

November 18, 2005

School reform vital in Orleans

"If we really expect a rebirth in the city of New Orleans, a quality public school system is essential." Those words from Gov. Kathleen Blanco sparked an ovation when she opened the special session of the Legislature, and an administration bill is on track to make a healthy new start.

The legislation mandates a plan for comprehensive reform, overseen by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Education reformers say many national foundations will help to fund and manage improved schools.

New Orleans children deserve better than they've been getting from the scandalously incompetent Orleans Parish School Board. And Blanco's words underline the stakes for reconstruction.

"An opportunity for better education will provide an incentive for repopulation and economic development," said Jim Brandt, president of the Public Affairs Research Council. "Given New Orleans' role in the state economy, Louisiana's economic well-being depends on the outcome."

Progress in schools is good for everyone.