Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS:

SUMMER 2014

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
louisiana Believes

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORK UNDERWAY IN LOUISIANA

Act 3 (2012) charged the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education with unifying the multiple publicly-funded early childhood programs to create a high quality statewide system. Two cohorts of community network pilots have launched to build innovative, coordinated approaches to ensure all at-risk children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. These pilots have a shared vision for:

- *High standards for what children should learn and what excellent teaching looks like*
- *Supporting and rewarding teachers who are excellent at interacting with children and guiding their learning*
- *Families being able to apply through coordinated processes and being satisfied with their children's experience*
- *Consistent funding levels across programs based on serving children well*

Led by these community pilots, the state will expand early childhood community networks in Fall 2014. All communities are expected to have a pilot in place and be implementing high standards, support for teachers and coordinated enrollment processes during the 2015-16 year.

HOW COORDINATED ENROLLMENT HELPS CHILDREN

Improving access is central to ensuring all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. However, current enrollment processes are very complicated for families. Current challenges include:

- *Families do not have a primary contact to learn about all early childhood programs in the community.*
- *Families have to go to too many places at different times to determine if they are eligible for a program and apply.*
- *Families may be on a waitlist for one provider while another in the community has empty seats.*

No single provider (schools, Head Start, or child care) can serve all families and prepare all children. Therefore, each community has to work together. Coordinated enrollment results in the most number of children being served as:

- *Families know of all available seats,*
- *Families have an easy way to know what they are eligible for and apply, and*
- *Families do not occupy more than one seat, thus ensuring maximum use of available slots*

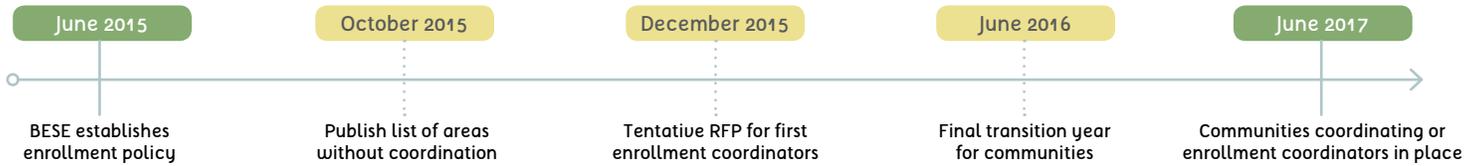# LEGISLATION SEEKS TO IMPROVE COORDINATION

Act 717 (SB 533) of the 2014 Legislative Session required an assessment of the extent to which early childhood providers coordinate their enrollment efforts.

As defined by the law, coordination involves four key areas:

1. **Coordinated Information Campaign**: Inform families about the availability of publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs serving children four years of age or younger;
2. **Coordinated Eligibility Determination**: Coordinate enrollment, eligibility criteria, and waiting lists to ensure that families are referred to other available publicly-funded early childhood programs should they be ineligible for or unable to access their primary choice;
3. **Coordinated Application**: Collect family preferences regarding enrollment choices for publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs; **AND**
4. **Matching Based on Preference**: Enroll at-risk children, using available public funds, based upon stated family preferences. *(e.g., a family ranks their preference of sites and communities match the family to their highest ranked preference available)*

Communities that do not begin coordinating enrollment across these four areas will be subject to intervention by BESE. The law specifies that in June 2015, BESE must establish enrollment policies that allow it to appoint enrollment coordinators for communities who do not have a coordinated system in place.

PRELIMINARY COORDINATED ENROLLMENT TIMELINE

June 2015	October 2015	December 2015	June 2016	June 2017
BESE establishes enrollment policy	Publish list of areas without coordination	Tentative RFP for first enrollment coordinators	Final transition year for communities	Communities coordinating or enrollment coordinators in place

RESULTS AND KEY LEARNINGS

In July 2014, every community in Louisiana convened their publicly-funded early childhood providers to complete a brief _self-assessment_ aimed at understanding community coordination across the four areas.

1) **Coordinated enrollment is possible.** Several cohort 1 pilots (Ascension, Cameron, and West Baton Rouge) were able to develop a fully coordinated enrollment system in their first year. The result of their efforts is that families had a much easier time understanding the enrollment process and applying to programs and providers benefitted from a streamlined, collaborative process.

BEST PRACTICE: Ascension Pilot (Cohort 1)

"The pilot really helped catalyze an interest in Ascension to work together to serve families. Our pilot created an online tool for families so in one place and at one time they could know what they were eligible for and apply to all the programs they wanted, submitting their paperwork right then (_www.ascensionearlychildhood.org_). 700 families were able to go through this process at an enrollment day where we supported them with the online tool."

