

Become part of [Education's Next Horizon](#)

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Community leaders from across Louisiana have accepted the challenge of improving Louisiana schools by working with a new organization called Education's Next Horizon. Literature on the organization's challenges and goals includes a thought particularly appropriate for education in Louisiana: "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago; the second best time is now."

According to Phillip Rozeman, M.D., board chairman, and John Warner Smith, chief executive officer, the membership believes that education is the key to our future economy and quality of life. "The purpose of Education's Next Horizon is captured in its name - to push forward the next horizon of school improvement in Louisiana."

We urge our readers to take an interest in the work of the organization and, perhaps, become part of it. Representing our area are Greg Davis, Robbie Bush and Billy Stokes, Ed.D. They can serve as guides for your trip through the many facets of Education's Next Horizon.

The full story of the organization is available in an ["Education Briefing Book"](#). It covers too many aspects of education improvement to list all of them here. We are impressed, however, by the summary of observations on which the organization was built. It reveals a common-sense approach to improving education.

Among the observations are:

- Louisiana can't improve what it can't measure; our nationally-recognized accountability system should be preserved.
- The achievement gap between black and white students must be narrowed quickly.
- Investment in Early Childhood Education is among the most effective long-term development strategies.
- If a child can't read well, school success is unlikely. Louisiana must have literacy for all.
- The creation of a good learning environment for children means dealing with the more basic needs of health, safety, and connecting with a caring adult.
- Workforce development depends on our high schools and middle schools. They must be redesigned to meet the future needs of Louisiana.
- The teacher is the most important single factor for student success. "On the job" professional development and improving working conditions of teachers are the keys to school improvement.

Advertiser staff members have met with the organization's Chairman, CEO and members from our area. We have seen in them a powerful dedication to better education, and a determination to make it happen. Among the most accurate observations is this: "If public education is the key to Louisiana's economy and quality of life, it is everybody's business."

We are content that the members of the organization will give their best to improving education, but they need public support. We urge that you learn about the organization's mission, and fully commit yourself to helping achieve it. (http://www.ednexthorizon.org/12_Giv_1.html)

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