

**Dual Enrollment Task Force**  
Thursday, January 30, 2025  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Iowa Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Claiborne Building  
1201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Baton Rouge 70802

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Susannah Craig called the January Dual Enrollment Task Force meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Cara Landry called the roll. A quorum was not established at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. B.J. Bertucci arrived, and a quorum was established.

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Susannah Craig (designee)	Board of Regents, Commissioner of Higher Education
Dr. Ernise Singleton	LDOE, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Cheryl Serrett (designee)	Louisiana School Board Association, Exec. Director
Mr. Mike Faulk	LA Association of School Superintendents, Exec. Director
Ms. Karen Triche (designee)	LA Association of Principals, Vermilion High
Mr. Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Mr. BJ Bertucci (designee)	LA Association for Career & Technical Education
Dr. Jeannine O'Rourke	College & Career Readiness Commission
<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Mr. Preston Castille	State BESE Member
Ms. Caroline Roemer	LA Association of Public Charter Schools
Ms. Jacquelyn Walther	President of the LA School Counselor Association
Ms. Jan Cotton	LA Association of Educators
Dr. Sabrah Kingham	Education Policy Director, Office of the Governor

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 9, 2024, AND DECEMBER 17, 2024, MINUTES

**Dr. Craig asked for a motion to approve October 9, 2024, and December 17, 2024, minutes. On the motion of Dr. Ernise Singleton, seconded by Dr. Jeannine O'Rourke, the motion was approved.**

## DISCUSSION OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2024, DUAL ENROLLMENT MEETING

Dr. Susannah Craig introduced herself as the designee for Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed for this meeting. She then reported on the previous Task Force meeting which occurred on December 17, 2024, and was held at Southern University New Orleans (SUNO). It was a great success. Those who were able to attend learned about SUNO's initiatives, particularly their efforts to support dual enrollment. SUNO repurposed an empty building on campus, with one half housing Rooted Schools, a high school, and the other half an Early Learning Center. Dr. Craig stated that this high school offers dual enrollment courses for high school students and reflects SUNO's "cradle to career" approach. She added that the event featured presentations from Kaitlin Karpinski, school leader of Rooted Schools, who discussed dual enrollment, and Nathan Stockman, Chief Education and Training Project Officer of YouthForce NOLA, who shared their work in Orleans Parish.

Dr. Craig then introduced Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere from the Board of Regents to provide a more detailed recap of the Task Force meeting. Dr. DeMeulenaere stated that the Rooted Schools at SUNO offers a personalized pathway for students to achieve financial freedom, with a focus on both academic and soft skills development. She added that many students graduate with job offers and/or college acceptance letters, often holding certifications and working paid internships by their sophomore or junior years of high school.

Dr. DeMeulenaere then reported that the school emphasizes soft skills, industry-based credentials, and entrepreneurship, with students creating projects and portfolios. One student, for example, was making a significant income in high school through cartoon character design. Rooted Schools also has a unique dual enrollment program starting in ninth grade, unlike other schools that begin in the junior year. SUNO faculty teach courses at Rooted Schools, and

students attend SUNO for courses as well, fostering close collaboration. This success is made possible through strong partnerships with organizations like the Board of Regents, SUNO, New Orleans Public Schools, and New Schools for New Orleans. Dr. DeMeulenaere then introduced Ms. Alicia Dagastino from YouthForce NOLA to report on the work they are completing to support dual enrollment in New Orleans.

Ms. Dagastino reintroduced herself as the Director of Impact Evaluation at YouthForce NOLA, and she provided an overview of the organization's work to support career-connected learning for New Orleans public school students. She stated that YouthForce NOLA helps students gain career exposure, soft skills, industry-based credentials, college credits, internships, and professional networking, all of which contribute to higher academic performance, graduation rates, and future career success. She added that the organization partners with schools, families, local businesses, and other stakeholders to fund and advocate for these opportunities.

Ms. Dagastino noted that YouthForce NOLA focuses on four skill clusters: Health Sciences, Digital Media, Skilled Crafts, and Business Services, and works closely with GNO Inc. to identify good job opportunities in these fields. She added that Orleans Parish has lagged in dual enrollment compared to neighboring parishes, with only 17% of seniors graduating with dual enrollment credits. YouthForce NOLA conducted a landscape analysis to understand the cause, finding that the decentralization of schools and inconsistent implementation of dual enrollment programs have contributed to the difference.

Ms. Dagastino then identified the best practices, such as early recruitment and strong school leadership, to increase dual enrollment success. She added that YouthForce NOLA is working to address these gaps by providing tools like the Super App to help schools plan and set goals for increasing dual enrollment. She noted that they also aim to streamline connections

between high schools and dual enrollment partners to improve accessibility and outcomes for students.

Ms. Dagastino then discussed how counselors ensure students are aware of their options and understand how to access them. She added that some schools use credentialed adjunct teachers, and the maritime pathway, where most dual enrollment occurs, aligns with the school's mission. She stated that many students earn associate's degrees in logistics or maritime fields. Ms. Dagastino stated that the delay in dual enrollment progress may be due to some campuses prioritizing AP and CLEP courses over dual enrollment for feasibility reasons, and a lack of understanding about the benefits of dual enrollment. To address this, efforts are being made to streamline connections between high schools and dual enrollment partners to create more opportunities for students.

Mr. Mike Faulk asked for clarification on the campuses shifting their focus from AP and CLEP courses to placing more emphasis on dual enrollment. Ms. Dagastino responded that there are ongoing discussions within YouthForce Nola that are focused on advancing dual enrollment. She then noted that some schools are facing challenges deciding between offering AP coursework or dual enrollment classes and they often opt for AP courses due to the transportation issues that occur with dual enrollment. Ms. Dagastino stated that the goal is to demonstrate that students can access both options. Dual enrollment partnerships vary by school, with SUNO having a memorandum of understanding with Rooted Schools, and other training providers like NOCSE offering dual enrollment opportunities. She noted that transportation remains a major barrier for students and efforts are being made to address these difficulties with continuing investigations to better understand the situation.

A question was raised about how YouthNola is funded. Ms. Dagastino stated that the organization has diverse funding sources, primarily from foundations, and they recently received a \$4 million grant from the Department of Labor to establish an apprenticeship program in the Greater New Orleans area. She noted that they are not yet ready to expand beyond New Orleans, but they have created a "Solutions Lab" for others interested in replicating their model. She added that the New Orleans Career Center has also been an important resource, and similar efforts have been attempted in Baton Rouge to replicate this process.

It was noted by the Task Force that on February 12, a launch event for the Louisiana College Access Network will take place statewide. This network, along with organizations like YouthForce NOLA, aims to support students in high school and those transitioning to higher education. It was stated that over the past six months, efforts have been made, with help from the Graphical Limiter Foundation, to bring these organizations together to collaborate. The event will serve as a formal forum for discussions on how to improve support for students as they move from high school to various types of higher education.

Ms. Dagastino stated that the New Orleans Career Center has set up several enabling conditions to support students. She then gave information on specific students and how they have been supported during their dual enrollment. In healthcare, they partnered with Ochsner and Delgado to offer nursing students the opportunity to start clinicals and earn an LDN before turning 18. She added that in engineering, their curriculum aligns with UNO, with adjunct professors teaching dual enrollment courses. One successful graduate interned at Ochsner, earned medical assistant training, and is now working while studying for the MCAT. Additionally, Operation Spark offers software development training with credit for prior learning, and students can earn college credits through agreements with Delgado and Tulane. One student from

Operation Spark is now a successful software engineer. Ms. Dagastino emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and work to help students access dual enrollment opportunities.

#### DUAL ENROLLMENT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Mike Faulk introduced Mr. Adam Lowe from the Education Strategy Group to present information from the Dual Enrollment Task Force 2024 Annual Report. Mr. Lowe stated that in 2019, BESE and the Board of Regents adopted a goal to increase college and career readiness for high school graduates, aiming for students to complete early college credits, including AP exams or other postsecondary credentials. He added that despite challenges such as the declining high school-age population, the number of students meeting this goal has increased, particularly through dual enrollment programs, which now represent around 50% of students earning early college credit. Mr. Lowe stated that the college-going rate also saw a significant rise, from 52% in 2022 to 56.5% in 2023, marking a return to 2019 levels.

Mr. Lowe stated that over the past six years, dual enrollment participation has grown, aided by more flexible eligibility policies that moved beyond GPA and ACT scores. The pandemic allowed for testing more flexible eligibility approaches, such as counselor recommendations, which stabilized enrollment numbers. He added that over the last three years, dual enrollment has experienced double-digit growth, fueled by rebuilding programs, expanded online coursework, and more flexible policies.

Mr. Lowe added that in 2021-2022, changes to dual enrollment eligibility contributed to a significant increase in student participation, particularly among African American students, narrowing the participation gap compared to first-time college students. Mr. Lowe stated that hybrid and online dual enrollment options also played a major role in growth, with online

enrollment increasing from 12-13% pre-pandemic to 23% in the 2023-2024 school year. Southeastern Louisiana's hybrid program, which combines high school and university instructors, also saw significant growth. He added that Baton Rouge Community College and other universities like LSU and Northwestern State expanded their online offerings, serving a broader geographic area.

A discussion with the Task Force members was held discussing the discrepancy in data from public universities and private institutions. It was noted that public universities have shown strong growth, but data on private providers and if students enroll in other universities such as Arizona State University and Southern New Hampshire University is less accessible. These institutions partner with Louisiana high schools, but the data system does not fully capture private provider enrollment, limiting visibility on their impact.

It was also mentioned that if a private provider is not accredited, they would not be able to offer high-quality courses. Additionally, high schools are required to approve courses from non-public providers before granting credit, with the principal ensuring the provider meets quality standards. Despite these mechanisms, there are still challenges in fully tracking and evaluating the private providers' impact.

The Task Force noted concerns about the consistency and quality of courses offered by outside providers, particularly when it comes to ensuring that their English courses align with Louisiana's established standards. The Task Force added that this reflects ongoing debates within the state about whether community college courses are equivalent to those at four-year institutions, and whether outside providers meet the same criteria.

Mr. Lowe then stated that most public high school students participating in dual enrollment are taking one or two courses, with a slight increase in students taking three or four.

He noted there had been a small rise in tenth graders enrolling in dual enrollment courses, which may lead to more students following a course sequence in the future. Mr. Lowe added that while the number of non-public school students participating in dual enrollment has decreased slightly, they still make up about 12% of enrollment in some institutions. He stated that technical education saw a significant decline during the pandemic but is now recovering. However, the recovery has been inconsistent, with growth concentrated in specific fields and institutions, and broader statewide rebuilding in technical programs has yet to fully materialize.

Mr. Faulk noted that enrollment in public education has declined overall. He added that tuition increases starting at the end of the 2023-2024 school year will impact the 2024-2025 period, as districts face financial constraints. Mr. Faulk stated that they may struggle to continue funding at previous levels due to reduced supplemental course allocations and general funds. A shift has occurred from 2018-2019 to 2023-2024, with notable increases in general education fields, particularly at institutions like LSU Eunice and LSU Alexandria.

Mr. Lowe stated that the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges (LCTCS) system delivers most of the technical education, and there has been increased interest in certificate programs, particularly in technical studies. He added that this growth is expected to impact career technical education in the following years, especially as more dual enrollment programs are introduced. However, concerns about the cost of tuition and additional fees for enrollment persist. Fields like welding and health professions are showing signs of recovery after a decline, with growth in online and in-person courses. He stated that notably, technical education remains hands-on, but some certificates can be completed through distance learning. Growth in health professions and welding is concentrated in specific areas, such as North Shore and Nunez.

