



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

Notice of Meetings

Louisiana Board of Regents

P.O. 3677 ▪ Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3677
Phone: (225) 342-4253 ▪ Fax: (225) 342-9318
www.laregents.edu

Monday, October 20, 2025

Event	Time	Location
Louisiana Delta Community College Campus Visit	2:00 PM	Louisiana Delta Community College 7500 Millhaven Road Monroe, LA 71203

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Event	Time	Location
Louisiana Tech University Campus Visit	8:30 AM	Louisiana Tech University The Ropp Center 213 Wisteria Street Ruston, LA 71270
Grambling State University Campus Visit	12:30 PM	Grambling State University Digital Library and Learning Commons G-Room 253 532 RWE Jones Drive Grambling, LA 71245

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Event	Time	Location
University of Louisiana Monroe and VCOM Campus Tour, and Meeting with Campus Leadership	8:30 AM	University of Louisiana Monroe 700 University Ave. Monroe, LA 71203
(Meeting as a Committee of the Whole)** Board of Regents		
Finance Facilities and Properties Academic and Student Affairs Research and Sponsored Initiatives Planning, Research and Performance Artificial Intelligence	12:30 PM	University Library The Terrace, 7th Floor University of Louisiana Monroe 700 University Ave. Monroe, LA 71203

ADA Accessibility Requests

If you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this meeting, please contact Karlita Anderson five (5) business days before the meeting date via email at Karlita.Anderson@laregents.edu or by telephone at (225) 219-7660 to discuss your accessibility needs.

**INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE AGENDAS MAY BE FOUND AT
WWW.LAREGENTS.EDU.**

**WEDNESDAY'S MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WILL BE LIVE
STREAMED AT WWW.LAREGENTS.EDU/LIVE.**

* The meeting may begin later contingent upon adjournment of previous meeting. Meetings may also convene up to 30 minutes prior to the posted schedule to facilitate business.

** The Board of Regents reserves the right to enter into Executive Session, if needed, in accordance with R.S. 42:11 *et seq.*



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5th Congressional District

Devesh Sarda
Student Member

K. Samer Shamieh, M.D.
1st Congressional District

Collis B. Temple III
6th Congressional District

Judy A. Williams-Brown
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Agenda

Board of Regents Meeting*

Meeting as a Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, October 22, 2025
12:30 PM

The Terrace ▪ University Library
University of Louisiana Monroe
700 University Ave. ▪ Monroe, LA 71203

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Public Comments
- IV. Approval of Minutes from September 24, 2025
- V. Approval of Board of Regents 2026 Meeting Calendar
- VI. Reports and Recommendations of Standing Committees
 - A. Finance
 1. Approval of Budget Request for FY 2026-2027
 - B. Facilities and Property
 1. Board of Regents FY 2026-2027 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation
 - C. Academic and Student Affairs
 1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Routine Staff Approvals
 2. Academic Programs
 - a. BBA Entrepreneurship – Southern University A&M
 3. New Centers and Institutes
 - a. Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions-Louisiana State University A&M



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- b. Center of Research Excellence for Traumatic Injury & Burn Research and Innovation – LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans

4. Reports

- a. MJ Foster Promise Report Year Three
- b. TOPS Annual Report 2025

D. Research and Sponsored Initiatives

1. Appointment of Endowed Chairholder without a National Search: Louisiana State University A&M College
2. Overview of Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) Plan and Budget, FY 2026-27

E. Planning, Research, and Performance

1. Consent Agenda

a. Advisory Commission on Proprietary Schools

- i. Initial Applications
 - a. Lafayette Medical Assistant School, Lafayette, LA
 - b. Shreveport Medical Assistant School, Shreveport, LA
 - c. Mandeville Medical Assistant School, Mandeville, LA
- ii. Change of Ownership Applications
 - a. Medical Education (MediEd), New Iberia, LA - Formerly Academy of Acadiana - New Iberia
- iii. Renewal Applications
 - a. 160 Driving Academy - Shreveport – License #2364 – Shreveport, LA
 - b. Acadiana Area Career College - A Div of Blue Cliff College – License #2357 – Lafayette, LA
 - c. Accelerated Academy - Baton Rouge – License #2220 – Baton Rouge, LA
 - d. Accelerated Academy - Denham Springs – License #2154 – Denham Springs, LA
 - e. Accelerated Academy - Hammond – License #2235 – Hammond, LA



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- f. Accelerated Academy - Houma – License #2228 – Houma, LA
- g. Accelerated Academy - Lafayette – License #2219 – Lafayette, LA
- h. Accelerated Academy - Lake Charles – License #2308 – Lake Charles, LA
- i. Accelerated Academy - Metairie – License #2230 – Metairie, LA
- j. Accelerated Academy - Monroe – License #2223 – Monroe, LA
- k. Accelerated Academy - Slidell – License #2224 – Slidell, LA
- l. Advance Nursing Training – License #2197 – New Orleans, LA
- m. Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy – License #2131 – Shreveport, LA
- n. Baton Rouge School of Phlebotomy – License #2335 – Baton Rouge, LA
- o. Blue Cliff College - Alexandria – License #2358 – Alexandria, LA
- p. Blue Cliff College - Metairie, Satellite Location – License #2361 – Metairie, LA
- q. Camelot College – License #680 – Baton Rouge, LA
- r. Coastal College - Alexandria – License #991 – Alexandria, LA
- s. Cross Road CDL Academy – License #2321 – Harvey, LA
- t. Delta College South – License #969 – Baton Rouge, LA
- u. Digital Media Institute – License #2198 – Shreveport, LA
- v. Fortis College – License #2134 – Baton Rouge, LA
- w. Healthcare Training Institute – License #2109 – Kenner, LA
- x. Life Care – License #2182 – Marrero, LA
- y. Louisiana Truck Driving Training – License #2393 – Tickfaw, LA
- z. MedCerts – License #2337 – Livonia, MI
- aa. New Orleans Medical Assistant School – License #2305 – New Orleans, LA
- bb. Opelousas Academy of Nondestructive Testing – License #2275 – Opelousas, LA
- cc. Remington College - Baton Rouge – License #2277 – Baton Rouge, LA



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- dd. River Cities School of Dental Assisting – License #2089 – Shreveport, LA
- ee. Smith Institute – License #2362 – Shreveport, LA
- ff. Stick It Phlebotomy – License #2226 – Ruston, LA
- gg. Synergy Massage Institute - Metairie – License #2365 – Metairie, LA
- hh. The Captain School – License #2392 – Marrero, LA

F. Artificial Intelligence

1. Consideration of AI Use Policy

2. Consideration of Resolution Concerning AI Use in Postsecondary Education

VII. Chair Comments

VIII. Reports and Recommendations by the Commissioner of Higher Education

IX. Other Business

X. Adjournment

**Note: The Board of Regents reserves the right to enter into Executive Session, if needed, in accordance with R.S. 42:11 et seq.*

DRAFT
MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS

September 24, 2025

The Board of Regents met at 1:19 p.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2025, in the Louisiana Purchase Room 1–100, Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Chair Cordell called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Doreen Brasseaux called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Present for the meeting were:

Kim Hunter Reed, Commissioner
Misti Cordell, Chair
Terrie Sterling, Vice Chair
Phillip May, Secretary
David Aubrey
Blake David
Stephanie Finley
Ted Glaser III
Dallas Hixson
Wilbert Pryor
Christy Oliver Reeves
Devesh Sarda, Student Member
K. Samer Shamieh
Judy Williams-Brown

Mgt. Board representatives present were:

LSU System Representative, Remy Voisin Starns
UL System Representative, John Noble, Jr.
Southern System Representative, Donald Ray Henry

Mgt. Board representative not present was:

LCTCS Representative

Absent from the meeting were:

Christian Creed
Darren Mire
Collis Temple III

Appendix A
Guest List

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Cordell asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2025 MEETING

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2025 meeting in globo.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE – MEAUXMENTUM MOMENT

Chair Cordell introduced Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, to review the Master Plan and report on progress over the last six years toward meeting the 2030 goal of the plan. She noted the significant strides being made to equip members of all Louisiana populations with credentials aligned to workforce needs. Each Board members received a hard copy of the report which will also be posted on the Board's website.

Dr. Denley noted that the Board enacted the Master Plan entitle Louisiana Prospers in 2019. The plan links the prosperity of the state to the ongoing educational attainments of its citizens. Dr. Denley, along with Commissioner Reed, thanked everyone across the state who is contributing to the success of the plan.

The initial plan presented a three-part focus: 1) expand access to and success in completing postsecondary education, 2) eliminate persistent and damaging gaps, and 3) significantly increase the education level for adults. He noted that today's student can be different from students of the past in that they include not only high school graduates but also veterans, first generation students, incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals, foster youth, working parents, and adults in rural areas.

Dr. Denley noted the report identified Louisiana's 2025 attainment rate – the number of working-age adults with a postsecondary credential – as 52.5%, an all-time high for Louisiana. This puts the state on track to meet or exceed the Master Plan's 2030 goal of 60%. In many instances, earning a credential can change the trajectory of an entire family. Since 2019, more than 350,000 adults in Louisiana have earned high-value credentials. At that pace, Louisiana will produce 85,000 new credential holders annually; as of today, that number is 80,000.

Dr. Denley went on to note that on average each of the 80,000 earning credentials each year will earn across the span of their working life a \$1M more than had they stopped at a high school diploma, totaling approximately \$82B more for the entire group. This will have a transformative effect on them, their families, their communities, and the state meaning any cost to the state for higher education is more an investment than a cost.

This investment enables Louisiana to meet its workforce needs. Filling Louisiana's workforce talent pipeline is a major reward of the Master Plan. How this is being accomplished involves a number

of factors including having a record high 43K students participating in dual enrollment for high school students during 2024–2025 and employing a deliberate strategy to engage adults through programs like the M.J. Foster Promise Program which saw over 4,000 enrollees obtain credentials since 2022. M.J. Foster Program graduates have increased their media salary by \$36,000 lifting many out of poverty.

Dr. Denley mentioned that there has been work on ensuring success for students in their early college studies through math and English corequisite courses which are intended to support students who now on average earn more than 60% more college credits at the end of their first year than did students who in previous years did not receive such support.

In concluding his presentation, Dr. Denley shared quotes from Secretary Susan Bourgeois, Louisiana Economic Development, Secretary Susie Schowen, Louisiana Workforce Commission, and Dr. Nancy Zimpher, president of National Association of Higher Education Systems about the success and importance of Louisiana Prospers, noting additional statements in support of Louisiana’

Regent David noted a report about the Master Plan improving Louisiana’s credit rating. Dr. Denley affirmed that the impact of the state’s economy by Moody’s is mentioned in the report. He said this is transformative across the state. He noted that the latest data about credentials attainment from Lumina in 2023 ranks Louisiana thirty-fifth among the 50 states when the 52.5% attainment number is inserted, but he said that there is still much more work to be done. Regent Hixson was impressed that an initiative could have an impact on Moody’s credit rating. Dr. Reed mentioned that she would send out a link to the full report about the credit rating change. Chair Cordell thanked Dr. Denley and recapped the presentation.

CHAIR’S COMMENTS

Chair Cordell made the following comments:

- She recognized Regent Devesh Sarda, student member, who gave his report.
 - Regent Sarda thanked Commissioner Reed for hosting the recent summit on hazing. He mentioned that he is going through hazing prevention training and that he knows how important it is to be focused on hazing prevention issues.
 - He informed the Board that the first meeting this year of the council of college class presidents from across the state will be hosted in Baton Rouge on Oct. 3–4. The theme for this meeting will be AI in higher education. He will report on students’ perspective about this topic during the October Board meeting.
- She presented highlights of the Board’s participation in Louisiana’s Innovative Pathways on Display at Oxford University in August. She and Commissioner Reed joined Dr. Sabrah Kingham, the governor’s education policy advisor, Louisiana Workforce Commission secretary, Susie Schowen, and others who participated in a degree apprenticeship study. The study lead by NGA (National Governors’ Association), Craft Education, and the national center for Grow Your Own brought together education leaders and policymakers from across the nation to explore how higher education and employers can partner to create “earn to learn” pathways. Louisiana was one of only eighteen states invited to participate and the only state invited to make a presentation about collaboration among K–12, higher education, and workforce development.

- She and Commissioner Reed attended the inaugural meeting of the Governor’s Task Force on Public Higher Education Reform on August 28. They will serve on the task force along with board chairs from the four Louisiana higher education systems. The first meeting provided an overview of accreditation issues. Dr. Denley provided an “Accreditation 101” presentation to the group. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 30, in the Governor’s Press Room.
- She attended the first Louisiana Hazing Prevention Summit on September 16. She and Commissioner Reed did several live interviews for the WAFB morning show to highlight the work of the summit named in honor of Southern University student Caleb Wilson. A number of state and local officials, as well as students and system representatives spoke throughout the day. Summit attendees heard from Dr. Walter Kimbrough, an expert on hazing. She thanked the Regents team and Dr. Allison Smith for their work on this event.
- She thanked Board members for their engagement in numerous activities, noting that Regents Aubrey and Pryor recently attended a higher education and workforce dinner in Shreveport where Commissioner Reed and Louisiana Workforce Commission secretary, Susie Schowen, made presentations to Leadership Louisiana.
- She ended her report by previewing the October Regents meeting to be held in Monroe, Chair Cordell’s hometown. The two-day meeting will include visits to the campuses of ULM, Louisiana Tech, Grambling State, and LDCC.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Chair Cordell asked whether any member of the Board wanted to take up any of the Committee reports separately before a motion was made to accept all reports. There were no requests.

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Board voted unanimously to approve all Committee recommendations from the Committee meetings.

FINANCE

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FY 2025–2026 OPERATING BUDGETS

Chair David began noting the extent to which the operating budgets were discussed at the budget hearings and the challenges facing higher education institutions across the state, urging the staff to maintain communication regarding budget shortfalls and funding for scholarship programs.

Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, began her presentation by stating that the September Board of Regents’ budget hearings provided an entire day for the Board to receive budget presentations from each of the management boards regarding their campus and system budgets as well as Board of Regents, which includes the programs of LOSFA and LUMCON. The hearings focused on the FY 2025–2026 Operating

Budgets. The budget hearings allowed for questions and discussion on immediate and long-term budget adjustments. Below is the schedule for the budget hearings.

Schedule of Budget Hearings for Tuesday, September 23, 2025

**Board Conference Room, Claiborne Building, 6th Floor
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

9:00 a.m.	Introduction
9:05 a.m.	Statewide Budget Outlook
9:45 a.m.	Board of Regents
9:55 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)
10:30 a.m.	Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)
11:00 a.m.	Break
11:05 a.m.	Louisiana Community and Technical College System
12:05 p.m.	Lunch Break
12:45 p.m.	Southern University System
1:45 p.m.	Break
2:00 p.m.	Louisiana State University System
3:00 p.m.	University of Louisiana System

Following the hearings, the Board of Regents met on Wednesday, September 24, 2025, to review and consider acceptance of the FY 2025–2026 operating budgets.

At this time, BoR staff presented statewide summary information for the Board’s consideration. Ms. Bentley-Smith noted that with today’s action of the board, the FY 2025–2026 budget development cycle would be completed. Next month, staff will update and prepare a preliminary full formula funding request for FY 2026–2027 to be considered by the Board.

Senior Staff recommends that the Committee accept the FY 2025–2026 Operating Budgets.

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Williams-Brown, the Board unanimously approved the funding recommendations for all Higher Education Systems, boards and agencies for FY 2025–2026.

After approval, Regent Aubrey asked if the operating budget was a flat, state-funded budget to which Ms. Bentley-Smith indicated it was at a standstill level as per the governor’s request of all state agencies. Regent Aubrey followed up asking if the growth was predominantly from self-generated revenues to which Ms. Bentley-Smith confirmed it was.

Regent Aubrey’s next question related to the Legislature’s increase of the Sports Wagering tax to support athletics and if these funds were reflected in the budget amounts. Ms. Bentley-Smith explained the funding still needed recognition by the Revenue Estimating

Conference before they could be used. We expect those funds to be recognized at the end of this fiscal year.

FACILITIES AND PROPERTY

ACT 959 PROJECT: LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE STUDENT UNION RESTROOM RENOVATION

Act 959 of 2003 permits institutions to initiate certain capital projects not exceeding \$10M that are funded with self-generated/auxiliary revenues, grants, donations, or local/federal funds. The Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of LSU A&M, submitted a request for the purpose of renovating restrooms within LSU's Student Union.

The LSU Student Union is a high-use facility serving students, faculty, staff, and visitors. This project will renovate existing restrooms on the first through fourth floors of the Student Union. The renovation will improve the functionality, accessibility, and user experience related to a heavily used core facility. The project scope involves replacing deteriorated components, upgrading fixtures to meet current code and accessibility standards, and refreshing finishes throughout each restroom. **The total project cost of \$1.7M will be funded with auxiliary revenues.**

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Reeves, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Act 959 project submitted by the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of Louisiana State University and A&M College, for the purpose of renovating the LSU Student Union restrooms.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Denley presented the Consent Agenda, consisting of routine items including Staff Approvals.

On motion of Regent Sarda, seconded by Regent Glaser, the Committee received and recommended Board of Regents approval of the items on the Consent Agenda.

2025 STATEWIDE STRATEGIC ACADEMIC PLANNING

Dr. Denley presented the 2025 Statewide Strategic Academic Planning, informing the Committee that institutions annually submit three-year plans, detailing the degree programs they plan to create and those to terminate over the next three years. He also advised that workforce needs are now considered in the academic planning process.

He noted no new academic programs are approved through this process, as institutions are still required to follow the approval process for new academic programs. He added that the plans have been reviewed by the four management boards.

Dr. Denley provided an update on the progress of programs in various stages of implementation as well as those that will be proposed for termination. He advised that there is now a focus on creating efficiency in the academic planning process by using Cooperative Academic Arrangements between campuses.

Regent Aubrey asked whether the Board is being asked to approve just the one year planning or the full three years and whether campuses will still bring forward specific full proposals for consideration when launching new programs. Dr. Denley responded that this approval is only permission to plan and that full presentations would still be required.

Regent Aubrey asked if the proposed terminations are low-completer programs and whether there is a designation for those programs. Dr. Denley responded that programs are proposed for termination primarily when the number of completers is low and that institutions, based on Board discussion, now understand that to create new programs, resource reallocation is needed.

Regent Sterling asked if this level of review of the academic programs is new. Dr. Denley responded that this is the third year of the more detailed review process.

Regent Aubrey asked for a definition of a “low completer program.” Dr. Denley responded that there are production thresholds, which are compared to a three-year average of program completers. Regent Aubrey asked for a document that sets forth the thresholds of low-completer programs.

Regent Sarda commented that, as part of academic program reviews, Regents staff should look for pathways that can be developed for students to earn additional credentials.

Regent Pryor asked about cross-enrollment opportunities among institutions in the state. Dr. Denley responded that several institutions do work together, providing as an example the LA Cyber Academy, which currently includes six institutions and a statewide footprint.

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Sarda, the Committee approved the recommended actions on the 2025–2026 institutional academic plans.

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRHOLDER WITHOUT NATIONAL SEARCH: LSUHSC-NEW ORLEANS

Ms. Robison notified the Committee that LSUHSC–New Orleans has requested to appoint Dr. Gary Klasser, Professor in the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, to the Henry A. Gremillion, DDS Chair in Orofacial and Maxillofacial Pain, a \$1 million Chair matched by the BoRSF in 2019–20 that has been vacant since July 2020. Dr. Klasser has been on the faculty at LSUHSC–NO since 2011 and was promoted to full professor in 2017. This request is aligned with all policy requirements for such appointments and an external expert has affirmed that Dr. Klasser is a superior candidate for the Chair and would very likely win a national search, should one be conducted. If approved, this waiver request would represent the first of LSUHSC–NO’s two uses of the national search waiver provision in FY 2025–26.

On motion of Regent Shamieh, seconded by Regent Glaser, the Research and Sponsored Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans’ request to waive the national search requirement to appoint Dr. Gary Klasser to the Henry A. Gremillion, DDS Chair in Orofacial and Maxillofacial Pain. As stipulated in Board policy, a copy of the Letter of Appointment sent to Dr. Klasser must be submitted to the Board within 90 days of this approval.

BORSF ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS SUBPROGRAM: POLICY REVISION

Ms. Robison informed the Committee that the annual deadline for submission of Endowed Professorships is March 31, to ensure funding can be considered by the Board and funds distributed prior to the end of the fiscal year. Given the uncertainty around the continuation of the Board of Regents Support Fund, pending the April 18, 2026, vote on a constitutional amendment to repeal, in June 2025 the Regents approved an expedited funding cycle for FY 2025–26, with recommendations brought for consideration in March 2026. To ensure Endowed Professorships align with this timeline, staff request to change the deadline established in the Endowed Professorships pre-award policy from March 31 to February 28.

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent May, the Research and Sponsored Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve a revision to the Endowed Professorships pre-award policy to change the deadline established in the Endowed Professorships pre-award policy from March 31 to February 28.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Robison acknowledged Dr. Michael Khonsari, Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Research and Development, for his recent appointment as Boyd Professor at LSU A&M. The Board extended their congratulations.

Regent Aubrey asked whether, as a vote to repeal the Board of Regents Support Fund is pending, competitions should be adjusted to remove multiyear funding opportunities. Ms. Robison responded that the Board had approved adjustments to the Support Fund budget to remove multiyear opportunities and focus remaining dollars on endowments and one-year grants.

Regent Pryor asked about the impact of the U.S. Department of Justice's memo related to eliminating proxies for race and ethnicity in higher education on the Support Fund Endowed First-Generation Undergraduate Scholarships subprogram. Ms. Robison indicated that an opinion had been requested from the U.S. Department of Education and institutions had been advised of steps they could take, with donor permission, to convert these scholarships to other types of endowments.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

Dr. Allison Smith, Assistant Commissioner for Student Health and Wellness, provided an overview of the state's college recovery programs and initiatives, noting that September is Collegiate Recovery Month nationwide. She highlighted the National Conference held in New Orleans, which was located there due to the growth of collegiate recovery programs across the state. She also featured testimonials from multiple students expressing gratitude for the community provided by recovery programs and their importance to student success.

Regent Pryor asked whether a statewide collaborative recovery effort would be useful. Dr. Smith responded that it would be, and that at the recent SLU/LSU football game the two programs hosted a joint tailgate. She emphasized the importance of ensuring students in recovery have the opportunity to have traditional social and fun college experiences.

This item was for information only; no action was requested.

CLARIFICATION OF BOARD OF REGENTS PROGRAM CONTRACT STRUCTURE

Ms. Subramanian informed the Committee that R.S. 17:3454 designates BOR as the fiscal agent and governing body of LUMCON, authorizes BOR to enter into contracts and other

agreements with other public agencies for LUMCON, and deems any liability of LUMCON as that of BOR. R.S. 17:3023 similarly eliminates the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, the former governing board of LOSFA, and transfers all of its powers to BOR, including the administration of the various student scholarship and loan programs.

She observed that, partly due to historical practices, some of the contracts to which LOSFA and LUMCON are parties still are executed in the name of the program, i.e., LOSFA or LUMCON, rather than the Board of Regents; however, these programs no longer have the legal authority to enter into contracts. She therefore recommended that the Board clarify that all data-sharing agreements to which the Board of Regents or either program is party apply to the entire agency, including its programs.

Dr. Denley indicated that this action is needed to integrate all data into LA FIRST, a legislatively created longitudinal data system housed in the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center at UL Lafayette. Ms. Subramanian noted that the agreements under discussion do not compromise the privacy interests of individuals.

Regent Sterling recommended that the Board and staff engage in further discussion of data-sharing among institutions and agencies during a future Board meeting or Board Development session.

On motion of Regent Williams-Brown, seconded by Regent May, the Statewide Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents recognize all contracts entered into in the name of LUMCON or LOSFA as properly those of the Board of Regents.

PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND PERFORMANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Susannah Craig presented the Consent Agenda, which consisted of five license renewal applications from academic degree-granting institutions. All five institutions are accredited by a U.S. Department of Education accreditor and had previously been approved as licensed institutions by the Board of Regents.

On motion of Regent David, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Planning, Research, and Performance Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Regents approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda.

A. R.S. 17:1808 (Academic Licensure)

1. Renewal Applications

- a. Fuller Theological Seminary – Pasadena, CA
- b. High Tech High Graduate School of Education – San Diego, CA
- c. Texas Wesleyan University – Fort Worth, TX
- d. University of Massachusetts Global – Aliso Viejo, CA
- e. University of the Pacific – Stockton, CA

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned on motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Sarda.

PERSONNEL

EVALUATION OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, began her presentation by providing the committee with an overview of the process for evaluating the Commissioner of Higher Education. Ms. Bentley-Smith then stated that the Personnel Committee is authorized to go into executive session and explained that the Commissioner had been advised of such as required by law. She explained the Commissioner agreed to have her evaluation discussed in executive session. A motion was made by Regent Finley, seconded by Regent Williams-Brown to enter into executive session. A roll call vote was taken to enter into executive session.

Committee Members Voting to enter executive session

Terrie P. Sterling – Vice Chair
Blake R. David
Stephanie A. Finley
Willbert D. Pryor
Judy Williams-Brown

Upon the conclusion of the executive session Regent David made a motion, seconded by Regent Finley to return out of executive session.

Committee Members Voting to return from executive session

Terrie P. Sterling – Vice Chair
Blake R. David
Stephanie A. Finley
Willbert D. Pryor
Judy Williams-Brown

Regent Sterling stated that the Personnel Committee discussed the Commissioner of Higher Education's performance using the reflections and observations document provided by the Commissioner.

Regent Sterling recommended that the Personnel Committee approve the evaluation of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Regent Finley made a motion, seconded by Regent Williams-Brown to approve the evaluation.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed thanked the Board for their strong support and presented several items:

- She commended all of higher education and Regents staff for the progress and success reflected in the Master Plan report.
- She noted that Regents staff attended a retreat at the Louisiana Arts and Science Center. The "Out of this World" retreat presented opportunities for team building and learning. She thanked Dr. Susannah Craig and others for making the retreat a memorable one for all of the staff. Several new staff awards were initiated. Chair Cordell presented the awards: Innovation Award to Elizabeth Kelly, Impact Award to Brianna Golden, and Good Citizen Award to Christina Cheek.
- She mentioned that September is "Student Parents" month and that across the nation there are 3 million students who are also parents. Dr. Chris Yandle and his team are highlighting through social media how Louisiana's colleges and universities are supporting student parents through efforts like on campus childcare centers.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Cordell asked if there was any other business to come before the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Regent May, seconded by Hixson, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Appendix A

Board Meeting Guest List

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

NAME	AFFILIATION
Brooke Ransome	LSU A&M
Blair LeBlanc	House Fiscal
Troy Blanchard	LSU A&M
Margaret Finch	LSU A&M
Amanda Mire	LSU A&M
William Tulak	LCTCS
Alicia Williams	GSU
Trang Nguyen	OPB
Jakob Ward	OPB
Helena Janssen	OPB
Brian Roberts	BOR-LUMCON
Jeannine O'Rourke	UL System
Scott A. Wicker	SUBR
Donald Ray Henry	SUBR
Jackie Bach	LSU A&M
Luria Young	SUBR

Proposed 2026 Board of Regents Calendar of Meetings

	Time	Room	Reason
January 2026			
Tuesday, January 27	10:00 am	Purchase ¹	Oaths, Committee and Board Meetings
February 2026 – no meeting			
March 2026			
Wednesday, March 25	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development Committee and Board Meetings
April 2026			
Wednesday, April 29	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development Committee and Board Meetings
May 2026 – no meeting			
June 2026			
Wednesday, June 10	9:00 am 10:30 am	Purchase TJ A&B	Joint BOR/BESE, Committee and Board Meetings
July 2026 – no meeting			
August 2026			
Wednesday, August 26	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development, Committee and Board Meetings
September 2026			
Tuesday, September 22	9:00 am- 4:30 pm	BCR ²	Budget Hearings
Wednesday, September 23	9:00 am	Purchase	Committee and Board Meetings
October 2026			
Tuesday, October 20	Noon	Off site	Board Development
Wednesday, October 21	9:00 am	Off site	Committee and Board Meetings
November 2026	No Board Meeting		
December 2026			
Tuesday, December 8	6:00 pm	TBD	Board Holiday Social
Wednesday, December 9	9:00 am 10:30 am	Purchase TJ A&B	Joint BoR/BESE, Committee and Board Meetings

¹ Louisiana Purchase (Purchase) Room (1-100), Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

² Board Conference Room (BCR), (6-242), Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D.
*Commissioner
of Higher Education*

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Chair
At-Large

Terrie P. Sterling
Vice Chair
At-Large

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Secretary
1st Congressional District

David J. Aubrey
2nd Congressional District

Christian C. Creed
5th Congressional District

Blake R. David
3rd Congressional District

Stephanie A. Finley
3rd Congressional District

Ted H. Glaser III
6th Congressional District

Dallas L. Hixson
At-Large

Darren G. Mire
2nd Congressional District

Wilbert D. Pryor
4th Congressional District

Christy Oliver Reeves
5th Congressional District

Devesh Sarda
Student Member

K. Samer Shamieh, M.D.
1st Congressional District

Collis B. Temple III
6th Congressional District

Judy A. Williams-Brown
4th Congressional District

Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Finance

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

The Terrace ▪ University Library
University of Louisiana Monroe
700 University Ave. ▪ Monroe, LA 71203

VI. Reports and Recommendations

A. Finance

1. Approval of Budget Request for FY 2026-2027



BOARD of REGENTS
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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Facilities and Property

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

The Terrace ▪ University Library
University of Louisiana Monroe
700 University Ave. ▪ Monroe, LA 71203

VI. Reports and Recommendations

B. Facilities and Property

1. Board of Regents FY 2026-2027 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Academic and Student Affairs

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

The Terrace ▪ University Library
University of Louisiana at Monroe
700 University Avenue ▪ Monroe, LA 71209

VI. Reports and Recommendations

C. Academic and Student Affairs

1. Consent Agenda

a. Routine Staff Approvals

2. Academic Programs

a. BBA Entrepreneurship – Southern University A&M

3. New Centers and Institutes

a. Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions-Louisiana State University A&M

b. Center of Research Excellence for Traumatic Injury & Burn Research and Innovation – LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans

4. Reports

a. MJ Foster Promise Report Year Three

b. TOPS Annual Report 2025

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.1.a

Routine Academic Requests & Staff Approvals

Institution	Request
SOWELA	Request to change the name of the AAS in Machine Tool Technology (CIP 48.0501) to Industrial Mechanics for Millwrights and Machinists to more accurately reflect the program's content. Approved.
NUNEZ	Request to change the names of the AAS in Business Technology (CIP 52.0101) to Business Management and the AAS in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance to Computer Science to more accurately reflect the programs' content. Approved.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.2.a

Proposed Bachelor of Business Administration in Entrepreneurship Southern University and A&M College

Background Information

Southern University and A&M College (SUBR) requests Board of Regents approval to offer a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Entrepreneurship. The proposal was approved by the Southern University Board of Supervisors then submitted to Regents for consideration. The proposal was reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide, and the proposed program was included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

The BBA in Entrepreneurship at SUBR will prepare students with the essential business knowledge and skills to launch and grow new ventures. Students will gain expertise in business planning, financial management, and marketing strategies tailored to startups and small businesses. The program offers experiential opportunities, including internships, entrepreneurial projects, and participation in case and business plan competitions. Supported by the development of the Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development Institute through funding from the Minority Business Development Agency, the proposed program is designed to expand opportunities for minority entrepreneurs and equip students to succeed in entrepreneurial environments. SUBR's College of Business, accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), holds international recognition for meeting the highest standards in business education. This accreditation strengthens the Entrepreneurship program by ensuring students benefit from a rigorous curriculum, qualified faculty, and strong industry connections.

1. **Value:** Per Regent's policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities** The proposed BBA in Entrepreneurship responds to strong demand as students across disciplines express interest in starting their own businesses, with many already managing businesses while in school. A survey by the Centre for Economic Policy Research found that 45% of prospective entrepreneurs pointed to technology as making startups more accessible.

Related Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Managers, all other	5-star	4,174	4,295	3%	\$110,948

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast

-
- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** Since the early 2000s, the College of Business at SUBR has expanded its work in entrepreneurship through partnerships with federal agencies, international universities, and small business communities. Grants and external support provided opportunities for faculty training through programs such as Babson College's Symposium for Entrepreneurship Educators, as well as global initiatives including faculty exchanges, training of trainers, and the establishment of the Center for Entrepreneurship at Makerere University in Uganda. These efforts were complemented by collaborative exchanges with the University of Liberia and the hosting of young entrepreneurs for training in Baton Rouge. Engagement with small and minority business owners through workshops has further shaped the College's entrepreneurial vision. Building on this record, the proposed BBA in Entrepreneurship draws directly from the College's long-standing investment in entrepreneurship education, faculty development, and stakeholder collaboration.

- c. Same or Similar In-State Programs: Louisiana State University A&M has a standalone B.S. in Entrepreneurship. This program averages 20 graduates per year. The proposed program will be the only one in an HBCU in Louisiana and in the Southern system.
- d. Student Enrollment and Completion: Interest in the proposed program was determined through surveys, discussions within the College's Entrepreneurship Club, and website traffic analysis. Additional interest is expected to grow through information sessions, open houses, and virtual events designed to showcase the program.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	10	18	30	48
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	0	10

2. **Resources:** The majority of current faculty in the College of Business teach entrepreneurship courses in the existing minor and will teach the new upper-level entrepreneurship courses. Additional compensation will be provided to the faculty member selected to serve as coordinator for the new degree.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will support the program.	Additional compensation will be allocated for the program coordinator.	Yr. 1+: \$30,000 (additional compensation)
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No additional resources are needed to begin the program.	\$0
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	Funding will be allocated for multiple graduate assistants each year.	Yr. 1: \$20,000 Yr. 2: \$25,000 Yr. 3: \$30,000 Yr. 4: \$40,000

3. **Master Plan Priorities:** The following aspects of the proposal directly address priorities or goals of the statewide attainment goal and 2030 Master Plan.

- **Accessibility:** The proposed BBA in Entrepreneurship courses will be offered during the day and evenings using the traditional face-to-face format. Faculty are developing plans to deliver the full program online in the future.
- **Affordability:** SUBR offers tuition that is lower than that of many other institutions in the state, and most students qualify for financial aid or other federal assistance. The Southern University Bookstore participates in Follett Access, which provides textbooks at reduced prices. Faculty use OER and Open Access materials as often as possible to expand affordability and access for students.
- **Partnerships:** The Southern University Foundation is a major partner for the College of Business through fundraising efforts that support scholarships and entrepreneurship programs for students. The College of Business is also working with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, the Small Business Administration, and trade associations, including the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and the World Trade Center of New Orleans. In addition, the College of Business has received grant funding from the Minority Business Development Agency to advance an entrepreneurship degree program and establish an Entrepreneurship Institute.

- **Work-based Learning:** The program coordinator, along with faculty advisors, will assist students in securing off-campus experiential learning with startups and other organizations.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** The proposed Entrepreneurship program will expand opportunities for minority students by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to start and grow businesses. Students will benefit from mentorship with experienced entrepreneurs and industry professionals, as well as from networking opportunities with investors and business leaders that can lead to partnerships and funding.

Staff Analysis

SUBR's proposed BBA in Entrepreneurship is designed to meet student demand and expand opportunities for minority entrepreneurs. The program builds on the College of Business's AACSB accreditation and international recognition, ensuring that students receive a rigorous curriculum and strong industry connections. As the only HBCU in the Baton Rouge region, Southern will fill a gap in degree offerings with this program. External funding from the Minority Business Development Agency will support the development of the Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development Institute, providing resources for students to engage in internships, entrepreneurial projects, and competitions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Entrepreneurship (CIP 52.0701) at Southern University and A&M College, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2026–2027 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.3.a.

Proposed Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions Louisiana State University and A&M College

Background Information

Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU) is requesting approval to establish the Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions. The LSU Board of Supervisors approved the request and submitted it to Regents for consideration.

Staff Summary

1. Description and Need

The LSU Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions will serve as the collaborative platform for multidisciplinary research, medical innovation, and performance optimization in collegiate, tactical, and operational athletics. Building on a historic partnership between LSU and Our Lady of the Lake, as well as more than 25 research projects developed over the past decade with the LSU School of Kinesiology and the LSU Health Sciences Center, the Institute will offer education and training for undergraduate and graduate students by centralizing expertise in exercise science, sports medicine, athletic training, orthopedics, cardiology, psychology, and other related fields. The Institute will advance research and technology innovation aimed at improving health, wellness, and performance outcomes for student athletes while also extending its scope to tactical athletes such as warfighters, astronauts, emergency service personnel, and operational athletes across the energy and agricultural sectors. The Institute will also develop and host an annual conference on sports science and medicine. By providing the infrastructure to support cutting-edge projects and applied practices, the Institute will guide evidence-based recommendations to LSU Athletics staff, coaches, and collaborators to enhance performance, safety, and well-being. Once established, the Institute will expand its reach to address new areas of human performance research and data analytics, positioning LSU as a national leader in the study of elite athletes and high-performing individuals exposed to unique physical, psychological, and environmental sectors. The vision of the Institute is to become the nation's leading athletic research institution.

2. Initiatives and Objectives

Short-term, first-year objectives of the Institute include:

- Establish the infrastructure to centralize sport and performance research at LSU through integrated clinical technology, enhanced facilities, and an executive committee of experts to provide research oversight and ensure compliance.
- Increase cross-departmental collaboration by connecting LSU Athletics, LSU researchers, and sports medicine professionals, while supporting inter-institutional collaborations and creating a research staff team for data collection and analysis.
- Develop a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to athletics-based research that enhances student-athlete health, well-being, and performance.
- Facilitate enhanced research funding by supporting grant applications, post-award management, and the establishment of novel endowments.

Long-term, five-year plans include:

- Integrate and analyze large-scale data sets from collegiate, tactical, and operational athletes to generate predictive models for injury risk, recovery, and performance optimization, supported by wearable and sensor technology development in collaboration with LSU centers.
- Expand undergraduate and graduate training by offering research opportunities, internships, senior design projects, and fellowships embedded within elite collegiate athletics to strengthen LSU's

educational mission and professional pipeline.

- Organize an annual research conference on Sports Medicine to share cutting-edge findings, strengthen LSU's visibility, and positively impact the health of Louisiana athletes and first responders.
- Establish a seed grant program to fund innovative sport research projects, generate preliminary data for external funding, and increase LSU Athletics' national visibility.

3. Resources and Administration

The Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions will be led by Dr. Neil Johannsen, with two Associate Directors representing LSU Athletics and LSU Health Sciences. An Athletic Research Board (ARB) consisting of faculty from LSU A&M, LSUHSC-NO, and Pennington. The ARB will provide oversight to ensure that research projects directly or indirectly benefit student athletes. The Institute will be organized into two primary divisions: Athlete Health and Well-Being, and Athlete Performance and Innovation. An Executive Council and two advisory committees will guide research and development projects. While future plans include the establishment of a dedicated physical infrastructure, the Institute will initially operate through existing laboratories with funds directed toward core services and shared resources.

4. Budget

The Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions has secured diverse funding streams, including investigator-led projects, internal LSU grants, collaborative awards with Our Lady of the Lake, and institutional support for personnel. These resources currently cover research activities, personnel, equipment, assessments, and participant stipends. Additional support has been awarded through federal agencies, private foundations, industry partners, and athletic organizations, totaling several million dollars in active projects led by LSU faculty. The Institute will continue to revise its budget as new funding is secured and will work with the LSU Foundation and the Tiger Athletic Foundation to attract private donors to ensure long-term sustainability. The budget document lists Y5 costs at \$956,012 and revenue at \$5,144,488, an impressive return on investment.

Staff Analysis

LSU is requesting approval to establish the Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions, a unit that will centralize existing strengths in sports medicine, kinesiology, and health sciences to advance research, innovation, and training in athlete health and performance. The Institute builds on LSU's long-standing collaboration with Our Lady of the Lake and a decade of funded research projects, creating a clear need for coordinated infrastructure. With leadership already in place, diverse funding secured, and a vision to expand into national leadership in the study of elite and tactical athletes, the Institute is positioned for success.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends authorization of the Institute for the Health and Performance of Champions. A progress report and request for continued authorization will be due August 1, 2028.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.3.b.

Proposed Center of Excellence in Traumatic Injury and Burn Research and Innovation Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans

Background Information

The Board of Regents Center of Excellence designation (Academic Affairs Policy 2.05A) was established by the Board in June 2013 and signifies that the designated unit is a statewide academic, research, or workforce leader in its focus area. All Centers of Excellence must demonstrate the following attributes: a strong performance record, a clear and finitely defined area of expertise, a range of opportunities in its area of designation (academic, research, workforce), engagement with the greater community, and recognition as a uniquely strong hallmark of the institution. A Center of Research Excellence is a highly specialized research unit that is well supported through external funding and partnerships, develops new knowledge, enhances the research productivity of faculty, integrates education and research, and positively impacts economic development in the state.

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) is requesting initial approval of the proposed center and Center of Research Excellence designation of the Center of Excellence (COE) in Traumatic Injury & Burn Research & Innovation. The request was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors and submitted to Regents for consideration.

Staff Summary

1. Description

Through decades of leadership in trauma and burn care, LSUHSC-NO has established itself as a hub for clinical excellence and research related to injuries. From its origins at Charity Hospital to its current base at University Medical Center, LSUHSC-NO has maintained continuous Level I Trauma Center designation since 1996. This status, granted by the American College of Surgeons, requires not only top-tier surgical resources and subspecialty coverage but also a sustained commitment to injury prevention, outpatient care, and trauma-related research. The region's elevated rates of violence and injury, combined with proximity to hazardous chemical infrastructure and national oil reserves, contribute to one of the highest trauma volumes in the country, including significant overlap in burn and traumatic injuries. These factors have driven collaborations among trauma surgeons, burn specialists, and researchers in basic science, clinical trials, and population health. In forming the Traumatic Injury & Burn Research and Innovation (TIBRI) Center of Research Excellence, LSUHSC-NO seeks to formally unite these efforts to accelerate translational research, improve patient outcomes, and foster high-impact partnerships. Building on existing industry collaborations in burn care, the TIBRI Center will connect with academic partners and corporate sponsors to support innovative, transparent, and rigorously conducted research on injuries, reinforcing New Orleans's role as a national referral destination for complex trauma.

2. Objectives and Evidence of Excellence

Comparable to trauma, burn injuries require precise triage and timely intervention, yet burn treatment access remains limited due to the lower frequency of burn cases. Only two percent of U.S. hospitals operate burn centers, and national resources guiding prehospital destination decisions for burn patients remain outdated. Addressing these gaps, in 2022, the University Medical Center-New Orleans (UMC-NO) burn unit partnered with BData, a private company that focuses on healthcare data analytics, and the American Burn Association to establish the National Injury Resource Database (NIRD), the only current, comprehensive listing of burn and trauma centers in North America.

UMC-NO's Burn Program advances care across every stage of treatment and recovery, from acute intervention to long-term rehabilitation. In prevention, the program partners with Tulane University's Violence Prevention Institute to study the causes and mitigation of violence, while LSUHSC-NO's TIBRI Center drives injury research and faculty experts lead firearm injury prevention initiatives. In prehospital

training, UMC-NO faculty secured a \$9.5 million Department of Defense grant to develop a curriculum for austere, prolonged field care scenarios. In hospital therapies, collaborations with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) have produced innovations in spray skin technology, artificial intelligence for wound assessment, and regenerative dermal substitutes. Rehabilitation efforts include survivor support groups, advanced scar management, and cosmetic reconstruction to improve quality of life.

Partnerships with state agencies, academic institutions, and federal research entities strengthen the burn unit's capacity for innovation, system development, and knowledge dissemination. Designation as a TIBRI Center of Research Excellence will unify these efforts, expanding research impact, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring that the most advanced care and resources are available to patients across the region.

3. Resources and Administration

The proposed Center of Research Excellence in Trauma, Injury, and Burn Research and Innovation will bring together scientists and clinicians from LSUHSC-NO, Tulane University, and the University of New Orleans. Led by Dr. Herb Phelan, Professor of Surgery and Vice Chair of Surgical Research at LSUHSC-NO, the Center builds on a strong foundation of externally funded studies, clinical expertise, and mentorship. Dr. Phelan has secured over \$4.7 million in research support and mentored more than 40 students and trainees. Associate Director Dr. Alison Smith is a trauma surgeon and principal investigator on seven industry-sponsored studies. Her lab investigates inflammatory responses in wound healing, and her work has earned national recognition, including awards from the Association of Academic Surgery and the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma. Dr. Patricia Molina, Senior Associate Dean for Research at LSUHSC-NO, adds further depth with her expertise and extensive leadership in trauma physiology. She has published over 200 peer-reviewed articles and directs a lab focused on the impact of substance abuse and metabolic responses following injury. Together, these faculty provide strong leadership across translational science, clinical practice, and interdisciplinary education.

The Center will be based at UMC-NO, Louisiana's only facility that houses both a Level 1 Trauma Center and an American Burn Association-verified Burn Unit. Opened in 2015, the hospital includes trauma resuscitation bays, surgical suites, and ICU-level burn and trauma care, all built with disaster resilience in mind. Basic science research will take place in Dr. Allison Smith's laboratory, which is equipped for human and animal cell culture, RNA/DNA analysis, and cryopreservation. This work will expand with the ongoing \$75 million renovation of LSUHSC's Medical Education Building, which will increase dedicated research space.

Clinical research and training will be supported through the Center for Advanced Learning and Simulation (CALS), which includes a cadaver lab, standardized patient suites, and integrated video feedback for medical education. CALS will serve as a hub for clinical model development, evaluation, and professional training. The long-term vision includes building a dedicated facility for the Center, with clinical, instructional, and research spaces to support its growing mission.

4. Funding and Budget

The TIBRI Center of Research Excellence will comprise an inter-institutional, cross-departmental, and multidisciplinary team of scientists, healthcare clinicians, and other specialists, all focused on aspects of injury prevention and treatment. A significant strength of the proposed Center is that its leadership is already spearheading numerous initiatives related to the comprehensive management of traumatic and thermal injuries. The TIBRI Center of Research Excellence will first focus on strengthening its existing activities in trauma and burn injuries by more intentionally combining education, training, research, and clinical care. Individuals who have agreed to partner with the Center are all well-established, well-funded, nationally recognized researchers and clinicians. Existing programs and entities already in place at both LSU Health New Orleans, Tulane University, UMC, and UNO will be a part of the team to ensure sustainable success for the TIBRI Center of Research Excellence. Furthermore, with over \$10 million in federal funding and numerous partnerships with private industry to advance innovation, the TIBRI Center of Research Excellence

has a sustainable business model that will ensure its success and impact.

The TIBRI staff has strong partnerships with federal agencies, industry partners, and academic collaborators, with a combined total of over \$63 million in active grant support and \$85 million awarded over the past five years. With designation as the proposed Center of Research Excellence, the TIBRI will leverage this funding and its broad current relationships into a nationally recognized center for the education of medical providers in the care and treatment of trauma and burn injury, and the acceleration of innovation, in conjunction with clinical and private partners, in both acute care as well as post-traumatic recovery.

Staff Analysis

The mission of the proposed center is to bring basic science, population science, and clinical investigators together to translate medical expertise in treating trauma and burns into a corresponding degree of enhanced scientific success and improved societal benefit. The designation as a formal Center of Research Excellence will facilitate greater scientific collaboration, improve patient care, increase the number of clinical trials, and foster outreach and education.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the Center of Excellence in Traumatic Injury and Burn Research and Innovation. A request for continued authorization and designation as a Center of Research Excellence is due December 1, 2027.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.4.a.

ACT 457 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

MJ Foster Promise Program Annual Report

- Act 457 of the 2021 Regular Session stipulates that an overview of specific data points be analyzed on a yearly basis and presented to the Legislature for outcomes assessment. The data for this Year Three report were compiled as the result of a collaborative effort by the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR), Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), Louisiana Works [formerly Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)], Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDoR), and the state's public and proprietary colleges.
- Acts 102 and 633 of the 2024 Regular Session
 - Act 102 increased the maximum amount that may be appropriated to \$40 million and provides for the Advisory Council to be called by LA Works (formerly LWC) rather than the Board of Regents.
 - Act 633 reduces the minimum eligibility age for the M. J. Foster Promise Program from 21 to 17 in a graduated manner over a period of four years.
- Act 152 of the 2025 Regular Session further defined the scope of eligible programs by basing eligibility criteria on the list of critical-need programs identified by LA Works (formerly LWC).

STAFF SUMMARY

Overall, for the 2024–2025 award year, 17,905 applicants were evaluated for eligibility to receive program funds. Of the total applicants, 10,552 were eligible, and 3,030 were ineligible. In total, \$17,425,927 was dispersed (as of July 23, 2025) to students in Year Three, compared to \$9,949,882 to students in Year Two.

In this third year, credential completions increased appreciably from 1,479 in 2023–2024 to 3,900 in 2024–2025. The healthcare profession, a clear need in our state, had the most significant number of completers. Altogether, 2,760 completers were awarded 3,900 credentials.

Of the M.J. Foster completers from 2022 through 2024 matched to LA Works data that had both pre- and post-earnings after completing their credential, their average annual salary was \$65,698. This equates to a change from 69% being below the ALICE Household Survival Budget pre-MJFP support to 87% above post-completion.

The salaries of these MJFP students increased by an average of 167% after they completed their credentials. This means that, on average, an individual's salary more than doubled from the amount before the student received MJFP funds. The median (the mid-point of the data set) increase in salary is \$36,864, clear evidence of the award's role in improving economic mobility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the “M.J. Foster Promise Program Annual Report” and authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to submit the report to the appropriate legislative committees on behalf of the Board of Regents.