~ Patrice Pujol, Superintendent, Ascension Parish Schools
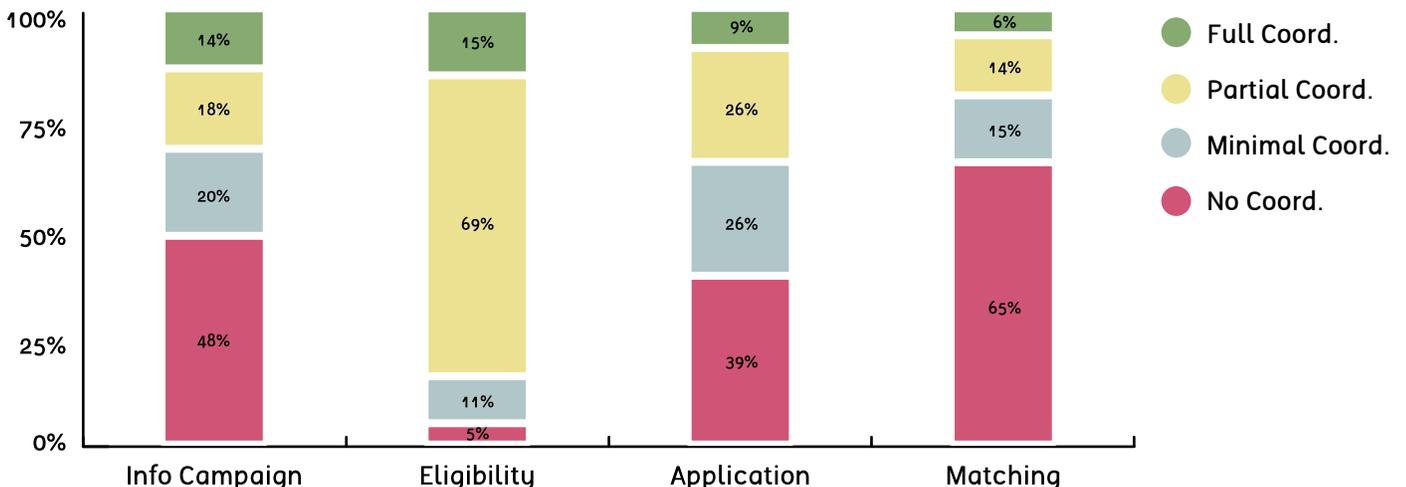
BEST PRACTICE: West Baton Rouge Pilot (Cohort 1)

"All pilot providers in West Baton Rouge came together to create a system that made more sense for families and eased the workload on providers. Through a joint information campaign and application process, we helped families apply to multiple programs without having to navigate different timelines or applications." _www.wbrearlylearning.com_

~ Crystal Leon, Early Childhood Director, West Baton Rouge Parish Schools

2) **All communities self-assessed their practices, showing that most communities are not yet coordinating enrollment.** The self-assessment demonstrates that most communities do not coordinate early childhood enrollment. Coordination across each area is at different levels statewide, but more than half the state is not coordinating or only minimally doing so in three of the four areas.

Each community has different needs they must plan for as they begin to approach this work. As is the case with the pilots, the state will continue to rely on local leaders designing a coordinated system that meets the needs of their community and puts families first. As the coordinated enrollment timeline shows, the state intends for communities to receive the time and support needed to successfully build a local coordinated system.

PERCENT OF COMMUNITIES AT EACH LEVEL OF COORDINATION

	Info Campaign	Eligibility	Application	Matching
Full Coord.	14%	15%	9%	6%
Partial Coord.	18%	69%	26%	14%
Minimal Coord.	20%	11%	26%	15%
No Coord.	48%	5%	39%	65%

BEST PRACTICE: Orleans Pilot (Cohort 1)

"The New Orleans pilot has been working for the past year to engage all providers to develop a framework for coordinated enrollment. We knew we needed to invest the time to get child care providers, charter operators, Head Start, and parents involved in building a system that will ease burdens on families and providers, and ultimately serve more children. We look forward to having all four-year-olds enroll through a coordinated system next year."

~ Tony Recasner, CEO, Agenda for Children

BEST PRACTICE: St. Bernard Parish

"St. Bernard has traditionally provided universal PreK for four-year-olds. As the Head Start grantee, we have been able to coordinate practices between Head Start and PreK. Now, we are working with our child care partners to ensure all families with young children know what options they have in St. Bernard and are supported through the enrollment process."

~ Doris Voitier, Superintendent, St. Bernard Parish Schools

Head Start Association

"Maintaining enrollment is key for Head Start, and the timeline provided for communities to develop local enrollment systems will ensure the needs of Head Start grantees are accounted for and families are well served."

Alvin Jones, President, Louisiana Head Start Association

3) Still developing their systems, but cohort 1 pilots are ahead of rest of state.

Cohort 1 pilots have been able to achieve full coordination on the four key areas at greater frequency than non-pilots. In 2013-14, the state partnered with pilots to estimate how many children were not being served, coordinate communication and make enrollment processes easier for families. As a result, cohort 1 pilots built coordinated information campaigns and improved referral processes. Some of these pilots went a step further, using coordinated applications and matching families based on family preference.

NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES FULLY COORDINATING
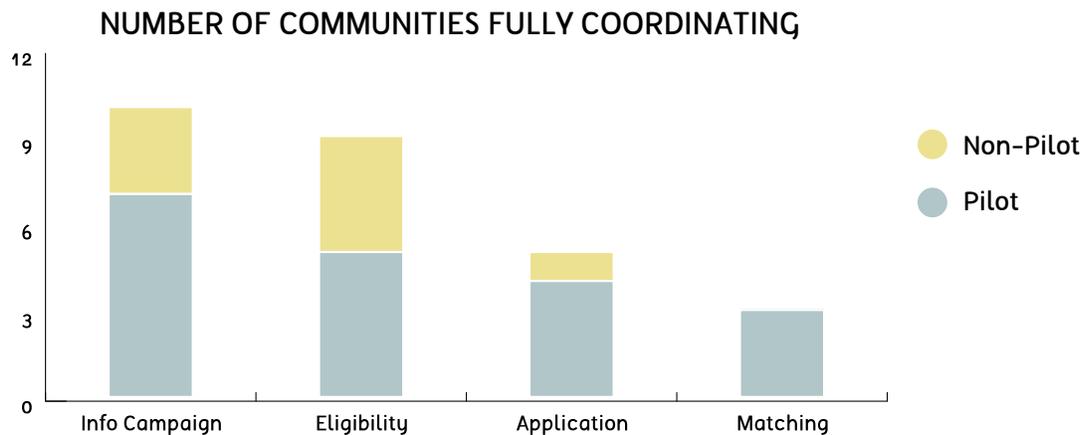
BEST PRACTICE: Ouachita Pilot (Cohort 1)

"Being a Cohort 1 pilot allowed Ouachita providers the opportunity to receive support to begin developing a coordinated enrollment system. From the beginning, we knew our families needed a central place to learn about early childhood options and services in Ouachita parish. Through a coordinated community effort, we were able to launch *www.qualityismychoice.org* in our first year and are continuing to expand our outreach."

~ Maureen Gallagher, Director of Operations & Early Childhood Programs, Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana

BEST PRACTICE: Calcasieu Pilot (Cohort 1)

"Coordinated enrollment was never something we really thought about in Calcasieu. But now that we have nearly achieved it, it is so much better for all of us to work together with families. We learned how important it is to let families know of their child care options especially, because we need as many of our youngest children enrolled so they get the care and education they need."

~ Sheryl Piper, Director of Early Childhood, Calcasieu Parish Schools

4) When communities coordinate, families benefit. Most communities have already begun the work to coordinate eligibility. In many instances, providers are partially coordinating by referring families to other providers when families are not eligible or space is not available. Although not fully coordinated, this partial progress has already resulted in more at-risk children being served.

BEST PRACTICE: Vernon Pilot (Cohort 2)

"Coordinated enrollment led to a drastic increase in enrollment at my child care center from less than 10 children to more than 40. Having the school system, Head Start, and other child care providers work with me helped our community reach more at-risk families."

~ Sharmeen Collins, Love & Laughter Learning Academy

Vernon Pilot (Cohort 2)

"As a military family, we heard of different early childhood programs and settings in the Fort Polk area. It was confusing, but I was able to speak with a pilot leader who really helped my family explore options for our PreK child. I felt armed with the knowledge to make a choice for my son's educational setting. I am confident he is in the appropriate program to meet my family's needs for his education."

~ Katherine Tabalno, Vernon Parent

BEST PRACTICE: Lafayette Pilot (Cohort 1)

"Kindergarten readiness starts at birth. In Lafayette, we needed to find innovative ways to coordinate among all of our providers and support each other. That's why we became a Child Care Resource and Referral agency. In our new role, we can help get all of the providers in our community on the same page about the best ways to work with families and to prepare our kids for K-12 and beyond."

