

POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2011-12
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE (Revised: 5.09.12)

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS NEW NEEDS

Parents, teachers, school/district leaders, university faculty, university leaders, community leaders, and state leaders will all need to play a major role in the successful implementation of the following recommendations.

1. Communication

- a. Develop and implement a serious media campaign that ensures that teachers, parents/grandparents/guardians, university leaders, business partners, and the public understand how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments will impact them and their students.
 - 1) Identify a clear message that is consistently communicated to the public by key state leaders.
 - 2) Inform stakeholders immediately to alleviate the fear of the unknown.
- b. Place a copy of the plans for the media campaign on a web site where stakeholders can be informed about the various types of communications taking place.

2. Parent/Grandparent/Guardian Development

- a. Have state agencies and local districts help parents/grandparents/guardians develop an understanding of the Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments.
 - 1) Direct parents/grandparents/guardians to the Louisiana Department of Education web site where copies of the PTA Common Core State Standards brochures are available.
 - 2) Secure sponsors from local businesses to partner with district superintendents to print copies of the PTA Common Core State Standards brochures to send home to parents/grandparents/guardians.
 - 3) Provide parents/grandparents/guardians with online activities that will engage children in grade appropriate Common Core State Standards learning activities in the home and promote higher order thinking.
 - 4) Provide parents/grandparents/guardians with information about how PARCC scores will impact their children's post-secondary future and how to access available support to help their children become career and college ready.

3. Resources and Support

- a. Provide one click access on a State web site that contains well developed teaching resources that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, COMPASS, and new PARCC assessments. Examples of items to be placed on the web site are listed below.
 - 1) Teacher Videos
 - a) Provide one click access to existing videos in other states of successful teachers teaching the common core state standards to students for use by teacher candidates, new teachers, experienced teachers, and parents.
 - b) Locate funding to create videos of effective teachers in Louisiana who are successfully using the Common Core State Standards.
 - 2) Lesson Plans

Have district curriculum supervisors and other knowledgeable educators provide concrete examples of successful lesson plans being used at the district level that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.
 - 3) Curriculum Materials
 - a) Provide framework(s) for districts to use when purchasing curriculum materials that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.
 - b) List quality materials that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.
 - 4) Louisiana Updates
 - a) Provide current information about CCSS-aligned curricula.
 - b) Provide easy access to information about future CCSS, COMPASS, and PARCC training being conducted by the State.
 - c) Provide easy access to information about future CCSS, COMPASS, and PARCC webinars being conducted by the State.
- b. Provide access to resources to prepare students, teachers, and parents/grandparents/guardians for the new PARCC assessments.
 - 1) Make sample PARCC assessment items available on a web site for students, teachers, teacher candidates, and parents/grandparents/guardians to understand how questions and items may be worded in the future.
 - 2) Develop materials that will help teachers, teacher candidates, and parents/grandparents/guardians interpret the PARCC assessments and understand the impact of the assessment scores.
 - 3) Make released PARCC assessment items available on a web site for students, teachers, teacher candidates, and parents/grandparents/guardians to use.

- 4) Provide teachers with easy access to assessment data about their students that will help them facilitate remediation.
- 5) Provide students with access to online performance activities that are similar to the new PARCC assessments that allow them to use a computer as they apply knowledge. Provide students with feedback about their performance.

4. Educator Development

- a. Create an infrastructure that supports the use of multiple delivery methods of professional development by the Louisiana Department of Education, universities, local school districts, and other educational organizations.
 - 1) Provide all educators with easy access to online professional development that is focused on the implementation of content specific strategies that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.
 - 2) Provide educators with professional development that deepens their content knowledge and broadens their knowledge of content appropriate strategies to address the Common Core State Standards.
 - 3) Provide educators with training to implement project-based learning using a range of technology applications. The methodology will drive the acquisition of knowledge and inform the pedagogy.
 - 4) Provide training to assist educators in monitoring the achievement of their students through the use of technology.
- b. Create and support a professionally-based social media website/electronic platform/discussion board for educators in Louisiana to communicate with each other, share new strategies/techniques, and promote best practices.

5. Educational Leader Development

- a. Provide principals and assistant principals with targeted professional development to help them know what to look for when observing and evaluating teachers who are effectively addressing the Common Core State Standards.
- b. Provide superintendents and district leaders with targeted professional development to help them know what to look for when observing and evaluating principals who demonstrate instructional leadership in schools that are addressing the Common Core State Standards.

6. Technology

- a. Develop a strategy/plan with a funding source to address threshold equity for districts in hardware/software/bandwidth/connectivity to be prepared for schools to address the Common Core State Standards and use the new PARCC assessments. Within the plan

consider asking sponsors within communities to help pay for technology costs (e.g., broadband connection; leasing of i-Pads, etc.).

