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# The Times-Picayune

## **BRIEFING BOOK**

**News and views from the Louisiana Capitol**

**Sunday, August 07, 2005**

### **Watchdog group wins a pair of awards**

The Public Affairs Research Council, an independent government watchdog group, has received two national awards from the Governmental Research Association. PAR received the association's highest award in two categories: the most distinguished research award for its report "No Child Left Behind: A Steep Climb Ahead," and the most effective education award for its report "Public Employee Retirement: A Time for Change." PAR President Jim Brandt credited research analyst Stephanie Franks as the main author of the childhood education study, which examined the long-term impact of the federal No Child Left Behind Act on the state's accountability program. Retired senior researcher Ty Keller was the chief author of the pension plan study, which examined the state's "fragmented retirement systems and outlined reforms that can help prevent funding problems from spinning out of control in the future," Brant said. The two awards bring to 30 the number the organization has received from Governmental Research Association, based in Birmingham, Ala. Brandt said 80 research organizations from 21 states participated in the competition.