2025 Year Three Report Murphy J. Foster Promise Award Program

Act 457 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025



BACKGROUND

Act 457 of Louisiana's 2021 Regular Legislative Session created Louisiana's adult financial aid program. Named after former Louisiana Governor Murphy J. "Mike" Foster, this legislation established a \$10.5 million annual state fund to provide workforce training opportunities for Louisiana's working-age adults who have not yet earned a postsecondary credential [legislation can be accessed here: [Act 457 \(2021\)](#)]

The originating legislation supported eligible students enrolled in two-year public postsecondary institutions and accredited proprietary schools approved by the Board of Regents to pursue an associate's degree or a short-term credential aligned with Louisiana's workforce priorities. The M.J. Foster Promise Award Program's (MJFP's) effective date was the 2022–2023 academic year. We have now completed the third year of the program (2024–2025). Since the 2021 Regular Session, multiple legislative instruments have been introduced to adjust and refine the original legislation, which will be covered later in this report.

Award recipients must pursue an associate's degree or shorter-term postsecondary credential tied to specific high-demand, high-wage occupations aligned with Louisiana's workforce priorities. The program funds enrollment in priority majors related to growing industry sectors, including construction, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics ([MJFP Approved Programs](#)).

The M.J. Foster Promise Award Program is critical in helping to reach the goal outlined in the Board of Regents Master Plan, *Louisiana Prospers*, of 60% credential attainment for the state's working-age population by 2030. With the growth of participants and completers in the program, the MJFP Award provides financial support for students to complete their education and training and earn high-demand credentials, ultimately contributing to a significant influx of working-age adults needed for high-value positions in Louisiana's economy.

Program eligibility requirements are as follows: applicants must be Louisiana residents, reach an age threshold, and meet a family income threshold of 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)¹ or be unemployed or underemployed for six months. The awards are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are accessible to the student for three years. The original program covered the cost of tuition and required fees after all other sources of aid (excluding student loans and federal work-study [MJFP Award Information](#)) had been applied; however, Act 284 of the 2023 Legislative Session allows the scholarship to be used before all other sources of aid for an eligible student's first semester of support.

¹A measure of income issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) determines eligibility for specific programs and benefits such as Medicaid. The 2025 income numbers for the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are \$15,650 for an individual and \$32,150 for a family of four. [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\) - Glossary | HealthCare.gov](#)

The award amount of \$3,200 per award year, or \$1,600 per semester, is provided to a student enrolled full time. Part-time students receive a proportional amount. Students can receive a maximum of \$6,400 over three years.

A student may receive the maximum award amount of \$6,400 in one year for certain high-cost programs ([MJFP Award Information](#)) and can use the award funds beginning July 1 through the following June 30.

Compliance with reporting requirements is a condition of an institution's continued eligibility to receive payments from the state on behalf of award recipients, which shall be determined annually by the administering agency.

The originating legislation, Act 457 of 2021, charged the Board of Regents with establishing an Advisory Council to identify qualified programs that provide the high-value credentials supported by this award.

In 2024, Act 102 transferred oversight of the Advisory Council from the Board of Regents to the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC – now LA Works), while maintaining day-to-day program administration under the Board of Regents through the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) [RS 17:3047.5].

LA Works must:

- Convene the Advisory Council once per year for program updates.
- Review the state's workforce priorities every three years. [RS 17:3047.1]

The Advisory Council is responsible for:

- Identifying at least five industry sectors with high-demand, high-wage jobs that align with state workforce priorities.
- Reviewing associate's-level or below programs at postsecondary and proprietary schools to determine which ones align with high-demand, high-wage jobs.
- Designating those programs that meet workforce priorities as qualified for MJFP funding. [RS 17:3047.1]

The Advisory Council is comprised of the following members, or their designees:

- The Chancellors of LSU Eunice and Southern University Shreveport
- The President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System
- The Commissioner of Higher Education
- The State Superintendent of Education
- The Secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission

- The Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Economic Development
- The Chairman of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council
- The Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue

Act 152 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session ([link](#)) further defined the scope of eligible programs. Specifically, it aligned TOPS Tech Early Start and TOPS-Tech-eligible programs with the eligibility criteria established for the M.J. Foster Promise Program, basing eligibility on the list of critical-need programs identified by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. The provisions of this Act apply to awards beginning with the 2025–2026 academic years and beyond.

The 2024 Regular Legislative Session enacted multiple laws that substantially revised the M.J. Foster Program.

Act 102 made the following additional changes to MJFP:

- Increased the maximum amount that may be appropriated to \$40 million. Note that this increase only allows for maximum appropriation; it does not require it.
- Provides that the Advisory Council shall be called by the Louisiana Workforce Commission rather than the Board of Regents.

Act 633 gradually reduces the minimum eligibility age for the M.J. Foster Promise Program from 21 to 17. This reduction in the minimum eligibility age will take place in a graduated manner over a period of four years, as follows:

- For the 2024–2025 award year, an applicant must be 20 years or older;
- For the 2025–2026 award year, an applicant must be 19 years or older;
- For the 2026–2027 award year, an applicant must be 18 years or older; and
- For the 2027–2028 award year and thereafter, an applicant must be at least 17 years old.

Overall, for the 2024–2025 award year, 17,905 applicants were evaluated for eligibility to receive program funds. Of the total applicants, 10,552 were eligible, 3,030 were ineligible, and 2,440 were cancelled. Cancellations and withdrawals consisted of students who voluntarily withdrew for various reasons, were not enrolled in an approved program, were not enrolled during the award year, or did not adhere to enrollment deadlines. In total, \$17,425,927 was dispersed (as of July 23, 2025) to students in Year Three, compared to \$9,949,882 to students in Year Two.

Year by year, the numbers for the M.J. Foster Promise program have steadily increased. The number of M.J. Foster Promise recipients went from 1,171 in the first year of implementation to 3,026 in year two, and 6,308 in year three (as of July 2025). The number of M.J. Foster Promise

graduates went from 192 in year one to 1,275 in year two and 2,760 in year three. When looking at the age of M.J. Foster Promise recipients, while each age range has had an increase in numbers, since year one the proportion of recipients under 30 years old has increased while the proportion of recipients over 30 years old has decreased. The number of completions in MJFP-approved programs has steadily increased as well. The number of completions went from 211 in year one to 1,479 in year two and 3,900 in year three.

METHODOLOGY

To gather the requested data for the report, eligible institutions offering the program were identified: Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) institutions, LSU Eunice (LSUE), Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA), and accredited proprietary schools licensed by the Board of Regents. The dataset for year three of the program includes students enrolled in MJFP-approved majors and validated skills and learning programs (short-term noncredit programs) at LCTCS institutions, LSUE, and SUSLA. In addition, approximately 160 proprietary institutions are licensed in the state; of those, 37 are accredited, and 31 offer credentials that are eligible for the award. BOR worked with these eligible and participating proprietary institutions to gather their enrollment and outcomes data.

Staff worked to identify both program awardees who enrolled in eligible credential programs and credential completers from all eligible institutions. Non-awardees in eligible programs were also identified to provide comparison data whenever possible. BOR, LOSFA, and LA Works relied on previously established intra-agency Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) governing data-sharing to acquire the data required for this report, following all data privacy protocols.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Act 457 (2021) required that the Board of Regents submit a written report to the Legislature to include all the information for the preceding academic year as listed below:

- Demographic information of award recipients, including age, race, gender, and household income.
- The mean length of time required for award recipients to complete a qualified program as compared to other completers of the program who did not receive the award.
- Pre- and post-award employment information, including employment status, annual wages, and employer's industry sector.
- Recidivism rates of award recipients.
- The administering agency shall, with the cooperation and assistance of the state's public two-year postsecondary education institutions and proprietary schools, annually query

each first-time award recipient to determine the extent to which receiving the award influenced the recipient’s decision to enroll in postsecondary education.

Although the 2024 amended statute calls for this report to contain information about students’ eligibility for federal financial aid, changes to federal reporting rules prevent that information from being shared.

All data requested and analyzed are reported in the aggregate only and contain no personally identifiable information.

Program Participant Demographic Information

Act 457 (2021) requires presentation of demographic information of program participants, including age, race, gender, and household income.

Table 1 considers the 6,308 MJFP recipients in 2024–2025 by race and gender (this metric is more than double last year’s number, 3,026). This increase in student recipients can be attributed to the \$7.3 million remaining dollars from the first implementation year, which was re-allocated back into the program. Table 2 groups these 6,308 MJFP recipients by the Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) of their residence.

Table 1. Race by Gender for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2024–2025

	Female		Male		Gender Not Reported		
Race	Headcount	Percent of Total	Headcount	Percent of Total		Total	Percent of Total
Black, non-Hispanic	2,354	37%	731	12%	3	3,088	49%
White, non-Hispanic	605	10%	236	4%	1	842	13%
Hispanic or Latino	76	1%	15	0%		91	1%
Asian	406	6%	60	1%		466	7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	34	1%	7	0%		41	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	0%	3	0%		9	0%
Two or More Races	55	1%	16	0%		71	1%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	1,371	22%	309	5%	19	1,699	27%
Grand Total	4,908	78%	1,377	22%	23	6,308	100%

Source: LOSFA’s MJFP Recipient File, as of 07/23/2025.

Race/ethnicity categories follow U.S. Census Bureau standards.

Table 2. Regional Labor Market Areas for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2024–2025

Region	Headcount	Percent of Total
Alexandria	387	6%
Baton Rouge	1,735	28%
Houma	345	6%
Lafayette	1,035	17%
Lake Charles	342	6%
Monroe	514	8%
New Orleans	1,161	19%
Shreveport	611	10%
Not Available	178	3%
Grand Total	6,308	100%

Source: BOR's Workforce Validated Skills and Learning, Statewide Student Profile System, LOSFA's MJFP Recipient File, as of 07/23/2025.

Note: Louisiana Parish data unavailable.

Table 3 looks at the age ranges of MJFP funding recipients. Eligible students in 2024–2025 were required to be 20 or older. Of the total MJFP recipients (6,308), just under half (45%) are 30 or older, and 71% are 25 or older. This outcome aligns with the program's original intent: to recruit individuals from older age groups and encourage them to pursue a high-value credential. The data in Table 3 confirms that the program has been successful in reaching this targeted population.

Table 3. Age Ranges for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2024–2025

Age Range	Headcount	Percent
20*	98	2%
21–24	1,716	27%
25–29	1,649	26%
30–39	1,827	29%
40 +	1,018	16%
Total	6,308	100%

Source: LOSFA's MJFP Recipient File, as of 07/23/2025.

*Per Act 633 (2024), this is the first year that 20-year-old students were eligible.

Another data point required by the law to be reported under demographic information is personal income of MJFP recipients. The program requires participants to meet a family income threshold of 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level](#)² or be unemployed or underemployed for six months.

²[Poverty Guidelines | ASPE](#)

Table 4 illustrates the self-reported adjusted gross income levels of recipients. 20% (1,309) of recipients fall into the two lowest income levels (less than \$15,000 per year); 67% (4,218) of recipients make less than \$34,999 per year; and 13% fall into the \$35,000–\$49,999 per year income group. Only 8% of the recipients made \$50,000 or more, and 13% of recipients (809 students) did not report their income.

Table 4. Income by Groups for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2024–2025

Self-Reported Adjusted Gross Income	Headcount	Percent
Less Than \$10,000	717	11%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	592	9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,486	24%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,423	23%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	805	13%
\$50,000 and more	476	8%
Did Not Report	809	13%
Total	6,308	100%

Source: LOSFA’s MJFP Recipient File, as of 07/23/25.

Almost 68% of recipients’ self-reported adjusted gross incomes are below the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Louisiana (\$29,316), and 98% of self-reported adjusted gross incomes are below the [ALICE Household](#) Survival Budget for a family of four (\$81,432). ALICE is an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed households with income above the Federal Poverty Level but below the basic cost of living [[About Us | Overview of ALICE Project \(unitedforalice.org\)](#)]. The ALICE Household Survival Budget is “the bare-minimum cost of household basics (housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and a smartphone plan, plus taxes and a small contingency)”.

These metrics indicate that the M.J. Foster Promise Program clearly helps the students who need the most assistance to get on an academic track to success and a pathway to being financially self-supporting.

Program Completers Information

Table 5 shows the race and gender demographics of the 2,760 students who completed credentials (over twice as many [1,275]) as last year. Table 6 presents the Regional Labor Market Area of residence for the same 2,760 students.

These data align closely with those on recipients and demonstrate that program support is effective across races and genders, enabling students to complete their credentials.

Table 5. MJFP Completers in M.J. Foster Approved Programs by Race and Gender, 2024–2025

	Female		Male		Unreported		
Completers	Headcount	Percent of Total	Headcount	Percent of Total	Headcount	Total for Race	Percent of Total
Black, non-Hispanic	1,304	47%	506	18%		1,810	66%
White, non-Hispanic	442	16%	230	8%	1	673	24%
Hispanic or Latino	50	2%	31	1%		81	3%
Asian	11	0.4%	4	0.1%		15	0.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	22	0.8%	6	0.2%		28	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0.1%	1	<0.1%		5	0.2%
Two or More Races	41	1%	16	0.6%		57	2%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	63	2%	27	1%	1	91	3%
Total	1,937	70%	821	30%	2	2,760	100%

Source: BOR's Statewide Completers System, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning, Statewide Student Profile System, LOSFA MJFP files. Race/ethnicity categories follow U.S. Census Bureau standards.

Table 6. Regional Labor Market Areas for MJFP Funding Completers, 2024–2025

Region	Headcount	Percent of Total
Alexandria	214	8%
Baton Rouge	589	21%
Houma	138	5%
Lafayette	562	20%
Lake Charles	164	6%
Monroe	253	9%
New Orleans	511	19%
Shreveport	318	12%
Not Available	11	<1%
Grand Total	2,760	100%

Source: BOR's Workforce Validated Skills and Learning, Statewide Completers System, LOSFA's MJFP files.

Note: Louisiana Parish data unavailable.

Program Completion Information

Table 7 provides the top five programs for MJFP program completions. In this report, counted industry-recognized credentials are limited to completions in the approved MJFP program *Classification of Instructional Programs* (CIP) code list, which is aligned to the five major industry sectors (listed in Table 7). Altogether, 2,760 completers were awarded 3,900 credentials.

In this third year, credential completions increased appreciably from 1,479 in 2023–2024 to 3,900 in 2024–2025. The healthcare profession, a clear need in our state, had the most significant number of completers. Further analysis finds that the top five healthcare program completions were Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing and Nursing Assistants (981); Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services (463); Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing (191); Health and Medical Administrative Services (155); and Clinical/Medical Laboratory Science/Research and Allied Professions (143). Other high-completion categories in other industries are Ground Transportation (542) and Precision Metal Working (271).

Table 7. MJFP Completions by Industry

Program Description	2023–2024	2024–2025
Healthcare	965	2,191*
Transportation and Warehousing	310	741
Manufacturing	96	500
Construction	70	260
Information Technology	39	208
Total	1,480	3,900

Source: BOR's Statewide Completers System, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning, LOSFA MJFP files.

*The majority of healthcare program completions (1,933) are in the top five.

Comparing year three MJFP completions by award level (Table 8) to year two data, the increase in completions is noteworthy. There were significant increases from last year to this year in Healthcare, Transportation and Warehousing and Manufacturing (Table 7). This positive trend indicates that MJFP funding is effectively achieving its goal of helping students acquire the necessary skills for those high-demand positions in the workforce. Additionally, the number of students earning stackable credentials of value suggests opportunities for this group of students to continue acquiring expertise in their chosen professions.

Table 8. MJFP Completions by Credential Level

Degree Level	2023–2024	2024–2025
Career Tech Certification	393	2,063
Certificate (One Year)	94	257
Diploma	165	305
Associate's	165	310
Cert. or Diploma < than 100 hours	24	46
Cert. or Diploma 100 to 449 hours	134	78
Cert. or Diploma 450 to 899 hours	326	349
Cert. or Diploma 900 to 1,800 hours	179	492
Grand Total	1,480	3,900

Source: BOR's Statewide Completers System, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning, LOSFA MJFP files.

Time-to-Degree

Program completion data compared time-to-degree for MJFP award recipients in public and proprietary institutions with students in the same programs who did not receive MJFP funding.

Table 9 provides data for students who completed eligible credentials in public postsecondary institutions and proprietary schools in the program's third year. For each credential level, time-to-degree is compared for students who received and did not receive MJFP funding.

Table 9. Time-to-Degree by Credential Level 2022–2023 and 2023–2024

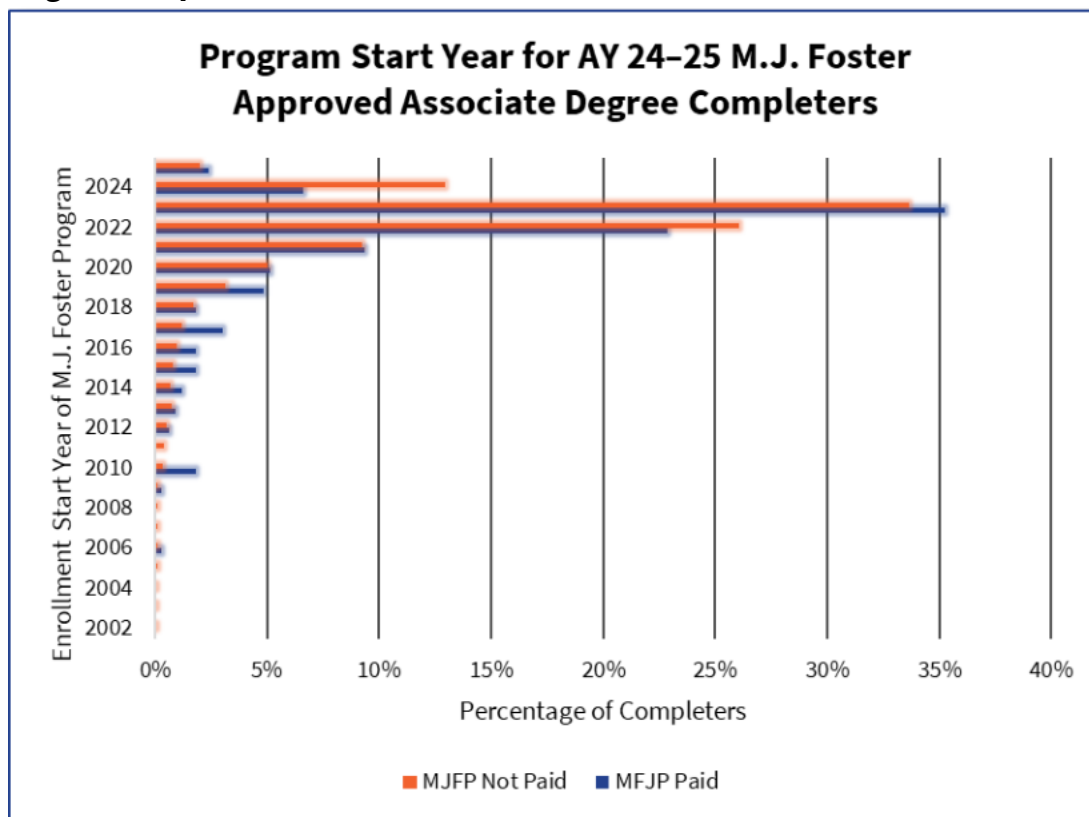
	2023–2024		2024–2025	
Degree Level	MJFP Completions	Non-MJFP Completions	MJFP Completions	Non-MJFP Completions
Career Tech Certification	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
Certificate (One Year)	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.4
Diploma	3.0	2.1	3.1	2.1
Associate	4.2	3.2	3.8	3.1
Cert. or Diploma < than 100 Hours	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Cert. or Diploma 100 hours to 449 hours	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2
Cert. or Diploma 450 hours to 899 hours	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6
Cert. or Diploma 900 hours to 1,800 hours	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0
Associate in Occ. Studies	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8

Source: BOR's Completions, Enrollment Files, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning Data System, LOSFA MJFP files as of 7/23/25.

MJFP recipients and non-recipients earned credentials designed to be completed in one year or less in similar, if not identical, timeframes. These awards included career and technical certificates and industry-recognized certifications. It is important to note, however, that students completing awards requiring one year or more may have started their programs previously and later returned to complete them.

Students also finished eligible diploma or associate's degree programs that cannot be completed in a single year. For some credentials, the average time to degree for these programs was longer for award recipients than non-recipients (3.1 vs. 2.1 years for diploma earners and 3.8 vs. 3.1 years for associate's degree earners). Further analysis of this population shows that some of these students began their college studies more than 20 years ago (Table 10). This analysis suggests that the funds provided by the MJFP award enabled students who had some college but no degree, and perhaps were unemployed or underemployed, to complete their credentials.

Table 10. Program Start Year for AY 2024–2025 M.J. Foster Approved Associate’s Degree Completers



*The population consists of AY 2024–2025 completers who were used for the time-to-degree calculations. LCTCS’s Workforce Validated Skills and Learning completers were not included as there were no clock hours provided for those awards.

Pre- and Post-Award Employment Information

As an element of this report, we analyze the financial impact of employment on MJFP completions. For this analysis, we examine the data for last year’s graduates. Of the completers from the 2022–2023 & 2023–2024 cohorts matched to LA Works (formerly LWC) data, 439 had reported wages before and after accepting the MJFP Award. The average annual wage pre-award for this group was \$24,624 (Table 11). This is below the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a Single Adult in Louisiana of \$29,316.

Table 11. Pre-MJFP Enrollment Wage/ALICE Data

Pre-Enrollment Annual Salary:			
Median: \$21,800			
Mean: \$24,624			
Completion Years		2022–2023 and 2023–2024	
Below/Above ALICE* for Pre-MJFP Enrollment	Average Wage Within Group	Headcount	Percent
Below ALICE Household Survival Budget for Single Adult (\$29,316)	\$15,982	305	69%
Above ALICE Household Survival Budget for Single Adult (\$29,316)	\$44,297	134	31%
All Matched Students	\$24,624	439	100%

*Pre-wage salaries were calculated as an annual average for all available pre-wage data.

Source: [State Reports](#) | [UnitedForALICE](#)

Of the M.J. Foster completers from 2022 through 2024 matched to LA Works data, 439 had both pre- and post-earnings after completing their credential in the LA Works data set. The average annual salary for this group of 439 completers was \$65,698 (Tables 12 and 13). This equates to a change from 69% below the ALICE Household Survival Budget pre-MJFP support to 87% above post-completion.

Table 12. Post-Completion Annual Salary **	Average Annual Salary Within Group	Headcount	Percent
Below ALICE Household Survival Budget for Single Adult (\$29,316)	\$15,831.64	56	13%
Above ALICE Household Survival Budget for Single Adult (\$29,316)	\$73,104.23	382	87%
All Matched Students	\$65,698.64	439	100%

**Post-wage salaries were calculated by annualizing the highest post-completion quarterly wage.

Source: BOR's Statewide Completers System, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning Data System, LOSFA MJFP files, LA Works Wage Data.

Table 13. Post-Completion Annual Salary **: 	
Median: \$61,856	
Mean: \$65,699	
Annual Salary After Completing MJFP**, 2022–2023 & 2023–2024	
Post-Completion Annual Salaries	Headcount
\$0–\$24,999	49
\$25,000–\$49,999	117
\$50,000–\$74,999	117
\$75,000–\$99,999	92
\$100,000–\$124,999	37
\$125,000–\$149,999	14
\$150,000–\$174,999	7
\$175,000–\$199,999	3
>\$200,000	3
Total	439

**Post-wage salaries were calculated by annualizing the highest post-completion quarterly wage.

Salaries of MJFP students increased by 167% on average after completing their credentials (Table 14). This means that on average an individual’s salary more than doubled from the amount before the student received MJFP funds. The median (the mid-point of the data set) increase in salary is \$36,864, and the mean (average) increase in salary is \$41,074. Changes in salary are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Post Completion Salary Bands**

Change in Salary After Completing MJFP, 2022–2023 & 2023–2024	
Salary Increase	Headcount
<\$0	29
\$0–\$4,999	25
\$5,000–\$9,999	26
\$10,000–\$19,999	45
\$20,000–\$29,999	51
\$30,000–\$39,999	66
\$40,000–\$49,999	44
\$50,000–\$59,999	46
\$60,000–\$69,999	38
>\$70,000	69
Total*	439

Source: BOR's Statewide Completers System, Workforce Validated Skills and Learning Data System, LOSFA MJFP files, LA Works Wage Data.

**Post-wage salaries were calculated by annualizing the highest post-completion quarterly wage.

Recidivism Rate Status

The law allows people who have been previously incarcerated to receive MJFP funds provided they have not been convicted of a violent crime. In this third year of the program, BOR continues to work with the Department of Corrections to obtain data concerning the recidivism rates of MJFP recipients. This section of the report focuses on the justice involvement of MJFP students after they have received funds. Of the 1,192 students who received MJFP funds in 2022–2023 and the 3,038 students who received MJFP funds in 2023–2024, only two have subsequently been incarcerated.

Yearly Student Survey

The legislation requires an annual survey of every first-time award recipient to determine how the MJFP award influenced their decision to enroll in college. LOSFA was asked to survey all students who were MJFP recipients. The source for the data below is LOSFA's survey.

The total survey population consisted of 14,607 students who either received an M.J. Foster payment in AY 2024–2025 or were eligible for M.J. Foster at one point. A total of 497 students responded, resulting in a 3.4% response rate, the same as the previous year. Notably, for the

question regarding program awareness (Table 15), students could select more than one answer, and this table reflects higher total responses.

Program Awareness

Students were asked how they first learned about the MJFP program. They were allowed to select multiple responses to this question. As shown in Table 15, the majority of students (67%) reported hearing about the program through word of mouth, either via their institutions, advisors, or family and friends. This finding underscores the importance of socializing this program with college advisors and counselors who have direct contact with students and can inform them of this opportunity.

Table 15. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

How did you hear about the M.J. Foster Promise Program?			
College Advisor, Admissions, or Enrollment Staff	257	44%	
Family, Friends	114	19%	
Personal Web Research for Financial Aid/Scholarships	85	15%	
Social Media	48	8%	
Email from Friends, Colleagues, etc.	36	6%	
Other	20	3%	
Adult Counseling	18	3%	
High School Guidance Counselor	8	1%	
Total Responses^{1**}		586	100%

¹ For the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question was 92%.

^{**}Students were able to select multiple responses to this survey question.

Prior College Experience

When asked if they had previously attended college (Table 16), **86%** of respondents reported having attended college before, while **14%** indicated they had not. This ratio was nearly identical to the ratio from the prior year.

Table 16. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Have You Attended College Before?			
Yes	428	86%	
No	69	14%	
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding²		497	100%

² For the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question is 100%.

Prior College Credit

Respondents were also asked if they had earned college credit prior to the MJFP award (Table 17). 65% reported having college credit, representing a 5% increase over the prior year. This result is more significant due to the larger response sample (n=413 compared to 258 last year).

Table 17. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Did You Have College Credit Already?			
	Yes	269	65%
	No	144	35%
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding ³		413	100%

³Of the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question is 83%.

Influence of MJFP on Enrollment

Students were asked whether the MJFP award influenced their decision to enroll in a postsecondary program (Table 18). The results were evenly split: 50% indicated that the award influenced their decision, while 50% reported it did not.

Table 18. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Did M.J. Foster Funds Affect your Decision to Enroll in your Program?		
Yes, It Did Influence	206	50%
No, It Did Not Influence	207	50%
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding ⁴	413	100%

⁴Of the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question is 83%.

Influence of MJFP on Enrollment in Program

Table 19 further displays how enrollment decisions aligned with the influence of MJFP funding. Of the 206 students who reported that MJFP influenced their decision, 61 enrolled in a program (certificate, diploma, or associate's degree), 14 did not, and 131 did not respond. Among the 207 who said MJFP did not influence their decision, 108 still enrolled in a program to complete their credential.

Table 19. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Yes, the MJFP Funds Influenced my Decision to Enroll		206
I did not enroll in a certificate/diploma/associate's degree program or a short-term workforce training program.		14
I enrolled in a certificate/diploma or a short-term workforce training program.		26
I enrolled in an associate's degree program.		35
No response		131
No, the MJFP Funds Did Not Influence my Decision to Enroll.		207
Did you enroll in a program to finish your degree? No		31
Did you enroll in a program to finish your degree? Yes		108
Did you enroll in a program to finish your degree? No response		68

Influence of MJFP on Type of Credential Sought

Overall, 80% of respondents (Table 20) reported enrolling in a program to complete a credential or degree that they had begun previously.

Table 20. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Did you enroll in an associate's degree program or a workforce training program?		
Yes, I enrolled in an associate's degree program	64	46%
Yes, I enrolled in a certificate/diploma or a short-term workforce training program	54	39%
No, I did not enroll in a certificate/diploma/associate's degree program or a short-term workforce training program	22	16%
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding⁵	140	100%

⁵ Of the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question is 28%.

Influence of MJFP on Degree Attainment

Finally, students were asked whether they enrolled specifically to complete a degree they had already started (Table 21). Of the 264 who responded, 80% reported enrolling to finish a degree already begun. This proportion was consistent with last year's results, but the sample size more than doubled, providing a stronger data point.

Table 21. M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results, 2024–2025

Did you enroll in a program to finish your degree?			
	Yes	212	80%
	No	52	20%
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding ⁶		264	100%

⁶Of the 497 survey respondents, the response rate for this question is 53%.

CONCLUSION

Implications/Recommendations

The Murphy J. “Mike” Foster Promise Award Program was created to expand access to workforce education and training for adult learners by providing financial support in high-value fields. Eligible recipients can receive up to three years of funding to pursue an associate’s degree, diploma, or short-term stackable credential.

Now in its third year, the program continues to demonstrate measurable progress in reaching and serving its intended population. 6,308 students received funds to support their education, double last year’s total. Part of that increase is due to the additional \$7.3 million that were available for student support. Those funds are not available in the current budget. Consequently, it is anticipated that demand will far outstrip the available resources this year.

While many of those students who received funds are still pursuing their credentials, 2,760 completed a credential. The law allows students to earn multiple stackable credentials in a qualified program. In total, in 2024–2025, 6,308 recipients collectively completed 3,900 credentials. Our analysis demonstrated that some of these students began their academic journey in 2002, yet had not completed their credentials. These completions represent not only individual achievements but also momentum toward long-term workforce readiness.

Of those students who received funds, 67% were from lower socio-economic brackets, 45% were 30 or older, and 78% were female. Program participation is concentrated in high-demand fields. This year, students earned credentials in Healthcare (2,191 credentials), Transportation and Warehousing (741 credentials), and Manufacturing (500 credentials), the top three programs by enrollment. These outcomes represent not only personal achievements but also meaningful contributions to Louisiana’s workforce readiness.

In addition to analyzing this year’s cohort, we also examined the financial impact of post-MJFP employment for the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 cohorts. For those cohorts, analysis shows that on average, the credential earned enabled a completer to increase their salary by more than \$36,864 (median), clear evidence of the award’s role in improving economic mobility. To further underscore the significance of this, the analysis showed that completers increased their salaries

from 69% below the ALICE Household Survival Budget pre-MJFP to 87% above post-completion, representing a post-completion salary average of \$65,698.64, clear evidence of the award's role in improving economic mobility, and creating a true path to sustainable prosperity.

The Board of Regents will continue to monitor progress, track outcomes, and evaluate the long-term impact of MJFP. Future analyses will assess not only the recipient's success but also the broader economic benefits for families and communities. This evidence suggests that the program has significant potential to strengthen Louisiana's workforce and expand opportunities for adult learners, thus becoming a cornerstone of the state's workforce and economic development strategy.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.4.b.

2025 TOPS Report (as Required by R.S. 17:5067)

Background Information

Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session	Created TOPS awards
First class to receive TOPS awards	Entering freshman class of 1998
Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session	Prescribed that BOR prepare a yearly report analyzing the program
Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session	Modified and clarified specific data points without making substantive changes to the report
Act 665 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Eliminated the inclusion of parental income data in the report
Act 447 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Added Geometry as a core curriculum requirement for TOPS <i>Tech</i>
Act 502 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Added specific computer science courses as an alternative to the foreign language requirement for TOPS <i>Opportunity</i> , <i>Performance</i> , and <i>Honors</i>
Act 267 of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session	Added Financial Literacy as a required, one-unit core curriculum course for the TOPS <i>OPH</i> and TOPS <i>Tech</i> core curricula. For TOPS <i>OPH</i> , it adds one core curriculum course, bringing the total courses required to 20. For TOPS <i>Tech</i> , it reduces the math electives to one course instead of two and adds Financial Literacy as the third required math
Act 211 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session	Requires students to earn one Carnegie unit of credit in Computer Science to meet the TOPS <i>Tech</i> , <i>Opportunity</i> , <i>Performance</i> , and <i>Honors</i> core curricula
Act 152 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session	Aligns TOPS <i>Tech Early Start</i> , TOPS <i>Tech</i> , and M.J. Foster eligibility programs based on the critical need programs identified by LA Works
Act 347 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session	Creates a new award level, <i>Excellence</i> , for students who score a 31 or higher on the ACT and enroll in a public college or university or

an institution that is a member of LAICU (private). Effective for the 2024–25 academic year.

Also introduces the Classic Learning Test (CLT) as an alternative testing option to the ACT and SAT for TOPS eligibility

Act 356 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session

Requires both public and approved nonpublic to use a uniform 10-point grading scale for assigning grades used in the calculation of the minimum GPA to qualify for a TOPS award, regardless of whether the school uses a different grading scale for other purposes

STAFF SUMMARY

Overall, the following trends were found:

- The percentages of eligible students who accept their awards vary by award level. The percentage of students eligible for an *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award and choosing to accept it decreased for *Opportunity* and *Performance*, and remained the same for *Honors*, at 74.6%.
- The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients between 2014–15 and 2023–24 decreased from 23.8 to 23.5, but the average core GPA increased from 3.32 to 3.64.
- The average ACT composite for TOPS *Tech* recipients for 2023–24 was 17.2, and the average core GPA was 3.02.
- Students who begin college with a TOPS award tend to persist and graduate at higher rates than non-TOPS students.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS *Tech* recipients pursuing an associate's degree at the same institution in which they first enrolled is 3.5 years, compared with 5.9 years for non-TOPS.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* recipients pursuing a baccalaureate degree at the same institution in which they first enrolled is 4.4 years, compared to 5.9 years for non-TOPS.
- From 1998–1999 through the 2024–2025 fiscal years, the state spent approximately \$5.1 billion on the TOPS program, supporting 439,615* students.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the “TOPS Report: Analysis of the TOPS Program from 2014-2015 to 2024-2025” and authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to submit the report to the appropriate legislative committees on behalf of the Board of Regents.

* Source: LOSFA Microsoft BI as of 3:18 PM, 9.12.2025

Taylor Opportunity for Program for Students (TOPS) Report

Analysis of the TOPS Program

2015–2025

October 2025



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

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Executive Summary

The Tuition Opportunity Program for Students, subsequently renamed the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), was created by Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session. The first college freshman class to receive TOPS awards entered postsecondary education in the fall of 1998.

Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session requires the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) to provide a report analyzing various aspects of the TOPS Program. Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session modified prior law to clarify and specify the data points to be reported without making any substantive changes to the program.

In accordance with Act 227, this report includes:

- An analysis of the relationship between high school courses taken and the student's American College Test (ACT) score;
- The number of high school graduates who are eligible for TOPS and subsequently enroll in college;
- Persistence (retention) rates of TOPS recipients;
- The number of, and reasons for students losing award eligibility;
- Graduation data; and
- TOPS time-to-degree and degree attainment information.

Act 587 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session added new reporting requirements to the TOPS report, including:

- Demographic information of *program* award recipients (race, gender, parents' income);
- High school GPA and ACT scores of program award recipients grouped by mean; and
- Average high school GPA and average ACT score of students who lost the award.

Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session requires that this report be submitted annually by December 1 to the Senate and House Committees on Education. The report includes current and historical data on TOPS students (students receiving an *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award) and, where applicable, non-TOPS students, allowing for comparison.

Act 665 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session eliminates the requirement that parental income data be included in the report.

Act 265 of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session added Financial Literacy as a required, one-unit core curriculum course for the TOPS *OPH* and TOPS *Tech* core curricula. For TOPS *OPH*, it adds one core curriculum course, bringing the total courses required to 20. For TOPS *Tech*, it reduces the math electives to one course instead of two and adds Financial Literacy as the third required math.

Act 211 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session requires students to earn one Carnegie unit of credit in Computer Science to meet the TOPS *Tech*, *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors*

core curricula.

Act 347 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session creates a new award level, *Excellence*, for students who score a 31 or higher on the ACT and enroll in a public college or university or an institution that is a member of LAICU (private). Effective for the 2024-2025 academic year. Also introduces the Classic Learning Test (CLT) as an alternative testing option to the ACT and SAT for TOPS eligibility.

Overall, the following trends were found:

- The percentages of eligible students who accept their awards vary by award level. The percentage of students eligible for an *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award and choosing to accept it decreased for *Opportunity* and *Performance*, and remained the same for *Honors*, at 74.6%.
- The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients between 2014–15 and 2023–24 decreased from 23.8 to 23.5, but the average core GPA increased from 3.32 to 3.64.
- The average ACT composite for TOPS *Tech* recipients for 2023–24 was 17.2, and the average core GPA was 3.02.
- Students who begin college with a TOPS award tend to persist and graduate at higher rates than non-TOPS students.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS *Tech* recipients pursuing an associate's degree at the same institution in which they first enrolled is 3.5 years, compared with 5.9 years for non-TOPS.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* recipients pursuing a baccalaureate degree at the same institution in which they first enrolled is 4.4 years, compared to 5.9 years for non-TOPS.
- From 1998–1999 through the 2024–2025 fiscal years, the state spent approximately \$5.1 billion on the TOPS program, supporting 439,615* students.

* Source: LOSFA Microsoft BI as of 3:18 PM, 9.12.2025

Introduction and Background

TOPS Legislation

Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session charged the Board of Regents (BOR) with developing a uniform TOPS reporting system for policy analysis and program evaluation, which would provide accurate data and statistics regarding the program's impact on the state and students (Appendix A). To satisfy the reporting requirements, BOR staff established interfaces between the major systems needed to identify and track TOPS students through the postsecondary education enrollment cycle. In addition to mandating the development of a TOPS reporting system, Act 1202 required the BOR to prepare a report on various aspects of the TOPS program. According to Act 1202, the "TOPS report" should include:

- An analysis of the relationship between high school courses taken and students' scores on the ACT;
- The number of high school graduates who are eligible for TOPS and subsequently enroll in college;
- Persistence (retention) rates of TOPS students by award level;
- The number of and reasons for students losing award eligibility;
- Graduation rates by award category (within 100% [four years] and 150% [six years] of time for a baccalaureate); and
- The number of students eligible for TOPS by award category, school, and parish.

Act 587 (Appendix B) of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session added reporting requirements to the annual TOPS report, including:

- Demographic information of program award recipients;
- High school GPA and ACT scores of program award recipients grouped by mean, median, and mode; and
- Average high school GPA and ACT scores of those who lost the award and those placed in probationary status.

Act 587 mandates that this report be submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Education no later than December 1 each year. Therefore, to comply with the Act's established deadline, data on 2023–24 TOPS recipients are not included in this report as institutions submit the previous years' enrollment each December and not in time for this report.

Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session amended Act 1202 (Appendix C) for statutory clarity. The new law reorganizes, renumbers, and recodifies existing law without making substantive changes to the program beyond requiring additional data points to assess TOPS recipients' time-to-degree.

Acts of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 18** sets a floor for the TOPS award amount and provides that the qualifying ACT score shall be truncated to a whole number rather than rounded to the next whole number. These changes were effective beginning with the fall semester of 2016.
- **Act 388** increases the *core* grade point average (GPA) requirement to qualify for a TOPS *Performance* award from 3.0 to 3.25 and the GPA requirement for a TOPS *Honors* award from 3.0 to 3.50. These changes are effective for high school graduates of 2022 (per Acts 245 and 346 of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session).
- **Act 503** changes the methodology for eliminating students' TOPS awards in case of a budget shortfall. When there is a budget shortfall, each student's TOPS award — including *Performance* and *Honors* award stipends — is subject to a reduction; National Guard stipends and TOPS *Tech* Early Start are not reduced. TOPS awards will be distributed to all students according to a pro-rata distribution of the available funds. Under Act 503, students can "opt out" of receiving their TOPS award during a budget shortfall. This change was effective beginning with the AY 2016–17 award year.

Act 44 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature impacts TOPS as follows:

- **Act 44** clarifies Act 18 of the 2016 Regular Session to specify that the award level shall be the TOPS award amount charged to students during AY 2016–17.

Acts of the 2018 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 671** changes certain TOPS initial eligibility requirements and provides relative to sharing specific student data.
- **Act 583** establishes the TOPS Income Fund as a special Treasury fund. Monies in the Fund can be combined with other funds; however, all monies in the TOPS Income Fund shall be used solely to fund the TOPS Program.

Senate Resolution 10 of the 2019 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature impacts TOPS as follows:

S.R. 10 requires the BOR to study the feasibility of updating TOPS reporting requirements to include data on scholarship recipients' employment outcomes and other relevant information.

Acts of the 2020 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 346** modified qualifications for the TOPS scholarships and continuing eligibility requirements for the 2019–20 academic year.
- **Act 245** charges the administering agency to adopt rules to provide waivers and exceptions to initial eligibility requirements and continuing eligibility requirements for students impacted by the public health emergency declared by the governor in response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.
- **Act 17** declared exceptions for Hurricane-Laura-affected students and applied to students who had a home of record in an affected parish or enrolled in an eligible college or university in an affected parish.

Acts of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 334** adds African American History as a core curriculum social studies option for TOPS.
- **Act 407** adds race and ethnicity data that may be collected and shared with BOR and LOFSA for assessment, evaluation, and policy development.

Acts of the 2022 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 665** eliminates the requirement that parental income data be included in the report.
- **Act 447** adds Geometry as a core curriculum requirement for TOPS *Tech* beginning with 2027 high school graduates.
- **Act 502** adds specific computer science courses as alternatives to the foreign language requirement in TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* core curricula beginning with 2027 high school graduates.
- **Act 681** provides exceptions to the initial and continuing TOPS eligibility requirements for students impacted by Hurricane Ida.

Acts of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 267** adds Financial Literacy as a required, one-unit core curriculum course for the TOPS *OPH* and TOPS *Tech* core curricula. For TOPS *OPH*, it adds one core curriculum course, bringing the total courses required to 20. For TOPS *Tech*, it reduces the math electives from two courses to one course and adds Financial Literacy as the third required math. This is effective beginning with 2028 graduates.
- **Act 224** provides a tuition and fee waiver for certain disabled veterans who will not receive a TOPS award but will receive an exemption in an amount equal to the remaining tuition and fees owed to the public postsecondary institution after the application of federal benefits. Defines “disabled veteran” as an individual with a service-connected disability as determined by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and who is a resident of Louisiana.
- **Act 405** amends the definition of Louisiana resident to allow graduates of 2023 and later to meet the residency requirement if their parent or court-ordered custodian was a Louisiana resident for at least the 24 months preceding the date they moved out of the country, provided that they remained a Louisiana resident as demonstrated by ownership of property, maintenance of a home, payment of Louisiana taxes, etc. during the entire time the parent or custodian was living out of the country.

Act 211 of the 2024 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature impacts TOPS as follows:

- **Act 211** requires students to earn one Carnegie unit of credit in Computer Science as part of the TOPS *Tech*, *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* core curricula. The Act provides that this credit will be obtained for any core as a math or science elective. Students pursuing the TOPS *Tech* core may also earn this credit as one of the nine

credits in Jump Start course sequences. Students pursuing the TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* core can earn this credit as an alternative to a foreign language. This is effective for graduates beginning with the 2028–29 cohort.

Acts of the 2025 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 152** aligns TOPS Tech Early Start, TOPS Tech, and MJ Foster eligibility programs based on the critical need programs identified by LA Works.
- **Act 347** creates a new award level, *Excellence*, for students who score a 31 or higher on the ACT and enroll in a public college, university, or an institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Eligibility for the *Excellence* award applies to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024–25 academic year. Data on students qualifying for and accepting the new *Excellence* award will be reported starting next year (AY 2025–26).
 - Act 347 also introduces the Classic Learning Test (CLT) as an alternative testing option to the ACT and SAT for TOPS eligibility.
- **Act 356** requires schools (both public and approved nonpublic) to use a uniform 10-point grading scale for purposes of assigning grades used in the calculation of the minimum GPA to qualify for a TOPS award, regardless of whether the school uses a different grading scale for other purposes.
- **Act 372**, effective August 1, 2025, delays the computer science requirement from the class of 2028–29 to the class of 2030–31.

Brief History of the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

The Tuition Opportunity Program for Students, subsequently renamed the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), Louisiana's merit-based student aid program, was created via Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session. The first freshman class to receive TOPS awards entered postsecondary education in the fall of 1998. Although the founding legislation does not explicitly state the goals of the program, the four generally accepted purposes of TOPS are to:

- Promote academic success by requiring completion of a rigorous high school core curriculum;
- Provide financial incentives as a reward for good academic performance;
- Keep Louisiana's best and brightest in the state to pursue postsecondary education with the hope that they will remain in the state and become productive members of Louisiana's workforce; and
- Promote access to and success in postsecondary education.

Eligibility Criteria, Levels of Awards, Renewal Requirements, and Distribution of Awards

Five TOPS awards are available to Louisiana college students: TOPS *Tech*, *Opportunity*, *Performance*, *Honors*, and *Excellence* (effective for 2025 high school graduates). Act 230 of the 2015 Regular Session changed the TOPS *Tech* program to allow students graduating from high school during the 2016–17 school year and thereafter to use the TOPS *Tech* award to pursue an associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education credential, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council and the Board of Regents have determined is aligned to state workforce priorities.

The *Opportunity*, *Performance*, *Honors*, *Excellence*, and *Tech* eligibility criteria include completing a defined high school core curriculum with a minimum grade point average (GPA) in core courses and a minimum ACT composite score. Table 1 displays the current eligibility criteria and award components for all TOPS awards. Currently, the TOPS Core Curriculum consists of 19 units. Starting with the graduating class of 2028, the TOPS/BOR core requirements will comprise twenty units. The specific course requirements of the TOPS Core Curriculum are outlined in Appendix E. The list of 2023 high school graduates eligible by school and parish is provided in Appendix F.

In 2025, ACT announced that it shortened the test, and the science section became an optional choice for students. The composite score now only includes English, math, and reading (EMR). Science is optional and will be scored separately, never included in the composite. In April 2025, ACT rolled out these changes to the national online test; in September 2025, they were implemented for the national paper and international tests. Finally, they were extended to any state and district in the spring of 2026.

The Board of Regents took the following action in response to this new change:

Current statutory provisions cover the use of the new Enhanced ACT EMR for financial aid programs governed by LOSFA. The BOR will recognize the Enhanced ACT EMR Composite Score for placement and admission to the state's public postsecondary institutions. Scores on ACT tests taken prior to April 2025 will also be honored. (Effective 6 June 2025)

Again, these changes will be reflected in next year's report.

Historically, the administration of TOPS was legally assigned to the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC); however, Act 314 of the 2016 Regular Session abolished LASFAC and transferred its responsibilities to the Board of Regents. Since then, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has managed the TOPS program under the BOR, following the directives of the Louisiana Legislature. Program eligibility is determined using the high school transcript from the Louisiana Department of Education's Student Transcript System (STS) and official composite ACT scores. The Free Application for

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the TOPS Online Application serves as the primary mechanism for applying for TOPS.

Notably, over the past several years, clear evidence has shown a decrease in participation in Louisiana's TOPS program, with the largest proportional decline in the *Honors* award category. Meanwhile, a concerning number of students who meet eligibility requirements have chosen either not to attend college, to attend part-time (which TOPS does not cover), or to pursue their postsecondary education outside the state. Additionally, Louisiana students are heavily recruited by neighboring states, which often offer more or better scholarships to students to attend their institutions. This trend contradicts one of the primary objectives of the TOPS program, which is keeping Louisiana's top students in the state's colleges and universities, and underscores broader concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's financial aid offerings.

In response to previously reported declines in TOPS participation and the underutilization of other state aid programs, Senate Resolution 138 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session tasked the Regents to conduct a comprehensive study of the state's financial programs and report their findings to the Legislature. The report, *Louisiana Higher Education Financial Aid Response to SR138 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session*, was presented to the Regents and the Legislature in February 2025.

In the 2025 Regular Legislative Session, Act 347 created a new award level, *Excellence*, for high-achieving students who score a 31 or higher and enroll in a Louisiana public postsecondary or LAICU institution. This new level became effective immediately for the graduating class of 2025, and these students are now eligible to receive the funds. Related data will be included in next year's report.

The report centered on the operation of the state's higher education financial aid programs, their efficiency and effectiveness, and recommendations for related legislation. *The Louisiana Higher Education Financial Aid Report's* response to this trend was to recommend modifications, realignments, and adjustments to the criteria for many financial aid programs. In response to these findings, the Legislature created a new *Excellence* award level for TOPS.

Table 1. TOPS Eligibility Criteria and Award Components

TOPS Eligibility Criteria and Award Components				
Award	Core Units	Core GPA	ACT Composite	Duration
<i>Opportunity</i>	19.0	2.50	Prior-year state average, currently 20	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>Performance</i>	19.0	3.25	23.0	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>Honors</i>	19.0	3.50	27.0	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>Excellence</i> *	19.0	3.50	31.0	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>TOPS Tech</i>	21 Jump Start Career Path Core Units	2.50	17 or higher or a Silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system	2 years

Source: LOSFA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

Achievement of the required GPA must occur within one year for *TOPS Tech*.

*The *Excellence* award applies to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024–25 school year, per Act 347 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session.

#Classic Learning Test added to determine eligibility of students graduating from high school during or after the 2024–25 school year, per Act 347 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session.

To maintain eligibility, TOPS and TOPS *Tech* recipients must be continuously enrolled as full-time students, earn at least 24 semester hours each academic year (fall, spring, and summer), and maintain satisfactory academic progress as demonstrated by the cumulative grade point average. LOSFA determines continuing eligibility based on data from the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled. Table 2 lists the minimum renewal requirements for each award.

Table 2. Minimum Renewal Requirements

Minimum Renewal Requirements			
Award	Hrs. Earned/AY	Cumulative GPA for Continuation	Award Reinstated* (Upon recovery of req. GPA)
<i>Opportunity</i>	24.00	2.30 after 24 credit hours earned 2.50 after 48 credit hours earned Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes
<i>Performance</i>	24.00	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, <i>Opportunity</i>
<i>Honors</i>	24.00	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, <i>Opportunity</i>
<i>Excellence</i>	24.00	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, <i>Opportunity</i>
<i>TOPS Tech</i>	24.00	2.5 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes

Source: LOFSA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

*Achievement of the required GPA must occur within two years for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* and one year for *Tech*.

*Excellence award applies to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024–25 school year, per Act 347 of the 2025 Louisiana Legislature.

#Classic Learning Test added as an additional test for determining eligibility for students graduating from high school during or after the 2024–25 school year, per Act 347 of the 2025 Louisiana Legislature.

Table 3a illustrates the distribution of TOPS awards across systems for AY 2024–25. This year, 47.3% of all TOPS awards went to students attending a UL System institution. Of students with the highest level of award, *Honors*, 50.64% attended an LSU System institution, followed by a UL System institution at 39.86%. Interestingly, among students with the next highest level of award, *Performance*, the percentages flip: 51% attended a UL System institution, while 40.5% attended an LSU System campus. Data also indicate that most students (42.7%) with TOPS awards had an *Opportunity* award.

Table 3a. Distribution of Award Types Across Systems, AY 2024–25

Distribution of Award Types Across Systems, AY 2024–25					
System	Award Name				% of all awards
	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>TOPS Tech</i>	
LSU System	37.40%	40.50%	50.64%	8.81%	41.1%
Southern System	1.92%	0.92%	0.15%	0.48%	1.1%
UL System	51.73%	51.12%	39.86%	5.31%	47.3%
LCTC System	3.27%	1.45%	0.36%	77.15%	3.7%
LAICU	5.47%	5.90%	8.95%	0.00%	6.4%
Out of State*	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.0%
Proprietary Schools	0.22%	0.10%	0.02%	8.25%	0.3%
% of all awards	42.7%	28.4%	26.6%	2.4%	100.0%

Source: LOSFA - TOPS Payment Summary by Academic Year 2024–25 as of 07/30/2025

*TOPS may be used at accredited out-of-state colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing.

Table 3b disaggregates the data in Table 3a by institution within each system. Table 3b shows, for each Louisiana public institution, the percentage of LA graduates who receive TOPS, highlighting the degree to which each institution's student population depends on the program.

Table 3b. Percentage of TOPS Recipients Relative to Annual LA Undergraduate Students

Percentage of TOPS Recipients Relative to Annual LA Undergraduate Students						
System	InstName	OPH Recipients	TOPS Tech Recipients	LA Ungraduates	OPH %	TOPS Tech %
LSU	LSU of Alexandria	694	68	5,156	13.5%	1.3%
	LSU and A&M College	13,960	0	20,834	67.0%	0.0%
	LSU Eunice	410	186	3,198	12.8%	5.8%
	LSU Shreveport	589	0	2,123	27.7%	0.0%
LSU Total		15,653	254	31,311	50.0%	0.8%
SU	Southern University and A&M College	631	0	4,586	13.8%	0.0%
	Southern University at New Orleans	31	0	1,121	2.8%	0.0%
	Southern University Shreveport Louisiana	21	16	2,543	0.8%	0.6%
SU Total		683	16	8,250	8.3%	0.2%
ULS	Grambling State University	178	0	2,824	6.3%	0.0%
	Louisiana Tech University	4,916	42	7,437	66.1%	0.6%
	McNeese State University	1,832	0	4,677	39.2%	0.0%
	Nicholls State University	2,131	16	4,681	45.5%	0.3%
	Northwestern State University	1,646	34	5,605	29.4%	0.6%
	Southeastern Louisiana University	4,150	17	9,728	42.7%	0.2%
	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	6,059	0	12,633	48.0%	0.0%
	University of Louisiana at Monroe	2,101	0	4,676	44.9%	0.0%
	University of New Orleans	1,220	0	4,885	25.0%	0.0%
ULS Total		24,233	109	57,146	42.4%	0.2%
LCTCS	Bossier Parish Community College	237	188	6,480	3.7%	2.9%
	Baton Rouge Community College	394	269	11,499	3.4%	2.3%
	Central Louisiana Technical Community College	40	56	1,281	3.1%	4.4%
	Delgado Community College	273	215	16,456	1.7%	1.3%
	Elaine P. Nunez Community College	59	43	1,976	3.0%	2.2%
	L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College	94	125	2,793	3.4%	4.5%
	Louisiana Delta Community College	76	158	3,843	2.0%	4.1%
	Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College	24	69	1,178	2.0%	5.9%
	Northshore Technical Community College	104	133	3,147	3.3%	4.2%
	River Parishes Community College	134	108	2,511	5.3%	4.3%
	South Louisiana Community College	270	250	6,644	4.1%	3.8%
	SOWELA Technical Community College	244	329	3,618	6.7%	9.1%
LCTCS Total		1,949	1,943	61,426	3.2%	3.2%
2-year Total		2,380	2,145	67,167	3.5%	3.2%
4-year Total		40,138	177	90,966	44.1%	0.2%
Grand Total		42,518	2,322	158,133	26.9%	1.5%

Source: LOSFA - TOPS Payment Summary by Academic Year 2024–25 as of 07/30/2025; Statewide Student Profile System (SSPS).

TOPS Report: Historical Analysis of the TOPS Program, from 2014–15 to 2024–25

METHODOLOGY

This report includes current and historical data on TOPS students (receiving an *Opportunity*, *Performance*, *Honors*, or *Tech* award) and, where applicable, Louisiana non-TOPS students, to allow for comparison. While TOPS funds are available for students to use at both public and LAICU universities and colleges, some of the data provided in the "Preparation" section and all

the data provided in the "Participation," "Persistence/Retention," and "Graduation" sections of this report do not include private postsecondary (LAICU) institutions, as these institutions do not currently participate in the Regents' reporting systems.

PREPARATION

With the 2001 Master Plan, the Regents adopted the TOPS Core as the BOR Core, the most critical element of the minimum standards for admission to the state's public four-year colleges and universities. The TOPS/BOR Core currently consists of four units of coursework in English, Math, Natural Science, and Social Science, two units of Foreign Language, and one unit of study in Fine Arts. However, beginning with the graduating class of 2028, TOPS/BOR Core requirements will comprise 20 units: four units of coursework in English, Math, Natural Science, Social Studies, two units in Foreign Language or in Computer Science, one unit in Fine Art, *and one unit in Financial Literacy*.

TOPS academic eligibility criteria require students to take this 19-hour core curriculum to prepare them for success after high school, particularly in postsecondary education (Table 4). With this change, students gained an incentive to complete the college-preparatory curriculum. Table 4 illustrates the average ACT composite of students who completed the TOPS/BOR Core compared to those who did not complete the Core. In 2025, ACT changed the methodology for calculating the composite score, which will go into effect beginning in April 2025.

Table 4. Average ACT Composite

Average ACT Composite								
High School Grad Year	HS Graduates Completing BOR Core Yes		HS Graduates Completing BOR Core No		HS Graduates Completing BOR Core Unknown		Total High School Graduates with an ACT Composite from LOSFA	
	Avg ACT	Count	Avg ACT	Count	Avg ACT	Count	Avg ACT	Count
2019	21.3	34,013	15.0	6,116	20.0	2,097	20.3	42,226
2020	21.2	32,759	14.7	5,014	21.0	1,366	20.3	39,139
2021	20.8	31,643	14.4	5,356	20.9	1,178	19.9	38,177
2022	20.7	31,092	14.4	5,751	20.9	1,097	19.7	37,940
2023	20.8	31,597	14.7	5,826	20.5	1,133	19.9	38,556
2024	21.0	30,454	14.8	5,281	20.7	946	20.1	36,681

Source: Louisiana Department of Education and LOSFA data.

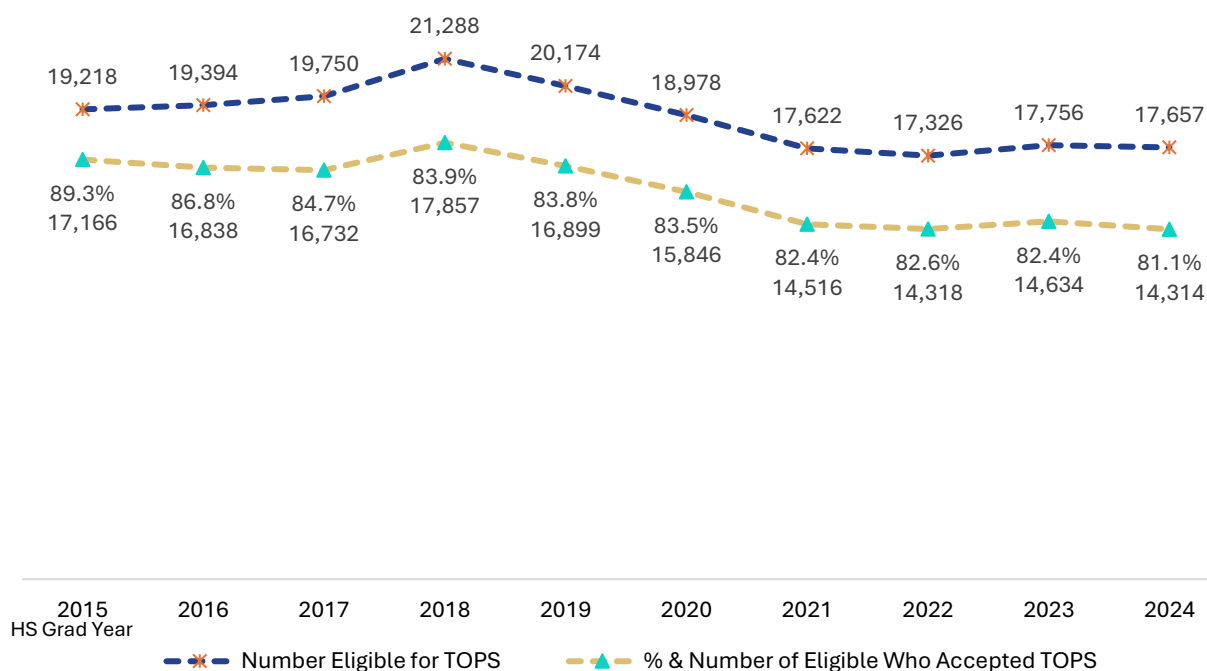
PARTICIPATION

A generally accepted purpose of TOPS is to attract and retain Louisiana's high school graduates who are more likely to persist and attain a postsecondary credential. A common slogan

associated with the TOPS Program has been “to retain the best and brightest” students to attend Louisiana’s colleges, with the hope that they will enter the state’s workforce after graduation. While the TOPS Program was initially successful in encouraging more of Louisiana’s high school graduates to remain in-state for postsecondary education, in recent years, the proportion of students eligible for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* awards who accept their awards has steadily declined (see Figure A1).

To that end, of 189,163 students deemed eligible for a TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award between 2014–15 and 2023–24, 159,120 (84.1%) accepted the award and enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana

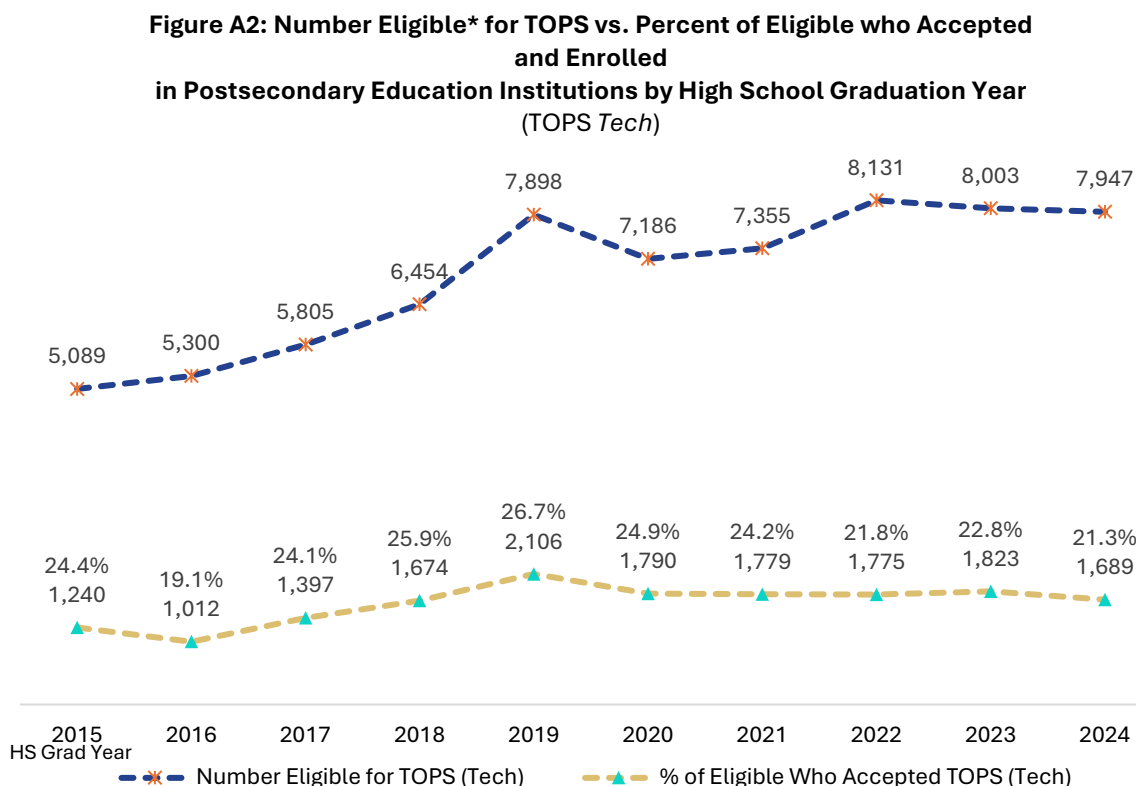
Figure A1: Number Eligible* for TOPS vs. Percent of Eligible who Accepted and Enrolled
in Postsecondary Education Institutions by High School Graduation Year
 (TO, TP, TH)



*Eligible students are applicants who met the criteria for a TOPS award. LOSFA processes eligibility continuously. (LOSFA definition)

Figure A2 displays similar data for students who were eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award. Acceptance rates for TOPS *Tech* awards have always been much lower than those for *Opportunity*, *Honors*, and *Performance*. Between school years 2014–15 and 2023–24, of the **69,168** high school students deemed eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award, **16,285** (or 23.5%) accepted their award and enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana.

There has been a decline in acceptance rates for TOPS *Tech* in recent years, which mirrors the trends of other awards.



*Eligible students are applicants who met the criteria for a TOPS award. LOSFA processes eligibility continuously. (LOSFA definition)

Over the past several years, the decreasing numbers of high school graduates eligible for TOPS and college-bound high school graduates, as represented in Figures A1 and A2, have remained a concern. The declines currently observed in Louisiana are consistent with trends evident throughout the southern states. Data from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (of which Louisiana is a member) indicate that total college enrollment is decreasing nationwide and in 13 of the 16 SREB states (Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, PAR Snapshot, February 2024). Additionally, the cost of attendance at both two- and four-year institutions ranks among the highest in the SREB states as a share of average family income.

For example, the SREB College Affordability Profile (2025) states that Louisiana remains above SREB **averages** on affordability burden (net price as a percentage of income) across public four-year, two-year, and technical sectors. For families earning **<\$30,000**, the share of income needed for *median tuition & fees* in 2021–22 was **67%** at public four-year Type 1 institutions, **51%** at four-year Type 2, **27%** at two-year, and **25%** at technical colleges. In Louisiana, the cost of attendance continues to be out of reach for many lower-income families.

According to data from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) (2024), students who require the most college financial aid apply at a lower rate than those who have less need. Nationally, an estimated 63% of seniors in the class of 2024 at high-income high schools completed a FAFSA application, while only 55% of seniors at low-income high schools did the same (NCAN, 2024).

The factors listed above, including several years of declines in the number of TOPS-eligible students, combined with lower proportions of students receiving/accepting their awards, have resulted in a persistent decrease in the number of overall TOPS recipients, although AY 2024–25 saw a modest increase of 454 TOPS recipients. For the fourth consecutive year, an increase in TOPS funding was not requested (Figure B1). Figure B2 provides a comparison of tuition and fee rates at two- and four-year institutions.

Figure B1: TOPS Recipients (including students maintaining their awards) and Total Dollars Awarded

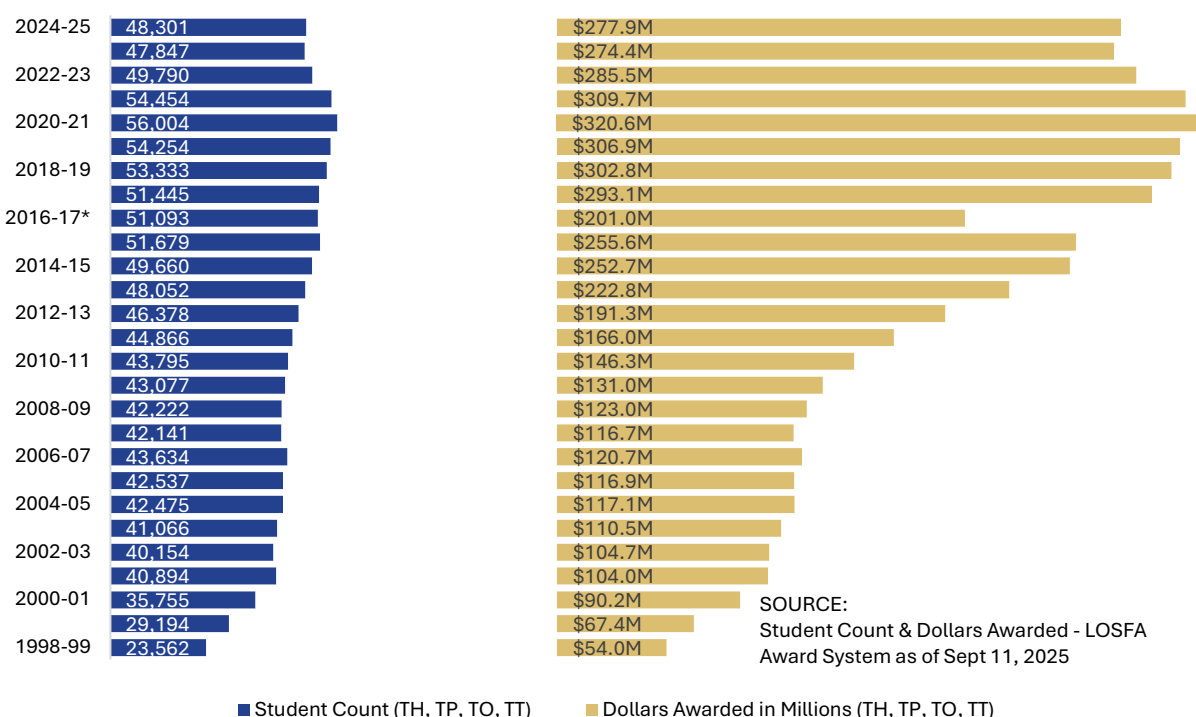
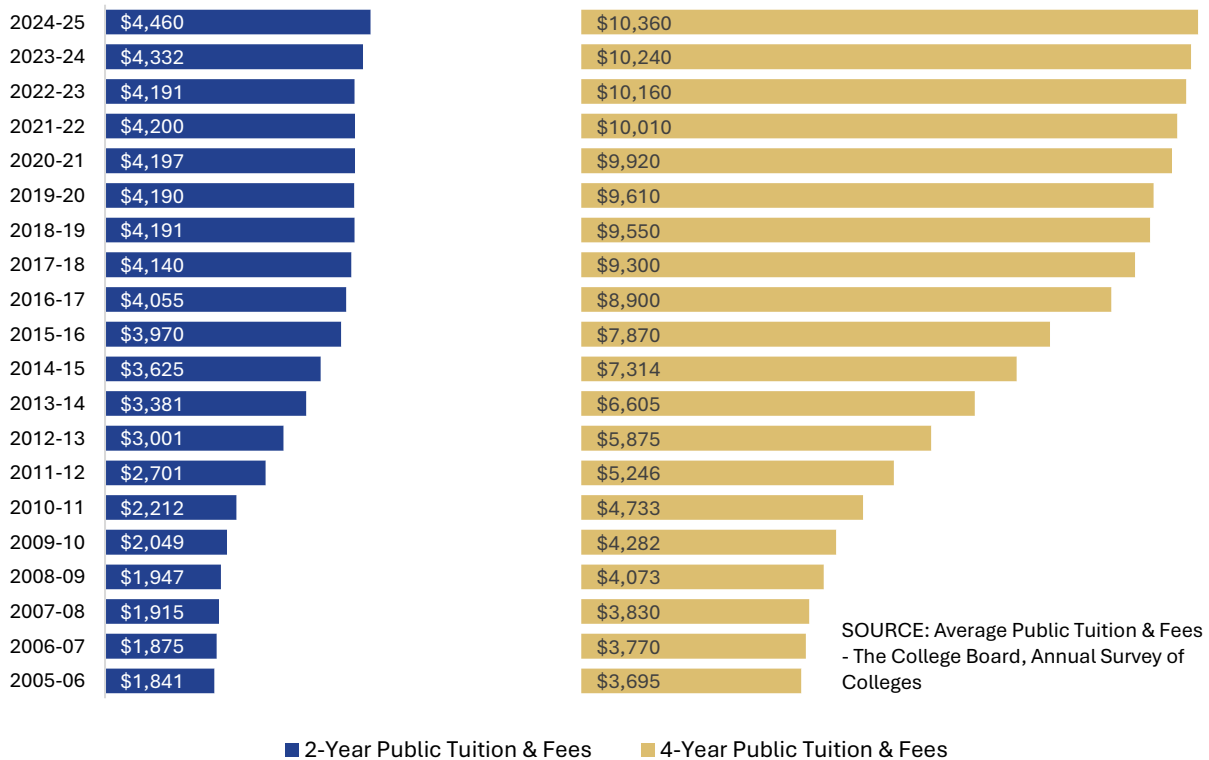


Figure B2: Average Tuition and Fees for LA Public Two-year and Four-year Institutions



While Figure A1 presents the overall TOPS acceptance rate, this average masks significant differences in acceptance rates across the four different awards.

Acceptance rates for *Opportunity* and *Performance* awards have remained in the low 80s in recent years (Table 5), while a steadily declining proportion of *Honors* awardees have been accepting their awards. That proportion has dropped from 80% in 2018–19 to 74.6% in 2023–24. This year saw declines in the acceptance rates across all other TOPS award categories, while *Honors* acceptance rates remained unchanged.

Table 5. TOPS Acceptance Rates

TOPS Acceptance Rates				
HS Grad Year	<i>Tech</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>
2014–15	24.4%	89.6%	92.9%	84.2%
2015–16	19.1%	86.7%	91.1%	81.9%
2016–17	24.1%	84.8%	89.4%	79.1%
2017–18	25.9%	83.6%	88.2%	79.4%
2018–19	26.7%	83.2%	88.1%	79.9%
2019–20	24.9%	83.1%	88.4%	78.7%
2020–21	24.2%	83.2%	86.7%	76.1%
2021–22	21.8%	83.6%	86.7%	75.4%
2022–23	22.8%	84.1%	86.0%	74.6%
2023–24	21.3%	81.9%	84.9%	74.6%

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

Table 6a shows the average ACT and Core GPA for TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* recipients. This year, ACT scores remained static while the Average Core GPA saw a modest increase from the previous year, indicating that academic performance is improving even as the number of students accepting TOPS is decreasing. Among TOPS recipients from 2014–15 to 2023–24, the average ACT score was 24.2 (four points above the minimum needed for eligibility for a TOPS *Opportunity* Award), and the average high school GPA (Core GPA) was 3.71 (significantly higher than the 2.5 minimum required for a TOPS *Opportunity* Award). This year, both those metrics generally remained stable.

Next year's report will introduce a new standardized test for students to qualify for TOPS, provided they achieve a score comparable to the ACT and SAT. The Classical Learning Test (CLT) was approved for immediate use in Act 347 (2025).

Table 6a. Mean ACT and Core GPA of TOPS Recipients (TH, TP, TO)

Mean ACT and Core GPA of TOPS Recipients (TO, TP, TH)		
HS Cohort	TOPS Recipients' Average Composite ACT Score	TOPS Recipients' Average Core GPA
2014–15	24.1	3.35
2015–16	24.3	3.38
2016–17	24.4	3.40
2017–18	24.4	3.54
2018–19	24.4	3.58
2019–20	24.5	3.64
2020–21	24.2	3.68
2021–22	24.1	3.70
2022–23	24.2	3.70
2023–24	24.2	3.71

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

Table 6b shows the average ACT and Core GPA for TOPS *Tech* recipients. This year, ACT scores and the Average Core GPA saw a slight decline.

