

Louisiana Believes

Louisiana Special School District Update
October 2018



Louisiana Special Schools Review Timeline

As a response to concerns about the student outcomes and opportunities in each of Louisiana's three Special Schools, the LDOE released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in July 2017 for an external evaluator to review each school and provide recommendations on how each could become a model of excellence in the state.

Timeline	
Spring 2017	Worked with the Office of State Procurement to develop RFP
July 2017	Released RFP
September 2017	Evaluated proposals and selected an external reviewer
October 2017	BESE approved contract with the Education Development Center
October 2017-February 2018	Evaluation conducted using data analysis, school visits and interviews; report developed
March 2018	Findings and recommendations presented to LDOE, BESE, and stakeholders
March 2018-July 2018	SSD Superintendent search
July 2018	SSD leadership appointed

Louisiana Special Schools Evaluation Team Members

EDC/Urban Collaborative

- Lauren Katzman, Executive Director
- Brianna Roche, Data Analyst
- Stephanie Downey Toledo, Project Manager

Perkins School for the Blind

- Ed Bosso, Superintendent
- Wendy Buckley, Assistive Technology Specialist/ Teacher
- Pat McCall, Education Director

American School for the Deaf

- Jeff Bravin, Executive Director
- Jennifer DelConte, Director of Education

Cotting School

- Krista Macari, Chief Academic Officer
- Larainne Wilson, Director of Upper School Services

Louisiana Special Schools

Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

“When these recommendations are in place, SSD will become a shared network of expertise and resources supporting all of the state of Louisiana.”

- Leaders have the appropriate levels of expertise;
- SSD has the appropriate support and guidance;
- SSD is organized so that decision-making related to operations is at the district level and instruction is at the school level;
- Resources are allocated strategically;
- There is clarity as to where the schools exist on the continuum of educational placements;
- There are staff recruitment and retention plans in place;
- There are districtwide supports to guide and build transition services, student independence and self-advocacy, residential/school connections; security/emergency response, and professional school culture;
- Each school is focused on a vision and mission; and
- Each school holds high academic standards and provides options for all students to participate in these high standards.

Building a Model of Excellence District

- 1. Redesign the position of SSD Superintendent.** The role of Superintendent will be redesigned to focus on developing a statewide model of excellence in serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or identified as having other low-incidence disabilities. The Department will launch a national search for a leader who has extensive experience in the education of students with low-incidence disabilities and is an expert in managing systemic change. This leader will be selected by the State Superintendent of Education after a series of public and private interviews.
- 2. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the SSD organizational and financial structure.** A management consultant will analyze the SSD's organizational structure and finances to provide a clear overview of the current landscape of the district to the new leader once he or she begins.
- 3. Prepare regular SSD updates to BESE.** The new leader will create a new strategic plan for the district to become a statewide model of excellence and will present regular updates to BESE on the plan and on progress toward achieving its goals.

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Louisiana Special School District Strategic Framework

The SSD serves over 1800 students annually across Louisiana in three schools, four Office of Juvenile Justice sites, 8 Department of Corrections sites, one Office of Behavioral Health, one Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and three state affiliated private hospitals.

Special School District Services

Site	Grades Served
Louisiana School for the Deaf	PK - 12th
Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired	PK - 12th
Louisiana Special Education Center	PK - age 32
Office of Juvenile Justice	7th - 12th
Department of Corrections	12th - age 25
Office of Behavioral Health	K - age 25
Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities	4th - age 25
State Affiliated Private Hospitals	3rd - 12th

SSD Mission, Vision and Core Values

Vision: To empower students to turn challenges into opportunities as big as their dreams

Mission: To provide compassionate, collaborative, and innovative educational opportunities for students with low incidence disabilities, meeting each student's unique needs

Core Values

- **Unity** – We will achieve our common goal of serving the diverse needs of our students by celebrating and building on each other's strengths, knowledge and skills.
- **Collaboration & Innovation** – As a unique conglomerate of educational functions with a unified goal, collaboration is required to accelerate our students' success. Honoring individual differences and perspectives leads to open-minded, innovative solutions to complex problems.
- **Trust** – We commit to forming relationships of integrity through honesty and open communication.
- **Compassion** – We will serve our students with compassion, understanding their individual challenges, and continue to be a place of inspiration and community for all students.
- **Commitment** – We will strive for excellence in everything we do by always placing students' needs and interests first and remaining accountable for the outcomes of our efforts.
- **Results** – The results we achieve as we strive for educational excellence allow us to celebrate successes and drive us to achieve even more.
- **Hope** – We will approach every day with a hopeful attitude and instill this same positive attitude in all of our students.

Strategic Priorities

The SSD strategic priorities will ensure 100% of the students served in our schools and programs leave with a clear path to success.

The SSD will be a unified school system that provides exemplar services to students with low incidence disabilities and effective professional development and technical assistance to Louisiana's students, families, and school systems. We will do this by:

- 1.) Unifying Systems of Support
- 2.) Ensuring Excellent Schools and Programs
- 3.) Building Innovative Partnerships
- 4.) Proving What's Possible

SSD Student Strategic Goals

The SSD will use these goals to measure our progress toward our vision, mission and strategic priorities:

- 1) 100% of SSD students will meet their annual growth targets.
- 2) 100% of SSD students achieve Mastery performance in reading, writing and numeracy by 3rd grade.
- 3) 100% of SSD students will have access to training and employment opportunities available in their Jump Start Region.
- 4) 100% of students graduate from SSD schools with credentials for a clear path to college or career.
- 5) 100% of students exiting programs operated by Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) facilities will transition to an appropriate education or workforce program.

SSD Statewide Strategic Goals

The SSD will use these goals to measure our progress toward our vision, mission and strategic priorities:

- 6) 100% of students in Louisiana with a visual impairment or deafness enter Kindergarten ready to learn.
- 7) 100% of families in Louisiana with students experiencing a visual impairment or deafness will be offered services by SSD.
- 8) 100% of school systems have access to professional development opportunities provided by the SSD.
- 9) 100% of school systems will have access to certified or licensed professionals who serve students with low incidence disabilities through state approved certification and training partnerships established by the SSD.

Next Steps

The SSD draft strategic framework is available for public comment through November 9, 2018.

Milestone	Date
SSD draft strategic framework released	October 16, 2018
Alexandria Listening Session 5400 Coliseum Blvd Alexandria, LA 71303	October 22, 2018 6pm-7:30pm
Baton Rouge Listening Session 2888 Brightside Lane Baton Rouge, LA 70820	October 30, 2018 6pm- 7:30pm
Public comment due	November 9, 2018
BESE Update	December 11, 2018