



# BOARD UPDATE

## To the Members of the Louisiana Legislature:



**Regent Robert W. Levy**  
**Board Chair**

The Board of Regents, charged with providing advice and recommendations to the Legislature, makes the recommendations below.

A vibrant higher education system is one of the key drivers of a prosperous state, but in Louisiana our colleges and universities are once again threatened with budget cuts that are both real and potentially devastating. It is not an overstatement to say Louisiana's continued ability to educate its citizenry and train its workforce depends on what happens in the upcoming special session of the Legislature. It is that critical.

For almost a decade now, higher education in Louisiana has taken near-annual budget cuts. Yes, it has survived, but those cuts have taken

their toll.

- Resources per student in Louisiana are the lowest in our region - behind Mississippi and Arkansas and a third less than what Alabama offers.
- Per capita higher education support in Louisiana is near the very bottom of the region and 31 percent less than Mississippi's.
- And, when our legislators talk of providing "full funding" for higher education, that actually means holding steady on the nation's second-highest disinvestment in higher education. That is unacceptable.

At the same time our education attainment levels are among the lowest in the country and the demands of business and industry for a highly-skilled and educated workforce only continue to grow. We cannot move forward in these critical areas if we continue to take actions that push us back.

That is why, we, the members of the Board of Regents are calling upon the Legislature to provide stable and adequate funding for higher education. We are not asking for more funding, only stable funding - resources that will allow our institutions to fulfill their missions and provide students the quality education they deserve.

It's important to recognize that the benefits of higher education go beyond just students. They impact every aspect of our state. The research is very clear, citizens with higher levels of education tend to be healthier, they are less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system, and they are less dependent on publicly-funded social services. They earn higher incomes, pay more in taxes, are better able to provide for their families, and make important contributions to the overall wellbeing of our state. All because of higher education.

But if that is what we aspire to, we cannot say higher education is a priority and then continue to cripple it with cuts. That is reliably self-defeating. For too long higher education in Louisiana has been an easy target where resources could be taken without thought of the consequences. That cannot be the case anymore. It is past time to turn our words into actions and stabilize higher education funding.

The Board of Regents remains committed to a robust public postsecondary education system, one that contributes to the state's social and civic wellbeing and helps support economic opportunities for all. Our ability to fulfill that mission of building our state through learning, teaching, and research depends on stable, predictable funding. Now is the time to truly prioritize education and keep the promises we made to our students. Now is the time to act.

Robert W. Levy, Chair, Louisiana Board of Regents

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