

Dual Enrollment Task Force
Thursday, February 12, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

EBR Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC)
2101 Lobdell Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the February meeting of the Dual Enrollment Task Force to order at 10:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Mellynn Baker called the roll and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Commissioner of Higher Education
Mr. Marcus Thomas (designee)	Governor's Office
Dr. Ernise Singleton	LA Department of Education
Dr. Janet Pope	LA School Board Association
Mr. Ben Ncaise (designee)	LA Association of School Superintendents
Dr. Stella Arabie	LA Association of Principals
Ms. Robyn Bentley	LA School Counselor Association
Dr. Jeannine O'Rourke	College & Career Readiness Commission
Mr. Barry Erwin	Leaders for a Better LA
Dr. Erin Bendily	Pelican Institute for Public Policy
Ms. Katrice Antoine	LA Association of Educators
Ms. Pilar Eble (designee)	Ellevate LA
Members Absent	Affiliation
Mr. Preston Castille	State Board of Elementary & Secondary Education
Ms. Caroline Roemer	LA Public Charter School Association
Mr. Tony McCardle	LA Association for Career & Technical Education

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025, MINUTES

Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the November 4, 2025 minutes.

On motion of Dr. Janet Pope, seconded by Ms. Robyn Bentley, the minutes were approved by the Task Force.

DUAL ENROLLMENT REPORT OVERVIEW

Dr. Reed introduced Mr. Adam Lowe, Director of Postsecondary Transitions at Education Strategy Group, to highlight key findings from the 2025 Dual Enrollment Report. Mr. Lowe explained that the presentation aimed to highlight successes reflected in the state's dual enrollment data, answer questions about the report, and identify opportunities for improvement. He reported steady growth in seniors graduating with early college credit, with the most recent data showing that the graduating high school class of 2025, 76% of students graduated with some early college credit, an industry-based credential, or both. Dual enrollment served as the primary pathway through which students earn early college credit in Louisiana. Mr. Lowe then transitioned to dual enrollment specific data, indicating that success rates remain strong. He indicated that a challenge related to access to career and technical education programs persists, partly credited to costs, equipment needs, and instructor shortages. Overall, the annual Dual Enrollment Report shows significant positive progress while continuing the need to expand career-focused dual enrollment opportunities.

Task Force members discussed a decline in credit-bearing dual enrollment participation and suggested that some students may be shifting to industry-based certifications. Members also raised concerns about decreases in areas such as computer science, construction, and engineering, noting that factors like program costs, limited instructors, scheduling limits from new graduation requirements, and changing student interests may contribute to these declines. The members emphasized the need for further analysis and collaboration to better understand these trends. They also discussed a course choice pilot program allowing students to decide whether to transcript dual enrollment credit, in which about 83% of participants chose to keep

the credit. Members further discussed Task Force recommendations and plans for a statewide single dual enrollment application system to improve efficiency.

The conversation moved to a proposed change to TOPS Tech eligibility that would add a new pathway for students. Under the proposal, students who earn nine hours of early college or dual enrollment credit in high school could qualify for TOPS Tech, providing an alternative to the current requirement of a 17 ACT score or a Silver WorkKeys score. Members noted that this option would align with efforts to encourage dual enrollment participation and support students pursuing career and technical education. Dr. Reed invited members to share additional legislative ideas related to dual enrollment and thanked them for the conversation.

OVERVIEW OF RPCC EARLY COLLEGE OPTION & EBR CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER

Dr. Reed introduced Ms. Melissa Zeller, Principal of the Early College Option, and Ms. Nicole Joseph, Associate Vice Chancellor of Early College Option and Dual Enrollment at River Parishes Community College (RPCC). Ms. Joseph highlighted RPCC's dual enrollment programs at the Gonzales and Reserve campuses, where high school students can earn associate's degrees or career-focused credits starting as early as ninth grade. The traditional program, established in 2017, serves freshmen and sophomores on a designated early college campus, with juniors joining on-campus college courses. The program averages 60 graduates per year and now includes process technology courses providing career-ready skills. Recruitment involves middle school outreach, parent meetings, and community engagement. Despite its rigor, the program attracts motivated students, many of whom plan to pursue four-year degrees and careers in education or technical fields.

