



River Parishes Community College



Strategic Plan (Department of Administration) **FY 2023-2028**

June 30, 2022

RPCC Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028

Mission:

River Parishes Community College is an open admission institution that partners with the communities and businesses of the river parishes region of Louisiana to provide workforce training, certificated, diplomas and Associate Degrees.

Vision:

As the premier post-secondary learning resource for River Parishes, River Parishes Community College will be the destination of choice for education

Philosophy:

RPCC is dedicated to developing and assisting students to achieve personal, professional, and academic success. In an effort to ensure that students have opportunities to develop, the College's administration, faculty, and staff are committed to the following:

- **Student Success:** Enhance the quality of academic instruction through a continued focus on student learning outcomes assessment; and, create campus environments that encourage better-quality learning experiences that reinforce the value of culture and economic diversity, mutual respect, and each person's ability to become a more productive Louisiana citizen.
- **Stakeholder Success:** Strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with secondary and other postsecondary institutions, business and industry, government agencies, economic development entities, and community-based organizations that leverage resources to expand educational opportunities for current and future students.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Develop new funding streams through annual. major gifts and capital campaigns through the RPCC Foundation and successfully apply to appropriate federal, state, and private grant programs to significantly enhance the mission and vision of the College.
- **Internal Process:** Attract, recruit, retain and support exemplary faculty and staff; effectively manage resources allocated by the State for capital and operational expenses to support the mission of the College, and make effective use of new and emerging technology to improve teaching and learning in the College's classrooms, laboratories, and telecommunication networks.
- **Organizational Capability:** Attract, recruit, retain and support exemplary faculty and staff; effectively manage resources allocated by the State for capital and operational expenses to support the mission of the College's classrooms, laboratories, and telecommunication networks.

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Goal: Increase Opportunities for Student Access and Success.

Objective 1.1: Increase the fall headcount enrollment by 5% from the baseline level of 2,401 in fall 2021 to 2,521 by fall 2027.

State Outcome Goals Link: Youth Education; Diversified Economic Growth; Safe and Thriving Children and Families; Better Health: Extensive research indicates a strong correlation between a citizen's education and the citizen's health, economic well-being, and positive contributions to the state and society.

Other Link: Closely linked to objective in Master Plan for Postsecondary Education

Strategy I.1.1: Expand system wide and campus-specific retention programming.

Strategy I.1.2: Expand availability of first-time student seminars and first-year experience courses.

Strategy I.1.3: Expand academic and training support and resource centers.

Performance Indicators:

Output: 1.1 Number of students enrolled (throughout the fall semester) in public postsecondary education.

Outcome: 1.2 Percent change from baseline in the number of students enrolled (as of end of term) in public postsecondary education.

Objective 1.2 Increase the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, associate degree- seeking students retained to the second fall at the same institution of initial enrollment by 1.0 percentage point from the fall 2021 cohort (to fall 2022) baseline level of 55.7% to 56.7% by fall 2020 (retention of fall 2019 cohort).

State Outcome Goals Link: Youth Education; Diversified Economic Growth; Safe and Thriving Children and Families; Better Health: Extensive research indicates a strong correlation between a citizen's education and the citizen's health, economic well-being, and positive contributions to the state and society.

Other Link: Closely linked to objective in Master Plan for Postsecondary Education and Louisiana Community and Technical College System LA 2020 goals

Strategy I.2.1: Expand system wide and campus-specific retention programming.

Strategy I.2.2: Expand availability of first-time student seminars and first-year experience courses.

Strategy I.2.3: Expand academic and training support and resource centers.

Performance Indicators:

Output: 2.1 Percentage of first-time in college, full-time, associate degree-seeking students retained to the second fall at the same institution of initial enrollment.

Outcome: 2.2 Percentage point change in the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, associate degree-seeking students retained to the second fall at the same institution of initial enrollment.

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Objective 1.3 Increase the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students retained from the fall to the spring semester at the same Louisiana Technical College campus of initial enrollment by 1.0 percentage point from the fall 2021 cohort (to the spring AY 2021-22) baseline level of 63.3% to 64.3% by Spring 2028 (retention of Fall 2027 cohort to spring AY 2027-28).

State Outcome Goals Link: Youth Education; Diversified Economic Growth; Safe and Thriving Children and Families; Better Health: Extensive research indicates a strong correlation between a citizen's education and the citizen's health, economic well-being, and positive contributions to the state and society.

Other Link: Closely linked to objective in Master Plan for Postsecondary Education

Strategy I.2.1: Expand system wide and campus-specific retention programming.

Strategy I.2.2: Expand availability of first-time student seminars and first-year experience courses.

Strategy I.2.3: Expand academic and training support and resource centers.

Performance Indicators:

Output: 3.1 Percentage of first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students retained to the following spring at the same institution of initial enrollment.

Outcome: 3.2 Percentage point change in the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students retained to the following spring at the same institution of initial enrollment.

II. Goal: Ensure Quality and Accountability.

Objective 2.1: Increase the institutional statewide graduation rate (defined as a student completing an award within 150% of "normal time") from the baseline rate (fall 2018 cohort for all institutions) of 18% to 20% by 2022-23 (Fall 2016 cohort).

State Outcome Goals Link: Youth Education; Diversified Economic Growth; Safe and Thriving Children and Families; Better Health: Extensive research indicates a strong correlation between a citizens education and the citizens health, economic well-being, and positive contributions to the state and society.

Oher Link: Closely linked to objective in Master Plan for Postsecondary Education and Louisiana Community and Technical College System LA 2020 goals

Strategy II.1.1: Assess admissions criteria at four-year institutions to promote better student-to-institution match.

Strategy II.1.2: Expand systemwide and campus-specific retention programming.

Strategy II.1.3: Expand efforts to encourage transfer from two-year colleges to four-year universities.

Performance Indicators:

Output: 4.1 Percentage of students enrolled at a Two Year College identified in a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking cohort, graduating within 150% of "normal" time of degree completion at any Louisiana public post-secondary institution.

Outcome: 4.2 Number of students enrolled at a Two Year College identified in a first-time, full-time degree-seeking cohort, graduating within 150% of "normal" time of degree completion.

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Objective 2.2: Maintain the total number Career and Technical Certificate (CTC) completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 0 in 2020-21 to 0 in AY 2023-28. Students may only be counted once per award level.

State Outcome Goals Link: Youth Education; Diversified Economic Growth; Safe and Thriving Children and Families; Better Health: Extensive research indicates a strong correlation between a citizen's education and the citizen's health, economic well-being, and positive contributions to the state and society.

Other Link: Closely linked to objective in Master Plan for Postsecondary Education and LA GRAD Act

Strategy II.2.1: Expand systemwide and campus-specific retention programming.

Strategy II.2.2: Expand availability of first-time student seminars and first-year experience courses.

Strategy II.2.3: Expand academic and training support and resource centers.

Performance Indicators:

Output: 5.1 Total number of completers earning Certificates (CTC)

Objective 6: Increase the total number of 1-year Certificate completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 172 in 2001-21 to 237 in AY 2027-28. Students may only be counted once per award level.

Performance Indicator:

Output: 6.1 Total number of completers earning Certificates

Outcome: 6.1 Percent change in the number of completers from the baseline year.

Objective 7: Increase the total number of Diploma completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 323 in 2020-21 to 337 in AY 2027-28. Student may only be counted once per award level.

Performance Indicator:

Output: 7.1 Total number of completers earning Diplomas

Objective 8: Increase the total number of Associate completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 187 in 2020-21 to 200 in AY 2027-2028. Students may only be counted once per award level.

Performance Indicator:

Output: 8.1 Total number of completers earning Associate Degrees

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Objective 9: Increase the unduplicated number of Undergraduate (adult, 25+ yrs..) completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 221 in 2021-22 to 226 in AY 2027-28.

Performance Indicator:

Output: 9.1 Total number of undergraduate (adults, 25+ yrs.) completers

Performance Indicator: Increase the number of underrepresented minorities (all races other than white, asian, non-residents & unknown/not reported) completers in a given academic year from the base line of 158 in 2021-2022 to 172 in AY 2027-2028.

