



Contact:

Meg Casper Sunstrom

Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Communication
(225) 978-6686

Nikki Godfrey

Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs

Louisiana Board of Regents
(225) 342-4253

September 23, 2020

**REGENTS PROGRESSING TOWARDS ATTAINMENT GOAL ONE
YEAR INTO MASTER PLAN**

Approves definition for Credentials of Value as a Year-Two Strategy

BATON ROUGE, La. –Louisiana’s Board of Regents is seeing promising gains one year after adopting its Master Plan for Higher Education and is progressing towards meeting its ambitious attainment goal of 60% of working adults holding a degree or credential by 2030. Since launching the Master Plan in August 2019, Regents has seen a 3% attainment rate increase as well as improved student outcomes, but acknowledges work remains in closing existing equity gaps to ensure Louisiana prospers.

“I could not be prouder to report on our progress,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed. “We are resilient. Despite a whirlwind of enormous challenges including a global pandemic, social unrest and hurricane recovery, we have remained laser focused on our talent development efforts. Our campuses have produced results, and we have attracted the attention of national and federal partners who have provided \$35.7 M in external resources, an important validation of the significance of this work,” Commissioner Reed noted.

Within a year of launching the Master Plan, Regents’ work has been nationally recognized as high-quality, equity-focused, outcomes-driven and scalable by organizations including the National Governor’s Association, the National Science Foundation, Strada, the National Skills Coalition and Strong Start to Finish. This external funding will be used to support strategies to accelerate degree completion including setting system/campus attainment goals, addressing the digital divide, promoting dual enrollment, expanding math reform through corequisite delivery, driving 21st-century research initiatives and aiding the Reboot Louisiana program supporting short-term credentials tied to high-demand jobs.

“Our colleges and universities are the best asset our state has to recover from the economic uncertainty brought by the pandemic as well as the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Laura,” said Board of Regents Chairman Marty Chabert. “We will see better days soon and higher education will lead the way using this Master Plan as our roadmap.”

Year-One Master Plan highlights include:

- Increasing Louisiana’s educational attainment by 3.1%, from 44.2% in 2018 to 47.3% in 2019. During the same time, the nation improved by 3.7%, reaching 51.3% and, outpacing the state’s gains. For Louisiana to reach its goal of 60% by 2030, the attainment rate must increase by 12.7% in the next ten years.
- Producing an additional 2,800 degrees/credentials, moving from 41,291 in 2018-19 to 44,147 in 2019-20. Reaching the annual goal of 85,000 degrees/credentials by 2030 means accelerating completions by an additional 8,553 degrees/credentials each year over the next decade.
- Growing student enrollment with particular increases in minority and Pell students, who are key to eliminating the state’s equity gaps.
- Increasing credential completion across all populations and at all levels of education. Approximately 45% of all completers in 2019 were aged 25 and older, indicating that significant numbers of adults, a population critical to Louisiana’s success, are successfully pursuing and earning credentials.

To further develop the talent pipeline necessary to meet the ambitious goal of the Master Plan, Regents approved a Quality Credentials of Value Policy today to identify non-academic credentials (typically awarded through Community and Technical Colleges) that provide value in the marketplace leading to strong opportunities and good wages. Regents has worked with the National Skills Coalition as well as the college and university systems to develop the policy’s uniform criteria.

As a result, in addition to academic degrees (such as a Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate), non-academic credentials of value (such as a technical certificate) will be counted towards the state’s attainment goal. Quality Postsecondary Credentials of Value must meet the following five standards:

- Provide valid, reliable and transparent evidence of the competencies mastered and be conferred by an entity recognized by business and industry and/or the State of Louisiana;
- Align to an occupation with a 3-, 4- or 5-star rating as defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission based on job demand, projected job growth and earnings;
- Lead to an occupation with a 20% wage premium over a high school diploma in Louisiana;
- Provide evidence for employment and wage outcomes and;
- Meet these criteria as a stand-alone credential, independent of another credential.

“If more states want to build an inclusive economy where all workers and businesses have the skills they need to stay competitive in a rapidly changing global marketplace, they should look to Louisiana for a guide,” said National Skills Coalition Senior Fellow Amy Allen Duke-Benefield. “Louisiana is a national leader in strategically addressing the twin goals of economic development and growing the state’s talent by identifying the credentials that pay off. By designating credentials of value, the Board of Regents not only captures the efforts of adult learners, but also ensures those adults are connected to education that matters—leading to living wage jobs and better lives for their families,” Duke-Benefield said.

###

[Master Plan One Year Review Brochure](#)