Ms. Corie McKinley Buras, Administrative Director of Workforce Development at the East Baton Rouge CTE Center, described the CTAC program, which serves about 500 students from 12–14 high schools in half-day shifts, offering pathways in healthcare, culinary, instrumentation, electrical, and CNA training. The CNA program includes a pre-LPN pathway, allowing students to enter BRCC with advanced standing, and many graduate with certifications like CNA or Phlebotomy. Courses are two-year programs that often articulate with partner institutions for workforce or advanced training. Ms. Buras added that recruitment begins in middle school, using field trips, hands-on projects, and visible branding to engage students and ensure equitable access. The most popular programs are CNA and Certified Medical Assistant, which often fill quickly, prompting expansion to additional schools. CTAC partners with BRCC, FranU, Ochsner, and RPCC to provide career ladders, stackable credentials, and shared facilities, helping students advance from entry-level roles to technical, healthcare, or entrepreneurial careers.

Dr. Reed thanked Ms. Buras and Ms. Joseph for their presentations.

DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENT PANEL

Dr. Reed welcomed Ms. Mellynn Baker to lead and facilitate a conversation with students about their dual enrollment experiences. The student panel consisted of:

- Reginae Williams, Early College Option Technical Academy, 10th Grade
- Romell Manuel, Early College Option Technical Academy, 10th Grade
- Mateo Alvarez, Early College Option Ascension Parish, 11th Grade
- Faith Richards, Early College Option Ascension Parish, 10th Grade
- Paisley Williams, Early College Option Ascension Parish, 12th Grade
- Iona Alexandrescu, EBR
- Mirielle Atkinson, EBR
- Samira Floyd, EBR
- Kierce Smith, EBR
- Richard Cooper, Lafayette Parish School System-SoLAcc Early College Academy Alum

The students shared their dual enrollment experiences, noting that they learned about the program through family, middle school presentations, or older siblings. They valued the opportunity to earn college credits in high school, which helped them save money, explore majors, and gain a head start on their degrees. Students commented that their dual enrollment programs were often small, supportive, and rigorous, giving students confidence and preparation for college-level work. Students highlighted hands-on learning, smaller class sizes, and supportive teachers and counselors as key to their success. Students on the panel commented that they enjoyed courses including dual enrollment biology, computer science, Spanish, and process technology, with some students earning stackable credentials. They noted that dual enrollment allowed them to balance extracurriculars, though some sports or activities were limited.

On the topic of dual enrollment programming suggestions, the students emphasized the importance of early recruitment, course variety, affordability, and relevance to careers, noting that the experience helped clarify post-high school goals and career paths, including in healthcare, technology, and STEM fields. Overall, the students described dual enrollment as preparing them academically, socially, and professionally for college and career success.

Ms. Baker and Dr. Reed thanked the students for sharing their information, commending their efforts and their success.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Sharell Ennis and Ms. Mary E. Alvarez, both parents of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses, expressed their appreciation for the educators and supporters who guided and assisted their children throughout the program.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Reed thanked participants for their involvement. She highlighted the upcoming 2026 Regular Legislative Session, which begins in March, asking members to share any relevant bills that may relate to dual enrollment. Dr. Reed stated that the Dual Enrollment Task Force will reconvene on June 30, 2026, at LSU Eunice, where members will have a chance to observe and learn about LSUE's dual enrollment programs. Dr. Reed asked for a motion to adjourn.

On the motion of Dr. Ernise Singleton, seconded by Mr. Marcus Thomas, the meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Reginae Williams- RPCC/ SJTB

Madison Owens- McNeese State

Faith Richards- RPCC/ ECO

Paisley Williams- RPCC/ ECO

Mateo Alvarez- RPCC/ ECO

Jeremy Ryder- SOWELA

Nicole Joseph- RPCC

Haden LaFleur- SOWELA

Melissa Zeller- RPCC/ Ascension ECO

Briana Juneau - Fletcher Technical Community College Romell Manuel - RPCC/ECO

Queena Grant - LCTCS

Bryan Alleman - Lafayette Parish

Katrice Antoine - LAE/ EBR

Arkeia Thomas - Jefferson Parish Schools

Sheri Goings - LSU

Erick Burton - LDCC

Kelita Johnson - SOLACC

David Shepard - YouthForce Nola

Melissa Schigoda - YouthForce Nola

Jamie Hilburn- BPCC

Kierce Smith - McKinley

Samira Floyd - Liberty High

Ioana Alexandrescu - Baton Rouge High/ CTEC

Sharelle Ennis