

STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS (START PROGRAMS)

**PRIVATE-PURPOSE TRUST FUNDS
OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA**

FINANCIAL AUDIT SERVICES

**Financial Statement Audit for the
Year Ended December 31, 2023
Issued November 20, 2024**

**LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
1600 NORTH THIRD STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 94397
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9397**

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
MICHAEL J. "MIKE" WAGUESPACK, CPA

FIRST ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
BETH Q. DAVIS, CPA

Under the provisions of state law, this report is a public document. A copy of this report has been submitted to the Governor, to the Attorney General, and to other public officials as required by state law. A copy of this report is available for public inspection at the Baton Rouge office of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor and online at www.la.la.gov. When contacting the office, you may refer to Agency ID No. 7417 or Report ID No. 80230136 for additional information.

This document is produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, State of Louisiana, Post Office Box 94397, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9397 in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 24:513. One copy of this public document was produced at an approximate cost of \$1.03. This material was produced in accordance with the standards for state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31.

In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance relative to this document, or any documents of the Legislative Auditor, please contact Jenifer Schaye, General Counsel, at 225-339-3800.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Independent Auditor’s Report	2
Management’s Discussion and Analysis	6
Statement	
Basic Financial Statements:	
Statement of Fiduciary Net Position	A 9
Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position	B 10
Notes to the Financial Statements	11
Schedule	
Supplementary Information:	
Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position, December 31, 2023	1 27
Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position for the Year Ended December 31, 2023	2 28
Schedule of Investments, December 31, 2023	3 29
Exhibit	
Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with <i>Government Auditing Standards</i>	A
Appendix	
Management’s Corrective Action Plan and Response to the Finding and Recommendation	A

November 14, 2024

Independent Auditor's Report

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LOUISIANA
TUITION TRUST AUTHORITY
STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA**
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the fiduciary fund activities of the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START Programs), private-purpose trust funds of the state of Louisiana, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the START Programs' basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the fiduciary fund activities of the START Programs as of December 31, 2023, and the changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the START Programs and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

As described in note 1, the financial statements present only the activity of the START Programs and do not purport to, and do not, present fairly the financial position of the state of Louisiana as of December 31, 2023, and its changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the START Programs' ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include

examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the START Programs' internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the START Programs' ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the Management's Discussion and Analysis on pages 6 through 8 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with GAAS, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the START Programs' basic financial statements. The accompanying supplementary information schedules, including the Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position, the Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position, and the Schedule of Investments on pages 27 through 31 are

presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS. In our opinion, the Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position, the Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position, and the Schedule of Investments are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated November 14, 2024, on our consideration of the START Programs' internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts, and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the START Programs' internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the START Programs' internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA
Legislative Auditor

LA:CJH:RR:BQD:aa

START 2023

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

As management of the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START Programs), we offer readers of the START Programs' financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the START Programs for the year ended December 31, 2023. The START Programs are administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, a Program under the Board of Regents, as directed by the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority. The responsibility for selection of the START Programs' investments and the investment of the START Programs' funds rests with the State Treasurer.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The assets of the START Programs exceeded its liabilities at the close of the most recent fiscal year by \$ 1,450,321,655 (net position – restricted for START participants).
- The START Programs' total net position increased by \$213,742,292, from \$1,236,579,363 on December 31, 2022, to \$1,450,321,655 on December 31, 2023.
- The number of accounts increased by 2,788, from 78,545 on December 31, 2022, to 81,333 on December 31, 2023.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This discussion and analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to the START Programs' basic financial statements. The START Programs' basic financial statements are comprised of three components: (1) Statement of Fiduciary Net Position, (2) Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position, and (3) Notes to the Financial Statements. These financial statements include the activities of the START Programs' fixed and variable investments.

The **Statement of Fiduciary Net Position** presents information on all of the START Programs' assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two reported as net position – restricted for START participants. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of the START Programs is improving or deteriorating.

The **Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position** presents information showing how the START Programs' net position changed during the most recent calendar year. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future periods (e.g., accrued interest receivable).

Notes to the Financial Statements. The accompanying notes provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the basic financial statements.

Other Information. In addition to the basic financial statements and accompanying notes, this report also presents supplementary information that presents combining schedules of the START Programs' net position and changes in net position for the Louisiana Education Tuition and Savings Fund and the K12 Fund; as well as a schedule that lists and categorizes the investments held by the START Programs at the end of the year.

BASIC FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

As noted earlier, net position may serve over time as a useful indicator of an entity's financial position. In the case of the START Programs, assets exceeded liabilities by \$1,450,321,655 at the close of the most recent year, December 31, 2023. By far, the largest portion of the START Programs' net position (95.1%) reflects its investments at fair market value. The following is a comparison of the START Programs' net position to the prior year.

Comparative Statement of Fiduciary Net Position As of December 31, 2023, and 2022

	2023	2022
Assets:		
Cash	\$119,779,911	\$99,230,198
Investments at fair market value	1,379,000,297	1,164,177,647
Participant deposits receivable	4,675,793	
Accrued interest receivable	474,834	3,827
Total Assets	1,503,930,835	1,263,411,672
Liabilities:		
Disbursements payable	1,327,341	2,156,843
Obligations under securities lending program	52,281,839	24,675,466
Total Liabilities	53,609,180	26,832,309
Net Position - Restricted for START Participants	\$1,450,321,655	\$1,236,579,363

Changes in Net Position. Investment activities and participants' transactions increased the START Programs' net position by \$213,742,292. Key elements of the increase are as follows:

Table A-2
Comparative Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position
For the Years Ended December 31, 2023, and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Additions:		
Participant deposits	\$127,269,327	\$120,495,768
From investment activities:		
Interest and dividend income	34,759,780	35,243,899
Change in the fair value of investments	<u>157,261,302</u>	<u>(241,418,030)</u>
Total additions	<u>319,290,409</u>	<u>(85,678,363)</u>
Deductions:		
Participant distributions	<u>(105,548,117)</u>	<u>(85,535,180)</u>
Increase (decrease) in net position	213,742,292	(171,213,543)
Net position, beginning of year	<u>1,236,579,363</u>	<u>1,407,792,906</u>
Net position, end of year	<u><u>\$1,450,321,655</u></u>	<u><u>\$1,236,579,363</u></u>

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Indications are that contact with individuals through benefit fairs increases name recognition and knowledge of the programs. This, and the payroll deduction option, contributed to an increase in accounts.

