

Chairman Kiley, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for having me today. My name is Cade Brumley, and I serve as the Louisiana State Superintendent of Education.

It remains my honor to tell the story of Louisiana's historic educational progress.

On the 2019 Nation's Report Card, the state of Louisiana ranked 50th in the country for 4th-grade reading and math.

Since then, Louisiana has led the entire country in literacy on two consecutive NAEP cycles and now, Louisiana's 4th graders rank 16th in the country in literacy.

Similarly, Louisiana has improved 12 places in 4th-grade math and ranked in the top 5 for overall math growth in 2024.

These gains at the 4th-grade level are remarkable, but they are only part of a much larger story unfolding in Louisiana – a story that seeks academic excellence.

As a state, Louisiana has improved its overall ranking on The Nation's Report Card from 50th in 2019 to 32nd today and our US News PK-12 Ranking from 50th in 2019 to 37th today. I believe we are one of the most important educational stories in the country.

These historic improvements did not occur by accident or chance—they happened because of an intentional focus and strategy.

Over the past 5 years, we have ushered in comprehensive education reform that has focused on:

- Getting back to the basics
- Valuing teaching professionals
- Expanding Educational Freedom and Parental Rights

At the foundation of every strong education system is a commitment to the fundamentals.

Back to Basics

For too long, Louisiana schools were utilizing their personnel, resources, and time to prioritize endeavors not aligned with their original intent – ensuring academic excellence. Instead of chasing shiny things, Louisiana schools now provide a laser focus on teaching fundamental academic content and skills.

Specifically, we have implemented the Science of Reading statewide. In math, we are returning to tried-and-true practices to build foundational numeracy skills. We also built a simplified school accountability framework so parents and communities get an honest look at school quality.

But no reform succeeds without those who stand at the front of the classroom.

Value Teaching Professional

After the parent, there is nothing more critical for student success than high-quality school teachers. Teachers deserve effective school leaders, meaningful professional learning opportunities, reduced distractions, an elevated voice, and compensation that makes sense in the 21st century.

We must appreciate the significance of the profession and those who choose to serve the next generation. So in Louisiana, we did something radical—we actually listened to our teachers. Through the “Let Teachers Teach” initiative, we elevated teacher voices and removed barriers that pulled them away from instruction.

Teachers told us clearly:

- They are not social workers.
- Bureaucracy must be reduced.
- Discipline must be restored.

Just as we elevated teachers, we also expanded opportunities for families.

Expand Education Freedom

In Louisiana, educational freedom opportunities have become more abundant for families. We’ve expanded choice options and removed barriers to accessing environments that make the most sense for students.

Alongside strong traditional public schools, we are cultivating a portfolio that includes high-quality public charters, non-public schools, and recognizing the value of home-study families. With true educational freedom, Louisiana must continue its efforts to fund students—not systems as a rising tide lifts all boats.

Educational freedom is inseparable from parental rights, because parents are a child’s first and foremost teacher.

Parental Rights

Children belong to their parents, not the government. Anything to solidify and accelerate the fundamental rights of parents must be a priority. Parents send their children to school expecting strong instruction in reading, math, science, and history—not indoctrination on divisive issues.

We have worked to deepen trust between parents and schools by focusing on core academics and expanding transparency. Parents should have easy access to records, curriculum resources, and school finances. The more transparency, the better.

In closing, I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary McMahon for their leadership in empowering states to chart their own educational path. I am proud of the work we’ve accomplished, and I’m even more hopeful about where we’re going. We are pleased, but not

satisfied. We must keep getting better. I look forward to discussing our progress, our challenges, and the lessons we've learned that may be valuable.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today.