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DATE: January 31, 2012

TO: Community College Chancellors

FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education

SUBJECT: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)
Campus Leadership Teams

The purpose of this memo is to make you aware of multi-state work that is occurring to develop new assessments through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career Readiness (PARCC) to replace current K-12 assessments in Louisiana.

As part of this work, the Board of Regents has attained external grant funds that will be disseminated to two- and four-year institutions for purposes of convening faculty to provide input into the development of the new assessments and realigning the remedial education and teacher preparation curriculum to address shifts in expectations due to the new Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments.

Campuses will be asked to create PARCC Campus Leadership Teams who will be involved in this work. Dr. Jeanne Burns will be contacting your chief academic officers within the next week about procedures for your campus to create the teams and access the grant funds.

It is important for your campus to have a clear understanding of PARCC for three important reasons:

- During the next three years, chancellors/presidents, chief academic officers, and campus faculty at all two- and four-year colleges in Louisiana will have opportunities to provide direct input into the development of new high school assessments and the establishment of college and career ready cut scores for entry into entry-level, credit-bearing College Algebra and English I courses.
- The new assessments will replace existing high school achievement tests in Louisiana by 2014-2015 and the identified college and career ready cut-off scores will serve as an additional measure to determine if high school students are allowed to enter entry-level, credit-bearing College Algebra and English I courses in Louisiana and the partnering states.

- The new PARCC assessments will be aligned with the more rigorous common core standards which will require colleges to reexamine their university curriculum for pre-service teachers. Failure of colleges to adjust their curriculum to address the higher standards and higher expectations for the new assessments may result in new teachers not providing an appropriate curriculum to their students, students lacking the necessary knowledge to perform well on the new assessments, and community colleges and universities receiving low scores on the Value-Added Teacher Preparation Assessment.

Once successfully implemented, this work will impact four areas that are important to your campus and the GRAD Act:

- Increase the number of high school students entering entry-level, credit-bearing classes;
- Increase the number of post-secondary students completing their first year of college;
- Increase the retention rate of post-secondary students; and
- Increase the completion rate of post-secondary students.

We look forward to the involvement of your campuses.

cc: Community College System President
Community College System Chief Academic Officer
Community College Chief Academic Officers