- b. Have districts identify students who do not know how to use technology to engage in performance based activities and have districts provide students with appropriate technology training.
- c. Change the outdated textbook policies of the state and encourage the use of digital textbooks.

7. Success in Entry-Level Credit-Bearing College English I and Mathematics Courses

a. PARCC Cut-Off Scores for Placement in Entry-Level Credit-bearing Mathematics and English College Courses

- 1) Use the same PARCC cut-off scores for placement of students in College Algebra and English I in all two- and four-year colleges since all post-secondary institutions use common descriptors for the two courses and students may transfer the courses to any two- or four-year institution in the state.

b. High School Students Who Have Not Attained PARCC Cut-off Scores for Placement in Entry-Level Credit-Bearing Mathematics and English College Courses

- 1) Develop a clear set of steps for high schools to follow when PARCC assessments and ACT scores are used by middle and high schools as an early measure to indicate that students are not on-track to attain the PARCC cut-off scores needed for placement in entry-level credit-bearing English I and mathematics college courses.

As part of the steps, develop options that would be available to students in all districts in Louisiana. The options could include the following:

- a) Remedial/developmental courses offered face to face or online through the Louisiana Virtual School during the senior year to all students in need of additional instruction to attain an ACT score of 19 in mathematics and ACT score of 18 in English for entrance into college mathematics and English I.
- b) Assessments and prescriptive modules that are provided online to high school seniors which are broken down by mathematical strands and allow high school seniors to complete modules just in the assessment areas where they demonstrated weaknesses on the PARCC or ACT assessments.
- c) “Boot Camp” curriculum that could be used by all teachers in the state to help high school students review math concepts prior to taking the PARCC or ACT assessments that could be offered face-to-face or online through the Louisiana Virtual School.

- d) Independent computer delivery developmental course offered during the summer prior to admission to the two- or four-year colleges.
 - 2) Align the curriculum within developmental courses at two-year institutions to the new expectations of high school students as they exit high school and enter college after being taught to address the Common Core State Standards.
- c. **High School Students Who Have Attained PARCC Cut-off Scores Early Within Their High School Years for Placement in Entry-Level Credit-Bearing Mathematics and English College Courses**
- 1) Provide high school seniors with a relevant mathematics course during their senior year or enroll the high school seniors in appropriate college mathematics courses to maintain their depth of knowledge about mathematics if they obtain cut-off scores for placement in entry-level credit-bearing mathematics courses on PARCC mathematics assessments by the end of their sophomore or junior year in high school.
 - 2) Change state policies that impact grade point averages and TOPS eligibility and prevent high school students from graduating from high school with honors due to taking more difficult college level courses while still enrolled in high school.
 - 3) Provide high school students with access to dual enrollment in college level courses through MFP funding.
 - 4) Change TOPS requirements to allow high school students who have attained high levels of academic excellence to start their TOPS eligibility while still enrolled in high school.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCED SUPPORT OF EXISTING INITIATIVES

1. Communication

- a. The Louisiana Department of Education currently has a toll-free number to respond to general questions about education. *Increase communication about the availability of the toll-free number to answer questions about the Common Core State Standards and new PARCC assessments.*
- b. The Louisiana Department of Education currently has information on their web site for educators entitled "Frequently Asked Questions: Common Core State Standards and COMPASS." *Develop a modified version of the questions and answers for parents and other non-educators that is less technical.*

2. Teacher Development

- a. The Louisiana Department of Education is currently supporting the creation of teams within every school and providing opportunities throughout the year for teachers within the teams to receive training to use new instructional strategies to implement the Common Core State Standards, practice the use of the strategies in their classrooms, and

receive additional training to further develop the strategies. *Have state and district personnel continue to provide the team members with consistent and ongoing professional development with the expectation that they will help other teachers in their schools. Have districts use the team members at each level (primary, middle, and secondary schools) to assist parish wide curriculum leaders in providing focused professional development on Common Core State Standards and teaching practices to all teachers.*

- b. The Louisiana Department of Education is currently integrating language within the teacher evaluation rubric that will determine if teachers are addressing the Common Core State Standards while teaching. *Continue to refine the teacher evaluation tools and training procedures as effective teaching is better understood for the Common Core State Standards to ensure that teachers are being accurately evaluated based upon the Common Core State Standards.*
- c. The new teacher evaluation system will indicate if students being taught by specific teachers demonstrate less success on PARCC assessments when compared to other teachers within schools. *If weaknesses are demonstrated, determine if the teachers possess the necessary depth of knowledge about the content area (e.g., mathematics) to teach to the new standards. If they do not, provide the teachers with focused instruction to acquire deep knowledge about the specific content area (e.g., mathematics).*

