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May 26, 2016

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

From now through June, we are continuing our dialogue regarding the future of our state's early childhood system. Policy making is best done alongside practitioners, who can inform rule making with guidance as to what works for children. In fact, many of you participated in our webinar or in-person roundtables in April. And last week we had several hours of discussion with our statewide early childhood advisory council about how to evaluate and support all our programs using the *CLASS* system and how to improve enrollment for families. Click [here](#) to see the presentation that was shared with the Advisory Council.

All of this work is informed by what is actually happening in early childhood classrooms in Louisiana. We have better information than ever before as we now have observation data on all toddler and pre-K classrooms in publicly-funded programs - child care, Head Start, and pre-K. Following last week's deadline, we now have nearly 15,000 observation results in our *CLASS* system. This represents nearly 20,000 hours of insight into the quality of care, teaching, and learning young Louisiana children are receiving every day in programs across our state. We are also in the final stages of collecting other information on best practices in classrooms such as child-teacher ratios and teacher credentials. Please see below for more information.

Using the results from Louisiana classrooms, we are collaboratively developing policy to help ensure all Louisiana children can access a quality early childhood programs preparing them for kindergarten. In June, the BESE will consider tweaks to the quality profiles and coordinated enrollment processes required by the law, putting in place a rating system based on *CLASS* that will provide parents and educators a strong sense of how children are being cared for and taught. This is a critical and final step that builds on years of learning about what works in the classrooms of Louisiana's youngest children.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children,

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
Twitter @LouisianaSupe

TEACHING AND LEARNING**UPDATING OTHER CLASSROOM INFORMATION IN GOLD® - DUE MAY 31**

Administrators and teachers should ensure the following informational metrics have been entered in the GOLD® system for each

classroom:

- [Teacher: Child ratios](#)
- Lead Teacher Degree
- Louisiana Teacher Certification
- Pre-K or Infant/Toddler Curriculum

Teachers must additionally ensure children with IEPs or IFSPs, including speech, are marked as having IEPs or IFSPs in the *GOLD®* system. All information must be entered by **May 31**.

Administrators can review the status of finalized Checkpoints for their classes by accessing the "Assessment Status Report" (located under the Checkpoint tab in the *GOLD®* system). For questions and additional assistance, please contact Ivy Starns at ivy.starns@la.gov.

THIRD CHECKPOINT IN *GOLD®* AND END OF ACADEMIC YEAR ACTIONS

By **May 31**, program administrators should ensure teachers have finalized the developmental levels for the third and final checkpoint for all publicly-funded children birth through pre-K.

Additionally, a number of other actions should be taken:

1. Once all checkpoints have been finalized, archive all children:

- Log on the *GOLD®* system, and go to: "Manage Children". A listing of all children at a site will appear.
- In the middle column, click on "Check" and then "Submit" (at the bottom of the screen).
- If children return to the site in the following year, their portfolios can be reactivated and transferred to the new classroom.

2. Run and **save** pertinent reports the *GOLD®* system. Keep in mind some of the reports are not available once an academic year has been closed out, so it is best to save your data at the end of each year.

3. Disable the accounts of any teachers or adults no longer working at the site.

Teaching Strategies[®] offers an array of resources on this process including *Quick Start Guides* for Teachers and Administrators available to anyone with an account through the "Help?" feature of the Teaching Strategies[®] website. More information about the checkpoint process can be found [here](#).

For questions and additional assistance, please contact Ivy Starns at ivy.starns@la.gov.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEAD TEACHER SURVEY

In an effort to provide support for teachers, the Early Childhood Division of the Department of Education is asking all early childhood lead teachers in publicly-funded sites to complete a brief [survey](#) measuring levels of teacher satisfaction with training and supports available to them.

- This survey is **only for Lead Teachers** in all early childhood publicly-funded programs.
- Individual results are **confidential and will never be shared** with programs or Community Networks.
- Results of the survey will be aggregated at the Community Network level and shared as an informational metric on the Community Network Practice Performance Profile.
- Surveys should be completed by **Monday, May 30**.

The Teacher Survey was disseminated through *GOLD®* email addresses to teachers, and to program grantees to disseminate to their teachers where *GOLD®* email addresses were not available. For questions, please contact Nasha Patel at Nasha.Patel@la.gov.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT - GUIDANCE AND VENDOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATALOG

To ensure children are ready to enter school prepared for success, teachers in all early childhood settings need strong and coordinated curriculum, assessments, and professional development. The Department released [guidance](#) to help districts and community networks

advance the quality and continuity of these areas across early childhood and early elementary settings.