Table 6b. Mean ACT and Core GPA of TOPS Recipients (TOPS Tech)

Mean ACT and Core GPA of TOPS Recipients (TOPS Tech)		
HS Cohort	TOPS Recipients' Average Composite ACT Score	TOPS Recipients' Average Core GPA
2014–15	18.6	2.81
2015–16	18.4	2.83
2016–17	18.4	2.89
2017–18	18.0	3.00
2018–19	17.5	2.93
2019–20	17.6	3.01
2020–21	17.4	3.06
2021–22	17.2	3.06
2022–23	17.3	3.04
2023–24	17.2	3.02

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

This year, ACT reports that 66% of Louisiana graduating seniors (public and private) took the ACT more than once, maintaining the percentage from last year, and improved their composite score by an average of 1.4 points (an increase from 1.3 last year) from their first test to their most recent test.

This trend is encouraging, as research by ACT has found that students who retake the test tend to perform better in subsequent administrations. A study by Allen (2022) provided more specific details:

- **Average gains are modest** (~+1 point).
- **Longer intervals** between tests yield greater improvement.
- **Students with higher first-test scores** show larger score gains.
- **Demographic gaps persist**, though differences in gains are small.
- **Additional retests help**, but with diminishing returns.

As shown in Tables 7a and 7b, below, one of the legislatively mandated elements of this report is to examine how the average ACT scores of TOPS recipients vary by race (Act 587, 2014). Composite ACT scores for African American students have increased over the past ten years to an average of 22.6 in 2023–24, compared to 24.6 for White students and 24 for Hispanic students.

Table 7a. TOPS Recipients by Race and Average ACT Composite Score (TH, TP, TO)

TOPS Recipients by Race and ACT Composite Score (TO, TP, TH)							
HS Cohort	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Other	Race Not Reported	Total
2014–15	25.4	22.5	24.5	24.1	24.0	25.5	24.1
2015–16	25.8	22.7	24.7	24.3	24.3	25.4	24.3
2016–17	25.6	22.6	24.8	24.2	24.6	26.3	24.4
2017–18	25.5	22.6	24.8	24.4	24.0	26.0	24.4
2018–19	26.0	22.6	24.8	24.2	24.1	26.0	24.4
2019–20	25.8	22.8	24.8	24.2	24.6	28.2	24.5
2020–21	25.8	22.6	24.5	24.1	24.0	25.8	24.2
2021–22	25.6	22.7	24.4	23.8	24.0	26.7	24.1
2022–23	26.0	22.6	24.5	23.8	24.1	23.6	24.2
2023–24	25.9	22.6	24.6	24.0	23.9	25.0	24.2

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

Table 7b. TOPS Recipients by Race and Average ACT Composite Score (TOPS Tech)

TOPS Recipients by Race and ACT Composite Score (TOPS Tech)							
HS Cohort	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Other	Race Not Reported	Total
2014–15	18.8	18.2	18.7	18.6	18.7	20.0	18.6
2015–16	18.2	18.1	18.6	18.0	18.2	20.5	18.4
2016–17	18.2	18.0	18.6	18.5	18.6	20.3	18.4
2017–18	18.1	17.7	18.2	17.9	18.5	22.0	18.0
2018–19	17.6	17.1	17.7	17.6	17.3	21.0	17.5
2019–20	17.8	17.2	17.8	17.4	17.5	19.7	17.6
2020–21	17.4	17.1	17.5	17.4	17.2	19.8	17.4
2021–22	18.3	16.8	17.4	17.0	17.0	20.0	17.2
2022–23	18.1	16.9	17.5	17.5	17.4	19.5	17.3
2023–24	17.2	16.6	17.4	17.2	17.4	21.0	17.2

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

As Table 8 indicates, overall, TOPS recipients are predominantly White.

In 2023–24, White students comprised 69.8% of TOPS recipients in the first-time entering freshman student population (Table 9). Graduation outcomes for the 2023 cohort also reflected notable differences across racial and ethnic groups: 93 percent of Asian students, 88.2 percent of White students, 80.1 percent of Black students, and 69.5 percent of Hispanic students earned a high school diploma ([2022–23 School System and School Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup](#)).

The number of minority students receiving TOPS has generally increased over time (2014–15 through 2023–24). This year, the number of African American and White students receiving TOPS experienced slight decreases, while the number of Hispanic TOPS recipients grew (Tables 8 and 9).

The most recent U.S. Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) for the 2021–22 academic year was 87% (NCES, 2024), with significant variation from state to state. Louisiana's ACGR is at 83.2%. Graduation patterns also vary considerably by student subgroup. National data show persistent disparities: White and Asian students consistently graduate at higher rates than Black and Hispanic students, though the magnitude of these gaps differs by state. The *Condition of Education* (NCES, 2024) reports that, nationally, the graduation rate gap between Black and White students is approximately nine percentage points, while the gap between Asian and Black students is about thirteen points. In Louisiana, the graduation rate gap between Black and White students is 8.1 percentage points, while the gap between Asian and Black students is 12.9 percentage points. The graduation gap between Hispanic and White students is 10.6 percentage points ([2022–23 School System and School Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup](#)).

Table 8. TOPS Recipients by Race (TH, TP, TO, TT)

TOPS Recipients by Race (TT, TO, TP, TH)							
HS Cohort	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Other	Not Reported	Total
2014–15	550	3,472	13,498	549	303	34	18,406
2015–16	522	3,455	12,974	573	285	41	17,850
2016–17	530	3,402	13,240	592	332	33	18,129
2017–18	583	3,914	13,934	651	417	32	19,531
2018–19	555	3,685	13,641	671	417	36	19,005
2019–20	539	3,164	12,835	683	398	17	17,636
2020–21	536	2,623	12,062	645	394	35	16,295
2021–22	565	2,829	11,535	713	422	29	16,093
2022–23	549	3,030	11,550	823	473	32	16,457
2023–24	519	2,920	11,178	858	493	36	16,004

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

Table 9. Percentage of TOPS Recipients by Race (TH, TP, TO, TT)

TOPS Recipients by Race (TT, TO, TP, TH)							
HS Cohort	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Other	Not Reported	Total
2014–15	3.0%	18.9%	73.3%	3.0%	1.6%	0.2%	100%
2015–16	2.9%	19.4%	72.7%	3.2%	1.6%	0.2%	100%
2016–17	2.9%	18.8%	73.0%	3.3%	1.8%	0.2%	100%
2017–18	3.0%	20.0%	71.3%	3.3%	2.1%	0.2%	100%
2018–19	2.9%	19.4%	71.8%	3.5%	2.2%	0.2%	100%
2019–20	3.1%	17.9%	72.8%	3.9%	2.3%	0.1%	100%
2020–21	3.3%	16.1%	74.0%	4.0%	2.4%	0.2%	100%
2021–22	3.5%	17.6%	71.7%	4.4%	2.6%	0.2%	100%
2022–23	3.3%	18.4%	70.2%	5.0%	2.9%	0.2%	100%
2023–24	3.2%	18.2%	69.8%	5.4%	3.1%	0.2%	100%

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

TOPS recipients have been predominantly female for over ten years. For the time period of this report, male students receiving TOPS have had slightly higher average ACT scores than female students (Table 10). Disaggregating recipients by gender over the last ten years, male TOPS recipients have seen an overall increase in their ACT scores of two percentage points, while female TOPS recipients have experienced a two-percentage-point overall decrease (Table 11).

Table 10. TOPS Recipients' ACT Composite Score by Gender

TOPS Recipients ACT Composite Score by Gender				
HS Cohort	Female	Male	Unknown	Total*
2014–15	23.4	24.2	N/A	23.8
2015–16	23.7	24.4	N/A	24.0
2016–17	23.6	24.4	26.3	23.9
2017–18	23.5	24.3	21.0	23.8
2018–19	23.3	24.1	27.8	23.7
2019–20	23.4	24.3	32.0	23.7
2020–21	23.2	23.9	19.0	23.5
2021–22	23.1	23.7	N/A	23.4
2022–23	23.0	23.9	24.8	23.4
2023–24	23.1	23.9	25.2	23.4

* This analysis includes 25 individuals who did not report their gender.

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

Table 11. TOPS Recipients by Gender

TOPS Recipients by Gender					
HS Cohort	Female		Male		Total*
2014–15	10,864	59.0%	7,542	41.0%	18,406
2015–16	10,523	59.0%	7,327	41.0%	17,850
2016–17	10,640	58.7%	7,486	41.3%	18,129
2017–18	11,406	58.4%	8,124	41.6%	19,531
2018–19	11,023	58.0%	7,976	42.0%	19,005
2019–20	10,329	58.6%	7,305	41.4%	17,636
2020–21	9,320	57.2%	6,974	42.8%	16,295
2021–22	9,244	57.4%	6,849	42.6%	16,093
2022–23	9,383	57.0%	7,069	43.0%	16,457
2023–24	9,122	57.0%	6,876	43.0%	16,004

* The total includes 25 individuals who did not report their gender.

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025.

PERSISTENCE (RETENTION)

Persistence in postsecondary education is measured by the rate at which first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students are retained in (or return for) their second year. As illustrated in Tables 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, and 14, students who begin college with a TOPS award are more likely than non-TOPS students to return to postsecondary education in subsequent years. Furthermore, students receiving *Performance* and *Honors* awards are generally better prepared for postsecondary education and are retained at higher rates than those receiving the *Opportunity*

award. An additional footnote to the methodology for Tables 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 14 – the 4th Fall represents retention or that the student graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree by that 4th fall semester.

Tables 12a and 12b examine the overall retention rates (retention at any Louisiana public postsecondary institution, but not necessarily at the institution where the student started) of students with TOPS who began at a four-year institution through the second, third, and fourth years (Table 12a) and a two-year institution (Table 12b) compared to those who started without TOPS.

Table 12a. Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Four-year Institution

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs. Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Four-year Institution (TO, TP, TH)						
Fall Semester Entering Class	2nd Fall Retention		3rd Fall Retention		4th Fall Retention or Graduates*	
	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS
2015	86.9%	64.5%	80.4%	54.3%	76.5%	48.6%
2016	87.5%	67.3%	81.4%	56.9%	77.5%	49.8%
2017	87.7%	67.7%	81.3%	56.5%	77.9%	49.7%
2018	87.5%	66.7%	81.5%	54.8%	77.4%	47.0%
2019	88.9%	69.0%	80.7%	55.3%	76.1%	48.3%
2020	86.9%	63.7%	79.1%	51.3%	76.6%	46.0%
2021	88.1%	64.5%	82.2%	54.1%	80.1%	49.0%
2022	90.2%	70.4%	84.2%	59.4%	0.0%	0.0%
2023	90.2%	69.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Returned to the 4th Fall or graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree by the 4th Fall.

This year, the retention rates for students starting at a four-year institution with a TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award either remained the same or increased for the second, third, and fourth-year fall retention, with a record high 84.2% of TOPS awardees returning for their third year.

Note that, for the 2023 cohort, we have only the second-fall retention rate because the students have not been in college long enough. The 2021 cohort provides a comprehensive four-year view of retention rates, indicating a 3.5-percentage-point increase in the fourth-year retention rate compared to the previous year.

Additionally, 76.5% of TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* students who began at a two-year institution (Table 12b) were retained in the second fall semester. The 2022 percentage rate appears to be an outlier because of the very small cohort size. This may indicate that students are not completing the required 24 hours of coursework necessary to keep the scholarship. For the 2021 cohort, there were increases in all three retention measures.

Table 12b. Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Two-Year Institution

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs. Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Two-year Institution (TO, TP, TH)						
Fall Semester Entering Class	2nd Fall Retention		3rd Fall Retention		4th Fall Retention or Graduates*	
	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS
2015	79.4%	53.2%	62.5%	37.6%	61.1%	30.1%
2016	78.0%	51.0%	66.2%	34.4%	62.7%	29.9%
2017	80.7%	51.3%	67.7%	35.0%	68.0%	28.6%
2018	77.9%	51.9%	60.0%	33.2%	59.0%	29.1%
2019	74.8%	50.2%	60.1%	34.6%	59.0%	29.7%
2020	75.3%	51.6%	59.4%	36.5%	60.4%	31.4%
2021	77.1%	56.8%	60.8%	37.5%	64.0%	33.9%
2022	84.1%	52.1%	61.8%	36.1%	0.0%	0.0%
2023	76.5%	50.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Returned to the 4th Fall or graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree by the 4th Fall.

Tables 13a and 13b analyze overall retention rates by award level for TOPS students who started at a four-year institution (Table 13a) or a two-year institution (Table 13b) during the second, third, and fourth years. TOPS *Honors* recipients at four-year institutions had a record-high retention rate of 95.5% from the first to the second year, with *Performance* recipients also reaching a record high of 93%. *Opportunity* recipients maintained a retention rate of 85.6%, representing a slight decline from the previous year.

Table 13a. Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS Students Who Began at a Four-year Institution by TOPS Award Level

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS Who Began at a Four-year Institution by TOPS Award Level									
Fall Semester Entering Class	2nd Fall Retention			3rd Fall Retention			4th Fall Retention or Graduates*		
	TO	TP	TH	TO	TP	TH	TO	TP	TH
2015	80.9%	89.9%	94.4%	72.7%	84.3%	90.3%	67.4%	81.2%	88.0%
2016	81.8%	90.5%	93.3%	74.3%	84.6%	89.1%	69.1%	81.7%	86.3%
2017	81.8%	90.8%	93.5%	74.1%	84.4%	89.1%	69.8%	81.4%	86.7%
2018	82.3%	89.7%	92.7%	74.2%	84.1%	89.3%	69.1%	80.5%	86.0%
2019	83.4%	90.5%	95.0%	72.3%	83.6%	89.0%	66.2%	79.3%	86.3%
2020	80.7%	88.8%	93.1%	70.5%	81.6%	88.0%	67.1%	79.8%	86.1%
2021	83.1%	90.1%	93.3%	75.7%	84.4%	89.4%	72.8%	82.7%	88.0%
2022	85.8%	92.4%	95.5%	78.3%	86.7%	91.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2023	85.6%	93.0%	95.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%

*Returned to the 4th Fall or graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree by the 4th Fall.

TOPS *Tech* recipients showed varied performance in their retention rates across all award levels.

Table 13b analyzes the retention rates of TOPS students who began at a two-year institution. The 2022 percentage rate appears to be an outlier due to the very small cohort size. Again, this could also be attributed to students not accomplishing one of the elements necessary to maintain TOPS eligibility.

Table 13b. Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS Students Who Began at a Two-year Institution by TOPS Award Level

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS Who Began at a Two-year Institution by TOPS Award Level									
Fall Semester Entering Class	2nd Fall Retention			3rd Fall Retention			4th Fall Retention or Graduates*		
	TO	TP	TH	TO	TP	TH	TO	TP	TH
2015	77.8%	84.7%	78.6%	61.0%	68.5%	57.1%	56.4%	74.8%	78.6%
2016	75.4%	85.5%	81.5%	63.9%	72.6%	70.4%	59.1%	71.8%	74.1%
2017	78.9%	85.3%	87.0%	64.5%	76.7%	69.6%	64.8%	76.0%	78.3%
2018	74.2%	88.0%	83.3%	57.7%	66.2%	62.5%	55.2%	69.0%	66.7%
2019	72.1%	84.3%	80.0%	57.2%	67.6%	80.0%	55.7%	66.7%	85.0%
2020	74.2%	77.3%	86.7%	57.5%	65.9%	60.0%	56.5%	71.6%	73.3%
2021	77.2%	79.0%	66.7%	60.4%	61.0%	66.7%	63.8%	65.0%	61.9%
2022	83.5%	83.3%	95.2%	60.6%	62.5%	76.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2023	74.8%	79.6%	85.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Returned to the 4th Fall or graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree by the 4th Fall.

Table 14 examines overall second- and third-year retention rates for students who began with TOPS at a two-year institution compared to those who started without TOPS (Non-TOPS students include only Louisiana residents who did not receive the award and were in eligible programs for comparison purposes). These retention figures only include students who are retained in or complete TOPS-Tech-eligible programs. Notably, the percentage of TOPS *OPH* who enroll at two-year colleges is historically very low.

Table 14. Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs. Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Two-year Institution and Enrolled in TOPS Tech-Eligible Programs

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs. Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Two-year Institution and Enrolled in TOPS-Tech-Eligible Programs				
Fall Semester Entering Class	2nd Fall Retention		3rd Fall Retention, Certificate, Diploma, or Associate*	
	TOPS Tech	Non-TOPS Tech	TOPS Tech	Non-TOPS Tech
2015	67.8%	50.4%	56.6%	36.0%
2016	66.5%	48.3%	51.9%	35.6%
2017	66.7%	48.5%	56.0%	38.9%
2018	65.3%	50.6%	52.2%	35.9%
2019	64.0%	43.0%	52.9%	34.9%
2020	65.5%	50.6%	53.6%	37.9%
2021	68.3%	49.8%	61.2%	39.4%
2022	68.1%	48.9%	60.3%	38.7%
2023	67.6%	46.5%	0.0%	0.0%

*Returned to the 3rd Fall or graduated with a certificate, diploma, or associate's degree by the 3rd Fall.

RETAINING THE TOPS AWARD

As previously noted, students who receive a TOPS award must meet minimum academic criteria to retain the award (See Table 2). The award is canceled when a student fails to maintain full-time and continuous enrollment, earn 24 hours of credit per academic year, or maintain the minimum GPA. Students may request and be granted exceptions for failure to meet these criteria due to circumstances beyond their control, including illness, family bereavement, military service, natural disasters, and other similar events.

TOPS awards are initially suspended for failure to maintain the minimum GPA and are permanently canceled after two years. TOPS *Tech* awards are permanently canceled after one year has passed during which the student has not attained the required GPA. Among TOPS *Tech* recipients, the most common reason for award loss is failure to meet the 24-hour enrollment requirement. As shown in Tables 15a and 15b, however, the number of award cancelations has declined over time across all TOPS award categories.

Table 15a. Percentage of TOPS Award Canceled* by Cohort (TO, TP, TH)

Percentage of TOPS Award Canceled by Cohort (TO, TP, TH)									
Entering Cohort	Total # of TOPS Awards	Total # of Awards Canceled		Canceled: 24 Hrs Requirement		Canceled: GPA Requirement		Canceled: Non-Continuous Enrollment	
2014–15	16,703	6,291	37.7%	3,683	22.0%	360	2.2%	2,248	13.5%
2015–16	17,292	6,601	38.2%	3,738	21.6%	332	1.9%	2,531	14.6%
2016–17	16,703	5,995	35.9%	3,378	20.2%	280	1.7%	2,337	14.0%
2017–18	16,692	5,305	31.8%	2,343	14.0%	196	1.2%	2,766	16.6%
2018–19	17,770	5,744	32.3%	2,166	12.2%	140	0.8%	3,438	19.3%
2019–20	16,952	5,442	32.1%	1,239	7.3%	60	0.4%	4,143	24.4%
2020–21	15,826	5,480	34.6%	1,694	10.7%	51	0.3%	3,735	23.6%
2021–22	14,560	4,277	29.4%	1,831	12.6%	51	0.4%	2,395	16.4%
2022–23	14,329	3,194	22.3%	1,517	10.6%	22	0.2%	1,655	11.6%
2023–24	14,720	2,211	15.0%	990	6.7%	0	0.0%	1,221	8.3%
2024–25	14,720	45	0.3%	18	0.1%	0	0.0%	27	0.2%
Total	176,267	50,585	28.7%	22,597	12.8%	1,492	0.8%	26,496	15.0%

Source: BOR data files as of July 2025.

*Students whose awards are canceled for non-GPA reasons may request an exception and be approved under existing law.

Table 15b. Percentage of TOPS Award Canceled* by Cohort (TT)

Percentage of TOPS Award Canceled by Cohort (TT)									
Entering Cohort	Total # of TOPS Awards	Total # of Awards Canceled		Canceled: 24 Hrs Requirement		Canceled: GPA Requirement		Canceled: Non-Continuous Enrollment	
2014–15	1,358	832	61.3%	316	23.3%	22	1.6%	494	36.4%
2015–16	1,374	885	64.4%	351	25.5%	24	1.7%	510	37.1%
2016–17	1,024	627	61.2%	226	22.1%	34	3.3%	367	35.8%
2017–18	1,373	888	64.7%	298	21.7%	11	0.8%	579	42.2%
2018–19	1,587	963	60.7%	282	17.8%	9	0.6%	672	42.3%
2019–20	2,191	1,278	58.3%	112	5.1%	8	0.4%	1,158	52.9%
2020–21	1,801	1,048	58.2%	148	8.2%	4	0.2%	896	49.8%
2021–22	1,740	995	57.2%	319	18.3%	2	0.1%	674	38.7%
2022–23	1,792	1,008	56.3%	317	17.7%	5	0.3%	686	38.3%
2023–24	1,872	802	42.8%	307	16.4%	0	0.0%	495	26.4%
2024–25	1,847	57	3.1%	54	2.9%	0	0.0%	3	0.2%
Total	17,959	9,383	52.2%	2,730	15.2%	119	0.7%	6,534	36.4%

Source: BOR data files as of July 2025.

*Students whose awards are canceled for non-GPA reasons may request an exception and be approved under existing law.

Furthermore, between the 2014–15 cohort and the 2024–25 cohort, 176,267 students received *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* awards (Table 15a), and 17,959 received *Tech* (15b). Of these *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award recipients, 28.7% had their awards canceled, while 52.2% of *Tech* recipients had their awards canceled during their postsecondary academic career. Most awards are canceled because students fail to meet the 24-hour requirement. Regardless, there has been a decreasing trend of award cancellations in recent years for TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* recipients.

The average ACT score of TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* recipients who had their awards canceled between 2014–15 and 2023–24 (due to failure to earn the required 24 hours of credit per academic year, achieve the required minimum GPA, or maintain full-time and continuous enrollment) was 23.1. This group's average high school GPA was 3.19 (Table 16a).

The average ACT score of TOPS *Tech* recipients who had their awards canceled between 2014–15 and 2023–24 (due to failure to earn the required 24 hours of credit per academic year, achieve the required minimum GPA, or maintain full-time and continuous enrollment) was 17.8. This group's average high school GPA was 2.8. (Table 16b).

Table 16a. Average ACT Score and High School Core GPA of TOPS Recipients Who had their Award Canceled*, (2013–14 to 2022–23 (TH, TP, TO))

Average ACT Score and High School Core GPA of TOPS Recipients Who had their Award Canceled*, 2014–15 to 2023–24 (TO, TP, TH)		
Reason Canceled	Average ACT Composite	Average High School Core GPA
24 Hour	23.2	3.23
GPA	23.0	3.07
Non-continuous enrollment	23.3	3.26

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025

*Students whose awards are canceled for non-GPA reasons may request and be approved for an exception under existing law.

Table 16b. Average ACT Score and High School Core GPA of TOPS Recipients Who had their Award Canceled*, (2013–14 to 2022–23 (TT))

Average ACT Score and High School Core GPA of TOPS Recipients Who had Their Award Canceled*, 2014–15 to 2023–24 (TT)		
Reason Canceled	Average ACT Composite	Average High School Core GPA
24 Hour	17.6	2.81
GPA	18.2	2.79
Non-continuous enrollment	17.6	2.82

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2025

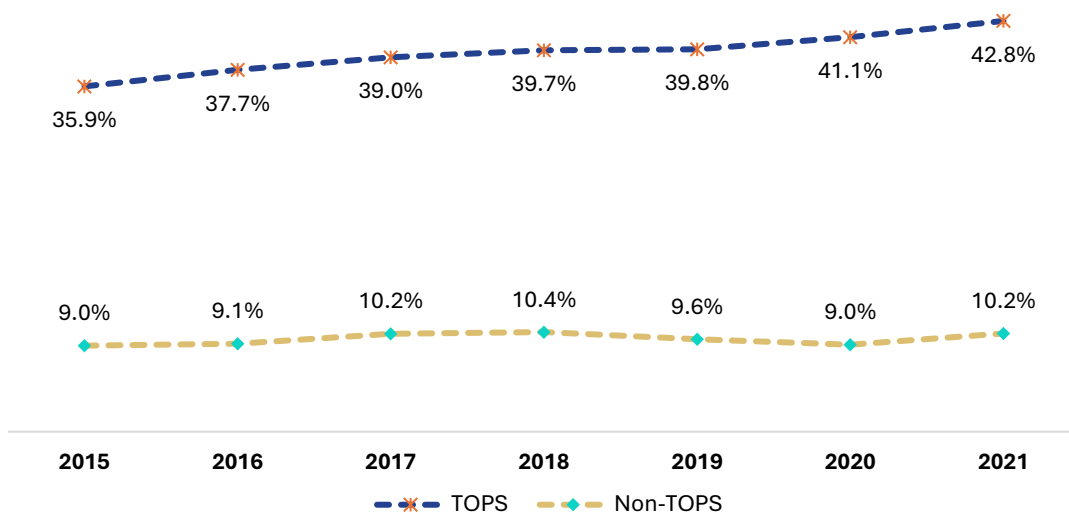
*Students whose awards are canceled for non-GPA reasons may request and be approved for an exception under existing law.

GRADUATION

A graduation rate is typically determined by calculating the rate at which first-time, full-time degree-seeking students earn their academic degrees within 150% of the time anticipated (i.e., within six years for baccalaureate degrees and three years for associate's degrees). However, because TOPS recipients are eligible for the award for a maximum of four years (or eight semesters), examining graduation rates at both 100% and 150% of the time is essential.

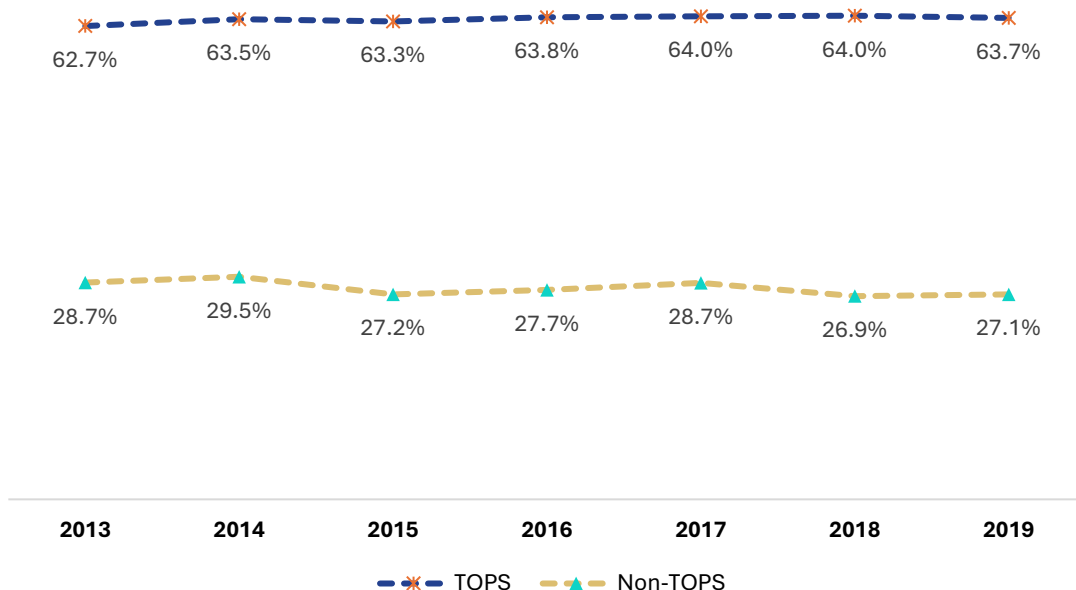
As noted in Figures C and D, students with TOPS who begin a baccalaureate degree program graduate within 100% and 150% of time at much higher rates than students without a TOPS award. The 2019 class should be used to compare cohorts, as both 100% and 150% data are available. Findings indicate that 39.8% of the 2019 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients completed a baccalaureate degree within 100% of time, compared with 9.6% of non-TOPS students.

**Figure C: Statewide Baccalaureate Four-year Graduation Rate (100%) among TOPS (OPH) and Non-TOPS Students
First-time, Full-time Entering Cohorts**



Furthermore, 63.7% of the 2019 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients (Figure D) completed a baccalaureate degree within 150% of time, compared with 27.1% of non-TOPS students.

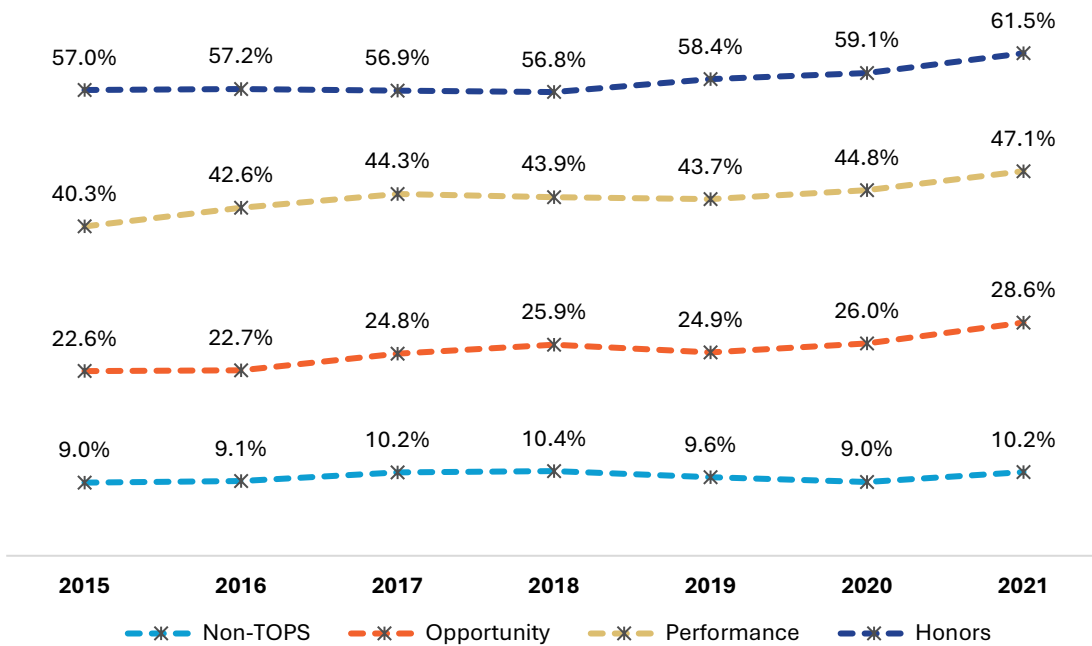
Figure D: Statewide Baccalaureate Six-year Graduation Rate (150%) among TOPS (OPH) and Non-TOPS Students First-time, Full-time Entering Cohorts



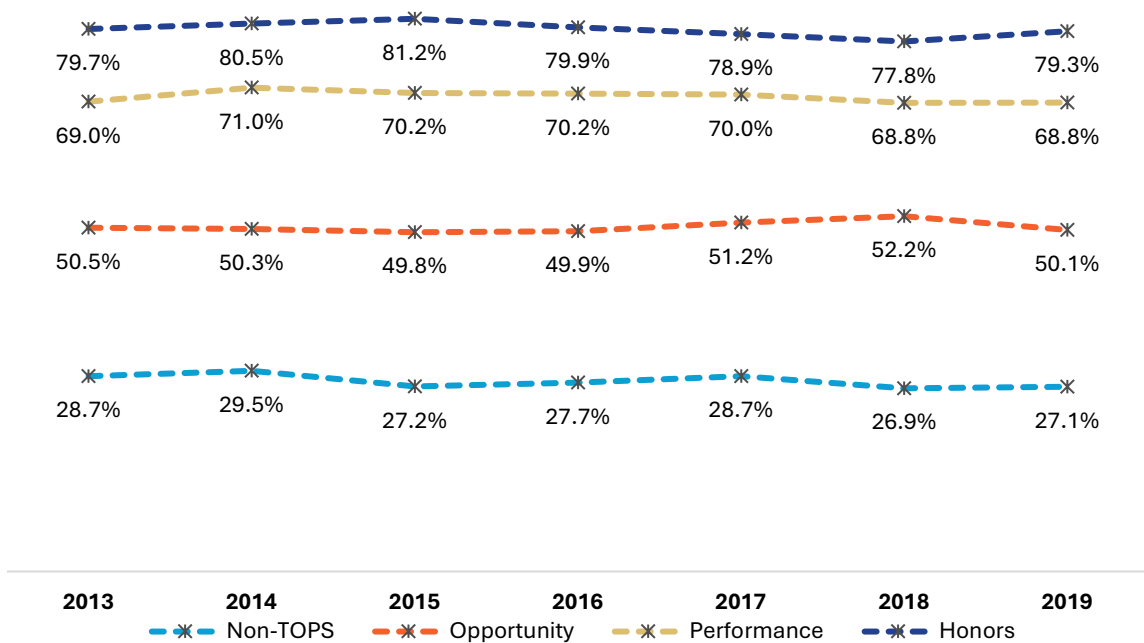
Graduation outcomes also vary by TOPS award level. Students receiving a TOPS *Honors* award graduate at substantially higher rates than those receiving TOPS *Performance* or TOPS *Opportunity* awards. In other words, *Honors* recipients are more than twice as likely as *Opportunity* recipients to graduate on time and 30 percentage points more likely to complete within 150 percent of the time.

Using the 2019 entering cohort for comparison, where both 100% and 150% time-to-degree data are available, 58.4% of *Honors* recipients completed a baccalaureate degree within 100% of time, and 79.3% within 150%. In contrast, among *Performance* recipients, 43.7% graduated within 100% of time and 68.8% within 150%; for *Opportunity* recipients, the rates were 24.9% and 50.1%, respectively. These outcomes are illustrated in Figures E and F.

**Figure E: Statewide Baccalaureate Four-year Graduation Rate
(100%)
by Non-TOPS, Opportunity, Performance, Honors**

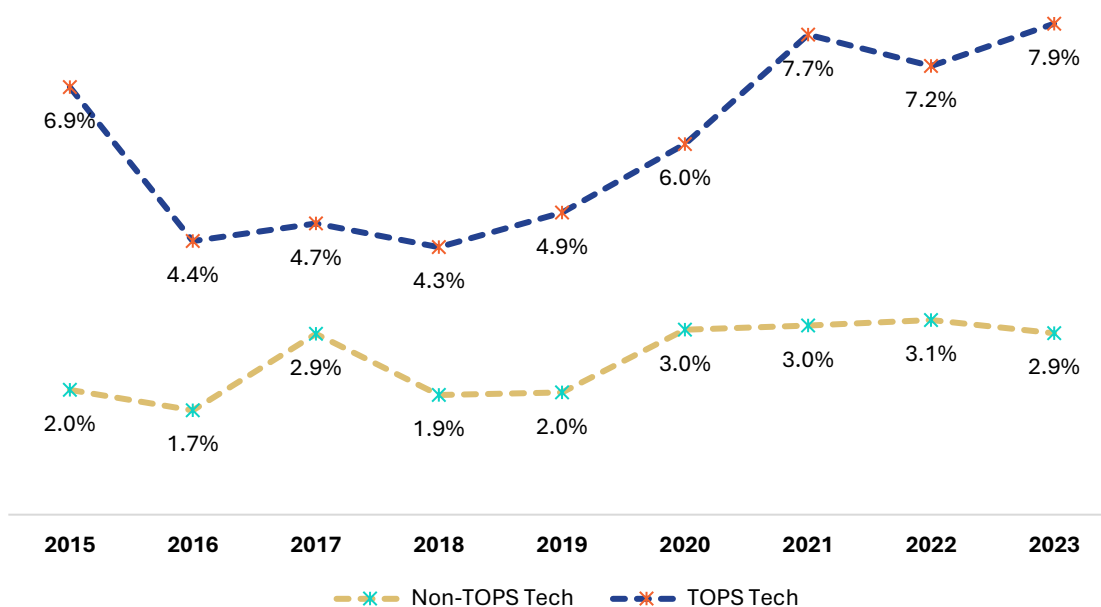


**Figure F: Statewide Baccalaureate Six-year Graduation Rate
(150%)
by Non-TOPS, Opportunity, Performance, Honors**

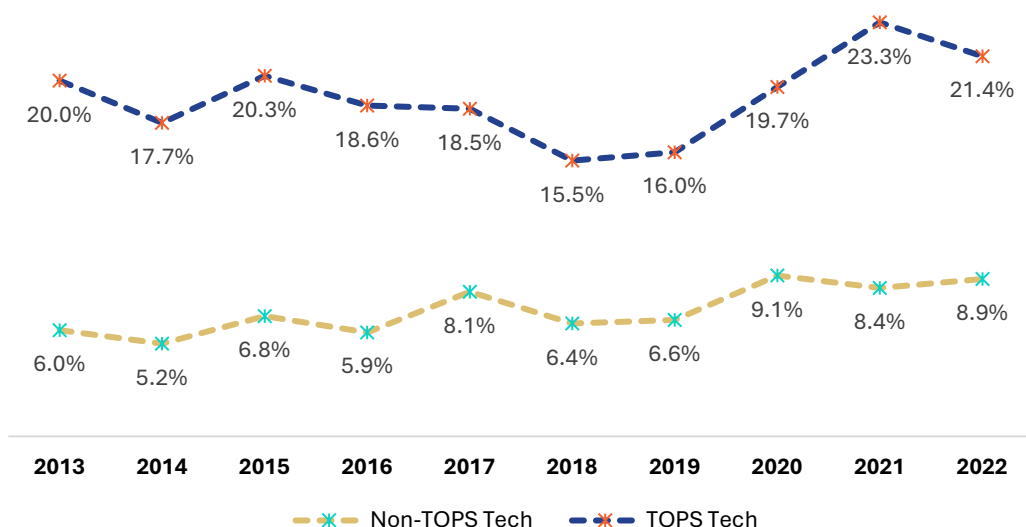


Like TOPS baccalaureate degree-seekers, TOPS recipients who begin in associate's degree programs also graduate at higher rates than their non-TOPS peers (Figures G and H). Using the 2021 first-time, full-time entering cohort, Figure G shows that 7.7% of TOPS *Tech* recipients completed an associate's degree within 100% of time, compared with 3% of non-TOPS students. Within 150% of time (Figure H), 23.3% of TOPS recipients completed an associate's degree, compared with 8.4% of non-TOPS students. Performance measures for out-of-state and international students were negligible and did not affect the results.

Figure G: Statewide Associate's Two-year Graduation Rate (100%) Among TOPS *Tech* and Non-TOPS Students First-time, Full-time Entering Cohorts (Two-year *Tech* Programs only)



**Figure H: Statewide Associate's Three-year Graduation Rate (150%) Among TOPS Tech and Non-TOPS Students
First-time, Full-time Entering Cohorts (2-year Tech Programs only)**



The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) [2016] defines time-to-degree as "the time between initial enrollment in a postsecondary institution and graduation with a college degree." Tables 17a, 17b, and 17c examine this metric for TOPS recipients compared with non-TOPS students for the 2024–25 Academic Year.

Consistent with the trends discussed in this report, TOPS recipients completed their degree in less time than their non-TOPS counterparts. Generally, within the three tiers of TOPS (*Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors*), the higher the scholarship level, the fewer semesters taken to graduate (Table 17c).

In light of recent transfer legislation and Board of Regents transfer policies, TOPS and non-TOPS time-to-degree data were examined in two ways. Tables 17a and 17b compare time-to-degree by award level for students who remained at the institution of initial entry versus those who transferred elsewhere in any associate's (TOPS *OPH*) [17a] or technical (TOPS *TECH*) eligible programs (17b). Table 17c examines the time-to-degree for baccalaureate program completers.

Tables 17a and 17b examine time-to-degree for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* awardees in associate's degree programs and TOPS *Tech* awardees in technical associate's degree programs. With the expansion of transfer initiatives such as the Universal Transfer Pathways and the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) policy, associate's degree programs have become more attractive to students as a bridge to a four-year degree, even if the student transfers from one institution to another. While still relatively new, these programs and policies show promise as a vehicle for students to attain and subsequently transfer credentials. The data

indicate that transfer students take a bit longer to graduate; however, as previously stated, the impact of BOR policies and legislative mandates enacted over the past few years may mitigate that trend in the future as standardized and more nimble transfer policies result in efficient transfer credit evaluation and application from one institution to another. Tables 17a and 17b provide an idea of present levels of time-to-degree for students with TOPS compared to those without TOPS in associate's degrees.

Table 17a. 2024–25 Associate's Average Time to Degree of TOPS & Non-TOPS Recipients

2024-25 Associate Average Time to Degree of TOPS (OPH) & Non-TOPS Recipients			
Graduation Type	Award Types	Time to degree (in years)	Completer Count
Same Institution	Honors	3.6	55
	Performance	3.0	135
	Opportunity	4.0	265
	TOPS	3.6	455
	Non-TOPS	5.5	499
	Overall	4.6	954
Any Institution	Honors	3.2	116
	Performance	4.2	246
	Opportunity	5.8	481
	TOPS	4.9	843
	Non-TOPS	7.7	815
	Overall	6.3	1,658

Note: The numbers reflected here are those students whose program start dates were available.

Table 17b. 2024–25 Associate's (Tech) Average Time to Degree of TOPS & Non-TOPS Recipients

2024-25 Associate (Tech) Average Time to Degree of TOPS & Non-TOPS Recipients			
Graduation Type	Award Types	Time to degree (in years)	Completer Count
Same Institution	TOPS Tech	3.5	303
	Non-TOPS Tech	5.9	592
	Overall	5.0	895
Any Institution	TOPS Tech	3.8	343
	Non-TOPS Tech	8.0	979
	Overall	6.9	1,322

Note: The numbers reflected here are those students whose program start dates were available.

The time-to-degree for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* students who graduate from the same institution they initially entered (4.6 years) is less than for those who transfer (5.3 years), which is also less than that for associate's or technical programs. The benefit of BOR policies may be a factor in this metric as institutions refine the transfer process into a more consistent and supportive model.

Table 17c. 2024–25 Baccalaureate Average Time to Degree of TOPS & Non-TOPS Recipients

2024-25 Baccalaureate Average Time to Degree of TOPS (OPH) & Non-TOPS Recipients			
Graduation Type	Award Types	Time to degree (in years)	Completer Count
Same Institution	Honors	4.0	2,637
	Performance	4.3	2,994
	Opportunity	4.8	2,896
	TOPS	4.4	8,527
	Non-TOPS	5.9	1,702
	Overall	4.6	10,229
Any Institution	Honors	4.2	2,872
	Performance	4.5	3,402
	Opportunity	5.4	3,633
	TOPS	4.7	9,907
	Non-TOPS	7.3	2,721
	Overall	5.3	12,628

Note: The numbers reflected here are those students whose program start dates were available.

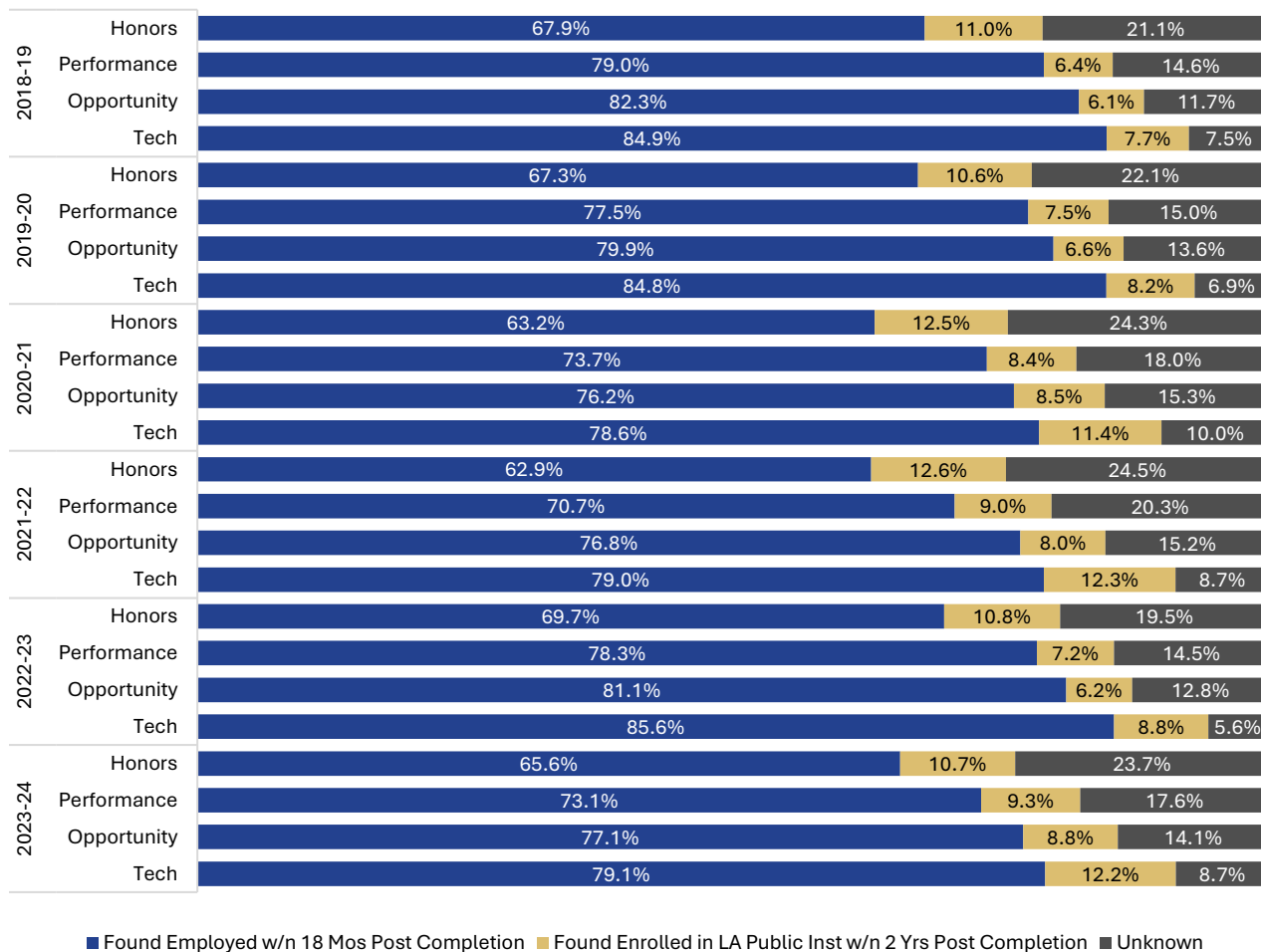
EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Study Resolution (S.R.) 10 of the 2019 Regular Legislative Session requested the BOR study to determine the need for and feasibility of updating TOPS reporting requirements to include data on scholarship recipients' employment outcomes and other relevant data points.

This is the second consecutive year in which the BOR has obtained requested data on completers by award level from the Louisiana Workforce Commission to illustrate the post-TOPS status of recipients. Figure I shows the 2nd- and 6th-quarter post-completion status of TOPS completers. The BOR looks forward to the continued expansion and refinement of this data to present in this report.

TOPS *Opportunity* and *Tech* completers indicated the highest levels of established employment post-graduation. TOPS *Honors* completers are found in the workforce data in lower numbers but showed higher enrollment levels within two years of graduating. This finding correlates with the lower rate of time-to-degree for *Honors* completers (Figure 17c) and the potential for students to use their remaining TOPS funds to attend graduate school. It will be interesting to track how this number is impacted as BOR dual enrollment, transfer and PLA policies increase opportunities for students to move efficiently from one institution to another and obtain the maximum benefit from their coursework.

**Figure I: TOPS Recipients Completing an Award
Employment Outcomes by TOPS Award Type**



Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) data.

Conclusion

The TOPS eligibility criteria require students to complete a more rigorous high school curriculum, which better prepares them for success in postsecondary education. Overall, students who complete the TOPS Core earn higher ACT composite scores (21) than students who do not (14.8).

This year, the median ACT score of TOPS *OPH* recipients remained stable, while that of TOPS *Tech* recipients decreased slightly. GPAs for TOPS *OPH* recipients rose slightly, while those of TOPS *Tech* recipients declined modestly.

From the 2014–15 through the 2023–24 academic years, a total of **189,163** students were deemed eligible for a TOPS *Opportunity*, *Performance*, or *Honors* award. Of these, **159,120 students (84.1%)** accepted their award and enrolled in a Louisiana postsecondary institution. During the same period, **69,168** students were deemed eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award, of whom **16,285 (23.5%)** accepted the award and enrolled.

The TOPS program has been successful in encouraging more of Louisiana’s high school graduates to remain in-state for postsecondary education. In recent years, however, the proportion of students eligible for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* awards who accept their awards has steadily declined. With TOPS funding frozen at 2016–17 levels, the proportion of the total cost covered by TOPS has decreased. Senate Resolution 138 of the 2024 Regular Session directed the Board of Regents to study all of the state’s higher education financial aid programs. The resulting report, presented to the Board of Regents and the Legislature (February 2025) gives a detailed analysis of whether students who are eligible for various levels of TOPS choose to remain in the state for college and if they choose to leave the state where they go. That analysis shows that out-of-state institutions have taken advantage of the decline in real-term levels of TOPS support to offer Louisiana students more competitive scholarships, thereby enticing them to leave the state and attend their institutions. Equally concerning is the growing share of TOPS-eligible students who forgo postsecondary enrollment altogether. This pattern is not unique to Louisiana but reflects broader national trends that warrant further analysis.

With the introduction of the new TOPS *Excellence* award for high-achieving students, it is hoped that this program can once again encourage Louisiana students to pursue their college education in the state.

TOPS recipients consistently attain ACT scores and high school core GPAs that exceed the minimum requirements for TOPS eligibility. In terms of demographics, data indicate that most initial TOPS recipients are White and female.

In terms of persistence, students who begin college with a TOPS award are more likely than non-TOPS students to return to postsecondary education in subsequent years.

Data indicate that students who began a baccalaureate or an associate’s degree program with a TOPS award graduated within 100% and 150% of the time at much higher rates than students without a TOPS award. Data indicate that TOPS awards may be correlated with time-to-degree, as TOPS recipients graduate in fewer semesters than non-TOPS students. Students who begin with a TOPS award complete their studies at a higher rate, regardless of whether they retain the award for the entire duration of their eligibility.

