



Adolescent Literacy: Forging a Local, State, and National Vision of How to Help All Students Acquire the Foundational Skills that Will Enable Them to Succeed in School, Work, and Life

June 8, 2009 ♦ 8:30 am – 12:15 pm
Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center Hotel
Baton Rouge, LA

Speaker Bios

The Honorable Rodney Alexander

United States House of Representatives, 5th District (R-LA)

Congressman Rodney Alexander is currently serving his fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, proudly representing the families living in the 5th Congressional District. In the 100th Congress, Congressman Alexander was a cosponsor of the Striving Readers Act of 2007, designed to provide funding to states to create statewide literacy initiatives for students in grades 4-12, share data on student progress with parents and the public, and improve teacher training and professional development in literacy so that all students receive high-quality instruction.

Prior to being elected to office, Congressman Alexander served his country in the U.S. Air Force Reserve from 1965 to 1971. He cut his political teeth at the age of twenty-five on the Jackson Parish Police Jury serving alongside his father, James Earl Alexander. He went on to serve for fifteen years as a Louisiana State Representative where he was the chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee. In this position, Congressman Alexander shepherded through the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) legislation, which assists mothers and children with basic health care and insurance needs.

Congressman Alexander serves on the House Committee on Appropriations as a member of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administrations, and Related Agencies (Agriculture). At the commencement of the 111th Congress, he gained two new assignments—member of the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and member of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS).

First elected to Congress in 2002, Congressman Alexander has supported—and will continue to support—legislation and programs aimed at solving America's energy crisis, making tax cuts permanent, protecting the rights of the unborn, and defending Second Amendment rights. From critical issues ranging from health care to tax reform, he has a proven track record of working for the best interests of the people of the 5th District.

Glenny Lee Buquet

Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Glenny Lee Buquet was first elected on the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 1992 and has served five terms as president, from 1998 to 2001 and from 2003 to 2005. She has served as cochair of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence since its inception in 1999. The commission has been recognized nationally as a model for K–12 and higher education cooperation for the success of all students. She currently serves as chair for the Quality Leaders/Educators Committee, and Literacy and Numeracy Committee.

A graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and of Leadership Louisiana, Ms. Buquet is a former speech and English teacher who, in the 70s, opened a tutorial school for children with reading disabilities. She has served as a member of the board of directors of the Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL); board chair of the Center for Dyslexia, Nicholls State; president of the Louisiana board of directors of the American Cancer Society and as a member of its regional board; a charter member of the Louisiana Center for Women and Government at Nicholls State University, the American Association of University of Women; and as a member of the National Association of State Boards of Education. Ms. Buquet's special areas of education focus are reading, with special attention to students with learning disabilities, and improving teacher training at the pre- and post-service levels.

The Honorable Bill Cassidy

United States House of Representatives, 6th District (R-LA)

Congressman Bill Cassidy is a lifelong public servant – a physician, a teacher, a community leader. As an associate professor of medicine with Louisiana State University, he has provided care for uninsured patients and taught doctors in training at Earl K. Long Hospital in Baton Rouge for the last twenty years.

In addition to his work at Earl K. Long, he co-founded the Greater Baton Rouge Community Clinic, a clinic providing free health care to the working uninsured through an innovative virtual approach that partners needy patients with doctors who provide care free of charge. Congressman Cassidy has also pioneered school-based public health programs to vaccinate children against Hepatitis B. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, he led a group of health care volunteers to convert an abandoned K-Mart building into an emergency health care facility, providing basic health care to hurricane evacuees.

Before his election to serve Louisiana's Sixth District in the House Representatives, Congressman Cassidy served in the Louisiana State Senate. In the Louisiana Senate, he helped pass a sweeping ethics reform package, opposed efforts to give state lawmakers a pay raise, and sponsored legislation to ensure an equitable distribution of health care resources for uninsured Louisiana patients statewide.