Output: 10.1 The unduplicated number of underrepresented minorities (all races other than white, Asian, non-residents & unknown/not reported) completers.

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Objective 10.1 The unduplicated number of underrepresented minorities (all races other than white, Asian, non-residents, & unknown/not reported) completers in a given academic year from the baseline year number of 199 in 2020-21 to 203 in AY 2027-28.

I. Principal clients and users of each program and the specific service or benefit derived by such persons or organizations:

River Parishes Community College is comprised of four sites. The main campus is located at 925 W. Edenborne Pkwy, Gonzales, LA 70707 (RPCC Gonzales) and houses the central administration, student services, the library and educational programs leading to transfer to a university. In addition, RPCC provides technical education and training in areas that include Business and Office Technology, Drafting Technology, Instrumentation, Process Technology, Practical Nursing, Air Condition & Refrigeration, Millwright, Pipefitting, Electrical and Welding. RPCC has a second campus near Plaquemine, Louisiana (RPCC Westside) and a third campus in Reserve, Louisiana (RPCC Reserve) and a fourth campus (RPCC United Way of St. Charles), Boutte Louisiana. RPCC campuses offer day and evening programs for people living in the College's primary service area: Ascension, Assumption, Iberville, St. James, St. John the Baptist and St. Charles Parishes. Opportunities for high school students to earn college credit before graduation are available in virtually every school system in the College's service area

II. An identification of potential external factors that are beyond the control of the entity and that could significantly affect the achievement of its goals or objectives:

A list of external factors that are beyond the control of the Board of Regents that could significantly affect the achievement of its goals includes:

1. The Administration

The current administration is very supportive of the Regents' goals and objectives. The support for postsecondary education in general has been laudable. However, the governor of Louisiana is very influential and there is no guarantee that future administrations will be as supportive of the Regents' plans.

2. The Economy

At present, the economy of both Louisiana and the nation is significantly impacted by the recession. This has resulted in a significant reduction in state appropriations to the state's higher education institutions. State approved tuition increases and significant community college enrollment increases have allowed RPCC to utilize additional self-generated income to meet transfer education and technical training needs of its citizens. At the local level, the College is located in one of the state's fastest growing parishes that has a highly rated public school system and a vibrant economy dominated by the petro-chemical industry.

3. The Federal Government

A significant amount of revenue flows from Federal programs into Louisiana public postsecondary education. A change in federal level policy could have dramatic affects on postsecondary education, including student financial aid, research and experimentation, telecommunications (distance learning), and related programs.

III. The statutory requirement or other authority for each goal of the plan.

Goal I: Increase Opportunities for Student Access and Success.

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1. Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5 (D) 4) - To formulate and make timely revision of a master plan. Similar statutory language appears in Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

Goal II: Ensure Quality and Accountability.

1. Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5 (D) 4) - To formulate and make timely revision of a master plan. Similar statutory language appears in Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.
2. Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5 (D) 1, 2) - To revise or eliminate existing academic programs and to approve or disapprove new program proposals. Similar statutory language appears in Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.
3. Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5 (D) 3) - To study the need for new institutions or change in mission of existing institutions. Similar statutory language appears in Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.
4. LA GRAD Act

IV. A description of any program evaluation used to develop objectives and strategies.

The goals and objectives in this *Five-year Strategic Plan* were derived in part from the *LCTCS System Strategic Plan*. Several existing external and internal strategic plans were reviewed. These plans include the Board of Regents' Master Plan for Higher Education River Parishes, the then-current LCTCS Strategic Plan as well as the plans of the system colleges. In addition, the System identified strategic directions for its future, which would allow for efficiency and effectiveness in addressing our roles as workforce training provider and the developer of human capital. Input was incorporated from staff, faculty, and college advisory committee members.

V. Identification of the primary persons who will benefit from or be significantly affected by each objective within the plan.

See Performance Indicator Documentation attached for each objective.

VI. An explanation of how duplication of effort will be avoided when the operations of more than one program are directed at achieving a single goal, objective, or strategy.

