

# LDOE Weekly Newsletter



December 15, 2015

## Superintendent's Message

Dear Colleagues,

The most important educational decisions are made in the home and in the classroom. The most important function of standards and assessments, therefore, is to inform parents and teachers as to the progress and needs of each child.

Over the last several months, school and district leaders, local businesses, and the Department of Education have undertaken an [unprecedented effort](#) to provide as many families as possible with a clear sense of the skills their children demonstrated on 2015 state assessments. Using [guides for families](#), educators and community leaders across the state shared detailed explanations of individual student progress for thousands of young people, outlining a path forward for learning in the home and in the classroom.

As part of this effort, today the Department released [Parent Guides to School Report Cards](#), similarly providing Louisiana families with a simple breakdown of the elements and indicators on annual school quality reviews. The [guides](#) show parents how to examine and analyze school- and district-level scores and how to evaluate other important indicators like high school readiness, high school graduation, and college readiness indicators.

Using these results, parents will be able to reflect on the offerings their children experience each day. They can evaluate future school choices, and they can become more aware of the courses and pathways available to their children. They can also revisit the progress their children are making in comparison with averages and other analyses gleaned from statewide information.

You have already received school performance scores and letter grades for your schools and district. Tomorrow you will receive statewide information. School and district reports will become public on Thursday at 11:00 a.m.

Our state is in the midst of transitioning to significantly higher expectations. By the year 2025, schools rated "A" will have an average performance level of true readiness for the next level of education, "mastery." This year, however, we are establishing a new baseline level of performance. During this transition to a new baseline, the letter grade rating distributions will be no lower than in 2013, when the transition started.

Amidst discussions of ratings and score calculations, let's not forget that the most important decisions are made at home and in the classroom. In light of this, let's do everything we can to relay to families the information that matters most: the growth of their children and the opportunities you work so hard to provide for them.

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

## John

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CLICK HERE TO VIEW  
THE MOST CURRENT  
LEA CALENDAR EVENTS

To view the current District Support Calendar, please click [here](#).

## District Support

### Save-the-Date: January Collaboration Events

The January Supervisor and Teacher Leader Collaboration Events will take place in the following locations:

- January 20: Baton Rouge
- January 25: Thibodaux
- January 27: Natchitoches
- January 28: Lafayette \*date changed from January 26

Sessions for the Supervisor Collaborations will include information on: planning for 16-17, assessments & results, principal support, early childhood education, struggling high school students, 2016 test administration, and student privacy.

Sessions for the Teacher Leader Collaborations will include information on: instructional strategies for ELA, math, social studies and science, preparing for 2015-2016 end of year assessments, using data from 2014-2015 to inform instruction, and choosing the right high school pathways for LAA1 students.

The Department will release additional information about these events, including the sessions that will be offered, the first week of January. Registration will open January 6.

Please contact [louisianateacherleaders@la.gov](mailto:louisianateacherleaders@la.gov) with questions about these events.

## **District Charter Application Process**

At the December BESE meeting, BESE approved the 2016 common charter application and the 2016 district charter school application process timeline. All local school boards must post district charter school application process information to their websites no later than Wednesday, January 6, 2016.

The Department has prepared resources that will support local school boards in running a compliant district charter school application process. Those resources can be found on the Department's charter application process webpage for districts, [here](#).

In addition to the resources posted on the Department's website, Department staff will host two webinars to guide district administrators through the steps districts must take in order to run a compliant charter school application process. The remaining webinar will be held on **Wednesday, December 16 at 10:00 a.m.** No pre-registration is required.

### **Webinar Login Information**

- Meeting Name: District Charter Application Process Webinar #2
- To join the meeting go to <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/districtcharterwebinar2/>
- Enter meeting room as a **guest** and provide your **name**
- Audio access: **(800) 832-0736** / Room number: **9492587**

For more information about the district charter school application process, please contact David Shepard at [david.shepard@la.gov](mailto:david.shepard@la.gov).

## **Assessment and Accountability**

### **ACT Payment Options - Memorandum of Understanding Deadline Extension**

Please forward to all District Test Coordinators.

The Department has developed two payment options for LEAs that wish to administer and pay for additional ACT, ACT

WorkKeys, and EXPLORE assessments to students who are not otherwise funded through the state assessment contract. This includes seniors retaking the ACT, students who are not pursuing the Career Diploma who wish to take ACT WorkKeys, or any administration of the EXPLORE exam. To participate in either options, LEAs must enter into one of the memorandums of understanding (MOUs).

Although the initial MOUs were legally sound, the Department has made revisions the MOUs after consultation with LSBA and

LASS leadership and the new versions are linked below. The deadline for submission of either MOU option and the related expected number of testers has been extended to end of day Friday, December 18. LEAs may submit a scanned copy to [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov) in order to meet the deadline and mail originals as directed in the guide.

The following documents are available in the [Assessment Library](#) to support districts in completing the MOU:

[2015-2016 ACT MOU Option 1 Revised](#)

[2015-2016 ACT MOU Option 2 Revised](#)

[Guide to the 2015-2016 MOU](#)

Please contact [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov) with any questions.

## **Parent Guides to School Report Cards Released**

**Please forward to Accountability Contacts and Principals.**

The Department has released a set of Parent Guides to help parents better understand the information contained in the **2014-2015 school reports cards being released this Thursday, December 17**. Districts and Principals are encouraged to share these guides with parents along with a copy of the each school's report card.

- [Parent Guide to Elementary School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to Middle School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to Combination School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to High School Report Cards](#)

**Please send questions to [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov).**

## **2015-2016 Assessment Resources**

In order to support planning and administration of the 2015-2016 assessments, the Department will be releasing a series of resources over the coming months for district staff, principals and teachers. Below is a list of resources available in the next few weeks:

- [Updated 2015-2016 Calendar](#): **Currently Available**
- [2015-2016 Assessment Checklist](#): **Currently Available**
- [2015-2016 LEAP Accessibility and Accommodation Overview](#): **Currently Available**
- [Tech Readiness Guidance](#): **Currently Available**
- [ELA and Math Assessment Guides](#): **Currently Available**
- Guide to Social Studies Field Test: **By Friday, 12/18**

Please email [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov) with questions.

## **2015-2016 Testing Schedule**

**Please forward to all district test coordinators.**

To honor LEA requests and accommodate 2015-2016 academic calendars, the Department has expanded the LEAP online assessment window for grades 3 to 8 by one week. Below are testing window details for both paper-based and online tests:

- April 11 to May 6: Online testing for ELA and math
- April 25 to April 29: Paper-based testing for ELA, math, and science
- May 9 to May 13: Social studies field test (optional)

**Please send questions to [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov).**

## High School Opportunities

### **Spring 2016 Individual Student Planning**

The department released a [guidance document](#) to assist Professional Middle and High School Counselors in the annual development and review of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). After April 1, 2016, Louisiana Connect will no longer host IGPs. Beginning in Spring 2016 and thereafter, districts/charters must choose from a variety of platforms for hosting IGPs:

- District/charter-identified career planning system
- District/charter cumulative folder, or
- LOSFA's [Louisiana Award System](#)

This spring, professional school counselors will work with the 2018 cohort to guide the selection of a diploma pathway aligned with academic and career interests and upload the diploma pathway selection into the Student Transcript System.

The department will host two webinars to support professional school counselors with the IGP and diploma pathway selection process.

- Thursday, January 21 - 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 27 - 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.

#### **Webinar Login Information** (*\*no pre-registration required*)

- **Meeting Name:** Individual Graduation Plan and Diploma Pathway Selection
- To join the meeting, click <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/igp2016>
- Enter meeting room as a **guest** and provide your **name**

For further assistance, please contact [Martha.moore@la.gov](mailto:Martha.moore@la.gov).

### **NCCER Instructor Webinar**

The Department will host a webinar to support NCCER Craft Instructors and NCCER certified schools in the proper implementation of NCCER within their schools. The webinar will focus on NCCER instructor trainings and certifications, facility audits, Form 200 submission and approval, and provide dates for upcoming NCCER Instructors trainings/webinars.

All NCCER Instructors are encouraged to participate in one of the following webinars scheduled for:

- **Thursday, December 17 - 3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

#### **Webinar Login Information** (*\*no pre-registration required*)

- **Meeting Name:** NCCER Instructor Webinar
- To join the meeting, click <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/nccerinstru/>
- Enter meeting room as a **guest** and provide your **name**

For additional information, please email [bryan.bertucci@la.gov](mailto:bryan.bertucci@la.gov) .

