

- (3) Bd. of Supervisors of Southern University.
- (4) Bd. of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges.

Present law provides that the La. Education Tuition and Savings Plan and Fund (START) is a state-sponsored college savings program that enables families to invest funds for a beneficiary's future qualified education expenses, including tuition, fees, and related costs at colleges and universities. Present law further provides that START is designed to encourage early financial planning for education, offering tax advantages and potential state earnings enhancements based on eligibility, while allowing account owners to retain control over contributions and distributions as they save for their children's college education or save for the benefit of another who will attend college or university. Present law provides that the SMART fund is managed by the Bd. of Regents that establishes program rules and policies, oversees investment and financial operations, ensures compliance with applicable state and federal laws, and safeguards the fiscal integrity of the fund. The Bd. also works to promote participation in the program, manage contracts and service providers, and ensure that funds are used appropriately for qualified education expenses.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the administrative and management functions of the START program from the Bd. of Regents to the management boards of the public colleges and universities.

Present law provides for the La. common application to be used by applicants applying for admissions to La. public college and universities to be developed by the Bd. of Regents. Present law further provides that individual colleges and universities are to use the La. common application but may require the applicant to submit supplemental materials. Present law also provides that the colleges and universities may also use the national "common application" that is developed and administered by the not-for-profit membership organization.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the development functions of the state common application from the Bd. of Regents to the management boards of the public colleges and universities.

Present law provides for colleges and universities to receive a designation and apply for grants under the Hunger-Free Campus program from the Bd of Regents. Present law provides that colleges and universities may apply for the designation by demonstrating that they meet specified criteria, such as establishing or maintaining a campus food pantry or meal assistance program, providing information to students about available nutrition resources (including federal programs), and implementing initiatives to raise awareness of food insecurity. Present law provides that schools that receive the designation may also be eligible for state grant funding to help expand or sustain these efforts, with funds used for purposes such as developing food access programs, conducting outreach, and improving coordination with community resources.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the administration of the Hunger-Free Campus program from the Bd. of Regents to the management boards of the public colleges and universities.

Present law provides that a public college or university may receive a Purple Star Campus designation by applying to the La. Board of Regents and demonstrating that it meets established criteria designed to support military-connected students. Present law provides that, in order to qualify, a college or university must implement specific initiatives such as designating a staff member to serve as a point of contact for military families, providing accessible information on admissions, financial aid, and support services for veterans and dependents, and adopting policies or programs that facilitate academic transitions and promote campus awareness of military-related issues. The Bd. of Regents reviews applications and awards the designation to colleges and universities that satisfy the requirements by showing a commitment to serve the unique needs of military-affiliated students.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the administration of the Purple Star Campus program from the Bd. of Regents to the management boards of the public colleges and universities.

Present law provides that state college and university facilities, or consortia thereof, may undertake minor repairs, renovations, or property purchases under \$1 million (adjusted annually for inflation) and larger self-funded projects up to \$10 million without including them in the capital outlay budget, provided they receive approval from the Bd. of Regents, the appropriate management board, and, for larger projects, the division of administration and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. Minor projects may use short-term loans up to one year, while larger projects must be funded through self-generated revenues, grants, donations, or through local or federal funds, with funds managed and disbursed by the Office of Facility Planning and Control, and any surplus or interest refunded to the college or university.

Proposed law retains present law that requires colleges and universities to continue to obtain approval on construction projects from their applicable management board but removes the requirement that the college also obtain approval of from the Bd. of Regents.

Present law creates the La. Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund as a special treasury fund to support and expand cybersecurity degree and certificate programs at public colleges and universities to meet workforce needs. Present law provides that the fund consists of legislative appropriations and donations, retains interest earnings, and carries forward unexpended balances. Present law further provides that monies are appropriated to the Bd. of Regents for distribution to institutions, subject to a requirement that each receiving college or university secures at least a 25% private match, which may include cash or in-kind contributions. Present law also provides that the fund allocations are supplemental and may not supplant existing state or federal funding or be included in the Bd. of Regents' funding formula. Present law also establishes the Cybersecurity Education Management Council to advise the Bd. of Regents on distributions, with specified membership, duties, and meeting requirements. Present law also requires the Bd. of Regents to annually report to the legislature on fund distributions, supported programs, and workforce outcomes, including job creation data.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the administrative and staffing functions of the La. Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund and the Cybersecurity Education Management Council from the Bd. of Regents to Louisiana Works.

Present law provides for the La. Universities Marine Consortium for research and education, under the authority and governance of the Bd. of Regents, which serves as its fiscal agent and oversees its budget, funding, and operations. Present law provides that the Bd. of Regents is granted broad powers to manage and supervise the consortium, including the authority to receive and administer public and private funds, set fees, acquire and maintain property and facilities, hire personnel, establish academic programs, adopt rules, and enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with public and private entities for research and education purposes. Present law provides for funding through separate legislative appropriations, allows the consortium to engage in joint projects and partnerships, and specifies that liability for consortium activities rests with the consortium as represented by the Board of Regents.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the administrative and staffing functions of the La. Universities Marine Consortium from the Bd. of Regents to the management board of Bd. of Louisiana State University.

Present law provides that the Bd. of Regents establishes an agency attrition analysis process specifically for higher education systems. Present law requires the Bd. of Regents to perform a systematic review of the history of employee vacancies in positions funded fully or partially by the state general fund and to guide a goal of reducing such positions by five percent annually for three years, with reductions applied proportionally across all salary ranges. Present law requires the Bd. of Regents to develop and implement the process for each higher education system, including analyzing general staffing needs, the cost of filling vacant positions, and other relevant factors to decide whether to retain or eliminate positions. The Bd. of Regents is also tasked with reporting to the Commission on Streamlining Government on the results of the process, including state general fund savings, positions eliminated, and personnel-related data, thereby providing oversight, ensuring compliance, and supporting fiscal accountability across higher education systems.

Proposed law retains present law and transfers the agency attrition and analysis from the Bd. of Regents to the management boards of the public colleges and universities. Proposed law further removes the reference to the Commission on Streamlining Government because the commission was terminated on January 12, 2023 under present law (R.S. 24:101-109).

(Amends R.S. 17:2048.51(A), (E), (F), (G)(1)(a)(i), (J), 2048.51(O)(1)(intro para), (2), and (3)(c), 3128.1(A), (B), (C), 3129.4(A), (B), (C)(2), 3138(A), (B), and (E), and 3138.4(A)(1), (B), (C)(1)(intro para) and (1)(a), and (b), and (3), 3138.5 (B)(1), (D)(1), (2), (D)(4)(intro para) and (4)(f), and (5), (E) and (F), 3189.9(A)(3) and (5), (B)(1) and (C), and 3452 and 3454(A), R.S. 39:128(B)(1) and (4)(a)(i), and R.S. 42:375.2(A), (B)(intro para) and (B)(1), (C), and (D)(3); adds R.S. 17:3128.1(D), 3129.4(D), 3138(G), 3138.4(D), R.S. 36:309(E)(3) and(4), and R.S. 42:375.2(D)(4); repeals R.S. 36:651(F)(6) and(L)(1)(a))