

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 10

BY SENATOR PETERSON

A RESOLUTION

To commend Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr. on more than twenty-five years spent in public education as a teacher, administrator, and superintendent.

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis is a native of Violet, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis' grandfather told him at an early age that school was his job and he has taken that job seriously ever since; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis began teaching at eight years old; his students were his cousins, his curriculum was the worksheets his aunt brought home, and his chalkboard was the wall; and

WHEREAS, while attending St. Bernard High School, he tutored students during the summer and later graduated as salutatorian; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis earned a bachelor's degree in secondary mathematics education from Southern University at New Orleans, a MEd in educational leadership and administration from the University of New Orleans, and a PhD in educational leadership and administration from Mississippi State University, all before the age of thirty; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Dr. Lewis began his career as a professional educator as a teacher and for the next seven years he worked in the St. Bernard Parish Public Schools; in addition he served for eleven years on the St. Bernard Parish Public School Board; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Dr. Lewis left the St. Bernard school system to serve in a variety of roles for the Algiers Charter Schools Association, the first charter management organization to open after Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis served as their director of academics and instructional technology, the assistant principal for Alice Harte Elementary Charter School, and as a founding principal of Algiers Technology Academy charter school; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Dr. Lewis was appointed superintendent for East Feliciana

Parish school system; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with East Feliciana Parish school system and as a result of his four-year strategic plan and leadership, he raised the bar for classroom teaching and evaluation, and made significant gains among low-income students; and

WHEREAS, as a result, East Feliciana Public Schools were recognized by the Louisiana Department of Education as second in the state for elementary student academic growth; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, at age forty, Dr. Lewis began his tenure as one of New Orleans schools' youngest superintendents in its nearly one hundred ninety year history; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis has been at the helm of New Orleans Public Schools for over six years, leading the historic 2018 unification of public schools in New Orleans under local control, the establishment of the district as a supporter of the local school community while holding each operator to high education standards, and celebrating through it all, the achievement of its teachers, support staff, and students; and

WHEREAS, under Lewis' leadership, the district's awards to disadvantaged business enterprises increased, its minimum wage for food service employees rose to fifteen dollars per hour, and its graduation rates increased; and

WHEREAS, also under Lewis' leadership, in 2019 the school district was able to procure a commitment of five million dollars for technology at the start of the pandemic, helping schools deliver thousands of laptops and hot spots to New Orleans families; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis brought all his experiences to bear building partnership, using data to drive decisions, and overseeing New Orleans Public Schools during unprecedented times; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis is the longest serving African-American Superintendent in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis has received many accolades, including being named a "Chiefs for Change" inductee in 2018 as well as a "Distinguished Board Member" from the Louisiana School Boards Association; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lewis is a member of the Council of Great City Schools, the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tenure as an educator, Dr. Lewis has not wavered from his mission as a protector of family and students' rights and a thoughtful steward of public resources; and

WHEREAS, throughout Lewis' illustrious career, he has served as a superintendent, a school board member, an academic's director, a school principal, an assistant principal, a teacher, a mentor, an instructional coach, and a curriculum expert; and

WHEREAS, an educator is one who helps others and influences lives forever and educating our kids to become intelligent citizens is one of life's most esteemed callings; Dr. Lewis has helped and influenced an entire generation of Louisiana students and made the state a much better place due to his efforts both in and outside of the classroom.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr. on a distinguished career spanning more than twenty-five years in public education as a teacher, administrator, and superintendent.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE