

Louisiana Believes

**Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting
September 27, 2017**

Public Comment Procedures

Public Comment Overview

- Comments will be allowed on all agenda items for a maximum of three minutes per person
 - The panel will receive all comments and may engage in further dialogue on the agenda item as a result of the comments received
- A person may only comment once per agenda item unless allowed an exception by the chair
- Comment cards must be submitted to the chair or LDE staff member prior to the vote on the motion
- The order and time of comment is left solely to the chair
- Persons making public comments shall identify themselves and the group they represent, if applicable
- Persons addressing the panel shall:
 - confine remarks to the merits of a specific agenda item before the panel
 - refrain from attacking a panel member's motives
 - address all remarks through the chair
 - refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending
 - refrain from disturbing the meeting

Approval of July 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Objectives

- Approve [minutes of July 12, 2017 meeting](#)
- Review annual report draft

Consideration of a progress update on focus areas for
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds

Objectives

- Review the process for developing focus areas for IDEA funds
- Understand progress towards focus areas

Background and Development Process for Louisiana's IDEA 611 Draft Grant Application

Historically, Louisiana's IDEA grant applications have been developed with an emphasis on continuing existing activities and partnerships and making minor spending adjustments based on cost inflation and feedback from the field. While there is value in the continuity of how state level IDEA funds are spent, it also limits the states ability to be responsive to current needs of students, LEAs, and the special education community. Therefore, the LDOE committed to taking a hard look at the use of IDEA set aside funds and developing the [Federal Fiscal Year \(FFY\) 17 IDEA grant application](#) based on the current needs of the state.

In the Fall of 2016 the LDOE began analyzing the use of IDEA set aside funds and established a process for developing an IDEA grant application based on set of funding priorities that will address the current needs of our state. As a result the FFY 17 IDEA draft grant application is rooted in a set of guiding principles, priority areas, and proposed activities to be considered for funding by the set aside portion of the grant and will culminate with a competitive search for partnerships to carry out the activities and priorities as necessary.

Funding Priority Areas

Louisiana believes that all students, even those with the most significant disabilities, deserve an education that prepares them to be independent and successful in life after high school. The IDEA FFY 17 draft grant application prioritizes funding activities and initiatives for the 2017-2018 school year that will support:

1. Building a workforce that is prepared to respond to the needs of all students with disabilities;
2. Developing standards aligned tools and resources that support the growth of students with disabilities and minimizes redundant work across the state;
3. Providing support for understanding and appropriately responding to the unique ways different disabilities manifest in the classroom; and
4. Establishing structures that ensure students have their individual needs identified and appropriately supported provided as early as possible and ensure students experience effective transitions to life after high school.

Necessary Activities

In addition to the priority areas, the IDEA FFY 17 draft grant application includes a plan for activities that the state must conduct to ensure the provision of FAPE is available to students across the state.

Necessary Activities:

- Implement a monitoring and complaint investigation system *
- Support the provision of assessment accommodations and implement an alternate assessment
- Employ staff to provide assistance and support to LEAs
- Support the special education services for students enrolled in programs supported by the special school district
- Provide support and professional learning opportunities for families
- Maintain a Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) *

* Indicates that this is a requirement of the IDEA

Louisiana's IDEA 611 Grant Application Timeline

- **December 2016 - March 2017:** Work group meetings and consultation
- **January 25, 2017:** SEAP discussion of funding priority areas
- **March 10, 2017:** IDEA grant draft application posted on LDOE website
- **March 29 - April 30, 2017:** Public comment period
- **May 1 - May 8, 2017:** Final revisions to application based on public comment
- **May 9, 2017:** IDEA Part B 611 grant application finalized and mailed to OSEP
- **Summer- Fall 2017:** Louisiana receives IDEA Part B 611 grant award and begins implementing priorities for the 2017-2018 school year
 - This includes releasing competitive applications for partnerships with the LDOE to implement priorities where appropriate

Focus Area 1 Progress

Building a workforce that is prepared to meet the needs of all students with disabilities

Activities to date	Projected Funding	IDEA Grant Application Category
Grant awards to Believe and Prepare partners to implement programs focused on increasing the number of special education teachers across the state	\$240,000	L
Recruit and implement a cohort of Teacher Leader Advisors focused on producing resources to support special education students	\$90,000	J
Provide allocations to teacher preparation providers to support the transition to the preparation competencies that prepare teachers to work with students with disabilities.	\$60,000	L
Provide allocation to LEAs and preparation providers to support stipends to teacher residents and mentors working with students with disabilities.	\$293,875	L
Total to date	\$638,875	
Remaining Balance	\$1,040,755	

Focus Area 2 Progress

Developing standards aligned tools and resources that support the growth of students with disabilities and minimizes redundant work across the state

Activities to date	Projected Funding	IDEA Grant Application Category
Regional technical assistance and professional development on using technology to support students with disabilities in the classroom	\$1,600,000	O and P
Total to date	\$1,600,000	
Remaining Balance	\$9,160,100	

Focus Area 3 Progress

Providing support for understanding and appropriately responding to the unique ways different disabilities manifest in the classroom		
Activities to date	Projected Funding	IDEA Grant Application Category
Implementation partnership to provide statewide capacity building for Autism and Related Disorders	\$500,000	M
Grant awards to support regional implementation of Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports	\$425,000	K
Round 1 implementation of the high cost services program	\$4,000,000	U
Released RFA to identify partner to provide statewide capacity building for supporting students with disabilities who have complex medical needs	\$160,000	M
Special Schools Evaluation Process	\$200,000	M
Total to date	\$5,285,000	
Remaining Balance	\$893,320	

Focus Area 4 Progress

Establishing structures that ensure students have their individual needs identified and appropriately supported provided as early as possible and ensure students experience effective transitions to life after high school

Activities to date	Projected Funding	IDEA Grant Application Category
JAG AIM High awards to LEAs to support middle school students with disabilities with leadership and career preparation skills	\$147,720	Q
Awards to six partnerships across the state between LEAs and IHES to build transition programs for students with significant disabilities.	\$350,000	Q
Award to university partner to support schools with building structures for appropriate identification of special education needs	\$150,000	M
Total to date	\$330,000	
Remaining Balance	\$1,394,630	

Other Activities Progress

Necessary Activities		
Activities to date	Projected Funding	IDEA Grant Application Category
Awards for partnerships to provide support for families of students with disabilities.	\$650,000	J
Total to date	\$650,000	
Remaining Balance	\$8,497,944	



Consideration of a discussion of the Special Education
Advisory Panel bylaws

Objectives

- Consider revisions to the bylaws to increase the membership to 23 members

SEAP Continuous Improvement Timeline

- **September 2016-** panel retreat; initial discussion of establishing norms for membership rotation and selection
- **October 2016-** panel adopts rotation cycle including specific members rotating off in July 2017, July 2018, and July 2019
- **January 2017-** revisit membership rotation in preparation for spring interview process
- **March- May 2017-** advertise, interview, and select candidates for vacant roles
- **July 2017-** establish plan for adding two additional roles specific to individuals with disabilities and parents of students with disabilities; outline plan to fill 19th vacant seat with representative of Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) who is also an individual with a disability or a parent of a student with a disability
- **July 2017-September-** advertise, interview, and select candidate for LDH seat
- **September 2017-** consider bylaw revision to increase membership
- **October 2017-** advertise, interview, and select candidates for vacant roles
- **November 2017-** panel meeting with 23 members aligned with bylaws and IDEA

July 12th Recommendation

The co-chairs present the following recommendations for panel consideration:

