Teacher Preparation Accountability System that included growth of student learning as one of several variables. The state did not have the capacity to collect and analyze achievement data in this fashion at that time.

As universities underwent evaluation by the national consultants, it was observed that universities were experiencing problems in creating authentic assessments to link student learning to new teachers who completed the teacher preparation programs. Dr. George Noell and I scheduled a meeting with former Commissioner of Higher Education E. Joseph Savoie and former State Superintendent Cecil Picard to propose a pilot study during 2003-04 to create and implement a value added teacher preparation model that used data from 10 school districts in the state. The 10 school districts were piloting a new data system for the Louisiana Department of

Education that linked students to their achievement tests to the teachers who taught the students. The Commissioner and State Superintendent agreed to share data and support the pilot.

The Board of Regents provided funding for Dr. Noell to conduct the pilot in 2003-04 and replicate the pilot in 2004-05. In 2005-06 and 2006-07, the Board of Regents provided funding for the study to be expanded to include all school districts, 20 public and private universities, and 2 private providers.

In 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Board of Regents obtained a two year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York for the Louisiana State University research team (led by Dr. George Noell and Dr. Kristin Gansle) to conduct additional quantitative research to expand the Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model. In addition, funding was provided for a State Research Team to be created to conduct a qualitative research study to determine why some teacher preparation programs prepared new teachers whose students demonstrated greater growth in learning than experienced teachers in specific content areas. The State Research Team was composed of a researcher from each of the 20 public and private universities and 2 private providers who prepared teachers as well as staff from the Board of Regents and Louisiana Department of Education.

### **Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model**

The Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment predicts growth of student achievement based on prior achievement, demographics, and attendance, assesses actual student achievement, and calculates effect estimates that identify the degree to which students taught by new teachers showed achievement similar to students taught by experienced teachers. The teacher preparation effect estimates are based upon multiple new teachers in multiple schools across multiple school districts in the state.

The predictors examine student variables, teacher variables, and building variables and differ slightly based upon the five content areas examined which are mathematics, science, social studies, reading, and English/language arts.

To be included in the analysis, new teachers must be first or second year teachers who have completed their teacher preparation program leading to initial certification, received a standard teaching certificate, attained teaching positions in their areas of certification, and completed a teacher preparation program within five years. Experienced teachers are all other certified professionals who possess a standard teaching certificate and have taught in their area of certification for two or more years.

The model examines the four pathways to teacher licensure that exist in Louisiana: Undergraduate Pathway, Master of Arts in Teaching alternate pathway, Practitioner Teacher Program alternate pathway, and Non-Master's/Certification Only alternate pathway. All three alternate pathways require candidates to meet the same entry/exit requirements and require all candidates to address the same standards.

The current analysis uses State achievement data in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, and reading for students enrolled in grades 4-9 who attended public schools in Louisiana during the full school years of 2005-06, 2006-07, and/or 2007-08. In addition, data are used for all grades 4-9 teachers in public schools in Louisiana who taught the students.

A Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) was used for the analysis. This is a layered statistical model that is designed to analyze data within natural layers or groups - students within classes within schools.

## **2008-09 Results**

We currently have results for eight teacher preparation programs in Louisiana that had a sufficient number of new teachers who completed redesigned or new alternate certification programs and met the criteria to be included in the study. It is anticipated that the remaining teacher preparation programs will meet the criteria for inclusion in the study when the results of the 2009-10 Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment study are released during 2010.

We used five bands of performance to focus attention on clusters of performance rather than a continuous ranking of teacher preparation programs.

Our results indicate that there is as much variance within teacher preparation programs in individual content areas as there is variance across teacher preparation programs in the state.

As an example, universities and private provider programs did not perform equally high or equally low across all content areas.

The New Teacher Project prepared new teachers where the growth in achievement was greater than experienced teachers in mathematics and reading, comparable to experienced teachers in science and language arts, and comparable to new teachers in social studies.

The University of Louisiana at Monroe prepared new teachers where the growth in achievement was greater than experienced teachers in science, comparable to new teachers in reading, language arts, and social studies, and comparable to new teachers in mathematics.

Our results have also provided valuable information that can help universities improve their programs. As an example, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette has been NCATE accredited for many years and received a label of Exemplary when our Teacher Preparation Accountability System was implemented. Their university is respected in the state, and they are committed to improving education in the communities surrounding their university. Their current President is the former Commissioner of Higher Education who supported the initial creation of the Value Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model. When they received their value added results, they found that the growth of achievement of students taught by their new teachers was comparable to other new teachers in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The growth was less than other new teachers in language arts in both their undergraduate and alternate certification program. When they were provided additional results, it was determined

that the problem was in their grades 1-5 grade span and not the other grade spans. The President, college of education dean, and faculty have seriously examined the curriculum and identified changes that are now being implemented to improve language arts in grades 1-5. Without the value added results, the university would not have been aware of the need to strengthen the curriculum in this area.

The only other teacher preparation program to have growth that was less than that of other new teachers was the Louisiana Resource Center for Educators in the area of reading for all grade spans. They have also seriously examined their curriculum and made changes to improve the effectiveness of teachers in reading.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has implemented a new policy that requires programs with growth that is less than new teachers or significantly less than new teachers to enter into Programmatic Intervention. Programs will be required to develop a plan to improve their programs and provide timelines for outcomes to be demonstrated. Failure to demonstrate improvement by the identified timelines will result in closure of the programs.

Results are currently being reported for only the redesigned and new teacher preparation programs that address the State's more rigorous teacher certification requirements. Results for pre-redesign teacher preparation programs were reported in 2006-2007 and the findings were not as positive as those for the post-redesign programs.

Based upon our qualitative research, we have determined that it is not the pathway that explains the variance within and between teacher preparation programs; it is what is occurring within the pathway to prepare new teachers in the specific content areas that makes the difference.

We have also determined that our state policies to create more rigorous teacher certification requirements and require all universities to redesign their teacher preparation programs impacted the programs. The more rigorous requirements for admission and completion of alternate programs resulted in most of the new teachers having ACT scores around 20 or 21 and few with lower ACT scores. These teachers are more or less effective based upon the knowledge and skills developed within specific content areas within the programs.

There has not been time to fully discuss our educational leadership reforms, but you do need to be aware that we have worked just as hard to improve the effectiveness of our educational leadership preparation programs and we are currently developing an Educational Leadership Preparation Accountability System. If we do not have effective principals in our schools, we will not be able to retain the effective new teachers that we are now preparing.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear today to discuss the work we have done in Louisiana to improve the effectiveness of new teachers and leaders. I would be happy to answer your question.