

Dear Editor:

As a member of the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), I am writing to express my disappointment in the deceptive practices that are being used to disparage our traditional schools and educators. I ran for the BESE position because I wanted to be an integral part of reforming schools in Louisiana. My campaign was based on reform. Shortly after being elected to the state board of education, I realized what is being offered up as reform is nothing more than trickery.

I am reminded of the biblical story relating to Adam and Eve. God warned Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit; yet, Eve manipulated Adam and evil arose from the eating of this fruit. I use this example to inform my constituents and the public that everything that glistens isn't gold. Many so-called reformers are trashing traditional public schools while many parents are facing real discrimination.

Choice is being sold to many parents as the silver bullet. However, many parents have reported their concerns and confusion regarding the responses they have received. Some students are being denied access to schools of their choice. I want to appeal to parents to exercise caution with their choice options. The virtual learning opportunities, if not monitored, may have far reaching implications regarding student success. Be wise and proactive in your choice decisions and don't accept less than was promised.

I recall growing up and revering the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. However, as an African American, I am concerned that there is silence regarding the future of our children. Where are our leaders? Why do we want out of state vendors to come to Louisiana to educate our children? Where are the standards? Why do we promote certification in traditional schools and don't require the same standards for charter schools? Why are we operating under different standards? Why does a state board of education and legislature make a distinction between education providers? Why would any board of education not require certification and testing when education is all about the attainment of standards?

I did campaign on education reform—a responsible reform—where there is an equitable playing field. The education reform that exists in Louisiana today consists of irresponsible education policies and laws. Again I am saddened that many have forgotten the struggles of Dr. Martin Luther King and others who have taken a stand for all people. Are we going to abandon this legacy? I am also reminded of all the elected officials who were in opposition to the education reform legislation during this past legislative session. I want to say thank you. I also

BESE Member Takes Aim at La. Education Reform

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say we must not abandon our responsibilities. We must rise to be the voices for our children, parents, and educators. If we don't stand openly and vocally for our children, then it may be said we are as guilty as if we had eaten of the forbidden fruit.

Carolyn Hill
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