TOPS *Opportunity* and *Tech* completers demonstrated the highest levels of established employment post-graduation. While TOPS *Honors* completers are found in the workforce data in lower numbers they showed higher enrollment levels within two years of graduating, leading to the conclusion that these students entered graduate programs. The main finding from this form of analysis is that it is insufficient to understand the long-term connection between TOPS and employment within the state. Regents is in discussions with LAFIRST, the state’s longitudinal data system, to explore what further analysis is possible to address this important question.

From the 1998–1999 through 2024–2025 fiscal years, the state provided approximately \$5.1 billion in funding for the TOPS Program. Several years of declines in the number of high school graduates and TOPS-eligible students, combined with lower acceptance rates among students, have led to consecutive years of decreases in the overall number of TOPS recipients. Although AY 2024–25 saw a modest increase of 454 TOPS recipients, for the fourth consecutive year an increase in TOPS funding was not requested (Figure B1).

The report that resulted from Senate Resolution 138 of the 2024 Regular Session examined options for modifying all state aid programs in light of long-term trends, with the goal of better supporting progress toward Louisiana’s attainment target of 60% of working-age adults holding a postsecondary credential by 2030.

The report emphasized that many of Louisiana’s scholarship programs were created decades ago, when tuition and fees represented the primary concern. Today, however, students face additional costs—such as housing, transportation, food, and childcare—that often determine whether they can pursue or persist in higher education. As a result, financial aid must evolve beyond covering tuition alone to address the full cost of attendance. Specifically addressing TOPS, the report outlined ways in which to address current student needs that were presented to the Legislature. The newly established *Excellence* award represents a strategic effort to mitigate the outmigration of Louisiana students to out-of-state institutions. We are grateful to the Legislature for recognizing this need and for providing the funding necessary to support this additional scholarship tier.

In addition, the report also recommended some further modifications to TOPS that would improve coordination across aid programs, strengthen workforce eligibility pathways, enhance the purchasing power of TOPS, and ultimately expand Louisiana’s talent base by helping to retain or regain our best and brightest students.

Firstly, there is an opportunity to use the TOPS scholarship to attract high-performing students who chose to leave the state to return to fill jobs that are of high-strategic importance to the state. Concepts such as the TOPS-for-Docs scholarship would encourage Louisiana students wishing to be doctors to return to, train in and subsequently practice in their home communities.

Similarly, the state will not be able to reach its educational attainment goals without continuing to increase levels of college going. Steps that the Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education have taken to increase availability and access to dual enrollment have resulted in three years of double-digit percentage increases in dual enrollment and, for the first time in several years, an increase in the state’s college-going rate for high school students. The impact of this work would be further amplified if TOPS’ current awards were modified to also include eligibility pathways for successful completion of academic early-college coursework as an alternative clear demonstration of a student’s potential for college success.

Lastly, while the Excellence award will address affordability issues for the most well-prepared students, the declining levels of real-term support for students at all other levels of TOPS remains an issue. This investment in our students is particularly critical for Louisiana, where the cost of attendance at both two- and four-year institutions ranks among the highest in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states as a share of average family income.

We appreciate the discussions and actions taken during the 2025 legislative session to better align Louisiana's financial aid portfolio with the state's educational attainment and workforce needs, and stand ready to participate in similar conversations in the coming months.

Appendix A:

Act 1202 of 2001 Regular Legislative Session

Appendix B:

Act 587 of 2014 Regular Legislative Session

Appendix C:

Act 227 of 2015 Regular Legislative Session

Appendix D:

Act 347 of 2025 Regular Legislative Session

Appendix E:

TOPS Core Curriculum

Appendix F:

Class of 2025 TOPS Eligibility by School



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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Research and Sponsored Initiatives

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

The Terrace ▪ University Library
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VI. Reports and Recommendations

D. Research and Sponsored Initiatives

1. Appointment of Endowed Chairholder without a National Search: Louisiana State University and A&M College
2. Overview of Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) Plan and Budget, FY 2026–27

AGENDA ITEM VI.D.1

Appointment of Endowed Chairholder without National Search: Louisiana State University and A&M College

Background Information

Since 2015 the Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars policy has included a provision to waive the requirement that BoRSF-matched Endowed Chairs be filled as the result of a national search to allow an internal appointment to be made. This provision was updated in August 2024 to clarify the requirements of internal appointments and seek documentation verifying that any internal appointment is fulfilling the goals of the Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars program. Institutions are limited in the number of waivers they may request in an academic year.

Staff Summary

Louisiana State University and A&M College requests to appoint Dr. Kenneth (Kip) L. Matthews II, Interim Director of the Medical Physics & Health Physics program, to the Dr. Charles M. Smith Chair in Medical Physics, a two-increment, \$2 million Chair matched by the BoRSF in 2006–07 and 2021–22. LSU A&M has used the Smith Chair, recently vacated by Dr. Wayne Newhauser, to support the Director of the LSU and Mary Bird Perkins Medical Physics program. Dr. Matthews, an internal candidate and career faculty member at LSU A&M, was appointed Interim Director in 2024.

Dr. Matthews’s qualifications align well with policy requirements for internal appointments and he would likely win a national search, should one be conducted. If approved, this waiver request would represent the first of LSU A&M’s three allowed uses of the national search waiver provision in FY 2025–26.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of Louisiana State University and A&M College’s request to waive the national search requirement to appoint Dr. Kenneth (Kip) L. Matthews II to the Dr. Charles M. Smith Chair in Medical Physics. As stipulated in Board policy, a copy of the Letter of Appointment sent to Dr. Matthews must be submitted to the Board within 90 days of this approval.

AGENDA ITEM VI.D.2

Overview of Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) Plan and Budget, FY 2026–27

Background Information

The Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF), constitutionally designated and managed by the Board of Regents, receives revenues on an annual basis from the Kevin P. Reilly Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund (LEQTF). These dollars, separate from State General Fund appropriations, cannot be used for operating costs but are designated to support supplementary and enhancing programs to improve the quality of higher education and contribute to Louisiana’s economic development. Accordingly, within the parameters set forth in the Constitution, the Board of Regents operates competitive programs and subprograms through the BoRSF appropriations, to bolster performance in priority areas through a variety of activities, including departmental enhancements, research and development, endowment matching, and targeted student support.

The Board is required by Article VII, Section 10 of the Constitution to submit an annual plan and budget to the Legislature and the Governor not less than 60 days prior to the beginning of the Regular Legislative Session. This document outlines proposals for expenditure across the four constitutionally permitted components of the Support Fund: Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars, Recruitment of Superior Graduate Students, Research and Development, and Enhancement. Though Act 222 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session repeals the LEQTF and related BoRSF, a Plan and Budget is still required for FY 2026–27, pending approval of the constitutional amendment by the voters on April 18, 2026.

Staff Summary

Though the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) provides the official revenue estimate for the Support Fund, staff considers both trends over the recent past and the annual projection of the Treasury. Annual revenues generated for the Support Fund declined steadily and significantly for the period FY 2006–07 through FY 2019–20, from a peak of \$35 million to less than \$18 million. In FY 2024–25, revenues rebounded above \$22 million, and current estimates indicate this improvement may continue.

Projections of the Treasurer and Revenue Estimating Conference are similar, ranging from \$21.75 million (Treasury, August 2025) to \$22.3 million (REC, May 2025); these projections are similar to FY 2024–25 earnings, which exceeded \$22 million.

Based on current estimates, recent earnings, and Support Fund history, the BoRSF Planning Committee concluded that \$22 million, with contingencies to accommodate potential shortfalls, is a reasonable budget level for the BoRSF in FY 2026–27. This recommended budget will enable full support for existing contracts and matching obligations and significant new monies for all BoRSF grant and endowment programs, which will help these programs recover from the contingencies put in place for FY 2025–26 to eliminate most competitive grant opportunities. The structure of the Support Fund, with RFPs released at the beginning of the fiscal year and funding allocated at the end, gives the Board ample opportunity to adjust as the budget picture clarifies in early 2027. If estimates fall below the recommended budget level, staff will make pro-rata reductions to new monies for competitive programs, in accordance with contingencies outlined in the Plan and Budget. Only under extreme exigency would federal matching dollars, guaranteed donor matches in Endowed Professorships (two slots per campus), or prior commitments be reduced.

Operating in this manner will minimize risk to this long-standing and highly valuable activity of the Board of Regents, allowing flexibility to adjust approaches over time. The contingencies recommended enable the Board and the staff to reassess and make necessary changes as the BoRSF's financial position continues to evolve.

Program allocations, as well as all contingencies in the event that revenues are higher or lower than projected, are detailed in Attachment A. Brief descriptions of each program/subprogram included in the budget are provided in Attachment B.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only. Staff recommendations for the FY 2026–27 BoRSF Plan and Budget will be brought for Board consideration in December 2025.

ATTACHMENT A

FY 2026–27 Board of Regents Support Fund Budget: BoRSF Planning Committee/Staff Recommendation

Support Fund Program/Subprogram	FY 2026–27 PROPOSED BUDGET		FY 2025–26 ADJUSTED BUDGET	
	Prior Commitments (Existing Obligations)	New Monies	Prior Commitments (Existing Obligations)	New Monies
Federal Matching	\$1,275,000	\$250,000	\$375,000	\$900,000
Endowed Chairs	\$0	\$3,220,000	\$0	\$2,020,000
Graduate Fellows	\$0	\$1,820,000	\$0	\$1,020,000
Traditional (GF)		\$0		\$0
BoR/SREB Fellowships		\$0		\$0
Endowed Grad Scholarships		\$1,820,000		\$1,020,000
Research & Development	\$1,283,441	\$2,750,000	\$3,324,204	\$2,090,000
Research Competitiveness	\$923,260	\$1,500,000	\$2,202,532	\$2,090,000
Industrial Ties/PoCP	\$360,181	\$800,000	\$1,121,672	SUSPENDED
Awds to Artists & Scholars	\$0	\$450,000	\$0	SUSPENDED
Enhancement	\$1,129,327	\$9,704,048	\$1,980,333	\$4,699,741
Departmental ENH (includes BoR/SREB)	\$1,129,327	\$5,814,048	\$1,980,333	SUSPENDED
Endowed Professorships	\$0	\$2,680,000	\$0	\$2,680,000
Endowed WF Scholarships	\$0	\$1,210,000	\$0	\$2,010,000
Administration (Formula)	\$0	\$568,184	\$0	\$590,722
TOTAL	\$3,687,768	\$18,312,232	\$5,679,537	\$11, 320,463
FISCAL YEAR BUDGET	\$22,000,000		\$17,000,000	

CONTINGENCIES:

Higher than Budgeted:

- Additional revenues allocated as approved by the Board
- No increase in spending authority

Lower than Budgeted

- If partial reductions are needed, proportionate cuts taken in first-year amounts allocated for proposals across all competitive programs and subprograms
- If additional cuts are needed after all competitive programs eliminated, reductions taken to the non-competitive Endowed Professorships subprogram once funding guarantees are met
- If additional cuts needed after all first-year funds are eliminated, reductions made to federal matching commitments and/or prior contractual obligations



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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Planning, Research, and Performance

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

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VI. Reports and Recommendations

E. Planning, Research, and Performance

1. Consent Agenda

a. Advisory Commission on Proprietary Schools

i. Initial Applications

- a. Lafayette Medical Assistant School, Lafayette, LA
- b. Shreveport Medical Assistant School, Shreveport, LA
- c. Mandeville Medical Assistant School, Mandeville, LA

ii. Change of Ownership Applications

- a. Medical Education (MediEd), New Iberia, LA -
Formerly Academy of Acadiana - New Iberia

iii. Renewal Applications

- a. 160 Driving Academy - Shreveport – License #2364 – Shreveport, LA
- b. Acadiana Area Career College - A Div of Blue Cliff College – License #2357 – Lafayette, LA
- c. Accelerated Academy - Baton Rouge – License #2220 – Baton Rouge, LA
- d. Accelerated Academy - Denham Springs – License #2154 – Denham Springs, LA
- e. Accelerated Academy - Hammond – License #2235 – Hammond, LA
- f. Accelerated Academy - Houma – License #2228 – Houma, LA
- g. Accelerated Academy - Lafayette – License #2219 – Lafayette, LA
- h. Accelerated Academy - Lake Charles – License #2308 – Lake Charles, LA
- i. Accelerated Academy - Metairie – License #2230 – Metairie, LA

- j. Accelerated Academy - Monroe – License #2223 – Monroe, LA
- k. Accelerated Academy - Slidell – License #2224 – Slidell, LA
- l. Advance Nursing Training – License #2197 – New Orleans, LA
- m. Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy – License #2131 – Shreveport, LA
- n. Baton Rouge School of Phlebotomy – License #2335 – Baton Rouge, LA
- o. Blue Cliff College - Alexandria – License #2358 – Alexandria, LA
- p. Blue Cliff College - Metairie, Satellite Location – License #2361 – Metairie, LA
- q. Camelot College – License #680 – Baton Rouge, LA
- r. Coastal College - Alexandria – License #991 – Alexandria, LA
- s. Cross Road CDL Academy – License #2321 – Harvey, LA
- t. Delta College South – License #969 – Baton Rouge, LA
- u. Digital Media Institute – License #2198 – Shreveport, LA
- v. Fortis College – License #2134 – Baton Rouge, LA
- w. Healthcare Training Institute – License #2109 – Kenner, LA
- x. Life Care – License #2182 – Marrero, LA
- y. Louisiana Truck Driving Training – License #2393 – Tickfaw, LA
- z. MedCerts – License #2337 – Livonia, MI
- aa. New Orleans Medical Assistant School – License #2305 – New Orleans, LA
- bb. Opelousas Academy of Nondestructive Testing – License #2275 – Opelousas, LA
- cc. Remington College - Baton Rouge – License #2277 – Baton Rouge, LA
- dd. River Cities School of Dental Assisting – License #2089 – Shreveport, LA
- ee. Smith Institute – License #2362 – Shreveport, LA
- ff. Stick It Phlebotomy – License #2226 – Ruston, LA
- gg. Synergy Massage Institute - Metairie – License #2365 – Metairie, LA
- hh. The Captain School – License #2392 – Marrero, LA



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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Artificial Intelligence

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

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VI. Reports and Recommendations

F. Artificial Intelligence

1. Consideration of AI Use Policy
2. Consideration of Resolution Concerning AI Use in Postsecondary Education

Louisiana Board of Regents Policy on Responsible, Ethical, and Secure Use of Artificial Intelligence

Adopted: [Date]

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Regents (BOR) recognizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve BOR's mission to coordinate public postsecondary education in Louisiana in the areas of learning, teaching, research and administration. However, to realize the potential benefits of AI without risking the possible harm it could cause, AI must be used responsibly and securely across all Louisiana postsecondary education institutions and systems. This AI policy sets forth guidelines to assist in promoting a culture of cybersecurity responsibility and knowledge development within the academic framework for all students, faculty, and staff by BOR and the programs under its jurisdiction, namely the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA). Postsecondary institutions and systems, BOR, LOSFA and LUMCON must prioritize and promote AI education and discernment to ensure the safety and security of information across data systems and networks. It is imperative that higher education institutions, BOR and its programs enact appropriate safeguards to ensure integrity in the use of AI as an academic tool, while understanding the shared responsibility necessary to lessen the likelihood of security breaches.

This policy seeks to:

- Prohibit the misuse of AI that undermines data system integrity, privacy, violates data security, or compromises research initiatives;
- Set clear standards for AI use by all staff, consultants, and contractors of BOR and its programs;
- Set clear standards for the enactment of policies governing AI use at postsecondary education institutions in Louisiana;
- Safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of data maintained by BOR and its programs;
- Enable the education of students, faculty, staff and the academic community on the ethical use of AI, the necessity of data and intellectual property protection, and personal responsibility and integrity; and

- Provide for compliance with all applicable laws and this policy and for enforcement in cases of violations in a consistent and timely manner.

II. Introduction

In accordance with its constitutional responsibility to coordinate higher education in Louisiana, the BoR adopts this policy on the Responsible and Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (“Policy”) applicable to BOR and the programs under its jurisdiction, i.e., LOSFA and LUMCON.

III. Definitions

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) System:** A system engineered and designed to achieve specific objectives, which processes human- or machine-provided inputs and data sources to produce outputs including text, images, audio and other content. The system may also generate predictions, recommendations, and decisions that influence human action and affect real and/or virtual environments. The system can create new content and operate at various levels of autonomy.
- **Institutional Data:** Any data collected, stored, created and/or maintained by a Louisiana public postsecondary institution or a program under BOR oversight. These include, but are not limited to, student data, staff personnel files/records, financial information, and research data.
- **Prohibited Use:** Any use of AI that violates academic integrity, privacy, institutional policy, or applicable state and federal laws and directives, including, but not limited to, unauthorized use or disclosure of sensitive or confidential data, falsification of research data and results, or loading of any proprietary and/or protected data (e.g., student data) into an AI system.

IV. Governance and Oversight

- BOR and each of its programs shall designate a responsible AI officer and AI committee to review AI use proposals, oversee compliance, assess AI tool risk, coordinate with system/institutional counterparts, and maintain an AI use list. BOR shall provide relevant personnel cybersecurity- and AI-related education, focused on authentication of information systems, secure communication across trusted and untrusted networks, data management, internal processes to report safeguard failures, and the function of security operations centers.

V. AI Tools Inventory and Risk Assessment

BOR, through the AI Committee, shall maintain and update regularly an AI tools inventory, which shall include:

- A list of AI tools currently procured, licensed, or approved for use.
- Documentation of each tool's intended use case (academic, research, administrative, communications, fiscal forecast, or cybersecurity).
- Risk classification for each tool (low, medium, high) based on data sensitivity and potential impact.
- Records of vendor compliance reviews, security testing results, and institutional use approval.
- A log of all AI pilot projects, deployments, and decommissioning of AI tools.

VI. Data Privacy, Security and Restrictions

BOR, through the AI Committee, shall establish clear standards to protect sensitive information and prevent unauthorized or harmful use of AI systems, including:

- **Data Classification and Protection:** AI systems may only process institutional data in accordance with existing data classification standards, and state and federal laws. Sensitive personal data (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA, fiscal data, non-public research data) shall not be entered into unapproved internal or external AI tools.
- **Access Control:** AI tool access shall be limited to authorized users using role-based permissions and require multi-factor authentication where applicable and feasible.
- **Data Minimization and Purpose Limitation:** AI tools shall use, collect or process only the minimum data required for their approved use. BOR shall document justification for any sensitive or personally identifiable information (PII) processed by AI systems.
- **Data Retention and Deletion:** BOR and its programs shall establish and enforce defined retention periods for data used in AI systems, with prompt deletion or anonymization carried out in accordance with applicable laws.
- **Source Code and Intellectual Property Restrictions:** AI systems shall not be used to replicate, reverse engineer or disclose proprietary code, trade secrets or intellectual property. To mitigate data leakage, institutions shall explicitly prohibit inputting proprietary institutional software code into unauthorized AI tools.
- **Secure Development and Testing:** AI tools used for development or testing must be sandboxed (isolated within the system) and segmented from production systems

handling sensitive student, finance or research data. BOR and its programs shall maintain audit logs of AI system use to detect misuse or unauthorized access.

- **Cross-Border Data Restrictions:** Institutional data shall not be exported or transmitted to AI systems hosted in jurisdictions without adequate technical and legal protections as approved by the AI Committee.

BOR staff shall be restricted in their use of AI for professional purposes based on the AI tools approved for use. Staff are prohibited from using personal AI accounts on state machines and from conducting state business on any non-state machine. Staff are also prohibited from using a state email address to establish an AI account without written approval of the agency Information Technology department.

VII. Academic Applications

Academic Integrity and Student Use: BOR shall coordinate with all Louisiana postsecondary institutions, through their respective management boards, to ensure: (a) clearly defined permissible and prohibited AI use by students; (b) classroom-level guidelines for responsible AI use, including grading and assessment, by faculty; and (c) methodologies to assess the effectiveness of AI use in teaching and learning.

VIII. Procurement, Vendor Requirements and Third-Party Tools

BOR shall, before adopting or integrating an AI system or related third-party tools, apply the following standards, under which vendors and third-party service providers shall:

- **Risk and Security Assessment:** Comply with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework, or an equivalent framework, to evaluate data protection, and security.
- **Data Governance:** Define data ownership, retention, deletion rights, and breach notification.
- **Transparency and Documentation:** Maintain AI tool documentation, data flows, compliance reviews and any pilot or testing results.
- **Accessibility:** Comply with state and federal standards for accessibility.
- **Governance Approval:** Comply with governance and oversight requirements as determined by the AI Officer and/or Committee.

IX. Training, Education and Professional Development

- BOR shall implement AI literacy programs to ensure that BOR employees and employees of its programs under its jurisdiction are equipped with knowledge and skills to use AI systems responsibly.
- These trainings shall address, at a minimum, ethics, privacy, attribution of sources, and methods for verifying and validating AI-generated results.
- Specialized training must be offered for security, communications, researchers, and IT staff handling third-party AI integrations.
- Acknowledging the speed of AI development, a review and update of these programs are required on at least a bi-annual basis to assess emerging technologies, risks, state and federal laws, and best practices for the responsible use of AI.

X. Compliance, Reporting and Enforcement

- The AI Committee shall establish procedures to address misuse of AI, including misconduct, data breaches, and unauthorized use and deployment of AI tools, through HR policies, and IT acceptable use policies.
- Data breach or loss shall be reported immediately upon discovery to the AI Officer.
- Non-compliance by employees shall result in the suspension of AI tool usage, revocation of access privileges, and/or the initiation of disciplinary actions.

XI. Review Cycle

This policy shall be reviewed and updated as needed by BOR to reflect emerging risks as well as state and federal law and directives.

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Board of Regents is constitutionally charged with the coordination and planning of public postsecondary education in Louisiana under La. Const. art. VIII, and

WHEREAS, the public postsecondary education institutions are placed under the governance of the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University System, the University of Louisiana System, the Southern University System, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents recognizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve postsecondary education, learning, teaching, research, and administration, and

WHEREAS, to realize the potential benefits of AI without risking the possible harm it could cause, AI must be used responsibly and securely across all Louisiana postsecondary education institutions and systems, and

WHEREAS, comprehensive and sound policies governing the use of AI are critical in developing and promoting a culture of cybersecurity responsibility and knowledge development within the academic framework for all students, faculty, and staff, and

WHEREAS, postsecondary institutions and their management boards must prioritize and promote AI education and discernment to ensure the safety and security of information across data systems and networks, and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the management boards require that their member institutions enact appropriate safeguards to ensure integrity in the use of AI as an academic tool, while understanding the shared responsibility necessary to lessen the likelihood of security breaches, and

WHEREAS, Governor Landry's Executive Order EO JML 25-203, and the amendments thereto in EO JML 2019, underscore the need for vigilance in the use of AI by state agencies as well as public postsecondary institutions and the inadvisability of free AI tools developed by nation-states such as the Chinese Communist Party; and

WHEREAS, the designation of an AI officer and/or AI committee at each system and institution will assist in the centralized review and evaluation of AI use proposals, oversee compliance, assess AI tool risk assessment, and maintain an AI use list, and

WHEREAS, it is important to educate all personnel involved in the authentication of information systems, secure communication across trusted and untrusted networks, data management, internal processes to report safeguard failures, and the function of Security Operations Centers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Regents of the State of Louisiana hereby urges and requests the Boards of Supervisors of the Louisiana State University System, the University of Louisiana System, the Southern University System, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to:

(1) Require the prompt adoption of policies by the system and each of its member institutions, consistent with the Board of Regents' Policy on Responsible, Ethical, and Secure Use of Artificial Intelligence, to:

- Prohibit the misuse of AI that undermines academic integrity, violates data security, or compromises research initiatives;
- Maintain and update a list of all authorized AI tools in use, documented by each tool's intended use case, risk classification, deployment, and decommissioning;
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of AI by all students, faculty, staff, consultants, and contractors;
- Safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of institutional, research, and personal data housed on machines controlled by the institution or system;
- Educate students, faculty, staff and the academic community on the ethical use of AI, the necessity of data and intellectual property protection, and academic responsibility and integrity; and

- Provide for the enforcement of applicable laws and policies by addressing violations in a consistent and timely manner to maintain accountability and trust.

(2) Ensure that the policies and procedures clearly address, at a minimum:

- Data classification and protection;
- Access control;
- Data minimization and purpose limitations;
- Data retention and deletion;
- Source code and intellectual property restrictions;
- Source development and testing; and
- Cross-border data restrictions.

(3) Ensure that the policies and procedures so adopted articulate clear standards for third-party tools and third-party service providers;

(4) Ensure that the policies and procedures provide for regular training and education to equip faculty, staff, and students with knowledge and skills to use AI systems responsibly and safely; and

(5) Ensure that the policies provide a clear process for compliance, reporting and enforcement of breaches and violations, including misuse of AI, academic misconduct, and unauthorized deployment or use of AI tools.

I, Misti Cordell, Chair of the Board of Regents of Louisiana, hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Resolution adopted by the said Board of Regents at a Board meeting, duly called and held on ____ October, 2025, at which meeting more than a quorum was present and voted.

In witness thereof, I have signed my name and affixed the official seal of the said Board of Regents at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this ____ _ day of October, 2025.

Misti Cordell, Chair
Louisiana Board of Regents

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D
Commissioner of Higher Education