Currently, 54% of the START Programs' accounts and 23% of its investments are invested in the Louisiana Principal Protection Fund, which has a guaranteed rate of return established by the State Treasurer which, for 2023, was 1.43%. As the capital markets improve, generally, the percentage of account owners investing in equities will continue to increase and the percentage investing in the Louisiana Principal Protection Fund option will decrease.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

This financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the START Programs' finances for all those with an interest in the START Programs' finances. For questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information, please call the START office at (225) 219-1012 or toll free at (800) 259-5626 or access the START website, www.startsaving.la.gov.

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
FIDUCIARY FUNDS - PRIVATE-PURPOSE TRUST FUNDS**

Statement of Fiduciary Net Position, December 31, 2023

ASSETS

Cash (note 2)	\$119,779,911
Investments (note 3)	1,379,000,297
Participant deposit receivable	4,675,793
Interest receivable	474,834
	<hr/>

TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,503,930,835</u>
--------------	----------------------

LIABILITIES

Disbursements payable	1,327,341
Obligations under securities lending program (note 4)	52,281,839
	<hr/>

TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>53,609,180</u>
-------------------	-------------------

**NET POSITION - RESTRICTED
FOR START PARTICIPANTS**

	<u><u>\$1,450,321,655</u></u>
--	-------------------------------

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
FIDUCIARY FUNDS - PRIVATE-PURPOSE TRUST FUNDS**

**Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

ADDITIONS

Participant deposits	\$127,269,327
Investment income:	
Interest and dividends	34,759,780
Net increase in the fair value of investments	<u>157,261,302</u>
Total additions	<u>319,290,409</u>

DEDUCTIONS

Disbursements to participants	<u>(105,548,117)</u>
Total deductions	<u>(105,548,117)</u>

Change in net position	<u>213,742,292</u>
------------------------	--------------------

NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>1,236,579,363</u>
--	----------------------

NET POSITION, END OF YEAR	<u><u>\$1,450,321,655</u></u>
----------------------------------	-------------------------------

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START Programs) are private-purpose trust funds of the state of Louisiana created under the provisions of Louisiana Revised Statutes (R.S.) 17:3091 *et seq.* The START Programs are administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) within the Louisiana Board of Regents (Board) and are governed by the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA). LATTA is comprised of 21 members, including all members of the Board, the commissioner of higher education, a representative of the banking community, the State Treasurer, a representative from the Louisiana House of Representatives, and a representative from the Louisiana Senate.

The START Programs consist of savings plans for both postsecondary education and kindergarten through grade twelve education.

The Postsecondary Education Savings Plan was created to help make education affordable and accessible to all residents of Louisiana, to encourage savings, and to enhance the ability of residents to obtain access to institutions of postsecondary education. The Postsecondary Education Savings Plan allows individuals to save for qualified higher education expenses for beneficiaries. To encourage college savings, the state of Louisiana matches a portion of an account owner's annual deposits and does not tax earnings in the Postsecondary Education Savings Plan when used to pay for qualified higher education expenses.

Qualified higher education expenses are:

- (1) tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for the enrollment or attendance of a designated beneficiary at an eligible educational institution;
- (2) room and board; and
- (3) expenses for special needs services in the case of a special needs beneficiary, which are incurred in connection with such enrollment or attendance.

The Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Savings Plan (K12 Plan) was created to allow families to save for tuition expenses related to attendance at eligible Louisiana schools that provide kindergarten through twelfth-grade instruction. An eligible school is "a public or approved nonpublic elementary or secondary school in Louisiana that contains any of the grades kindergarten through twelve." Qualified expenses are considered the tuition for enrollment or attendance of a designated beneficiary at an eligible educational institution.

Both programs are qualified tuition programs under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, as amended. Participation in the START Programs is voluntary.

Under each program, an account owner may open only one account per beneficiary; however, multiple account owners may establish an account for one beneficiary. An account may be opened by an individual, a legal entity, or a custodian who meets the following requirements:

- Both the account owner and the beneficiary are United States citizens, permanent residents of the United States, and/or are lawfully residing in the United States and have valid Social Security numbers.
- Either the account owner or the beneficiary must be a Louisiana resident.
- Individual account owners must be at least 18 years old at the time the account is opened.
- An authorized representative of a legal entity must open the account in the name of the legal entity.
- Custodians for minors under the Uniform Transfers to Minors Act and custodians of minors appointed by courts of competent jurisdiction may open accounts in the name of the minor.

Account owners may withdraw their deposits at any time and for any purpose. If the withdrawal is not for qualified higher education expenses, the entire account balance must be withdrawn. Account owners who withdraw deposits for other than qualified higher education expenses are responsible for any resulting income tax liability.

The START Programs' disclosure statements and participation agreements can be obtained at the START Programs' website, www.startsaving.la.gov, or by calling the START Programs' office at (225) 219-1012 or toll free at (800) 259-5626.

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) promulgates accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and reporting standards for state and local governments. These principles are found in the *Codification of Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards* published by GASB. The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with such principles.

B. REPORTING ENTITY

GASB Codification Section 2100 has defined the governmental reporting entity to be the state of Louisiana. The START Programs are private-purpose trust funds of the state of Louisiana. The activity of the postsecondary education savings plan is reported in the Louisiana Education Tuition and Savings Fund (LETSF) and the activity of the Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Savings Plan is reported in the K12 Fund. The state exercises oversight responsibility and has accountability for fiscal matters as follows: (1) LATTA's members include all members of the Board, the commissioner of higher education, a representative of the banking community, the State Treasurer, a representative from the Louisiana House of Representatives, and a representative from the Louisiana Senate; and (2) the state has control and exercises authority because the START Programs' are administered by LOSFA, a program under the Board.

The accompanying financial statements present information only as to the balances of the START Programs. Annually, the state of Louisiana issues basic financial statements, which include the activity contained in the accompanying financial statements. The financial statements are audited by the Legislative Auditor.

C. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The accounting and financial reporting treatment applied to a fund is determined by its measurement focus. The financial statements of the START Programs are prepared using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Accordingly, additions are recognized when earned and deductions are recognized when incurred.

D. CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Cash represents amounts on deposit with the custodian, fiscal agent banks, and/or the investment advisors. Under state law, the START Programs may deposit funds with a fiscal agent bank organized under the laws of the state of Louisiana, the laws of any other state in the Union, or the laws of the United States. The START Programs provide broad guidelines for acceptable investments by authorizing any investments in which Louisiana public retirement boards are authorized by law to invest and by authorizing investment of up to 100% of deposits in equity securities, based on the investment options chosen by account owners. All deposits are invested on behalf of the program by the State Treasurer. The START Programs' permissible investments are limited to the investment options selected by the State Treasurer. The investments are stated at fair value based on actual value and quoted market values. The fair value of investments is determined on a business-day basis.

Deposits in fixed earnings investment options are invested by the State Treasurer, and deposits in variable earnings investment options are invested by the State Treasurer in one or more mutual funds managed by the Vanguard Group. Account holders own an interest in the investments held by the START Programs, but do not own shares of the underlying Vanguard funds.

The Postsecondary Education Savings Plan currently offers the following investment options:

- Louisiana Principal Protection Fund - 100% of deposits and interest earned thereon are invested in the Louisiana Fixed Return Investments portfolio managed by the State Treasurer. The state guarantees the return of account owners' principal and interest earned thereon.
- Age-Based Moderate Track Fund - Deposits are placed in the Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund and automatically moved to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund on the beneficiary's sixth birthday, then to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Income Fund on the beneficiary's eleventh birthday (each fund has a progressively more conservative asset allocation) and finally, when the beneficiary is 16, to the Principal Protection Fund.
- Age-Based Growth Track Fund - Deposits are placed in the Vanguard LifeStrategy Growth Fund and automatically moved to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund on the beneficiary's sixth birthday, then to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund on the beneficiary's eleventh birthday (each fund has a progressively more conservative asset allocation) and finally, when the beneficiary is 16, to the Principal Protection Fund. This track is different from the Age-Based Moderate Track Fund in that the initial fund is less aggressive.
- Age-Based Aggressive Track Fund - Deposits are placed in the Vanguard LifeStrategy Growth Fund and automatically moved to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund on the beneficiary's ninth birthday, then to the Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund on the beneficiary's thirteenth birthday (each fund has a progressively more conservative asset allocation) and finally, when the beneficiary is 16, to the Principal Protection Fund. This fund is different from the Age-Based Growth Track Fund in that the progressions take place when the beneficiary is older.
- Vanguard Total World Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares - Provides shareholders low-cost exposure to stock markets around the globe, including the United States, developed foreign markets, and emerging markets. In addition to stock market risk,

the fund is also subject to currency risk and country risk. Long-term investors seeking global equity exposure who are comfortable with the volatility inherent in stock market investing may wish to consider this fund.

- Vanguard Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares - Seeks to track the performance of a benchmark index that measures the investment return of the overall stock market. Invests in large-, mid-, and small-cap stocks diversified across growth and value styles. Passively managed, using index sampling.
- Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares - This fund offers investors a low-cost way to gain equity exposure to both developed and emerging international economies. The fund tracks stock markets all over the globe, with the exception of the United States. Because it invests in non-U.S. stocks, including those in developed and emerging markets, the fund can be more volatile than a domestic fund. Long-term investors who want to add a diversified international equity position to their portfolio might want to consider this fund as an option.
- Vanguard Small-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares - This fund provides broad exposure to the small-capitalization U.S. equity market. The fund seeks to track an index of small-sized companies. One of the fund's primary risks is its focus on the small-cap arena, which is an often-volatile segment of the market. Investors looking to add a small-cap equity allocation to an already diversified portfolio may wish to consider this option.
- Vanguard Mid-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares - This fund employs an indexing investment approach designed to track the performance of the CRSP US Mid Cap Index, a broadly diversified index of stocks of mid-size U.S. companies. The Fund attempts to replicate the target index by investing all, or substantially all, of its assets in the stocks that make up the Index, holding each stock in approximately the same proportion as its weighting in the Index.
- Vanguard Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares - Seeks to track the performance of the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, which measures the investment return of large-capitalization stocks. Using full replication, the portfolio holds all stocks in the same capitalization weighting as the index.
- Vanguard Large-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares - This fund seeks to track the investment performance of the CRSP US Large Cap Index, an unmanaged benchmark representing

predominantly large U.S. firms. Using full replication, the portfolio holds each index stock in approximately the same proportion as its weighting in the index.

The K12 Plan currently offers the following investment options:

- Vanguard Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares - Seeks to track the performance of the Standard & Poor's 500 Index, which measures the investment return of large-capitalization stocks. Using full replication, the portfolio holds all stocks in the same capitalization weighting as the index.
- Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund - Uses target allocation as a simplified approach to meeting investors' different objectives and risk tolerances. Rooted in asset allocation theory, Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund seeks to provide current income and low to moderate capital appreciation by investing in four other Vanguard funds. The fund holds 60% of its assets in bonds, a portion of which is allocated to international bonds, and 40% in stocks, a portion of which is allocated to international stocks. Investors with a long-term time horizon who can accept modest movement in share price and can tolerate the risk that comes from the volatility of the stock and bond markets may wish to consider this fund.
- Vanguard LifeStrategy Growth Fund - Uses target allocation as a simplified approach to meeting investors' different objectives and risk tolerances. Rooted in asset allocation theory, Vanguard LifeStrategy Growth Fund seeks to provide long-term capital appreciation and some current income by investing in four other Vanguard funds. The fund holds 80% of its assets in stocks, a portion of which is allocated to international stocks, and 20% in bonds, a portion of which is allocated to international bonds.
- Vanguard LifeStrategy Income Fund - Uses target allocation as a simplified approach to meeting investors' different objectives and risk tolerances. Rooted in asset allocation theory, Vanguard LifeStrategy Income Fund seeks to provide current income and some capital appreciation by investing in four other Vanguard funds. The fund holds 80% of its assets in bonds, a portion of which is allocated to international bonds and 20% in stocks, a portion of which is allocated to international stocks.
- Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund - Uses target allocation as a simplified approach to meeting investors' different objectives and risk tolerances. Rooted in asset allocation theory, Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund seeks to provide capital appreciation and a low to moderate level of current income by investing in four other Vanguard funds. The fund holds 60%

of its assets in stocks, a portion of which is allocated to international stocks, and 40% in bonds, a portion of which is allocated to international bonds.

- Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund - Seeks to provide current income and preserve shareholders' principal investment by maintaining a share price of \$1. As such it is considered one of the most conservative investment options offered by Vanguard. Although the fund invests in short-term U.S. government securities, the amount of income that a shareholder may receive will be largely dependent on the current interest rate environment.
- Vanguard Short-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares - Diversified approach to bond investing, providing broad exposure to U.S. investment-grade bonds with maturities from one to five years. Reflecting this goal, the fund invests about 30% of assets in corporate bonds and 70% in U.S. government bonds within that maturity range. A key risk of the fund is the fact that changes in interest rates can eventually lead to a decrease in income for the fund.
- Vanguard Intermediate-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares - Diversified approach to bond investing, providing broad exposure to U.S. investment-grade bonds with maturities from five to ten years. Reflecting this goal, the fund invests about 50% of assets in corporate bonds and 50% in U.S. government bonds within that maturity range. Risks of the fund include the fact that changes in interest rates, both up and down, can affect the fund by resulting in lower bond prices or an eventual decrease in income for the fund.
- Vanguard Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares - Seeks to track the performance of a benchmark index that measures the investment return of the overall stock market. Invests in large-, mid-, and small-cap stocks diversified across growth and value styles. Passively managed, using index sampling.
- Vanguard Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares - Offers investors a low-cost way to gain equity exposure to both developed and emerging international economies. The fund tracks stock markets all over the globe, with the exception of the United States. Because it invests in non-U.S. stocks, including those in developed and emerging markets, the fund can be more volatile than a domestic fund. Long-term investors who want to add a diversified international equity position to their portfolio might want to consider this fund as an option.

