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GOV. BOBBY JINDAL'S SCHOOL VOUCHER PLAN GETS AN 'F' FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

(Baton Rouge - February 14, 2012) A new report by the Louisiana Budget Project finds that Gov. Bobby Jindal's plan to dramatically expand the state's private school voucher program is lacking the strong accountability and transparency requirements that parents need to make informed decisions about their children's educational needs.

"Private schools receiving state vouchers should be held to the same accountability standards as public schools," says Jan Moller, director of the Louisiana Budget Project. "Assessment tests allow parents, as well as Louisiana taxpayers, to see what results they are getting for their money."

The existing voucher program pays for 1,850 students in Orleans Parish to attend private schools. Jindal's plan would make 380,000 children—54 percent of all public school students—eligible for the program. But voucher schools would not be required to test all their students, and would not be rated by the same A-F scale that holds public schools accountable.

"Handing over public resources to private schools with no strings attached is bad public policy," says Moller. "All schools that receive state funding should be subject to the same testing and grading requirements."

The report recommends that voucher schools should be required to test all their students, and that students from the worst-performing public schools should be given first priority for vouchers.

The Baton Rouge-based Louisiana Budget Project provides independent research and analysis of Louisiana fiscal issues and their impact on low and moderate income residents.

For a copy of the full report and more information on LBP, visit www.labudget.org.

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