3. Teacher Preparation

- a. Through involvement within their PARCC Campus Leadership Teams, all two- and four-year universities are currently enhancing the teacher preparation curriculum within the Colleges of Education and Colleges of Arts/Sciences/Humanities to prepare new teachers to effectively address the Common Core State Standards, COMPASS, and new PARCC assessments. *Continue to support this work and provide university faculty and staff with the necessary professional development and resources for teacher candidates to learn to engage students in performance-based learning activities that allow students to use technology and higher level thinking skills while demonstrating understanding of specific content areas.*

4. Technology

- a. The Louisiana Department of Education is currently surveying all schools and districts in the state to determine their access to hardware, software, technology resources, and bandwidth to utilize technology in learning tasks and implement the new PARCC assessments and develop plans to address identified needs. *Use the data from the surveys to identify schools that lack the necessary resources and identify a process to help the schools attain the necessary infrastructure for their students to be prepared to demonstrate knowledge on the new assessments.*
- b. Career Technology courses are available in the State. *Expand the use of the Career Technology course to all districts.*

- c. High school students in Louisiana currently have access to college level courses within their high schools through the use of technology. *Provide high school students with greater access to information about available college level courses.*

5. Success in Entry-Level Credit-Bearing College English I and Mathematics Courses

- a. The Board of Regents is currently working with all two- and four-year colleges as PARCC Campus Leadership Teams are identifying core competencies that high school students need to demonstrate when passing the new PARCC assessments for placement and success in College Algebra and English I. PARCC Campus Leadership Team members will meet during June 2012 to reach consensus on statewide critical core competencies. K-12 educators are working with the teams. The teams will be doing similar work next year to examine placement in Contemporary Math, Applied Algebra for College Students, and introductory Statistics. *Once the critical core competencies have been identified, develop and implement a process for the critical core competencies to be communicated to all school districts in the state.*
- b. Policies already exist for students to enroll in college level courses while attending high school. *Have two- and four-year colleges develop and disseminate materials that fully inform high school students about the process and courses that can be taken for dual enrollment.*
- c. High school students in some districts are allowed to take an entry-level credit-bearing English I college course during their senior year in school. However, high school seniors in other districts may not. *Identify barriers that prevent high school seniors from taking English I during their senior year, and identify strategies that will allow high school seniors to overcome those barriers.*
- d. All districts in Louisiana are currently expected to provide high school students with access to Advanced Placement courses. *Provide support for school districts to offer Advanced Placement courses in a variety of subjects at each high school in each district.*
- e. Through course choice, opportunities are available in Louisiana for every high school student to complete a minimum of one post-secondary course at a technical, two-year, or four-year post-secondary institution prior to graduation from high school. *Increase awareness among students and parents/grandparents/guardians about these opportunities.*

C. ITEMS TO NOT INCLUDE IN THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were identified as recommendations that were low priorities, recommendations that should be deleted, or recommendations that were addressed by other recommendations.

1. Recommendations Addressed Within Other Recommendations

- a. Provide students with access to digital textbooks. *(Recommendation addressed in 6c.)*

- b. Provide every district with the funding to allow every student and school to have uniform technology resources. *(Recommendation addressed in 6a.)*
- c. Provide an electronic repository of resources (e.g., videos of model lessons,) for teachers and students to use. *(Recommendation addressed in 3a.)*
- d. Expand the LDOE website to update teachers and districts on new programs, new curriculum, and new training aligned with the CCSS and PARCC. *(Recommendation addressed in 3a.)*

2. Recommendations to be Deleted

- a. Delete the recommendations for the change in the vision statement for the waiver application. *(The LDOE has already submitted a waiver application to the United States Department of Education. A vision statement has already been included in the waiver application.)*
- b. Have the LDOE provide timelines and a guide for schools across the state to implement the “change” process. *(The Louisiana Department of Education has already done this.)*
- c. Provide opportunities for teachers to observe teachers who are successfully using the Common Core State Standards as they teach their students. *(Decisions about this would need to occur at a district level.)*
- d. Provide online practice sessions between teachers in local districts and “master teachers” who can demonstrate effective strategies to integrate the Common Core State Standards via technology into the curriculum. *(Decisions about this would need to occur at a district level.)*

3. Low Priority Recommendations

- a. Take information to where the parents are – story library hours, churches, bus stops – community organizations, pastors, etc.
- b. Take information to other venues (i.e., Chamber of Commerce, etc.).
- c. Create an app for telephones.
- d. Create a social media website for parents.
- e. Provide support to create online learning environments in which a teacher’s role is more like a facilitator of student learning – this will also help teachers to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully address the CCSS and PARCC. Provide teachers and students with access to powerful online learning environments in English and mathematics that are already available and could easily be adjusted to the states needs