Account owners are allowed to redistribute their existing account balances over any and all funds, provided the percentages are in whole digits and the total of all percentages equal 100%. All existing funds are liquidated and the proceeds are used to purchase shares in the funds based on the account owner's instructions. Future deposits will be allocated according to the last distribution instructions received from the account owner, unless changed by the account owner. Account owners may change their investment selection(s) for each new deposit. Investment selections for deposits already made cannot be changed more than twice each calendar year.

E. NET POSITION

Net position comprises the net earnings from additions and deductions. Net position is classified as restricted as these amounts can only be withdrawn per account holder instruction.

F. ESTIMATES

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. DEPOSITS WITH FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

For reporting purposes, deposits with financial institutions consist of demand deposits and funds received from participants for investment in a zero-balance bank account. The START Programs' deposits are pooled with all deposits in the state of Louisiana's general fund and special funds, separately managed funds, state of Louisiana bond issue funds, et cetera, and are carried at cost.

As reflected on the Statement of Fiduciary Net Position (Statement A), the START Programs have deposits (cash) totaling \$119,779,911 at December 31, 2023. These deposits are held and controlled by the State Treasurer and are secured from risk by the State Treasurer through separate custodial agreements, and the risk disclosures required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America are included within the state's basic financial statements. Cash on deposit with the State Treasurer is invested in various instruments in the pooled investment account of the State Treasurer. The investments are not identifiable by fund.

Custodial credit risk is the risk that, in the event of a bank failure, the START Programs' deposits may not be recovered. Under state law, the START Programs' deposits must be secured by federal deposit insurance or similar federal security or the pledge of securities owned by the fiscal agent bank. The market value of the pledged securities plus the federal deposit insurance must at all times equal the amount on deposit with the fiscal agent bank. A quarterly review for uncollateralized funds is performed by the State Treasurer. In addition, the State Treasurer reviews

the collateral at least monthly between the quarterly reviews and takes appropriate action as necessary to ensure collateral is sufficient for cash deposits.

3. INVESTMENTS

Investments of \$1,379,000,297, as presented on Statement A, are reported at fair value. The following table itemizes the investments, the range of maturity dates, and fair market value of investments at December 31, 2023, and the change in investments during the year.

Investment Securities	Fair Value	Investment Maturities (in Years)			
		Less than 1	1 to 5	6 to 10	>10
Corporate Bonds	\$53,994,690	\$5,895,650	\$40,818,610	\$7,280,430	
Federal Farm Credit Bank Bonds	46,545,983	11,732,010	27,579,013	7,234,960	
Federal Home Loan Bank Bonds	32,928,141	6,899,680	26,028,461		
Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Bonds and Notes	42,043,174	3,967,900	28,457,275	8,074,550	\$1,543,449
Federal National Mortgage Association Notes	19,490,800	8,477,475	5,443,660	3,284,746	2,284,919
U.S. Treasury Securities	70,172,900	26,593,990	43,578,910		
Total Investment Securities	\$265,175,688	\$63,566,705	\$171,905,929	\$25,874,686	\$3,828,368
Collateral Held Under Securities Lending	\$52,281,839				
Vanguard Mutual Funds	1,061,542,770				
Total Investments	\$1,379,000,297				

Change in Investments - Fair Market Value

Balance, beginning	<u>\$1,164,177,647</u>
Add:	
Investment purchases	365,590,324
Market value adjustment	<u>157,261,302</u>
Total	<u>522,851,626</u>
Less investment sales/redemptions	<u>(308,028,976)</u>
Balance, ending	<u><u>\$1,379,000,297</u></u>

Unrealized investment gains exceeded unrealized investment losses by \$157,261,302 at year-end. This net unrealized investment gain is reflected in the year-end investments since they are reported at fair market value.

For an investment, custodial credit risk is the risk that, in the event of the failure of the counterparty, the START Programs will not be able to recover the value of its

investments or collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party. The START Programs' investments are a part of the state's total investment portfolio. Funds invested in the Louisiana Principal Protection Fund option, are registered in the name of the state of Louisiana and are held in JP Morgan Chase Bank. The Vanguard Group manages funds invested in the START Programs' equity options.

Credit risk is the risk that an issuer or other counterparty to an investment will not fulfill its obligations. R.S. 17:3099 permits the START Programs to invest its funds in any investments in which public retirement boards are authorized by law to invest, provided that up to 100% of deposits to an account may be invested in equity securities when an account owner has selected an equity investment option and that such investments in equity securities shall not be included in any limitation on investment in equity securities. Ratings issued by Standard and Poor's, which indicate the level of credit risk for the START Programs' investments as of December 31, 2023, are in the table below. U.S. Treasury Securities and Government Sponsored Entity Securities totaling \$128,124,553 are not included in the table below since they are explicitly guaranteed by the U.S. government and are not exposed to credit risk.

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Fair Value</u>
AAA	\$9,346,500
AA+	147,586,864
AA	6,975,920
AA-	4,143,300
A+	2,914,290
A	2,946,420
A-	5,768,160
BBB+	6,362,500
BBB	3,289,020
Total	<u>\$189,332,974</u>

Concentration of credit risk is the risk of loss attributed to the magnitude of an entity's investment in a single issuer. The START Programs' account owners have several options from which to choose for investment of their deposits. For the Postsecondary Education Savings Plan, these options range from 100% equity investments, which are not guaranteed by the state, to 100% invested in the Louisiana Principal Protection Fund option. (These deposits and the interest earned thereon are guaranteed by the state.) Investment options for the K12 Plan are limited to equity investments only. Investment options may be changed twice per calendar year. Account owners assume the risk associated with the option they select.

Interest rate risk is the risk that changes in interest rates will adversely affect the fair value of an investment. The State Treasury has no specific policies to limit interest rate risk for the START Programs' investments.

GASB Statement No. 72, *Fair Value Measurement and Application*, requires disclosures to be made about fair value measurements, the level of fair value hierarchy, and valuation techniques.