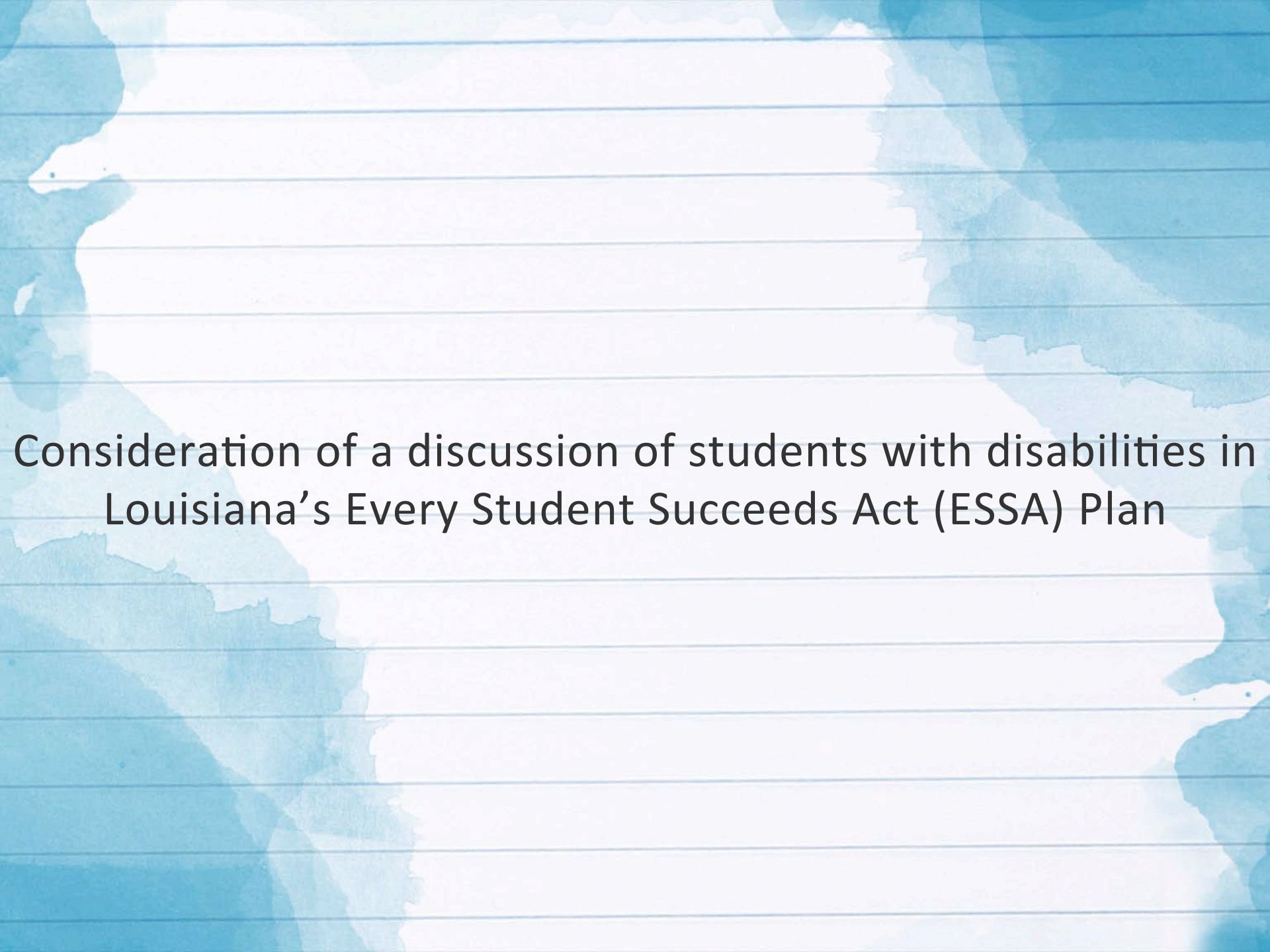
- 1.) Solicit applications for the 19th seat on the panel in the category of teacher or State agency providing related services (with preference to given to a parent/ individual with a disability)
- 2.) At the September 2017 meeting consider revisions to page 2 section 1 of the bylaws to read “The SEAP shall consist of no less than 13 and no more than 23 members appointed from....”
- 3.) Solicit applications for four additional members from the categories of parents and individuals with disabilities.