Additionally, education-related courses, like early childhood education, are seeing a rise in enrollments, partly due to task force efforts to strengthen the teacher pipeline.

Dr. Tristan Denley added that The Louisiana Community and Technical College System has seen growth in health professions, especially in fields like allied health and biology, reflecting efforts to improve representation in these areas. However, the growth has not been as strong as expected across all technical education fields. Mr. Lowe reiterated that LCTCS has seen steady growth, particularly in one-year technical certificates, with a focus on fields like health sciences, nursing, welding, and culinary arts. Students are increasingly completing short-term certificates, many of which are stackable toward longer-term associate degrees. While the growth in associate's degrees is more concentrated in liberal arts, technical fields like welding and health professions are gaining traction. Programs are being structured with clear pathways to guide students, leading to early increases in enrollment, especially in high-demand fields.

Mr. Faulk added that after removing the impact of COVID years, a clearer picture of regular enrollment trends will emerge. He states that with the shift in accountability, where 75% will be based on six tests and factors like dual enrollment, it will take a few more years to fully understand how these changes will impact overall enrollment. The process will require time to assess and adjust to the new accountability system.

Mr. B.J. Bertucci stated that the focus from LCTCS has been on reevaluating programs to include a certificate of technical studies as a stopping point, which was previously lacking. This allows students to earn valuable credentials, like a welding certification, by the time they graduate. He added that the process involves collaborating with the secondary system to ensure students get proper credit for courses and avoid unnecessary repetition. Mr. Bertucci noted that by embedding industry-based certificates, students can still graduate on time, even if they do not

pursue technical studies. However, successful implementation requires careful coordination and alignment of various systems.

Mr. Barry Erwin asked for clarification on a certificate of technical studies. Mr. Bertucci stated that the certificate of technical studies represents about one year of study, typically requiring 17 or more credit hours, with some programs like welding involving 24 hours of academic and lab work (over 600 hours in total). It serves as a steppingstone toward a technical diploma, which typically takes a full semester to complete. The certificate is not a full credential but is part of the pathway to earning a technical diploma.

Dr. Denley noted that the approach encourages stacking credentials, starting with a certificate of technical studies (usually 1-2 semesters), followed by a technical diploma (typically four semesters). Many community colleges also offer associate degrees that incorporate the technical coursework, allowing students to transfer those credits toward a bachelor's degree. He added that the key focus is on structuring these programs effectively for students to build on their qualifications.

A discussion held by the Task Force on the Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS) and how it provides students with broad technical skills in a specific field, often leading to a technical diploma after completing 15 hours of academic coursework. It was added that some programs offer an associate degree in applied sciences, which can transfer credits to a four-year university. This structure encourages students by offering incremental achievements, such as CTS, which motivates them to continue their education. It was noted that apprenticeships and internships are also part of the system, offering certification and contributing to high-wage career pathways. These programs align with new accountability standards, which include credit for technical and apprenticeship work.

Dr. Craig then thanked Mr. Lowe for his presentation and thanked the Task Force for their work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT

**On the motion of Dr. Singleton, seconded by Ms. Serrett, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.**

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Alicia Dagostino- YouthForce NOLA

Mr. Adam Lowe- Education Strategy Group

Jason Wolfe- LSU A&M

Phoebe Rouse- LSU A&M

Alisha Fontenot- LSUE

Amanda Brady (Amy Cable)- LCTCS

Madison Owens- McNeese State

Arkeia Thomas- Jefferson Parish Schools

Michael Rather- SOWELA

Daryl Comey- LAVCA

Kelita Johnson- SoLAcc

BOR STAFF

Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere

Dr. Tristan Denley

Ms. Cara Landry

Ms. Allison Vicknair

Ms. Melanie Sandahl

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