

Taylor Plan

Louisiana TOPS Education Background

May 21, 2008

Education is essential for a strong economy and individual advancement. Louisiana's commitment to education and the TOPS program is a testament to the belief that despite horrendous hurricanes and economic setbacks, progress and hope for the future persist.

Louisiana was hit by four major hurricanes between 2003 and 2005. Hurricanes Rita and Katrina in 2005 were devastating. Of the top ten U.S. disasters, Katrina at \$30 billion was three times greater the 9/11/01.

Louisiana's population decreased by 250,000 after the 2005 hurricanes. The state's population in 2005 was 4,507,331; in 2007, 4,293,204, including the return of some 50,000 residents. Louisiana for a number of years has had minimum population growth. Between 1990 and 2005 the population increased by 287,358 a scant 6% in 15 years.

In the 2004-2005 school years, there were 42,450 TOPS (Taylor Plan / Tuition Opportunity Program for Students) students enrolled in Louisiana's two year, four year and technical schools. In the 2007-2008 school year, the number was 41,949, a slight decline from the 2004-2005 mark because of the 2005 hurricanes. For this academic year (2007-2008), the total scholarship expenditure is set for \$116,068,652—the average payment being \$2767. Between 1998 and 2007, the number of TOPS students grew from 23,509 to 41,949—78%.

Baseline Summary

- Despite a population growth of just 4% between 1998 and 2005 (pre-Katrina / Rita), the number of TOPS students increased from 23,509 to 42,450—an increase of 81%.
- Hurricane Katrina and Rita resulted in the displacement of 96,631 K-12 students.
- In 2007 66% of high school graduates completed the Core success curriculum for college (27,230 of 41,370 graduates); in 2003, 56% (25,546 of 45,226).
- The high school graduation rate has increased from 61% in 1991 (48th in the nation and 11% below the national rate of 72%) to 69.4% in 2004 (39th and 5% below the nation). In 2006 it dropped to 64.8%—no doubt a hurricanes causal factor.
- College readiness improvement between 1991 and 2002—from 22% to 35%—was second best in the nation.
- High School graduates eligible for and enrolled with TOPS has improved since Katrina—91% in 2004 (pre-Katrina) – 83% in 2005 (years of Katrina) – 88% year after Katrina.
- ACT average scores for first-time post-secondary freshman increased from 19.4 in 1996 to 20.1 in 2006—above the minimum ACT standard of 19 for college preparedness.

- Persistence of TOPS students is much better than non-TOPS students—4th year for the class that entered 2003 is 77%--well above the national average. It was 42% for non-TOPS students.
- The TOPS program is administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance. According to Richard Ordal, (225) 922-1043, TOPS has 14 employees. Its operational budget of \$1.296 million (\$31 per TOPS student) represents 1% of TOPS' \$119,121 million budget for the current school year. TOPS' has two additional employees for the Go Grant Program and Dual Enrollment Program.

High School Performance

High School enrollment in Louisiana declined by 4% between 1990 and 2000. The percent of minority students for the school year 1999-2000 was 51%, versus a national rate of 38%; percent of children under 18 years in poverty (1999) was 26% versus 19% nationally. College readiness increases for Louisiana high schoolers has surpassed the national rate—35% versus 34%.

Core Curriculum

- 66% of 2007 high school graduates took the more rigorous Core curriculum versus 56% in 2003.
- 64% of Louisiana students scored a 3 or higher on the advanced placement exam versus 61% nationally.

ACT Scores

- **Louisiana** 1991 – 19.4; 1999 – 19.6; 2006 – 20.1; **U.S.** 1991 – 20.6; 1999 – 20.0; 2006 – 21.1.
- 79% of all Louisiana high schoolers took the ACT test in 2007; Montana's rate in 2004 was 56%; the national rate 40%.
- Over the past 5 years Louisiana's state composite has risen .5 points versus nationally .4.
- 71% of Louisiana's ACT test takers in 2001 completed ACT's Core curriculum versus 60% nationally.

