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Leaders, parents urge Gov. Bobby Jindal to drop opposition to Common Core

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Gov. Bobby Jindal

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BATON ROUGE — A coalition of business, civic and education leaders and parents whose children attend public and private schools urged state lawmakers and Gov. Bobby Jindal to drop opposition to Common Core State Standards and a testing element to judge whether students are learning under the new standards.

Representatives of the groups roamed hallways in the Capitol, cornering lawmakers and emphasizing that the state shouldn't "go backwards."

The governor originally was a strong supporter of Common Core and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers exam, but in the past few months has

reversed course. He supports legislative efforts to get the state out of agreements to use the standards and testing and says if that doesn't work, he would try to unilaterally withdraw.

Stand for Children, a pro-education group, delivered to the governor's office a stack of 6,000 petitions signed by parents and educators asking Jindal to drop his opposition.

Parent Leader Yolanda Braxton, who led a group in delivering the petitions, said "We have continued to hear the governor suggest that parents are not supportive of Common Core and PARCC. But we are here today as parents who support Common Core and PARCC and have in our hands nearly 6,000 additional signatures of parents and others who feel the same. We're here to urge Governor Jindal and our elected leaders to hear our parent voices and take a stand for what is in the best interest of our kids, teachers and students in Louisiana."

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In an open letter to members of the Louisiana House of Representatives, business, civic and education leaders from across the state wrote to “reaffirm our strong support for the Common Core academic standards and our belief that we should do nothing that would delay any aspect of implementing these standards or the testing that is so important to them.

“In our view, it is critical that Louisiana’s education system be strong enough to produce a workforce that is locally capable and globally competitive,” the letter states.

“This can best be accomplished, we believe, by teaching our students using world class standards and holding them accountable with assessments that are both nationally rigorous and fully aligned to the Common Core. We are firm in both of these beliefs.”

The coalition shared similar concerns.

“Louisiana should not invest scarce state dollars in the development of its own test,” the letter to lawmakers states. “The PARCC test was developed with full participation by Louisiana, but at no cost to Louisiana. In other states considering their own tests, including Louisiana, the cost of developing a new state-specific test has been pegged at upwards of \$20 million. Those are resources that would be better targeted to other needs.”

Among the groups in the coalition are Associated Builders & Contractors, Chamber of Commerce in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Southwest Louisiana, Black Alliance for Educational Options, Blueprint Louisiana, Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, Cajun Industries LLC, Center for Development and Learning, CenturyLink, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, Committee of 100, Committee of 100 for Northwest Louisiana, Council for A Better Louisiana, Educate Now!, Education’s Next Horizon, ExxonMobil, Fleur de Lis New Orleans Cuisine, Greater New Orleans, Inc., Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, ISC Constructors, LLC, Jefferson Business Council, Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, La Coste Consulting, LLC, Louisiana Association of Business & Industry, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics, Louisiana Science Teachers Association, New Schools for Baton Rouge, River Region Chamber of Commerce, Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education, Stand for Children Louisiana and United Way of Southeast Louisiana.

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