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Board of Regents Establishes Pilot Program To Partner Universities With Underperforming Schools

The Louisiana Board of Regents' Sponsored Programs Committee today approved a plan that will provide at least \$1 million over the next three years to help Louisiana colleges of education partner with underperforming schools across the state to improve student achievement. The pilot program, entitled "K-12 Underperforming Schools: Catalytic Monies for Colleges and Universities to Accelerate Elevation in Student Learning and Achievement," will target Louisiana schools identified by the Department of Education as "Academically Unacceptable" through the state's School Accountability System. The Regents' program, inspired in part by the University of New Orleans' recent takeover of the underperforming Pierre Capdau Middle School in New Orleans, will be funded through the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF).

"Judging by the kind of passion for improvement we're seeing in UNO's work with Pierre Capdau, this program can make a real difference," said Regents Chairman Roland Toups. "While the resources of the Board of Regents for this purpose are limited, we are hopeful that this initiative will help leverage other private and state dollars."

Under the program, colleges and universities, in conjunction with the schools and school districts in question, will submit proposals for catalytic (startup) funding to support partnership activities ranging from providing a particular service (such as collaborative leadership in school planning) to undertaking a complete school takeover like the UNO- Pierre Capdau arrangement. Other specifics of the program include the following:

Initial proposals will be reviewed during 2005-06.

Catalytic monies for colleges and universities must complement rather than supplant existing institutional resources.

A minimum of \$1,000,000 BoRSF dollars will be provided for the three years of the pilot program, with individual grants ranging up to \$100,000 per year.

(More)

Pilot Program

ADD ONE

Awards will be made on a competitive basis. Proposals will be reviewed by out-of-state consultants.

There will be one round of competition. Successful projects will be funded for three years from FY 2005-06 through FY 2007-08.

The Board of Regents will decide whether to continue the program after evaluating its effectiveness during 2007-08.

Campuses will be required to abide by relevant accountability requirements of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

“As we’ve said on many occasions, elementary, secondary and postsecondary education are really one enterprise,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. “This program is an excellent example of targeting resources to improve student achievement. We can’t expect to improve college access and the state’s economy until we help address academic preparation in our elementary and secondary schools.”

The committee also approved a recommendation that a one-day workshop be held on January 12, 2005, to develop guidelines, including a request for proposals (RFP), for implementation of the program. Full board approval of the measures is expected at tomorrow’s Board of Regents meeting.