

WIC Strategic Plan Document

Final

Below is a list of five strategic goals with accompanying benchmarks and recommended implementation strategies.

Strategic Goal #1: Increase the High School Graduation Rate

Today there is universal recognition that career opportunity and family income is highly correlated with education level. High school graduation is widely regarded as the minimum level of achievement necessary to seek financial self-sufficiency, and it is the gateway to all postsecondary education options.

The following numbers from the Center on Education Policy and American Youth Policy Forum provides clear evidence. In 2003, annual income of male high school dropouts was \$21,447 compared with \$32,266 for high school graduates. Those with associate's degrees earned \$43,462 and bachelor's degree holders earned \$63,084.

The Louisiana Department of Education reports that Louisiana's 2007 public high school graduation rate is 65.9%. However, this graduation rate does not include schools in Cameron Parish, City of Bogalusa School District, Jefferson Parish, Orleans Parish, Plaquemines Parish, the Recovery School District, and St. Bernard Parish – these school systems did not report cohort graduation data due to the interruption in school caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The national graduation rate for the 2005 cohort was 73.2%. Graduation rates in top states are above 80% and the mid-range states have graduation rates above 70%.

Typically, we think of high school dropouts as those who are 18 years old or younger. However, adult high school dropouts represent a considerable portion of our population. The U. S. Census Bureau reports that 18.34% of Louisiana citizens aged 18 to 44 have not completed high school.

Benchmark Objective: Increase the Louisiana cohort high school graduation rate to 80% by 2014

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- **Provide a comprehensive set of early childhood development programs (Age 0 to 5)**
- **Design and implement a complimentary set of programs and services focused on preventing high school dropouts and recovering youth that drop out of high school**
- **Evaluate school calendar and schedule for potential changes that would better accommodate student learning and today's family circumstances**
- **Maintain a strong statewide accountability system**

- **Provide a comprehensive delivery system of continuing adult education and literacy and numeracy programs**

Strategic Goal #2: Increase the Postsecondary Graduation Rate

The graduation rate at Louisiana's four- and two-year schools are among the lowest in the nation. The recognized measure for the bachelor's degree achievement is the six-year graduation rate and the three-year graduation rate is the recognized measure for an associate's degree. Louisiana's 2007 six-year graduation rate of approximately 42% is better than only three other states (New Mexico, Nevada, and Alaska). The national average graduation rate is approximately 56% with top states graduating over 60% of their students in the six-year time period.

Only one of our four-year schools, LSU A&M in Baton Rouge (at 65%), has a graduation rate above the national average, and only two additional schools, Louisiana Tech (at 53%) and University of Louisiana in Lafayette (at 45%), have graduation rates above the Louisiana state average. Ten of our fourteen four-year schools have graduation rates below 40%. The state's 2007 three-year graduation rate for associate seeking students was 24.5%. The national average was 27.8%. (NCHEMs 2007 – HigherEdInfo.org)

These low graduation rates represent a poor return on Louisiana's university investments and therefore produce a less-than-satisfactory contribution to Louisiana's workforce needs and economic vitality.

- Benchmark Objectives:**
- Increase SREB 1 (LSU) graduation rate to 75% by 2018**
 - Increase SREB 2 (UL, LA Tech, UNO) graduation rate to 60% by 2018**
 - Increase all other four year institutions to 50% by 2018**
 - Increase the community and technical college graduation rate to the SREB median of their institutional level by 2018**

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- **Raise admission standards at all four-year universities**
- **Ensure that articulation and transfer policies facilitate a seamless movement from two-year to four-year schools**
- **Redefine mission of regional universities**
- **Support funding of postsecondary institutions to the level necessary to fulfill their mission while protecting opportunities for all students which may include but is not limited to providing tuition and fee-raising flexibility for all higher education institutions – to spur a healthy competition among schools for our students, and to allow each school the opportunity to cover the costs of meeting their respective missions.**

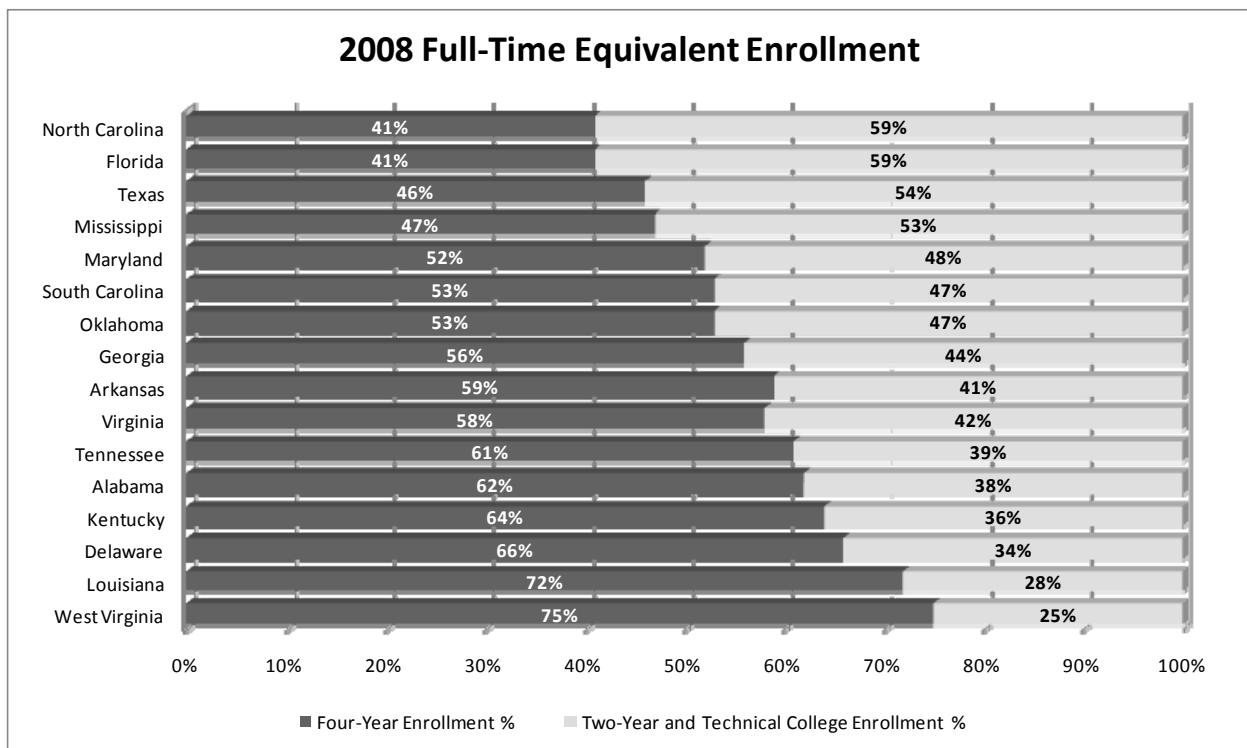
- Provide a comprehensive delivery system of continuing adult education and literacy and numeracy programs
- Fully implement a performance-based funding formula for all postsecondary education systems that is consistent with institutional missions
- Evaluate postsecondary governance for redesign

Strategic Goal #3: Align Postsecondary Resources with Workforce Needs

There is a significant mismatch between the higher education system Louisiana has and the system of higher education that Louisiana needs. Most glaring is the undergraduate student enrollment imbalance between our community and technical colleges and our four-year universities.

National data, as well as data from Louisiana’s Occupational Forecasting Conference, indicates that the majority of Louisiana jobs require education beyond high school. Only about 30% require four-year degrees. However, only about 25% of postsecondary enrollment is in community and technical colleges even though nearly 70% of jobs require that level of education and training.

Ideally, the undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment split between technical/two-year schools and four-year schools should be somewhere in the 50-50 range. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) data below clearly demonstrates how far Louisiana is from that mark.