Graduation Rate

- Louisiana: 1991 – 61%; 2003/2004 – 69.4%.
U.S.: 1991 – 72%; 2003/2004 – 74.3%.
- For the time frame, Louisiana's improvement of 7.4% was one of the best in the nation.
- All young adults with a high school diploma or GED: 82% Louisiana; 85% U.S

- **By Sector**

- White**

- African-American Graduation Rates**

Louisiana	1997 – 63%; 2002 – 69%	Louisiana	1997 – 52%; 2002 – 56%
U.S.	1997 – 76%; 2002 – 78%	U.S.	1997 – 54%; 2002 – 56%

- College Readiness**

- Louisiana 1991 – 22%; 2002 – 35 %
U.S. 1991 – 25%; 2002 – 34%
- Louisiana’s improvement of 13%--from 22% to 35%--was the second best in the nation

- College Preparation**

- 56.5% of high school graduates in 2003 took the Core versus 65.8 in 2007
- The number taking the Core has increased despite devastating hurricanes, loss of student population and minimum state population growth.
- Eligibility for TOPS awards continues to grow – from 14,797 in 2003 to 15,273 in 2005. It declined slightly in 2006 due to Katrina.

College Performance

The number of college students in Louisiana with TOPS Scholarships continues to grow—despite devastating hurricanes, overall population decreases, and increases in Core curriculum rigor. ACT scores have increased from 19.4 to 20.7—to a level above the minimum predictor for college success and yet another positive attribute of the core high school success curriculum. Almost 90% of high school graduates eligible for TOPS stay in Louisiana for their college education.

- Enrollment Growth**

- Between 1989 and 1999 the percentage of adults earning post-secondary and technical degrees increased by 24% in Louisiana versus 7% in the U.S.
- Between 2004 and 2005, higher education enrollment in Louisiana declined by 19.7% due to Katrina and Rita.
- In 2004 Louisiana had 214, 144 students in higher education; in 2006 195, 380—a decline of 18, 764, or 9%, as a result of the hurricanes.

- Admissions Criteria**

- 81.9% of the Fall 2004 entering class met 2005 admission criteria.

- Anticipated even better preparation for Fall 2005 according to the Board of Regents.

Student Retention

- Between the 1996-1997 school year and 2001-2002 year, freshman to sophomore year retention increased from 71% to 75%.
- For students who enrolled in post-secondary in 2003, 88% returned for their second year versus 60% for those without TOPS.
- For fourth year students in 2007, 77% were still in college versus 42% for non-TOPS counterparts.

Degrees Awarded

- Between 1994-1995 school year and 2003-2004, the number of degrees and certificates awarded annually increased from 22,904 to 26,449—a 15% increase.
- 59% TOPS students at four year institutions graduate within six years, versus only 25% of non-TOPS students.

Funding

- Between 1983 and 1993 Louisiana ranked 48th in the nation in percentage of post-secondary funding increases. For the years 1994-2002, the state was second in the nation.

Brain Drain

Louisiana's challenges in terms of keeping college graduates in the state are no different than other historically slow growth and traditional industry (i.e., moderately dependent economy versus diversified economy) states across the country, including Montana. Since the 1980's Louisiana has struggled with mediocre population growth and image problems. That has changed, and continues to change as evidenced by efforts to restructure the economy and higher education endowed chairs (33) and professorships (265) at LSU.

- The 2005 hurricanes decreased jobs in the state to 1997 levels. By the end of 2007 the state was within 3700 jobs of 2005.
- By mid – 2008, with a projected increase of 37,700 jobs (1.9%), the state will set new employment records.
- A unique program through Louisiana State's E.J. Ourso College of Business promotes jobs for Louisiana graduates—www.LouisianaGrads.com
- The oil and gas industry is booming and is hiring college graduates.

- According to Cathy Breaux (Louisiana Economic Development Department (225) 342-5375) TOPS graduates want to stay in Louisiana, but jobs for graduates continue to be a problem.
- Louisiana (43rd place), like Montana (38th) and nine other states, has a moderately dependent economy versus states like Georgia (11th) and Texas (13th) which have moderate diversification.

Report prepared by Bill Schilling, Taylor Foundation Representative, Casper, Wyoming, 307-262-5990.