Proposed Revision for Consideration

ARTICLE III: Membership

Section 1 – Members

The SEAP shall consist of no less than 11 and no more than ~~19~~ 23 members appointed from a pool of applicants by the State Superintendent of Education, shall be representative of the state population and shall be composed of individuals involved in or concerned with the education of students with disabilities. The panel must include panel members that fill each of the roles listed below, understanding that panel members may represent more than one role.



Consideration of a discussion of students with disabilities in
Louisiana's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan

Objectives

- Understand next steps with implementation of the Louisiana's ESSA plan
- Understand Louisiana's plan for submitting an alternate assessment participation waiver

Feedback on Louisiana's ESSA State Plan

- On April 15, following a year of stakeholder engagement and directives received from BESE, the LDE submitted Louisiana's proposed [ESSA State Plan](#) to the U.S. Department of Education for review and approval.
- The proposed plan addresses requirements tied to the receipt of federal education funding and sets forth Louisiana's long-term K-12 education plan for increasing student achievement and ensuring equitable student access to a high-quality education.
- Independent organizations have evaluated state plans and issued national reports summarizing their strengths and weaknesses.
- The U.S. Department of Education approved Louisiana's plan in August 2017.

Alternate Assessment Participation Waiver

ESSA made changes to alternate assessment participation.

- ESSA limits the total number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed statewide with an alternate assessment to 1.0% of the total number of students in the state who are assessed in that subject.

Previous Law	New Law
1% cap on the percentage of the total tested student population that could count as proficient on the alternate assessment.	1% cap on the percentage of the total tested student population that can participate on the alternate assessment.

- ESSA establishes a **state** cap, **not** an LEA cap. A state cannot prohibit an individual LEA from assessing more than 1% of its students with an alternate assessment. However, LEAs that exceed the 1% cap must engage in certain activities.

Alternate Assessment Participation Waiver

ESSA provides the opportunity for states to request a waiver from the 1% alternate assessment participation cap. LDOE anticipates that the state will exceed the 1% participation cap in English language arts and math and plans to submit a waiver request. To do this, both the state and LEAs that exceed the cap must take certain actions and meet certain criteria.

Requirements for **LEAs** that exceeded the 1% alternate assessment participation cap

- Submit a justification for exceeding the 1% cap to LDOE
 - Provide assurance that the LEA followed the state's guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment
 - Provide assurance that the LEA will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking the alternate assessment

Requirements for **states** that exceed the 1% alternate assessment participation cap

- Make all justifications publicly available (without revealing personally identifiable information)
- Provide oversight to LEAs that exceed the 1% cap
- Submit a waiver to the U.S. Department of Education

Alternate Assessment Participation Waiver

ESSA requires states to submit a waiver request 90 days prior to the alternate assessment testing window. LDOE is planning to submit a waiver request in early November.

Key Activities

Target Date	Activity
September 27 th	LDOE outlines ESSA requirements at SEAP
September 27 th	LDOE posts notice of intent to submit a waiver for public comment
October 5 th	LDOE hosts Special Education Leaders webinar
October 6 th	LEAs receive 1% cap package
October 10 th	LDOE conducts webinar for LEAs who must submit a justification
October 21 st	Public comment closes
November 7 th	LDOE submits waiver to U.S. Department of Education
Fall 2017- Winter 2018	LDOE conducts reviews of any LEA who exceeded the 1% cap

Consideration of a discussion of supports for students with disabilities in the 2017-2018 school year

Objectives

- Understand current initiatives that support improved outcomes for students with disabilities including:
 - State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Transition
 - The Louisiana Special Schools Evaluation
 - Special Education Guidebook

SPDG Transition

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) program provides grants to help states reform and improve their systems for personnel preparation and professional development of individuals providing educational services to improve results for children with disabilities.

This is a federally funded program supported through the U.S. Department of Education. LDOE was competitively awarded a 5-year SPDG grant in 2016.

Louisiana's SPDG program is focused on improving English language arts (ELA) outcomes for students with disabilities in grades three through five through implementation of:

- Data-based decision making
- Evidence-based literacy practices
- Coaching
- Family Partnerships

This work is aligned with our State Systemic Improvement Plan.

SPDG Transition

Beginning October 1, 2017, implementation of Louisiana's SPDG grant will transition to direct management by the LDOE to develop a clear, coherent professional development system that is aligned to the Louisiana's academic priorities. This transition will further the goal of building a comprehensive system that is responsible for and working towards improving outcomes for students with disabilities and will:

- Provide greater alignment with Louisiana's [ESSA plan](#),
- Provide more funds to expand professional development support for participating LEAs, expand impact to additional students, and scale-up tools and resources to educators across the state, and
- Increase the state's capacity, leading to a more sustainable structure that results in improved professional development for educators, and improved literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

SPDG Transition

Louisiana's SPDG program is focused on improving English language arts (ELA) outcomes for students with disabilities in grades three through five.

Immediate focus for the 2017-2018 school year:

- Ensure teachers are aware of and effectively provide supports for students with disabilities during whole-class instruction based on data from curriculum-aligned assessments.
- Ensure teachers provide for and use small-group instruction flexibly and based on data from curriculum-aligned assessments to ensure students with disabilities receive additional supports.
- Ensure participating school systems have resources and program those resources to support educators as they implement whole-class and small-group instruction for students with disabilities.
- Partner with family training / support center to deepen connections between families and ELA academic content.

SPDG Transition

Louisiana's SPDG program is focused on improving English language arts (ELA) outcomes for students with disabilities in grades three through five.

Long-term goal:

By the end of the grant, a full professional development system is implemented to support students with disabilities.

- The system helps students with disabilities read, understand, and express understanding of complex, grade-level texts through whole-class instruction, small-group interventions, and intensive interventions. The system scales tools and resources across the state.
- The program ensures families have the tools and resources to support their children with disabilities towards mastering grade-level ELA standards.

Louisiana Special Schools Evaluation

In July 2017 the LDOE released a request for proposals for an external evaluator to conduct and evaluation of Louisiana's Special Schools serving students with disabilities (Louisiana School for the Deaf, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, and the Louisiana Special Education Center).

Specifically, the LDOE sought one contractor to serve as the lead evaluator and work with subcontractors with specific expertise for the specific environments of each school to conduct an evaluation and produce a report with recommendations that can inform each school's plan for improvement under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Louisiana Special Schools Evaluation

Specifically, LDOE required a contractor to provide a report that outlines the following information for each school:

1. Service delivery model and how it compares to national models of excellence,
2. Administrative and staffing structure and its ability to effectively address the unique needs of the school's student population,
3. Use of state and federal funds to design instructional programs that are culturally responsive to the student population and aligned to national models of excellence,
4. Implementation of Louisiana's graduation pathways for students with disabilities.

The report will also provide recommendations on the following:

5. The appropriateness of the role each school plays within the larger system of schools; specifically the role of segregated schools serving specific populations of students with disabilities,
6. The appropriate student population to be served based on the mission of the specific school, and
7. Actions necessary to achieve a comprehensive program of excellence for the students served in each school, including how these schools should coordinate with other schools and school systems across Louisiana in a functional way.

Special Schools RFP

Timeline

Spring 2017	Work with the Office of State Procurement to develop RFP
July 2017	Release RFP
September 2017	Evaluate proposals and select winner
October 2017	BESE considers contract
October-December 2017	Evaluations conducted and reports developed
Winter 2018	Review results and work with stakeholders to determine next steps

Special Education Guidebook

This fall the LDOE will be releasing a Special Education Guidebook to provide school and system leaders with information and guidance on creating strong plans for their schools that ensure proven, quality practices for students with disabilities.

Four Focus Areas:

- Early and accurate identification
- High quality instruction
- High quality services and support
- Coordinated and timely transitions planning and services

Follow-up/ Next Steps