Source: SREB State Data Exchange – Table 44 and 49 (December 2008)

Benchmark Objective: Postsecondary undergraduate enrollment balanced to approximately 50-50 between two-year/technical colleges and four-year schools by 2014

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Raise admission standards at all four-year universities
- Ensure that articulation and transfer policies facilitate a seamless movement from two-year to four-year schools
- Redefine mission of regional universities
- Support funding of postsecondary institutions to the level necessary to fulfill their mission while protecting opportunities for all students which may include but is not limited to providing tuition and fee-raising flexibility for all higher education institutions – to spur a healthy competition among schools for our students, and to allow each school the opportunity to cover the costs of meeting their respective missions.
- Increase capacity at community colleges through innovative delivery methods, resource sharing, and new investment in LCTCS infrastructure
- Increase marketing/promotion of associate and technical programs
- Fully implement a performance-based funding formula for all postsecondary education systems that is consistent with institutional missions
- Evaluate postsecondary governance for redesign

Strategic Goal #4: Develop a Comprehensive (Demand) System that Credibly Forecasts and Effectively Communicates Workforce Demand and Identifies Priority Workforce Education and Training Needs

An integrated and effective workforce delivery system, driven by the alignment of job training and education with high demand occupations, is essential for maintaining current and future economic stability in Louisiana. This requires an accurate and relevant occupational forecast which is developed using a model that includes significant input by the state's employers. The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC), in cooperation with the Occupational Forecasting Conference, is currently refining methods and processes to improve future forecasts with input by business and industry.

With its strategic membership make up, the WIC is in position to provide a framework for reasonable integration or collaboration of services among workforce delivery partners. It is the goal of the WIC to advocate for this collaboration in order to promote a system which responds to the needs of employers, workers and job seekers in a timely way. This will also create an environment where all potential workers have access to job preparation services regardless of historical barriers to employment, and also creates a venue for informed participation by Louisiana's employers.

Benchmark Objectives: Maintain comprehensive and accurate industry and occupational forecasts that are actionable at the state and regional levels

Utilize the Occupational Forecast to deliver workforce development services through an integrated network of state agencies, educational institutions, local workforce investment boards and community-based organizations

Increase the number of people working and highly skilled potential workers in Louisiana

Recommended Implementation Strategy:

- **Realign unemployment insurance and workers' compensation programs as re-employment services**
- **Coordinate all job placement and business engagement activities across state agencies**
- **Integrate Louisiana Rehabilitation Services into the Louisiana Workforce Commission**
- **Support training for job seekers that prepares them for jobs that provide financial independence**
- **Support the implementation of credible, portable credentials and skills assessments throughout the workforce delivery system**
- **Work with business and industry to increase the opportunities for non-traditional sources of labor, including veterans, ex-offenders, people with disabilities and people with language barriers, to achieve sustained employment**
- **Increase business engagement by developing and leveraging partnerships through the local workforce investment boards**

Strategic Goal #5: Implement a Comprehensive Accountability System for Workforce Development Results

The duties and functions of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council include, among other things, these two responsibilities: 1) implementing a statewide system for evaluating the effectiveness of all workforce development programs in achieving state and local goals and objectives, and 2) regularly updating recommended strategy for the provision of a coordinated comprehensive workforce development delivery system using a multiagency approach to ensure that state workforce efforts are responsive to business needs.

Additionally, the WIC is charged with the responsibility of providing an annual report to the Governor describing progress toward to the goals of the state strategic plan (this document).

Meeting all of these responsibilities requires the design and implementation of a comprehensive accountability system that includes metrics, data collection and analysis, reporting requirements and activities, responsibility assignments, and a calendar.

Benchmark Objectives: Develop a comprehensive accountability system design by second quarter 2010

Pilot new system design and evaluate results by second quarter 2011

Embrace the concept of diversity to ensure Louisiana's workforce is a reflection of the diversity found in Louisiana's population

Recommended Implementation Strategy:

- **Charter a project team of key stakeholders to design accountability system**