### **2016 Jump Start Convention**

The [2016 Jump Start Convention](#) will be held in Baton Rouge on **Tuesday, January 19, 2016** at the Baton Rouge River Center. Attendees of the convention should include high school principals, district administrators, professional school counselors, Jump Start regional team members, and regional economic development and workforce development organizations.

Please register by January 8, 2016. You can register [here](#) or at <https://www.solutionwhere.com/ldoe/cw/showconference.asp?4318>.

For information about hotels with a block of rooms available, please click [here](#) or at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/jumpstart/2016-jump-start-convention---hotel-list.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

Please email [JumpStart@la.gov](mailto:JumpStart@la.gov) with questions.

### **Course Choice/SCA School Level Information**

Registration for spring 2016 Course Choice Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) funded coursework opened **December 1, 2015**. Each high school has an account on the system to validate and approve course offerings.

If you are unsure of the user account for your school please send an e-mail to [SCA@la.gov](mailto:SCA@la.gov) requesting account information. Please include your school name and school district in the body of the message.

Registration for dual enrollment coursework with Louisiana public post-secondary institutions should occur as it has in the past with students registering directly with the post-secondary institution.

## **Finance**

### **MFP Supplementary Funding (HB1 Appropriation for Pay Raise Continuation)**

Act 16 of 2015, the appropriations bill, contained supplementary funding outside of the MFP formula for teacher pay raises. As this funding was supplementary, Act 16 provided that in the event the revenues providing for the supplementary funding were insufficient to fully fund all supplementary budget items, they shall be reduced on a pro rata basis based upon the amount by which the estimated revenue is insufficient to fully fund the supplementary appropriations.

At this time, the LDE has been notified by the Office of Planning and Budget within the Division of Administration that the original funding level has not been entirely realized and the appropriation has been reduced by \$101,224.

Pursuant to this reduction in the appropriation, the December payment for each LEA's pay raise payment has been reduced by its proportionate share of the \$101,224 reduction. The revised payment schedule is available [here](#) on the Department's website.

# Grants Management

## **Notice to SIG and RTT Indistar Users**

Please be advised of changes to the monitoring procedures for recipients of 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Race to the Top - Phase 3 grants (RTT).

- Grant recipients will no longer be required to submit quarterly reports in Indistar. However, grant recipients may continue to create reports to share among their school improvement teams.
- Because quarterly reports will no longer be submitted, the Department will no longer provide coaching comments.
- The Department will continue to use the Indistar platform to collect required federal reports and documentation, such as EDEN data and other documentation (e.g., Assurance of Increased Learning Time [where applicable]).
- The Department will continue to support schools and districts that want to use the Indistar platform for school improvement, professional development and reporting purposes. Indistar offers many features beyond reporting that grant recipients may want to take advantage of.

# Federal Programs

## **Limited English Proficient Exit Determinations**

LEAs must determine which Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have met the definition of English Proficient and can be exited from LEP status. The SIS code of any student exited from LEP status should be changed from (02) to (01) and the student's academic performance should be monitored for two years after being exited. Determinations (and subsequent exiting) should be completed by January 6, 2016. The criteria for determining proficiency can be found in [Bulletin 111, §4001: Proficient in English](#). Please contact either your POC or Melanie Mayeux at [melanie.mayeux@la.gov](mailto:melanie.mayeux@la.gov) if you have any questions.

# Talent

## **Connecting the Dots with Stem Academy Training**

District and school level administrators have the opportunity to attend a **Connecting the Dots with STEM Academy** workshop sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Discovery Education.

In the workshop, participants will:

- Immerse themselves in STEM teaching and learning
- Explore STEM resources
- Experience instructional strategies that promote STEM skill building
- Examine data about future STEM career opportunities in Louisiana
- Begin creating their own STEM definition and strategy

Two full-day workshops are offered:

- **January 13** in Baton Rouge
- **January 14** in Minden

The deadline to register is today, **December 15, 2015**. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

## Education in the News

[High school seniors will be required to apply for financial aid](#)

[Lafayette schools get grant to help train special education students for jobs](#)

[Edwards names 52-member panel to study K-12 issues](#)

### LDOE Contacts

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