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Legislators grill bridge officials on toll revenue

Surplus is being used, laurnakers are lold

By Ed Anderson Capita barsau

BATON ROUGE — The Crescent City Connection is sitting on at least \$256 million in surplus when the benderment by state law have not been done, as the continue bearing officials told a legislative panel Anderson Committee to expert for the barry than the state Department of Transportation and Development, told the House Appropriations Committee the things authority, a division of the state part for the state and Engoyment of the more than the state part of the state part of the state and the state

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Jeff schools' plan to rehire revived

to work and eventually earn their former salaries and retirement benefits.

Moran, who proposed the initiative back in 2005, reiterated her support again.

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High-powered committee seeks ways to coordinate school systems

Some services may overlap in Orleans By Sarah Carr Staff writer A new committee will look for ways the Recovery School District, the Orleans Parish School Board and the city's network of charters can consolidate their services, work together to cut costs and plot out the education landscape of the future. The committee, chaired by Tulane President Scott Cowen and Dan Packer, the retired president of Entergy New Qrleans, is made up of several	community power players. Its creation comes in the wake of some high-profile spats between the city's different school systems, including a \$41 million financial dispute between the recovery district and the School Board that dragged on for months. Cowen said the decentralization produced by the storm has helped the schools in many ways, but that it has also "hampered communication and cooperation between schools," particularly in financing and facilities issues. In the near future, state Superintendent Paul Pastorek, who put together the committee, said he expects it to look at consolidating transportation, food service and athletic pro-	grams of the School Board and the recovery district schools. He also charged it with leading a campaign to renew four school property tax levies on the July ballot. The four levies — for textbooks and instructional supplies, early childhood and dropout-prevention programs, salaries and benefits, and building repair — bring in about \$32 million a year to the public schools. The money would go to all public schools in the city, whether they are charter or not. At a press conference where the committee was announced, School Board President Torin Sanders said he hopes that the group, called the Public Education Progress Committee, will also look at shared special edu-	cation services down the road. Special education has been a thorny issue for many schools, particularly charters, who sometimes struggle to build full programs without the support of a traditional central office. Pastorek said the timing seemed right to look toward the future, since both districts have successfully gotten schools up and running and seem to be fairly stable in their operations. "First, we had to get oxygen to the patient, and now we're ready to get food to the patient," he said. He also noted that the recovery district and the School Board have had "some adversarial moments" in the past year, including the dispute over the \$41 million, but now need to get	past to The system The system The recover as the recover as the school of the Urba direction the Mean the Control of the Mean
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past them.

The long-term future of both systems remains up in the air. The School Board, which formerly oversaw 120 schools, now runs just five, all of which were relatively high-performing before the storm. The state-run recovery district operates about 30 schools, which were relatively low-performing. Both entities have several charterschools under their auspices.

Members of the new committee are Nolan Rollins, president of the Greater New Orleans Urban League; Karla Sikaffy, director of adult education for the Archdiocese of New Orleans; Mary Joseph, director of the Children's Défense Fund of New Orleans; the Rev. Vien Surface of the New Orleans of the Chartest of the New Orleans of the Chartest of the New Orleans of the New Orleans.

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