The fair value hierarchy categorizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value into three levels:

- Level 1 inputs – The valuation is based on quoted market prices for identical assets or liabilities traded in active markets;
- Level 2 inputs – The valuation is based on quoted market prices for similar instruments traded in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar instruments in markets that are not active, and inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability;
- Level 3 inputs – The valuation is determined by using the best information available under the circumstances and might include the government's own data. In developing unobservable inputs, a government may begin with its own data but should adjust those data if (a) reasonably available information indicates that other market participants would use different data, or (b) there is something particular to the government that is not available to other market participants.

The categorization of investments within the hierarchy is based upon the pricing transparency of the instrument and should not be perceived as the particular investment's risk.

Assets classified in Level 1 of the fair value hierarchy are valued directly from a predetermined primary external pricing vendor. Assets classified in Level 2 are subject to pricing by an alternative pricing source due to lack of information available by the primary vendor. Assets classified in Level 3, due to lack of an independent pricing source, are valued using an internal fair value as provided by the investment manager.

Fair values of assets measured on a recurring basis at December 31, 2023, are as follows:

	Fair Market Value	Quoted Prices In Active Markets for Identical Assets Level 1	Other Observable Inputs Level 2	Significant Unobservable Inputs Level 3
Debt securities:				
Corporate Bonds	\$53,994,690		\$53,994,690	
Federal Farm Credit Bank Bonds	46,545,983		46,545,983	
Federal Home Loan Bank Bonds	32,928,141		32,928,141	
Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Bonds and Notes	42,043,174		42,043,174	
Federal National Mortgage Association Notes	19,490,800		19,490,800	
U. S. Treasury Securities	70,172,900		70,172,900	
Collateral held under Securities Lending	52,281,839		52,281,839	
Total Debt Securities	317,457,527	NONE	317,457,527	NONE
Equity securities:				
Vanguard Mutual Funds	1,061,542,770	\$1,061,542,770		
Total Investments	\$1,379,000,297	\$1,061,542,770	\$317,457,527	NONE

Fair values for investments categorized in Level 2 have been obtained from the State Treasury, which obtains fair values from various external sources and are based on other observable inputs.

4. SECURITIES LENDING

As explained in note 1D, the State Treasurer manages the START Programs' investments. In accordance with its authority under R.S. 49:321.1, the State Treasurer (on behalf of the state of Louisiana) has entered into a securities lending agreement with Deutsche Bank, who acts as an agent for the state in lending the state's securities to multiple counterparties. These transactions can be for a fixed or variable period, for different fees/spreads, and for various amounts of securities. These securities lending transactions are executed pursuant to the terms of an agency securities lending agreement between the state and Deutsche Bank, with the Bank of New York Mellon acting as an independent third-party custodian for securities collateral. State statute requires cash collateral received should be equal or greater than the securities on loan. Cash collateral in excess of the securities that it lends through Deutsche Bank is reinvested for the state by Deutsche Bank in securities authorized by statute for investment by Treasury.

In each security lending transaction, Deutsche Bank lent the state's securities and received cash collateral in exchange. Deutsche bank then reinvested the cash collateral in securities that are authorized by state statutes.

The Postsecondary Education Savings Plan's U.S. Government securities are included in the State Treasurer's securities lending program. At December 31, 2023, the fair market value of the Postsecondary Education Savings Plan's securities on loan totaled \$49,246,315, and the cash collateral provided totaled \$50,126,208. The Postsecondary Education Savings Plan had limited credit risk exposure because the value of the collateral securities pledged exceeded the value of the securities on loan by \$879,893.

At December 30, 2023, the received cash collateral of \$50,126,208 was reinvested in reverse repurchase agreements with a fair market value of \$52,281,839 that were either open overnight repurchase agreements or had stated maturities of less than one year. The risk to the state is further mitigated because loss indemnification is provided to the state in the securities lending contract with Deutsche Bank, which has agreed to purchase replacement securities or return cash collateral in the event a borrower failed to return a loaned security or pay distributions. There were no such failures by any borrowers to return loaned securities or pay distributions during the fiscal year. The state had limited interest rate exposure to borrowers because the duration of the loans generally matches the duration of the investments made with the cash collateral. All of these investments mature in less than a year.

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

Investment income is recognized when earned using the full accrual method of accounting. The investments in the START Programs are stated at fair value based on quoted market rates, and any increases or decreases are reported as net increase (decrease) in the fair value of investments. The fair value of investments is determined on a business-day basis.

Interest is calculated on a daily basis and is credited to accounts and reported to account owners after the conclusion of the calendar year in which the interest was earned. For purposes of determining account owners' shares sold and redeemed, and for financial statement purposes, investments are valued and reported at fair market value, respectively. Realized gains/losses are a part of investment income.

The START Programs' objectives include providing safety of principal and daily liquidity with a competitive rate of return to account owners by pooling monies. The following table shows the START Programs' annual return for the one-year, three-year, and five-year periods ended December 31, 2023:

Portfolio	Average Annual Return		
	One Year	Three Years	Five Years
<u>Postsecondary Education Savings Plan Investments:</u>			
Vanguard:			
Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares	26.24%	9.96%	15.66%
Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares	26.05%	8.47%	15.11%
Large-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	27.28%	9.10%	15.61%
LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund	12.48%	0.46%	5.52%
LifeStrategy Growth Fund	18.55%	3.97%	9.83%
LifeStrategy Income Fund	9.48%	(1.34%)	3.27%
LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund	15.49%	2.21%	7.68%
Mid-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	16.00%	5.50%	12.72%
Small-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	18.22%	4.67%	11.72%
Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	15.53%	1.80%	7.37%
Total World Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	21.89%	5.72%	11.83%
Louisiana Fixed Return Investments (Louisiana Principal Protection Fund)	1.43%	1.12%	1.39%
<u>K12 Plan Investments:</u>			
Vanguard:			
Federal Money Market Fund	5.09%	2.20%	1.83%
Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares	26.24%	9.96%	15.66%
Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares	26.05%	8.47%	15.11%
Intermediate-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares	6.07%	(3.52%)	1.68%
LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund	12.48%	0.46%	5.52%
LifeStrategy Growth Fund	18.55%	3.97%	9.83%
LifeStrategy Income Fund	9.48%	(1.34%)	3.27%
LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund	15.49%	2.21%	7.68%
Short-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares	4.87%	(0.68%)	1.47%
Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	15.53%	1.80%	7.37%

6. SAVINGS ENHANCEMENT FUND

R.S. 17:3129.4(C) established the Savings Enhancement Fund to receive funds appropriated by the legislature or donated from any other source for the purpose of funding earnings enhancements. Earnings enhancements are annually appropriated by the legislature and represent payments credited to a Postsecondary Education Savings Plan account to help offset the beneficiary's qualified higher education expenses. The amount of the earnings enhancements credited to an account is based on the account owner's annual income and annual deposits of principal. Earnings enhancements and the interest earned thereon may only be disbursed for qualified higher education expenses and may not be refunded to the account owner if an account is closed. Earnings enhancements appropriated by the Legislature to the Postsecondary Education Savings Plan for the state's fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 totaled \$2,900,000. The activity of the savings enhancement fund is recorded in the state of Louisiana's General Fund. This activity is not reported in the START Programs' fiduciary fund financial statements. The K12 Plan does not receive earnings enhancements.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES

The Vanguard Group charges investment fees to the START Programs for the funds it manages and invests. These investment fees vary for each mutual fund and are subject to change at any time without notice. Earnings credited to the accounts invested in Vanguard mutual funds are net of these investment fees. For 2023, the maximum fee charged was 0.14% for the Postsecondary Education Savings Plan's mutual funds and 0.14% for the K12 Plan's mutual funds. Costs incurred by LATTA, LOSFA, and the State Treasurer to administer the START Programs are paid by those agencies and are not charged to the accounts.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position, December 31, 2023

Schedule 1 presents the Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position for the Louisiana Education Tuition and Savings Fund and the K12 Fund.

Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position, for the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Schedule 2 presents the Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position for the Louisiana Education Tuition and Savings Fund and the K12 Fund.

Schedule of Investments, December 31, 2023

Schedule 3 presents the face amount, maturity date, yield (where applicable), and the fair value of investments held by the START Programs at December 31, 2023.

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
FIDUCIARY FUNDS - PRIVATE-PURPOSE TRUST FUNDS**

Combining Schedule of Fiduciary Net Position, December 31, 2023

	LOUISIANA EDUCATION TUITION AND SAVINGS FUND	K12 FUND	TOTAL
ASSETS			
Cash	\$119,779,911		\$119,779,911
Investments	1,352,914,462	\$26,085,835	1,379,000,297
Participant deposit receivable	4,485,524	190,269	4,675,793
Interest receivable	474,834		474,834
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS	1,477,654,731	26,276,104	1,503,930,835
LIABILITIES			
Disbursements payable	1,282,241	45,100	1,327,341
Obligations under securities lending program	52,281,839		52,281,839
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	53,564,080	45,100	53,609,180
NET POSITION - RESTRICTED FOR START PARTICIPANTS			
	<u>\$1,424,090,651</u>	<u>\$26,231,004</u>	<u>\$1,450,321,655</u>

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
FIDUCIARY FUNDS - PRIVATE-PURPOSE TRUST FUNDS**

**Combining Schedule of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	LOUISIANA EDUCATION TUITION AND SAVINGS FUND	K12 FUND	TOTAL
ADDITIONS			
Participant deposits	\$117,585,884	\$9,683,443	\$127,269,327
Investment income:			
Interest and dividends	34,073,979	685,801	34,759,780
Net increase in the fair value of investments	154,413,261	2,848,041	157,261,302
Total additions	<u>306,073,124</u>	<u>13,217,285</u>	<u>319,290,409</u>
DEDUCTIONS			
Disbursements to participants	<u>(101,060,847)</u>	<u>(4,487,270)</u>	<u>(105,548,117)</u>
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	205,012,277	8,730,015	213,742,292
NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>1,219,078,374</u>	<u>17,500,989</u>	<u>1,236,579,363</u>
NET POSITION, END OF YEAR	<u><u>\$1,424,090,651</u></u>	<u><u>\$26,231,004</u></u>	<u><u>\$1,450,321,655</u></u>

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAM
STATE OF LOUISIANA
Schedule of Investments, December 31, 2023**

FACE AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	MATURITY DATE	COUPON RATE	FAIR VALUE
----------------	-------------	------------------	----------------	---------------

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN FIXED EARNINGS INVESTMENTS**Corporate Bonds:**

\$3,000,000	3M Company	02/14/2025	2.000	\$2,892,600
2,000,000	Alphabet, Inc.	08/15/2027	0.800	1,788,620
1,000,000	Amazon.com, Inc.	12/01/2025	4.600	1,003,100
1,000,000	Amazon.com, Inc.	12/01/2027	4.550	1,016,140
2,000,000	Amazon.com, Inc.	05/12/2031	2.100	1,725,080
1,000,000	Amgen, Inc.	03/02/2028	5.150	1,023,060
3,000,000	Apple, Inc.	08/20/2025	0.550	2,819,760
5,000,000	Apple, Inc.	02/08/2026	0.700	4,632,450
5,000,000	Apple, Inc.	02/08/2028	1.200	4,451,050
1,000,000	AT&T	06/01/2027	2.300	929,040
3,000,000	Honeywell, International, Inc.	08/15/2024	2.300	2,946,420
500,000	HP, Inc.	01/15/2028	4.750	500,860
1,000,000	Intel Corp.	08/12/2028	1.600	885,450
2,000,000	International Business Machines Corp.	05/15/2026	3.300	1,940,800
1,000,000	International Business Machines Corp.	07/27/2027	4.150	988,690
5,000,000	Johnson and Johnson	09/01/2027	0.950	4,464,600
1,000,000	Lowe's Companies, Inc.	04/01/2027	3.350	963,860
500,000	McDonald's Corp.	09/09/2032	4.600	505,500
5,000,000	Microsoft Corp.	11/03/2025	3.125	4,881,900
1,000,000	Packaging Corporation of America	12/15/2027	3.400	952,570
5,000,000	Proctor and Gamble Co.	10/29/2030	1.200	4,143,300
1,000,000	Texas Instruments, Inc.	11/18/2024	4.700	996,010
1,000,000	Texas Instruments, Inc.	02/15/2028	4.600	1,016,770
1,000,000	The Coca-Cola Company	03/05/2028	1.500	901,510
1,000,000	The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.	08/15/2025	4.300	977,480
2,000,000	Walmart, Inc.	09/22/2028	1.500	1,788,300
2,000,000	Walt Disney Co.	08/30/2024	1.750	1,953,220
1,000,000	Westlake Corp.	06/15/2030	3.375	906,550
<u>\$58,000,000</u>	Total Corporate Bonds			<u>\$53,994,690</u>

Federal Agency Bonds and Notes:

Federal Farm Credit Bank Bonds:

