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Louisiana Recognized for Progress in Improving Quality of School Leadership Preparation Programs

According to a report recently released by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Louisiana is the only state in the 16-state southern region to have achieved “promising progress” in every category identified as critical to developing a learning-centered school leadership preparation system. The SREB report, entitled *Schools Need Good Leaders Now: State Progress in Creating a Learning-Centered School Leadership System*, is intended to encourage states to “inspire and train a new generation of school leaders who put curriculum and instruction first.” The report identifies key steps state leaders and policy-makers can take to build leadership systems that produce more effective school principals.

Following closely on the heels of a successful redesign of *teacher* preparation programs at all of the state’s public and private colleges and universities, Louisiana began revamping its graduate-level programs in school *leadership* (commonly called “educational administration” programs) in 2003. The initiative was completed in 2006. The SREB report indicates that in large part those efforts have put Louisiana at the head of the class among its Southern-state peers.

“Although all SREB states are making progress in developing learning-centered systems, individual states’ rates of improvement and their areas of focus vary greatly,” said SREB president Dave Spence. “Three states – Alabama, Louisiana and Maryland – show particularly promising progress in several areas. Only one state – Louisiana – improved its SREB school leadership rating from 2002 to 2006 in all six major categories measured in the report.”

The six categories evaluated in the report include 1) learning-focused leadership standards, 2) candidate recruitment, 3) the overhaul of university-based, graduate-level principal preparation programs, 4) tiered licensing structure for principals (requiring continuous demonstration of leadership skills), 5) alternative licensure (allowing high-performing, master-level teachers to gain entry-level licensure), and 6) professional development.

“We have long understood that we couldn’t bring about meaningful change simply by improving *teacher* quality,” said Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. “Competent, learning-focused school leadership is also essential to student success. We’re pleased that the SREB has validated our approach to improvement in this critical area.”

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The SREB, founded in 1948, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with leaders and policy-makers in 16 member states to improve pre-K through postsecondary education.

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