For the purposes of Act 1465 of 1997, the LCTC System is a single program. Duplication of effort of more than one program is thus not applicable.

VII. Documentation as to the validity, reliability, and appropriateness of each performance indicator, as well as the method used to verify and validate the performance indicators as relevant measures of each program's performance.

See Performance Indicator Documentation attached for each performance indicator.

VIII. A description of how each performance indicator is used in management decision making and other agency processes.

See Performance Indicator Documentation attached for each performance indicator.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DOCUMENTATION

Program: River Parishes Community College

Objective 1.1: Increase/Maintain the fall headcount enrollment by 5% from the baseline level of 2,401 in fall 2021 to 2,521 by fall 2027.

Indicator: Number of credit students enrolled fall semester at RPCC.

- 1. What is the type of the indicator?**
Output
- 2. What is the rationale for the indicator?**
Recognition of importance of Louisiana having educated citizens.
- 3. What is the source of the indicator?**
Data is submitted by the college to the LCTCS and Board of Regents Statewide Student Profile System (SSPS) from the Student Enrollment System database. The LCTCS retrieves this information from the SSPS. This system has been in existence for over 30 years. The change will be calculated using Fall/Spring, 2015 enrollment figures as the baseline year and measuring the change to the year being examined.
- 4. What is the frequency and timing of collection or reporting?**
The data is submitted three times annually, first after fall semester census date, second after the spring semester census date and third at the end of spring semester. For this indicator, fall data (the national standard) will be used. The indicator will be reported at the end of the third quarter. This will allow time for collection, aggregation, and editing of the data. The change will be measured from the baseline year to the year being examined.
- 5. How is the indicator calculated?**
The standard method practiced for reporting headcount enrollment statewide uses the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) Statewide Student Profile System (SSPS) unit record system where each enrolled student regardless of course load is counted.
- 6. Does the indicator contain jargon, acronyms, or unclear terms?**
No
- 7. Is the indicator an aggregate or disaggregate figure?**
This indicator is the aggregate of all students in the indicated cohort at RPCC campuses in each fall term.
- 8. Who is responsible for data collection, analysis, and quality?**
Each institution submits the SSPS data electronically to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents performs numerous edits and works with the campuses/systems to correct errors. When all campus submissions are complete, the Regents' staff builds a master file for SSPS.
- 9. Does the indicator have limitations or weaknesses?**
No real weaknesses. The reader must understand that this indicator reflects retention at the same campus and does not include students who transfer to other institutions.

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10. How will the indicator be used in management decision making and other agency processes?

River Parishes Community College remains committed to retaining and graduating students. The importance of retaining students can cause many decisions to change on campus, from recruitment strategies to student services, from hiring strategies to course scheduling.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DOCUMENTATION

Program: River Parishes Community College

Objective 1.2 Increase/Maintain the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, associate degree-seeking students retained to the second fall at the same institution of initial enrollment by 1.0 percentage point from the fall 2021 cohort (to fall 2022) baseline level of 55.7% to 56.7% by fall 2020 (retention of fall 2019 cohort).

Indicator: Percentage of fall semester first-time, full-time, associate degree-seeking freshmen retained to the second fall at RPCC.

1. What is the type of the indicator?

Output

2. What is the rationale for the indicator?

Recognition of importance of Louisiana having educated citizens.

3. What is the source of the indicator?

Data is submitted by the college to the LCTCS and Board of Regents Statewide Student Profile System (SSPS) from the Student Enrollment System database. The LCTCS retrieves this information from the SSPS. This system has been in existence for over 30 years. The change will be calculated using Fall/Spring, 2015 enrollment figures as the baseline year and measuring the change to the year being examined.

4. What is the frequency and timing of collection or reporting?

The data is submitted three times annually, first after fall semester census date, second after the spring semester census date and third at the end of spring semester. For this indicator, fall data (the national standard) will be used. The indicator will be reported at the end of the third quarter. This will allow time for collection, aggregation, and editing of the data. The change will be measured from the baseline year to the year being examined.

