

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Minutes of Joint Meeting
2005-2006 Interim
October 12, 2005

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Carl Crane, chairman of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. in Committee Room 1, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary of each committee called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

HOUSE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Carl Crane, Chairman
Representative Ernie Alexander
Representative Austin Badon
Representative Regina Barrow
Representative A. G. Crowe
Representative Hollis Downs
Representative Jim Fannin
Representative Hunter Greene
Representative Mike Powell
Representative Henry "Tank" Powell
Representative Harold L. Ritchie
Representative Don Trahan
Representative Tommy Wright

HOUSE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Avon Honey, Vice Chairman
Representative Lelon Kenney

HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Jones, Research Analyst
Nancy Jolly, Research Analyst
Jackie Snowden, Secretary
Daryl Augustine, Sergeant at Arms

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Chris Ullo, Chairman
Senator Jay Dardenne
Senator Willie Mount
Senator Julie Quinn
Senator Gerald Theunissen

SENATE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Sharon Broome
Senator Joel Chaisson

SENATE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sherri Breaux, Senior Researcher

Hilma Hatcher, Secretary

III. DISCUSSION

To receive and discuss information from the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the state superintendent of education, the commissioner of higher education, and the executive director of the state Office of Student Financial Assistance relative to:

(1) The effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the delivery of education services in the state;

(2) Actions taken by executive branch boards and commissions to amend, suspend, or waive administrative rules and regulations due to the disasters; and

(3) Recommended changes in law that need to be considered by the legislature prior to the 2006 Regular Session.

Representative Crane said the joint meeting of the House and Senate education committees was being held to discuss some of the issues that affected education in Louisiana following the impact of Hurricane Katrina. He noted that Katrina had displaced thousands of students across the state who were scattered across the country. Representative Crane said that discussions were needed on financing the MFP and changes in law that have to be determined prior to the 2006 Special Session that would begin November 6.

Senator Ullo stated that there were many real changes in education since the hurricanes due to the displacement of students. He noted that restructuring the MFP was essential. He said the meeting would serve to organize a dateline for proceeding.

K-12 Education

Cecil Picard, state superintendent of education, no witness card submitted, narrated a PowerPoint, "Hurricane Katrina/Rita Report", labeled Exhibit A in the committee records of this meeting. He stated that Jeanne Deville, special projects assistant, prepared the information for presentation. He noted that the system had been seriously affected by the hurricanes with students and families moving as far away as Alaska. He said that BESE and the Louisiana Department of Education were moving forward on all fronts. He stated that the staff continued to work and he had received advice from colleagues in Florida to make sure that teachers who were displaced were taken care of.

Glenny Lee Bouquet, president, BESE, P.O. Box 94064, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064, spoke for information only.

Superintendent Picard introduced representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Art Jones, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness; and David (last name inaudible), Infrastructure Coordinator for FEMA.

Mr. Jones commended the Department of Education on the work they had done. He informed committee members that the agency had been dealing with schools that suffered damages and was working to locate and provide temporary facilities. He noted that several areas were experiencing an influx of students, leading to overcapacity. He said the placement of temporary facilities in these areas was important and the agency was focused on addressing this situation.

Scott Norton and Beth Scioneaux, representing BESE and the State Department of Education, presented information on policy waiver requests and reports seeking approvals from the legislature, labeled Exhibit B in the records of this committee meeting.

Ms. Bouquet stated that the minimum foundation program formula would also need restructuring as many districts are in need of more funding because of the influx of displaced students. She noted that this will depend on the level of funding approved by Congress. She informed the committee that John Auginblick, board financial advisor, has been working with BESE officials to structure MFP simulations. (See Exhibit B-2 for correspondence between the state Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.)

Representative Crane opened the floor for questions from committee members.

Higher Education

Joe Savoie, commissioner of higher education, representing the state Board of Regents, gave a summary of higher education hurricane impacts and issues contained in Exhibit C in the committee records of this meeting. He noted that several campuses were unable to provide services to students.

Present to answer questions concerning the cleanup of their respective campuses were: Alex Johnson, Delgado Community College, New Orleans; Tommy Warner, chancellor, Nunez Community College; Edward Jackson, chancellor, Southern University-New Orleans campus; Stanley Leger, chancellor, SOWELA Community College, Lake Charles; and Frazier Branje, Louisiana Technical College.

Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission

Jack Guinn, executive director, and George Eldridge, general counsel, presented a handout to committee members that contained actions the commission had taken under its regulatory authority and certain regulatory rule changes established for displaced students, labeled Exhibit D in the records of this meeting. The information also contained statutory waivers proposed by the commission for legislative consideration.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Crane, Chairman
House Committee on Education