In the U.S. House, Congressman Cassidy serves on the Committee on Natural Resources, the Agriculture Committee, and the Committee on Education and Labor. He is a member of the Republican Study Committee and has been named an Assistant Whip for the House Republican Conference.

Dwayne Lemoine

Avoyelles Parish Schools System

Dwayne Lemoine was hired as superintendent of schools for the Avoyelles Parish Schools in July 2007. Prior to this position, Mr. Lemoine served as principal of Pineville High School for eight years and was

named Principal of the Year for Rapides Parish in 2007. He also taught mathematics/science and coached in Avoyelles and Rapides Parish.

Mr. Lemoine attended Louisiana Tech University earning a bachelor of science degree in math education. He later earned a master's degree in education leadership from Northwestern State University.

Paul Pastorek

Louisiana Department of Education

Paul Pastorek was appointed Louisiana's state superintendent of education in March 2007 by Louisiana's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Prior to serving as state superintendent, Mr. Pastorek served on BESE from 1996 to 2004, serving the last three years as president of the board. On his departure from BESE, Louisiana was noted as having the best rated statewide accountability program in the United States.

For the last twenty years, Mr. Pastorek has been working to improve public education in Louisiana. He started as a passionate volunteer in a New Orleans inner-city junior high school. His experiences led him to study education issues and he began working through the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce to push for improvements. His work came to the attention of Governor Mike Foster who appointed him to BESE. After stepping down from the BESE in 2004, Mr. Pastorek formed Next Horizon, a nonprofit organization that serves as a statewide think tank to connect Louisiana's leadership—education, government, business, and community—as a force supporting school improvement.

Mr. Pastorek is an attorney and in 1979, he was licensed practice law in Louisiana. He joined the law firm of Adams and Reese, a New Orleans-based law firm. He has been associated with Adams and Reese for over twenty-seven years, first as a litigator and later as a corporate and transactional attorney. In 2002, Mr. Pastorek was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as general counsel to NASA. For two and a half years, he served as the chief legal official for the agency and as a trusted advisor to then-NASA administrator Sean O'Keefe.

Mel Riddile, EdD

National Association of Secondary School Principals

In July 2008, after a distinguished career as principal of J. E. B. Stuart High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, and T. C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, Mel Riddile joined the staff of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) as the associate director for high school services. Dr. Riddile was named the 2006 National High School Principal of the Year and he was named the 2005 Virginia High School Principal of the Year. His work as a high school principal has received national and international recognition from *National Geographic* magazine, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the International Baccalaureate of North America.

As a principal of both a Breakthrough High School and an International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) Model School, Dr. Riddile is a recognized leader in efforts to reinvent America's high schools. He has received White House and U.S. Department of Education recognition for this and was a member of the U.S. Secretary of Education's High School Reform Task Force.

His pioneering work in the field of adolescent literacy has been featured in the publications *Breaking Ranks II*, *Creating a Culture of Literacy*, and *Edutopia* magazine and has led to his active involvement in advisory boards including those of the National Governors Association, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and Scholastic Publishing. In addition to the above, Dr. Riddile has been a keynote speaker and presenter at numerous conferences and conventions.

Bob Wise

Alliance for Excellent Education

Bob Wise, author of *Raising the Grade: How High School Reform Can Save Our Youth and Our Nation*, became president of the Alliance for Excellent Education in February 2005. Under his leadership, the Alliance has continued to build its reputation as a respected authority on high school policy and to advocate for reform in America's secondary education system, working to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for success. Since joining the Alliance, Governor Wise has become a sought-after speaker and advisor on education issues. He has advised the U.S. Department of Education and frequently testifies before the U.S. Congress.

As governor of West Virginia from 2001 to 2005, he fought for and signed legislation to fund the PROMISE Scholarship Program, which has helped thousands of West Virginia students remain in the Mountain State for college. During his administration, West Virginia saw a significant increase in the number of students completing high school and entering college. Governor Wise earned a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a JD from Tulane University College of Law.