In order to assist programs in selecting high-quality training and support, the Department released the [Vendor PD Course Catalog](#) . The catalog is designed to help programs make informed decisions regarding professional development for staff. The Vendor Professional Development Catalog will be updated routinely to include additional resources for early childhood programs as they become available.

For questions, please contact Jill Slack at jill.slack@la.gov.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS REVIEW - NEW CURRICULAR REVIEWS ADDED

New 3 and 4-year-old, as well as infant/toddler, [Curriculum Resource Reviews](#) have been posted on the Department's website. The following reviews are currently posted:

- Amplify - Core Knowledge, ages 3 - 4 (Tier II)
- Frog Street Pre-K, ages 3 - 4 (Tier I)
- Kaplan - Learn Every Day, ages 0 - 2 (Tier I)
- Kaplan - Learn Every Day, ages 3 - 4 (Tier III)
- Pearson - OWL, ages 3 - 4 (Tier I)
- Teaching Strategies - Creative Curriculum Pre-K, ages 3 - 4 (Tier I)
- Voyager - We Can, ages 3 - 4 (Tier I)

Additional reviews will be added in the upcoming weeks.

Vendors from Tier I and Tier II rated curriculum will be invited to participate in a session at the upcoming June Teacher Leader Summit. Vendors will highlight how their curriculum resources are aligned to the [Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards](#) and will be available to meet with participants.

2015-2016 APPEALS PROCESS FOR CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Communities and sites will have the opportunity to complete an [Appeals Form](#) to appeal any of the following:

- Local *CLASS* Observation Scores;
- Third Party *CLASS* Observation Scores;
- Use of 1's in a *CLASS* observation for any classroom where a local observation was not conducted.

Appeals can be submitted if there are extenuating circumstances related to the observation or serious concerns about how an observation was completed. Appeals of scores due to concerns of the quality of the classroom or teacher not reflected in the score received will not be approved.

The 2015-2016 Appeals Process will begin June 6 and run until July 6, 2016.

Submitting an appeal form does **not** guarantee the appeal will be approved. Lead Agencies and sites will be notified by email in July regarding the status of their appeal.

Site Leaders may complete an appeal form, but the form **must be submitted to the Department** by the local Lead Agency. All appeals must be submitted to the Department by Lead Agencies **by July 6, 2016**. Lead Agencies should email all appeals to earlychildhood@la.gov .

To provide additional information on completing the **2015-2016 Early Childhood CLASS Scores Appeals Form**, the Department will host a webinar:

Date: Wednesday, June 8

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Link: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/appeals/>

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

LA 4 BUDGET REVISIONS DUE

In order to comply with budget reductions from the special legislative session, the Department of Children and Family Services reduced TANF funding for the LA 4 program. The statewide reduction for LA 4 is \$2.9 million. The revised LA 4 allocation by LEA is provided [here](#) . Revised allocation files have been loaded into eGMS and budget revisions will be required to reflect the reduced funding for each program. All FY 2015-2016 budget revisions for LA 4 must be submitted by June 1, 2016.

For questions regarding LA 4 budgets, contact Lindsey Bradford at lindsey.bradford@la.gov .

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS - BULLETIN 137

Throughout the year, Licensing Specialists complete inspections to ensure Early Learning Centers comply with [Bulletin 137 - Louisiana Early Learning Center Regulations](#) . During these visits the Licensing Specialist may determine the center has a deficiency requiring a corrective action plan. A corrective action plan may also be necessary if the center has repeated deficiencies.

Corrective action plans include information about a specific course of actions the center will take to ensure the deficiency does not occur in the future. The corrective action plan template can be obtained by calling or emailing Michelle DeMeulenaere at 225-342-9905 or michelle.demeulenaere@la.gov .

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

WEEKLY EARLY CHILDHOOD LEAD AGENCY OFFICE HOURS - ENDING FOR SUMMER 2016

Lead Agency Office Hours will be ending for the summer months. There will be **no office hours on May 31 or in the weeks following.**

Notification of any future office hours will be shared through the Early Childhood Connection Newsletter, and through Lead Agency emails.

COMMUNITY NETWORK BUDGET REVISIONS DUE

All remaining Early Childhood Community Network budget revisions for FY 2015-2016 must be **submitted by June 5, 2016** . All funds for FY 2015-2016 must be **expended by June 30, 2016** .

For questions regarding Community Network budgets, contact Lindsey Bradford at lindsey.bradford@la.gov .

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