\$1,000,000		02/23/2024	5.040	\$999,120
10,000,000		10/16/2024	1.500	9,733,300
1,000,000		11/29/2024	5.450	999,590
1,100,000		06/23/2025	1.170	1,044,868
500,000		12/12/2025	4.125	493,770
2,000,000		01/12/2026	4.920	1,989,440
5,000,000		03/25/2026	1.050	4,649,950
1,000,000		03/30/2026	4.375	1,003,340
2,000,000		06/23/2026	4.820	2,000,720
1,000,000		06/23/2026	4.375	1,004,680
1,000,000		07/13/2026	3.750	981,000
1,000,000		08/17/2026	3.960	982,260
500,000		12/01/2026	5.060	504,930
1,500,000		05/18/2027	5.390	1,493,430
1,000,000		06/01/2027	3.450	967,610
500,000		11/24/2027	5.120	504,215
1,000,000		02/28/2028	5.100	1,006,120
1,000,000		03/13/2028	5.350	1,005,590
5,000,000		04/03/2028	4.620	4,948,300
2,000,000		06/30/2028	5.000	1,994,400
1,000,000		07/14/2028	5.430	1,004,390
1,000,000		07/25/2029	4.330	971,350
1,000,000		01/25/2030	3.750	978,970
4,000,000		06/24/2030	1.150	3,283,720
1,000,000		03/03/2033	4.375	1,007,020
1,000,000		03/28/2033	5.930	993,900
<u>\$48,100,000</u>	Total Federal Farm Credit Bank Bonds			<u>\$46,545,983</u>

Federal Home Loan Bank Bonds:

\$4,000,000		08/15/2024	1.500	\$3,913,960
3,000,000		12/30/2024	1.150	2,985,720
2,000,000		03/28/2025	2.230	1,949,420
1,000,000		04/28/2025	2.000	993,130
2,000,000		05/16/2025	4.000	1,989,700
5,000,000		06/13/2025	0.500	4,725,800
2,500,000		08/28/2025	4.000	2,482,050
3,140,000		01/28/2026	0.500	2,903,401
5,000,000		06/04/2027	1.070	4,509,000
5,000,000		06/25/2027	1.000	4,490,000

(Continued)

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAM
STATE OF LOUISIANA
Schedule of Investments, December 31, 2023**

FACE AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	MATURITY DATE	COUPON RATE	FAIR VALUE
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN FIXED EARNINGS INVESTMENTS (Continued)				
Federal Agency Bonds and Notes (Continued)				
Federal Home Loan Bank Bonds (Continued):				
1,000,000		06/30/2027	4.700	995,000
1,000,000		09/14/2027	5.000	990,960
<u>\$34,640,000</u>	Total Federal Home Loan Bank Bonds			<u>\$32,928,141</u>
Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Bonds and Notes:				
\$1,000,000		08/08/2024	4.000	\$993,140
1,000,000		11/25/2024	4.000	992,220
1,000,000		12/30/2024	4.000	990,690
1,000,000		12/30/2024	4.000	991,850
1,000,000		01/24/2025	5.150	999,610
5,000,000		02/12/2025	1.500	4,827,700
1,000,000		02/24/2025	5.300	997,530
5,000,000		05/28/2025	0.750	4,755,550
1,000,000		06/27/2025	3.560	987,840
5,000,000		07/21/2025	0.375	4,699,500
1,000,000		07/25/2025	4.050	987,460
2,000,000		08/28/2025	3.800	1,979,640
1,000,000		08/28/2025	4.050	993,640
1,000,000		08/28/2025	4.200	989,700
4,000,000		09/24/2025	0.570	3,743,040
1,000,000		01/27/2026	5.300	997,540
1,000,000		02/24/2026	5.400	997,450
500,000		12/07/2026	5.750	501,075
5,000,000		12/07/2029	1.100	4,179,500
5,000,000		10/19/2032	1.320	3,895,050
880,844		03/01/2042	2.000	752,100
<u>889,326</u>		04/01/2042	2.500	<u>791,349</u>
<u>\$45,270,170</u>	Total Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Bonds and Notes			<u>\$42,043,174</u>
Federal National Mortgage Association Notes:				
\$8,500,000		02/05/2024	2.500	\$8,477,475
1,000,000		02/17/2026	5.200	1,001,010
5,000,000		10/08/2027	0.750	4,442,650
987,560		12/01/2029	4.000	959,079
757,870		03/01/2032	1.500	691,579
752,842		04/01/2032	2.000	699,526
978,047		06/01/2032	3.830	934,563
824,211		03/01/2037	2.000	739,886
877,082		03/01/2042	2.000	749,037
<u>870,540</u>		04/01/2042	3.000	<u>795,995</u>
<u>\$20,548,152</u>	Total Federal National Mortgage Association Notes			<u>\$19,490,800</u>
U. S. Treasury Securities:				
\$5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	01/11/2024	0.000	\$4,993,450
3,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	02/20/2024	0.000	2,978,490
3,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	05/02/2024	0.000	2,948,010
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	05/30/2024	0.000	4,895,550
3,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	08/08/2024	0.000	2,913,690
3,000,000	U. S. Treasury Bills	11/29/2024	0.000	2,874,000
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	01/15/2024	0.125	4,990,800
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	04/30/2025	0.375	4,732,400
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	01/31/2026	0.375	4,620,500
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	04/30/2026	0.750	4,627,350
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	06/30/2026	0.875	4,625,400
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	04/30/2027	0.500	4,466,000
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	05/31/2027	0.500	4,455,100
5,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	07/31/2027	0.375	4,413,100
8,000,000	U. S. Treasury Notes	04/30/2028	1.250	7,168,160
<u>5,000,000</u>	U. S. Treasury Notes	05/31/2028	1.250	<u>4,470,900</u>
<u>\$75,000,000</u>	Total U. S. Treasury Securities			<u>\$70,172,900</u>
<u>\$281,558,322</u>	Total Postsecondary Education Savings Plan Fixed Earnings Investments			<u>\$265,175,688</u>
Collateral held under securities lending program				\$52,281,839
<u>\$281,558,322</u>	Total Postsecondary Education Savings Plan Fixed Earnings Investments and Collateral Held Under Securities Lending Program			<u>\$317,457,527</u>

(Continued)

**STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAM
STATE OF LOUISIANA
Schedule of Investments, December 31, 2023**

FACE AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	MATURITY DATE	COUPON RATE	FAIR VALUE
----------------	-------------	------------------	----------------	---------------

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN VARIABLE EARNINGS INVESTMENTS

The Vanguard Group (Mutual Funds):

Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares	\$973,030
Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares	366,814,523
Large-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	117,611,561
LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund	113,154,936
LifeStrategy Growth Fund	90,725,903
LifeStrategy Income Fund	50,683,909
LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund	124,397,950
Mid-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	56,291,211
Small-Cap Index Fund, Institutional Shares	48,601,615
Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	37,161,176
Total World Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	<u>29,041,121</u>

