

*Robert W. Levy*  
*Chair*

*Mary Ellen Roy*  
*Vice Chair*

*Charlotte A. Bollinger*  
*Secretary*

*James E. Purcell*  
*Commissioner of*  
*Higher Education*



**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](http://www.regents.state.la.us)

*Scott Ballard*  
*Robert J. Bruno*  
*Maurice C. Durbin*  
*Joseph P. Farr*  
*William H. Fenstermaker*  
*Chris D. Gorman*  
*Donna G. Klein*  
*W. Clinton Rasberry, Jr.*  
*Albert D. Sam II*  
*Victor T. Stelly*  
*Harold M. Stokes*  
*Joseph C. Wiley*  
*John D. Mineo IV, Student*

Date: September 1, 2011

Contact: Meg Casper  
[meg.casper@la.gov](mailto:meg.casper@la.gov)

### **Remedial Education Commission to Focus on Student Success**

BATON ROUGE, La –During its inaugural meeting, the Remedial Education Commission elected Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell to serve as Chairman in order to lead the effort to reduce the need for remedial education at the college level. Assistant Deputy Superintendent of College and Career Readiness with the Department of Education, Debbie Schum, will serve as Vice Chair. The Remedial Education Commission was established as a result of Act 187 of the 2011 Legislative Session. The 16-member commission is a joint collaboration between the Louisiana Board of Regents and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for the purpose of:

- Studying and reviewing data on educational services provided in public elementary and secondary schools and remedial education provided at public postsecondary institutions;
- Recommending best practices and strategies to be used by public elementary, secondary and postsecondary education institutions in providing such services; and
- Recommending any necessary statutory and regulatory changes to the legislature, BESE and the Board of Regents related to the study.

To guide the commission’s discussion, the Board of Regents provided comprehensive information and data related to remedial education enrollment and completion in Louisiana. The statistics provided for the 2006 cohort show:

- Approximately 8,300 students out of 28,000 (30%) first-time, full-time freshman enrolled in a remedial education course.
- 36.9% of students who took only remedial English successfully completed and went on to finish the next college level English course within two years.
- 27.1% of students who took only remedial Math successfully completed and went on to finish the next college level Math course within two years.
- Only 10.2% of students who needed BOTH remedial English and Math successfully completed and went on to finish the next college level course in the same subject within two years.
- The estimated annual cost of remedial education in Louisiana was in excess of \$76.6 million. For example, this is equivalent to the total state general funds allocated to Northwestern State University and Southeastern University combined.

“Remedial education is a challenge for Louisiana that we all must work together to fix,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell. “The Board of Regents’ minimum admissions standards will increase next fall and students will not be admitted into our flagship (Louisiana State University and A&M College ) or statewide universities (University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of New Orleans and Louisiana Tech) if they are in need of remedial courses. And in 2014, no student will be eligible for university admission anywhere in the state if they require remediation. They will have to attend a community college to complete those courses. This is a big shift, and our collective work today is designed to make sure more students are ready,” Purcell emphasized.

-more-

## **PAGE 2-REMEDIAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**

“Today’s economy requires a different kind of graduate, one that can survive in a global and technological world,” said Acting State Superintendent of Education Ollie Tyler. “While Louisiana has embraced school reform in many ways, there are still high schools not preparing students to succeed in this new world. Our preparation gap has taken a huge toll on our students, our schools, our colleges, our society and our economy. We must all continue to collaborate together and we at the Department of Education are eager to work together in order to leverage resources for our students from kindergarten through college,” said Tyler.

“We cannot lock students out of college because they were not adequately prepared in high school,” said State Representative Patricia Smith, author of Act 187. “It has become a gateway issue in this state and we are not addressing the problem in an adequate fashion. This is a costly issue so our goal must be to increase the educational strength of our students and ensure that those who need additional help get it,” Smith said.

Dr. Bruce Vandal, Director of Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development for the Education Commission of the States, provided a systemic view of remedial education as well as national policies and practices for the commission. He said that in Louisiana, policy makers need to focus on facilitating student success with a goal of moving students as quickly and effectively not only through their remedial education sequence but also their first college level course. Dr. Vandal also led the afternoon work, describing successful approaches to developing a differentiated game plan for students entering college at all levels of readiness.

“I think the issue is the system and not the student, so that’s the good news,” said Bruce Vandal, Education Commission of the States. “There are many places you can make changes and move that needle for students in your state. You can make a difference and so you should start from an optimistic place. Your leadership has stepped up and set the bar very high,” said Vandal.

Additional information concerning the commission including future meeting dates can be found on the Board of Regents website, [www.regents.la.gov](http://www.regents.la.gov), under the “Administration” section. A final report will be submitted by the commission to the Legislature no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the 2012 Legislative Session.

###