5. How is the indicator calculated?

Retention rates are the percentage of the incoming class specified cohort that are retained (enrolled) at the same institution the following fall. The change will be calculated using a standard mathematical approach, subtracting the fall first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students still enrolled in spring semester from fall first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students and dividing the difference by the fall semester students, resulting in a percentage change. $[(Fs-Ss)/Fs]$

6. Does the indicator contain jargon, acronyms, or unclear terms?

No

7. Is the indicator an aggregate or disaggregate figure?

This indicator is the aggregate of all retained students at RPCC campuses from the fall to the following fall.

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8. Who is responsible for data collection, analysis, and quality?

RPCC submits the SSPS data electronically to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents performs numerous edits and works with the campuses/systems to correct errors. When all campus submissions are complete, the Regents' staff builds a master file for SSPS.

9. Does the indicator have limitations or weaknesses?

No real weaknesses. The reader must understand that this indicator reflects retention at the same campus and does not include students who transfer to other institutions.

10. How will the indicator be used in management decision making and other agency processes?

River Parishes Community College remains committed to retaining and graduating students. The importance of retaining students can cause many decisions to change on campus, from recruitment strategies to student services, from hiring strategies to course scheduling.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DOCUMENTATION

Program: River Parishes Community College

Objective 1.3 Increase/Maintain the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students retained from the fall to the spring semester at the same Louisiana Technical College campus of initial enrollment by 1.0 percentage point from the fall 2021 cohort (to the spring AY 2021-22) baseline level of 63.3% to 64.3% by Spring 2028 (retention of Fall 2027 cohort to spring AY 2027-28).

Indicator: Percentage of fall semester first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen retained to the following spring semester at RPCC.

1. What is the type of the indicator?

Output

2. What is the rationale for the indicator?

Recognition of importance of Louisiana having educated citizens.

3. What is the source of the indicator?

Data is submitted by the college to the LCTCS and Board of Regents Statewide Student Profile System (SSPS) from the Student Enrollment System database. The LCTCS retrieves this information from the SSPS. This system has been in existence for over 30 years. The change will be calculated using Fall/Spring, 20015 enrollment figures as the baseline year and measuring the change to the year being examined.

4. What is the frequency and timing of collection or reporting?

The data is submitted three times annually, first after fall semester census date, second after the spring semester census date and third at the end of spring semester. For this indicator, fall data (the national standard) will be used. The indicator will be reported at the end of the third quarter. This will allow time for collection, aggregation, and editing of the data. The change will be measured from the baseline year to the year being examined.

5. How is the indicator calculated?

Retention rates are the percentage of an incoming class which is retained in the following spring. The change will be calculated using a standard mathematical approach, subtracting the fall first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students still enrolled in spring semester from fall first-time in college, full-time, degree-seeking students and dividing the difference by the fall semester students, resulting in a percentage change. $[(Fs-Ss)/Fs]$

6. Does the indicator contain jargon, acronyms, or unclear terms?

No

7. Is the indicator an aggregate or disaggregate figure?

This indicator is the aggregate of all retained students at the same campus of Louisiana Technical College from the fall to the following spring.

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8. Who is responsible for data collection, analysis, and quality?

Each institution submits the SSPS data electronically to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents performs numerous edits and works with the campuses/systems to correct errors. When all campus submissions are complete, the Regents' staff builds a master file for SSPS.

9. Does the indicator have limitations or weaknesses?

No real weaknesses. The reader must understand that this indicator reflects retention at the same campus and does not include students who transfer to other institutions.

10. How will the indicator be used in management decision making and other agency processes?

River Parishes Community College remains committed to retaining and graduating students. The importance of retaining students can cause many decisions to change on campus, from recruitment strategies to student services, from hiring strategies to course scheduling.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DOCUMENTATION

Program: River Parishes Community College.

Objective II. 1: Increase/Maintain the institutional statewide graduation rate (defined as a student completing an award within 150% of “normal time”) from the baseline rate (fall 2018 cohort for all institutions) of 18% to 20% by 2022-23 (Fall 2016 cohort).

