

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 42

BY SENATOR APPEL AND REPRESENTATIVE BRASS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents, the state Department of Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the Department of Economic Development to collaborate to solicit, as necessary, input, recommendations, and guidance pertaining to work-based learning programs from, and collaborate and engage with, interested parties and stakeholders, including but not limited to industry, government, high schools, public and nonpublic postsecondary education institutions, business organizations, employers, labor unions, economic development organizations, entities currently engaged in work-based learning activities, students, chambers of commerce and educational associations to inform a review of successful, high-value, work-based learning programs and projects; to establish a vision, goals, and targets for statewide impact; to develop a comprehensive, coordinated statewide framework and implementation plan for Louisiana; to identify policies and strategies designed to lead to the expansion, improvement, and better coordination of existing work-based learning initiatives in the state; and to make policy recommendations to the legislature and the governor for a large scale, coordinated work-based learning model in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Louisiana industry is grappling with a shortage of qualified, credentialed workers in growing fields such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and digital technology that provide family-supporting wages and career growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana and nationwide employers recognize a gap between the education students receive in our high schools and postsecondary education institutions and the skills needed in the 21st century workplace; and

WHEREAS, in addition to specific knowledge and technical training, employers seek workers who understand the culture and expectations of the workplace including strong communication and problem-solving, among other essential skills; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has one of the highest poverty rates in the country at more than eighteen percent and many of those who live and raise children in poverty do not have the work skills or credentials for employment in careers that provide a family-supporting wage, and do not have the means or time to participate in postsecondary education and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the state's unemployed and underemployed citizens are disproportionately minorities; and

WHEREAS, for Louisiana's economy to grow, the state must ensure that citizens can obtain skills and credentials that meet the needs of employers that provide living wages; and

WHEREAS, the state will not be able to meet its workforce needs, reduce poverty, and improve the economic health of the state and its citizens without closing gaps for minorities and impoverished communities; and

WHEREAS, work-based learning initiatives and programs that include wages, college credit and industry recognized credentials, and on-the-job training are a proven method for closing the gaps between worker skills and employer needs to help develop state and local economies; and

WHEREAS, "earn and learn" models provide a financially viable path for students and workers to and through postsecondary education opportunities, and provide opportunities for business to upskill and retrain workers; and

WHEREAS, experiential or work-based learning opportunities are an effective way to connect underserved populations to family-supporting careers; and

WHEREAS, a statewide framework for work-based learning opportunities that is driven by industry and supported by education and workforce development policy and practice in high schools and postsecondary education institutions will provide the foundation for greater industry and education alignment to meet the workforce needs and economic goals of the state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby

urge and request the Board of Regents, the state Department of Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the Department of Economic Development to collaborate to solicit, as necessary, input, recommendations, and guidance pertaining to work-based learning programs from and collaborate and engage with interested parties and stakeholders, including but not limited to industry, government, high schools, public and nonpublic postsecondary education institutions, business organizations, employers, labor unions, economic development organizations, entities currently engaged in work-based learning activities, students, chambers of commerce and educational associations to inform a review of successful, high-value, work-based learning programs and projects; to establish a vision, goals, and targets for statewide impact; to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide framework and implementation plan for Louisiana; to identify policies and strategies designed to lead to the expansion, improvement, and better coordination of existing work-based learning initiatives in the state; and to make policy recommendations to the legislature and the governor for a large scale, coordinated work-based learning model in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings from this work shall inform a strategy and framework for recommendations to the legislature and the governor on all matters relevant to the implementation of work-based learning programs, which shall include the following:

(1) A report that identifies and examines successful work-based learning programs nationally and within the state, including pertinent background material, data, an inventory of existing state and local programs and partnerships for work-based learning, and recognized best practices that may serve as models for a statewide work-based learning program in Louisiana.

(2) A policy agenda for the state's work-based learning initiative which shall include:

(a) A comprehensive review of statewide laws and policies with the greatest potential impact on the successful creation and implementation of a statewide framework for valuable work-based learning models.

(b) Identification of a statewide and regional framework for collaboration between high schools, postsecondary institutions, and industry that leverages existing programs, partnerships, and funding.

(c) An intermediary model for the coordination and implementation of regional and statewide work-based learning efforts, common language defining valuable work-based learning experiences, and a plan and timeline to scale up.

(d) Identification of methods and efforts to ensure access and equity to work-based learning opportunities for Louisiana's underserved populations.

(e) A funding model to support and sustain valuable work-based learning programs that include college credit and/or industry-based credentials, on-the-job work for pay, and other related expenses, as well as the infrastructure required to implement these programs.

(3) An implementation timeline.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents shall submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the legislature and the governor not later than February 1, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chair of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, the state superintendent of education, the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the secretary of the Department of Economic Development, and the governor.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES