Board criticizes education cuts
Resolution seeks ‘adequate funding’

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NEW IBERIA — The Iberia Parish School Board is letting the state know of its unhappiness at Gov. Edwin Edwards' proposed 5 percent cut to education.
The board voted unanimously Wednesday to send a protesting resolution to Edwards, the Legislature, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Louisiana School Boards Association.

School Superintendent Dave Cavalier, who presented the resolution Wednesday, added that state officials should be encouraged "to seek revenue sources to ensure adequate funding of programs for public education."

Iberia Association of Educators representative Georgia Barras asked the board to begin gathering support to oppose the cut.
"We must work together, along with business, to help oppose these cuts," Barras said.

Further, board member Harry Leleux asked that Cavalier's resolution be sent to all local government bodies in Iberia Parish for their assent before sending the document to Baton Rouge.

"The first people to feel these cuts, like I've always said, are the ones on the grass-roots level," said board member John Berard, who requested that the resolution be put on the agenda.

"If we don't stand up now, the government will continue to see us as the line of least resistance," he said.

After the meeting, Cavalier blasted the Louisiana Association of Educators for threatening to advise businesses to avoid the state if the cuts are implemented.

"I am appalled at the statements made of the LAE's position of having businesses turn away from Louisiana because of budget cuts," Cavalier said.
"I certainly don't feel those statements represent the feelings of the majority of educators in the state."

The board also voted, after much discussion, to look at self-insurance as an alternative to its current insurance plan. In addition, any alternate plans also found viable would be sent to the school system administrative staff.

The staff would then study the issues and report its findings and recommendations to the board's Insurance Committee on Nov. 13.

Cavalier also recommended continuing to hold school during the Nov. 4 election and asking school administrators to handle their own traffic problems.

"It might even be educational to our students to watch the election process in action," Cavalier said.

The board also voted unanimously to support an administrative substitute program for Iberia Parish.

Cavalier said the program would be designed to use every administrator, principal, counselor and even the superintendent as substitute teachers when necessary.

Every administrator and staff member not bearing a teaching load would be required to substitute a minimum of five school days.

On another matter, three teachers were named teachers of the year in Iberia Parish:
• High school — Susan Whitaker of New Iberia Senior High.
• Junior high school — Phyllis Berberick of Loreauville Junior High.
• Elementary school — Norma Lester of North Lewis Elementary.

All three teachers' names have been submitted for competition on the regional level.

Cavalier said he received a call Wednesday from state Superintendent of Education Tom Clausen informing him that Lester had won the regional competition.

Lester will now compete, along with representatives from six other districts, to be declared the state's outstanding elementary-school teacher.