Total Postsecondary Education Savings Plan Vanguard Mutual Funds \$1,035,456,935

Total Postsecondary Education Savings Plan Investments \$1,352,914,462

K12 PLAN VARIABLE EARNINGS INVESTMENTS

The Vanguard Group (Mutual Funds):

Federal Money Market Fund	\$2,964,538
Institutional Index Fund, Institutional Shares	46,729
Institutional Total Stock Market Index Fund, Institutional Plus Shares	15,017,059
Intermediate-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares	2,481,159
LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund	184,448
LifeStrategy Growth Fund	512,920
LifeStrategy Income Fund	99,200
LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund	249,069
Short-Term Bond Index Fund, Admiral Shares	1,623,289
Total International Stock Index Fund, Institutional Shares	<u>2,907,424</u>

Total K12 Plan Vanguard Mutual Funds \$26,085,835

Total K12 Plan Investments \$26,085,835

Total Postsecondary Education Savings Plan and K12 Plan Investments \$1,379,000,297

(Concluded)

OTHER REPORT REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

Exhibit A

The following pages contain our report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance with laws, regulations, and other matters as required by *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The report is based solely on the audit of the financial statements and includes, where appropriate, any significant deficiencies and/or material weaknesses in internal control or compliance and other matters that would be material to the presented financial statements.

November 14, 2024

Report on Internal Control over Financial
Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an
Audit of Financial Statements Performed in
Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*

Independent Auditor's Report

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LOUISIANA
TUITION TRUST AUTHORITY
STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND
REVENUE TRUST PROGRAMS
STATE OF LOUISIANA**
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of the fiduciary fund activities of the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START Programs), private-purpose trust funds of the state of Louisiana, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the START Programs' basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated November 14, 2024.

Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the START Programs' internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the START Programs' internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the START Programs' internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. *A material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material

misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. We identified the following deficiency in the START Programs' internal control that we consider to be a material weakness.

Inadequate Controls Over Financial Reporting

For the second consecutive year, and despite some improvements noted, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) did not have adequate controls over financial reporting to ensure the START Programs' financial statements were accurate and complete. Failure to perform adequate review over financial reporting caused the financial statements, related note disclosures, required supplementary information (RSI) and supplementary information (SI) to have numerous errors requiring adjustment, some of which were material.

Based on our audit procedures, the following errors were identified:

- The securities lending note disclosure included in the compiled financial statement report contained language that failed to describe the current securities lending agreement and related investment risks, which is a material disclosure error; and instead, described the prior securities lending agreement and related risks that was last applicable in the December 31, 2021, audit report. LOSFA subsequently provided an accurate version of the disclosure and other information showing that LOSFA completed this note accurately during the compilation process, but failed to update their report template for the new language.
- Interest receivable was overstated by \$5,504,473, and cash and participant deposit receivable were understated by \$2,713,652 and \$2,790,821, respectively, due to LOSFA misclassifying cash and participant deposit receivables as interest receivable. Additionally, participant deposit receivables and participant deposit additions were also understated by \$1,884,972 for participant deposits that occurred or were effective on December 29, 2023, but not recorded until the following month.
- Cash and the net increase in fair value of investments were overstated by \$3,093,327 for errors in posting of the annual

change in fair value of investments journal entry. LOSFA's journal entry was calculated accurately; however, the full entry was not recorded to the financial statements due to other errors in the compilation.

- A \$4,081,168 manual adjustment to the supplementary information schedules moving cash from the START column to the K-12 column lacked adequate support.
- Multiple instances were found in which the financial statements, note disclosures, and schedules did not agree to one another and had footing errors. For the Investments note disclosure (note 3), certain investment amounts did not agree to other disclosures within note 3.
- Prior-year audit adjustments accepted by management for the Management's Discussion and Analysis section, the Summary of Significant Accounting Policies note disclosure, Investments note disclosure, the Savings Enhancement Fund note disclosure, and the Schedule of Investments were not reflected in the current-year statements, causing repeat adjustments.

Good internal controls over financial reporting should include adequate procedures to record, process, and compile financial data needed to prepare accurate and complete financial statements. Those internal controls should include an effective review of the financial statements, including the note disclosures, RSI, and SI, so that errors can be detected and corrected. While LOSFA has controls in place, those controls appear to be impacted by confusing and unclear compilation methods and templates.

Management should provide additional training to those involved with the financial reporting process and modify existing controls to ensure that prior-audit adjustments are appropriately reflected in the current-year financial statements and amounts within the various sections of the financial statements agree, as applicable. Management should also conduct an effective review of the financial statements including the note disclosures, RSI, and SI, which may be facilitated through revised compilation methods and templates. Management concurred with the finding and provided a corrective action plan (see Appendix A).

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the START Programs' financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The

results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Management of the START Programs Response to Finding

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on management of the START Programs (Management's) response to the finding identified in our audit and described previously. Management's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements, and accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose. Under Louisiana Revised Statute 24:513, this report is distributed by the Legislative Auditor as a public document.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA
Legislative Auditor

LA:CJH:RR:BQD:aa

START 2023

APPENDIX A – MANAGEMENT’S RESPONSE

LOUISIANA 529 SAVINGS PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS



October 21, 2024

Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA
Legislative Auditor
P.O. Box 94397
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397

Dear Mr. Waguespack:

Thank you for your diligence in conducting the recent audit of the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START).

We have carefully reviewed the audit finding and concur with the assessment of "Inadequate Controls Over Financial Reporting" for the period ending December 31, 2023. While none of the identified adjustments were considered material by Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), we agree that their cumulative impact necessitated this finding.

The adjustments primarily stemmed from procedural errors, such as outdated bank information and incorrect labeling of Excel line items. Additionally, footing errors were traced to hyperlinks embedded in the financial statement notes. To address these issues, we have implemented the following corrective actions:

1. **Hyperlink Removal:** We have removed all hyperlinks from the notes section of the financial statements and replaced them with whole numbers to prevent future footing errors.
2. **Procedural Improvements:** We have established new procedures to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is used in financial reporting. This includes regular reviews of bank information and consistent labeling of Excel line items.

Brett Hunt, our Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of these corrective actions. These measures were put in place on October 5, 2024.

We value your ongoing partnership and appreciate the cooperation of your staff throughout the audit process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
BRETT HUNT
3D3C27F4F303484...

Brett G. Hunt
Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services, LOSFA

Dr. Kim Hunter-Reed
Chair, Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority

602 North Fifth Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

(800) 259-5626
(225) 219-1012

start@la.gov
 www.startsaving.la.gov
www.able.osfa.la.gov