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BOARD OF REGENTS
P. O. Box 3677
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3677
Phone (225) 342-4253, FAX (225) 342-9318
www.regents.state.la.us

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Contact: Meg Casper
meg.casper@la.gov

Regents to Focus on Delivery of Additional Graduates

BATON ROUGE, La. – The Board of Regents announced today that it has been chosen as the first state in the nation to participate in a joint effort with the Education Delivery Institute (EDI), a partnership between the Education Trust, Achieve and McKinsey and Company's Global Education Practice, to reach its target goal of producing 10,000 additional graduates by 2015. The team from the EDI will spend the next three months in Louisiana launching this project along with several key staff members from the Board of Regents.

The delivery approach was created during former Prime Minister Tony Blair's second term in order to meet his country's public service needs. Dr. Kim Stangeby of EDI made the announcement today with Commissioner of Higher Education Sally Clausen noting that there is incredible personal passion at the highest levels in Louisiana and an impressive commitment to the specific goal of increasing educational attainment.

"In order for a delivery unit to be successful you must have a short list of critical priorities and then have a methodical approach to ensure those promises to the public are delivered," said Dr. Stangeby. "Our guiding philosophy is you have to stick to your priorities. Half the battle is leadership and deciding what you're going to focus on, and Louisiana has done that with its objectives, goals and reform efforts."

"We are honored to be the first state to be identified to work on a higher education delivery unit because it shows that we are moving in the right direction. The Board of Regents has been challenged to move farther and faster, and part of the reason is that Louisiana has farther to go in postsecondary education. But, we have the potential to be designated the state that has made the most improvement if we are relentless in achieving our goal of 10,000 additional graduates," emphasized Clausen.

Dr. Stangeby outlined for board members the methodology used by EDI for their delivery units including identifying clear goals, establishing a delivery chain, setting trajectories or benchmarks for success, collecting data, taking stock of progress being made and identifying best practices. Stangeby emphasized to the audience, the bottom line for organizations is to first set high goals and then use a very rigorous approach to achieve the desired outcomes.

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Each of the four college and university system presidents were in attendance today and identified campuses that will participate in the pilot delivery unit. The campuses are:

Baton Rouge Community College
Bossier Parish Community College
University of New Orleans
Southern University A&M
Southern University-Shreveport
Southeastern Louisiana University
Nicholls State University

In addition to the delivery unit announcement, Regents members also dialogued with former Indiana Commissioner of Higher Education and legislator, Stan Jones who is currently President of The National Consortium for College Completion. Jones' organization is working with states to improve completion rates using funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina.

“Both of these foundations will tell you the most important thing that Louisiana can do is graduate 10,000 additional students,” said Jones. “What we see between the first day of class and graduation day is a lot of broken dreams. For this country to succeed we can’t continue those ways.”

Commissioner Clausen emphasized the connection between the Board of Regents goals and national trends. She reminded board members that establishing partnerships with organizations like the Consortium on College Completion, the Education Delivery Institute and Education Trust shows Louisiana’s willingness to learn from others who are also focused on improving attainment.

“We have already made tremendous improvement in just the past year in the development of our performance funding model and our commitment to a statewide transfer guarantee,” said Commissioner Clausen. Those initiatives have laid a foundation so we can now increase attainment, graduate more students, meet the workforce needs of our state and improve our overall quality of life.”

“This will be the first time in history that our nation takes a step backwards in education. This economy can’t run on all cylinders if half of those that enter college don’t finish,” said Jones. “Louisiana is positioning itself so it can be competitive by focusing on graduating more students.”

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