Indicator: Percentage of students identified in a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking cohort, graduating from RPCC within 150% of “normal” time (three years).

1. What is the type of the indicator?

Output

2. What is the rationale for the indicator?

Recognition of importance of Louisiana having educated citizens.

3. What is the source of the indicator?

The source of the data is the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Graduation Rate Survey (GRS)

4. What is the frequency and timing of collection or reporting?

The student cohort data includes those student who entered RPCC at First-time, full-time degree seeking students during the fall semester three years earlier and completed an associate degree at any time prior to the third fall semester following. Counts of numbers of students in the cohort completing graduation requirements within three years are submitted annually (each spring) to the NCES for the prior academic year.

5. How is the indicator calculated? Is this a standard calculation?

The count of an entering cohort who graduated within three years from RPCC is reported. The number of graduates divided by the total count of the cohort generates a graduation rate.

6. Does the indicator contain jargon, acronyms, or unclear terms? If so, clarify or define them.

No.

7. Is the indicator an aggregate or disaggregate figure?

This indicator is the aggregate of all students in the indicated cohort at RPCC campuses who obtain an associate degree within three years.

8. Who is responsible for data collection, analysis, and quality?

RPCC submits data as specified by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES is responsible for analysis and ensuring quality of the data.

9. Does the indicator have limitations or weaknesses? Is the indicator a proxy or surrogate? Does the source of the data have a bias or agenda?

No real weaknesses. The reader must understand that this indicator reflects retention at the same campus and does not include students who transfer to other institutions.

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10. How will the indicator be used in management decision making and other agency processes?

River Parishes Community College remains committed to retaining and graduating students. The importance of retaining students can cause many decisions to change on campus, from recruitment strategies to student services, from hiring strategies to course scheduling.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DOCUMENTATION

Program: River Parishes Community College

Objective II.2: Maintain the total number of completers for all applicable award levels in a given academic year from the baseline level of 682 in 2020-21 academic year to 682 in academic year 2027-2028. Students may only be counted once per award level.

Indicator: Total number of completers for Associate, Technical Diploma and Certificate award levels.

1. What is the type of the indicator?

Output

2. What is the rationale for the indicator?

Recognition of importance of Louisiana having educated citizens.

3. What is the source of the indicator?

Data is submitted by the college to the LCTCS and Board of Regents Statewide Completer System. This system has been in existence for over 30 years.

4. What is the frequency and timing of collection or reporting?

Data is submitted annually each July by the college to the BOR Statewide Completer System. All completers of certificate or associate degrees during the immediately previous academic year are reported. Data are audited by Board of Regents in association with GRAD Act performance verification.

5. How is the indicator calculated? Is this a standard calculation?

Total numbers of degrees awarded at the certificate and associate degree levels are summed. A count of all degrees awarded to individual students at the same level following the first award is ten subtracted from the totals for each level, resulting in a headcount of students receiving degrees at each award level. Sums for each award level are totaled to generate the indicator value.

5. Does the indicator contain jargon, acronyms, or unclear terms? If so, clarify or define them.

No.

7. Is the indicator an aggregate or disaggregate figure?

This indicator is the aggregate of all students at RPCC campuses who obtained a certificate or associate degree during the previous academic year.

8. Who is responsible for data collection, analysis, and quality?

RPCC submits the Completer File data to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents performs numerous edits and works with the college to correct errors. When both campus submissions are complete, the Regents' staff builds a master Completers file.

9. Does the indicator have limitations or weaknesses? Is the indicator a proxy or surrogate? Does the source of the data have a bias or agenda?

No real weaknesses. The reader must understand that this indicator reflects awards conferred and is not a graduation rate. Also, according to the LA GRAD Act, the college reports all awards with no duplication within an award level, so the number of degrees actually awarded may be larger than the count reported.

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10. How will the indicator be used in management decision making and other agency processes?

River Parishes Community College remains committed to retaining and graduating students. The importance of retaining and graduating students can cause many decisions to change on campus, from recruitment strategies to student services, from hiring strategies to course scheduling.