Educators resist cuts

Recent budget cuts have hit education in a time when many have criticized the educational programs of the state. The 4% percent cut to the Minimum Foundation Program by Gov. Edwin Edwards, added to the 4% percent cut from the Legislature, has seriously hampered local school districts' ability to adequately pay their employees.

St. Landry Parish alone faces cuts of over $2 million. Teachers, understandably, are upset. Two different actions are being undertaken by the state's largest teacher group in protest.

The Louisiana Association of Educators has filed a suit to restore the cuts to the MFP. The group feels the cuts are unconstitutional and is basing the suit on two areas. The first is that the state's constitution gives the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education the power to set up the MFP and that the Legislature must approve it. If it is approved, the solons must fund the formula. The LAE feels the MFP was approved and then cut.

Then, the group feels that Gov. Edwards' cut was unconstitutional for much the same reasons. They agree that Edwards has the authority to order a 10 percent across-the-board cut to state spending, but feels the MFP is exempt.

The court will have to decide whether or not what was done was done properly or whether it can be done at all.

The other action the LAE is undertaking is a "Doomsday Wednesday" to protest the cuts. All educators are encouraged to wear black Nov. 19 to protest the cuts.

President Shirley Williams says black is the color associated with mourning and the cuts to the program "have brought public education in Louisiana to the brink of death."

The day, Nov. 19, also falls in the middle of the Annual Education Week. This show of outrage by educator has already drawn attention.

But whether or not it will do any good is a valid question that remains to be answered.

Several areas of education need to be addressed.

Only a fool will say that education in Louisiana is at its best — everyone knows there is always need for improvement.

But there is something to be considered about starving an area of state government when it needs help.

Pouring money into public education is probably not the answer to end all questions.

But starving other vital areas of state government just for one is a bogus ideal that has no place in modern thought.

A recent poll of public opinion indicates that the official turnout for Tuesday's election was 62.75 percent of the registered voters.

Brown, who has pushed for the weekday voting since 1981, believes that the election being held on a Tuesday is responsible for the high percentage.

The secretary of state also notes that Tuesday elections are cheaper. He says that voting machines do not have to be moved on Sunday when overtime rates are charged.

By VICTOR ANDREWS
Louisiana State Newspapers