~ Pat Cooper, Superintendent, Lafayette Parish Schools

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2014–15

Every community needs to further develop their coordinated enrollment system, using their self-assessment as a baseline of what they need to focus on first. Every community should at least coordinate information and referrals in 2014–15.

- Cohort 1 and 2 pilots will continue to receive state support and technical assistance.
- Communities that are not yet a pilot will have an opportunity to apply in fall 2014, thus enabling them to access state resources and support in the future.
- In summer 2015, BESE will establish policy outlining the full implementation of coordinated enrollment.
  - ~ *Communities who are coordinating will continue to have autonomy. Communities with little coordination will have time to improve their efforts to avoid having BESE designate a third party coordinator.*

COORDINATED ENROLLMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Legend:
- ● Full Coordination
- ◐ Partial Coordination
- ⊘ Minimal Coordination
- ○ No Coordination
- ● Active Preparation
- ◐ Some Preparation
- ○ No Preparation
- * COHORT 1
- ♦ COHORT 2

Coverage Area	Preparation for Coordination	Coordinated Information Campaign	Coordinated Eligibility Determination	Coordinated Application	Matching Based on Preferences
Statewide Average	◐	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Cohort 1 Pilot Average*	●	⊘	◐	◐	⊘
Acadia	○	○	◐	◐	○
Allen ♦	○	○	○	○	⊘
Ascension*	●	●	●	●	●
Assumption	●	●	◐	●	⊘
Avoyelles	◐	○	⊘	◐	⊘
Beauregard	○	⊘	◐	◐	⊘
Bienville ♦	○	○	◐	○	○
Bossier ♦	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Caddo*	◐	⊘	⊘	⊘	○
Calcasieu*	●	◐	●	●	●
Caldwell	○	◐	◐	◐	◐
Cameron*	●	●	●	◐	◐
Catahoula	○	○	●	○	○
Central	○	○	⊘	◐	○
City of Bogalusa	◐	○	◐	◐	◐
Claiborne	○	⊘	◐	◐	○
Concordia	◐	◐	◐	○	○
De Soto	◐	○	◐	◐	○
East Baton Rouge/Baker ♦	◐	⊘	◐	◐	○
East Carroll	○	○	◐	◐	○
East Feliciana	○	⊘	◐	◐	○
Evangeline	○	⊘	◐	◐	○
Franklin	○	○	◐	⊘	⊘
Grant	○	○	○	○	○
Iberia	◐	⊘	⊘	⊘	○
Iberville*	●	●	●	●	●
Jefferson ♦	○	⊘	◐	○	○
Jefferson Davis ♦	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Lafayette*	●	●	●	◐	◐
Lafourche	◐	⊘	⊘	⊘	◐

Coverage Area	Preparation for Coordination	Coordinated Information Campaign	Coordinated Eligibility Determination	Coordinated Application	Matching Based on Preferences
LaSalle	○	○	◐	○	○
Lincoln/Jackson/Union*	●	◐	●	◐	○
Livingston	○	⊘	◐	⊘	⊘
Madison	○	○	◐	○	○
Morehouse ♦	◐	○	◐	○	○
Natchitoches	○	○	◐	○	○
Orleans*	●	⊘	◐	◐	◐
Ouachita/City of Monroe*	●	●	◐	◐	◐
Plaquemines	○	⊘	◐	○	⊘
Point Coupee*	●	●	◐	◐	⊘
Rapides*	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Red River	○	○	⊘	⊘	○
Richland	◐	○	◐	○	○
Sabine ♦	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
St. Bernard	◐	◐	●	◐	⊘
St. Charles ♦	◐	○	◐	○	○
St. Helena	◐	○	◐	○	○
St. James ♦	◐	⊘	◐	◐	○
St. John ♦	◐	○	◐	◐	○
St. Landry	◐	○	◐	○	○
St. Martin ♦	◐	○	◐	◐	○
St. Mary	◐	⊘	◐	⊘	○
St. Tammany*	●	◐	◐	◐	○
Tangipahoa ♦	◐	○	⊘	○	○
Tensas	○	○	●	○	○
Terrebonne	◐	○	◐	○	○
Vermilion	○	○	○	○	○
Vernon ♦	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Washington	○	○	◐	○	○
Webster	○	⊘	◐	⊘	⊘
West Baton Rouge*	●	●	●	●	●
West Carroll	○	○	●	◐	○
West Feliciana ♦	●	⊘	◐	◐	⊘
Winn ♦	◐	○	◐	○	○
Zachary	○	○	⊘	○	○

NOTE: All data was self-reported by the communities.