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### **LAE will not endorse Louisiana's R2T application**

(Baton Rouge) The Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE) announced that it will not be able to endorse the Department of Education's (DOE) Race to the Top (R2T) application in its present form. This comes after a meeting with Superintendent Paul Pastorek and other key department personnel on Thursday afternoon.

Joyce Haynes, LAE president, expressed disappointment at the actions of Supt. Pastorek and the DOE, for their unwillingness to work with LAE on key issues. These include the teacher evaluation process, student assessment, and other issues LAE hoped would improve teacher and district support for the Louisiana R2T application. President Haynes remarked, "Having had three prior meetings, I approached today's meeting with confidence, as Supt. Pastorek had assured me that an educators' perspective was key and that he was willing to work with LAE." She continued, "First we had to get to the table. Now we need a chance to digest and continue to discuss how we can partner in the transformation of the system."

Haynes said that LAE is sensitive to both the need for additional resources and support, which may be provided to the state through R2T grants. She believes that there are several positive items in the overall grant that could improve student performance in Louisiana. However, Haynes reported that she could not in "good faith" agree to the current R2T application. Haynes indicated that LAE remains willing to collaborate with the department to both improve the application and to help design effective programs to improve student performance in Louisiana. LAE believes that the focus on "great teachers and leaders" is a critical component to the improvement of schools and student performance in the state.

LAE agrees that a proactive approach is needed to improve schools in Louisiana. However, rushing a grant application partially focused on beliefs rather than what actually works is inappropriate. If given the opportunity, LAE will continue to "get back to the table" and actively work to improve the Louisiana DOE application.

LAE will convene a meeting of education stakeholders in early January to discuss the Louisiana DOE R2T application. LAE will enter into these discussions with the sentiment of, "surviving tough times requires tough advocacy."

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