Education Moving in ‘Right Direction’

Louisiana’s State Superintendent of Education J. Kelly Nix told Ville Platte Chamber of Commerce board members Monday Louisiana is headed in the “right direction” where education is concerned and “there’s a lot right about education in Louisiana today.”

Nix addressed the Chamber board and its guests Monday night at a regularly scheduled meeting in the Hebert-Langlade-Marine-Perdue School complex’s new Chicot golf course. A record number of people for a Chamber board meeting attended the event. Nix was accompanied by Supts. Jim Stafford and John Dupre along with Evangeline Parish Supt. Sidney Ortego as well as other state personnel.

Nix said when he took office in 1976, there were two problems which he has tackled: one of the areas, he said, was the student – to see that students were actually learning what they should learn to receive a high school diploma. In the other area, he said, was the educator: “You can’t have a good solid program for students of you don’t have educators to teach, to administer and to do the other functions of a school system,” Nix said.

While establishing minimum standards in all grade levels, high school graduation requirements were increased back to requiring four Englishes, three mathes, two sciences, two social sciences, two health and physical educations and a half unit in free enterprise. Nix said, “That’s a requirement in 13 units being required from the state of every student graduating from high school in Louisiana. At the same time, we went from 20 to 22 credit units being required for high school graduation. We raised the credit units. I was trying to keep a 12th grader in school all day in his 12th year. I don’t like to see him going home at 10:30 in the morning. I like to see him actually in that course in English or math or whatever rather than go home.”

At the basis of the minimum standards and increased requirements for high school graduation is an emphasis on the very basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, Nix said. “When I became superintendent in 1976, they said, every state in the nation, time about 3 1/2 hours a week in the basic language arts programs. We did away with that. We went back to 12th grade, we allowed a week or a minimum of 4 hours a day on reading, writing and mathematics in our lower grades. We at the same time started lowering the teacher-pupil ratio.”

Nix said, “To what extent the teacher-pupil ratio can be lowered depends upon state finances, but the goal is to bring that ratio to 20-1 in grades kindergarten through eighth. As a result of that, we’ve increased the number of teachers in the state from all the universities which are teaching in the state through the use of a university professors as the teacher-pupil ratio.

In another measurement, the SAT scores, Nix said state scores have been rising up for the past four years. “Today we’re about 35 points ahead of the national average here in Louisiana. In math alone, last year Louisiana gained 11 points while the nation gained three points in the South gained one point.”

So, we’re not just moving ahead, we’re doubling and tripling in our movements ahead.”

In business matters before the Chamber Monday night, the board was reminded of the Spring Trade Days event which is scheduled March 4 and 5. “Authorized up to $150 for pamphlets advertising the Louisiana Commerce.” The pamphlets are to be used in conjunction with the World’s Fair next year in New Orleans. Was congratulated both by Ville Platte Mayor Charles Hope Scott and Supt. Sidney Ortego for its operation regarding the pre-Christmas Trade Days in which a shop at home theme was used. “They’re up 35 percent above last year. We at the same time started lowering the teacher-pupil ratio.”

In education matters, he said the state has been making great strides in education compared to other states. Nix said the scores nationwide on the American College Test have been going steadily downward for the past 19 years. However, he said, scores in Louisiana have been going steadily upwards for the past two years.

“The average ACT score is 11.2 in Louisiana. This is the same as last year,” Nix said. “Louisiana is the only state in the entire nation that gained in every category. We gained in reading, writing, mathematics, male, female, black, white, we gained in every measurable category on the ACT, the only state in the entire nation that gained.”

Nix said that the state has been making great strides in education compared to other states. Nix said the scores nationwide on the American College Test have been going steadily downward for the past 19 years. However, he said, scores in Louisiana have been going steadily upwards for the past two years.

“The average ACT score is 11.2 in Louisiana. This is the same as last year,” Nix said. “Louisiana is the only state in the entire nation that gained in every category. We gained in reading, writing, mathematics, male, female, black, white, we gained in every measurable category on the ACT, the only state in the entire nation that gained.”

In another measurement, the SAT scores, Nix said state scores have been rising up for the past four years. “Today we’re about 35 points ahead of the national average here in Louisiana. In math alone, last year Louisiana gained 11 points while the nation gained three points in the South gained one point.”

So, we’re not just moving ahead, we’re doubling and tripling in our movements ahead.”

“Authorized up to $150 for pamphlets advertising the Louisiana Commerce.” The pamphlets are to be used in conjunction with the World’s Fair next year in New Orleans. Was congratulated both by Ville Platte Mayor Charles Hope Scott and Supt. Sidney Ortego for its operation regarding the pre-Christmas Trade Days in which a shop at home theme was used. “They’re up 35 percent above last year. We at the same time started lowering the teacher-pupil ratio.”

In education matters before the Chamber Monday night, the board was reminded of the Spring Trade Days event which is scheduled March 4 and 5. “Authorized up to $150 for pamphlets advertising the Louisiana Commerce.” The pamphlets are to be used in conjunction with the World’s Fair next year in New Orleans. Was congratulated both by Ville Platte Mayor Charles Hope Scott and Supt. Sidney Ortego for its operation regarding the pre-Christmas Trade Days in which a shop at home theme was used. “They’re up 35 percent above last year. We at the same time started lowering the teacher-pupil ratio.”