

The logo features the text "Louisiana Believes" in a green, hand-drawn font, underlined. The background is a light blue watercolor wash.

Louisiana Believes

**Louisiana Public Charter Schools Program
Best Practices Dissemination Sub-Grant Application**

December 10, 2018

Purpose

Louisiana Believes is built on the premise that Louisiana students are just as capable as any students in America. Louisiana has worked hard to raise expectations for students, and as a result, students are performing at higher levels than ever before. While the state is pleased with its accomplishments, there is still much work to do.

At the root of Louisiana Believes is the belief that an effective teacher is the most critical component of academic success and that teachers are most effective when they have access to a high-quality, standards-based curriculum, ongoing professional development to use that curriculum effectively and data from a focused set of standards-aligned assessments that measure how well students are meeting the outcomes of the high-quality curriculum.

Schools improve when classrooms improve. Thus, staff at all levels of a school system must understand their roles in supporting teachers to implement the curriculum effectively in each classroom. CSP dissemination grants will enable high-quality charter schools and partners they have identified with expertise in curriculum implementation to form communities of practice in which charter school staff with similar roles in different schools learn best practices for supporting effective curriculum implementation.

Eligibility

CSP best practices dissemination sub-grants fund successful Louisiana charter schools to convene communities of practice that will improve student academic achievement. In order to be considered an eligible successful charter school, charter schools must:

- Have opened no later than the 2015-2016 school year
- Satisfy Louisiana's USDOE-approved definition of a high-quality charter school
- Have re-enrolled at least 70% percent of students in the 2015-2016 school year

A list of charter schools in Louisiana that meet these requirements can be found [here](#).

Additionally, charter schools may only apply if authorized by one of the authorizers listed below.

- Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Orleans Parish School Board

Federal guidelines only allow the awarding of CSP best practices dissemination sub-grants to charter schools under the jurisdiction of authorizers whose policies reflect authorizer best practices. For example, authorizers must have policies on record for reviewing and evaluating charter schools under their jurisdiction at least once every five years.

Authorizers may contact David Shepard at david.shepard@la.gov to learn more about how to comply with this requirement.

Awards

Successful charter schools may apply for CSP best practices dissemination awards of up to \$133,000. The LDE will determine award amounts based on the amount requested and the availability of funds.

BESE will allocate CSP best practices dissemination sub-grants to charter school LEAs. Awards on behalf of Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools will be allocated to each charter school's LEA on the condition, required by federal guidelines, that LEAs may not deduct administrative fees unless as part of an arrangement for administrative services to which the charter school and LEA have mutually agreed.

Sub-grant recipients must complete grant activities by March 14, 2019. ¹

¹ The LDE's CSP grant is scheduled to expire on March 14, 2019. If the LDE receives a no-cost grant extension from USDOE, sub-grant recipients will be able to continue completing grant activities for an additional 12-month period; the full 24-month potential grant period is contingent on USDOE approval of consecutive grant extensions and would be calculated based on the beginning date of BESE approval. Sub-grant recipients should not plan for a no-cost extension. LDE staff will inform sub-grant recipients if a no-cost extension is granted by USDOE.

Application Process and Timeline

CSP best practices dissemination sub-grant applications are due December 21, 2018, 3:00pm CST by email to Megha Upadhyaya at megha.upadhyaya@la.gov. Complete applications consist of the following components, described in more detail on next page.

Application Narrative:

- Cover Page
- Project Narrative (4 page limit)
- Approach to Equity (2 page limit)
- Assurances Page

* Appendices:

- Appendix A: CSP budget form
- Appendix B: Approved charter school application
- Appendix C: Approved financial plan
- Appendix D: Authorizer's pre-opening checklist
- Appendix E: Authorizer's performance framework
- Appendix F: Charter contract

* BESE-authorized charter schools are not required to submit Appendices B – E.

The application narrative and Appendices B, D, E and F should be submitted as separate PDF documents. Appendices A and C should be submitted as Excel files.

Each sub-grant application will undergo both a technical review by Department staff and a quality review by an independent panel of three reviewers. Department staff will review each proposal for compliance with state law and policy and with federal CSP guidelines. The independent review panel will assess the quality of all projects. The standards for both the technical and quality reviews can be found in the LDE's CSP best practices dissemination grant rubric on page 8. BESE will vote to allocate new CSP best practices dissemination sub-grants at their August meeting.

Contact

Please contact Megha Upadhyaya at megha.upadhyaya@la.gov with questions.

Application Instructions

Cover Page

Provide a two-page cover page that includes the following information and responds to the following prompts:

- School Name
- Primary point of contact name, email, and phone number
- Name(s) of partner school(s) included in the application

Part 1: CSP Best Practices Dissemination Project

Respond to the following prompts in no more than four pages.

- (1) Describe the community of practice. Include:
 - The name of the organization with expertise in curriculum implementation that will facilitate the community of practice, and a description of the organization's approach to helping schools improve student achievement.
 - A description of the best practices that participating charter schools will learn through the grant.
- (2) Describe the goals that a CSP best practices dissemination sub-grant will enable your community of practice to achieve. Include:
 - The ways in which the sub-grant will support three unique dissemination project objectives.
 - The ways in which the sub-grant will enable the community of practice to achieve Louisiana's CSP performance measures:
 - Improve student achievement for educationally disadvantaged populations
 - Increase the percent of students that achieve proficiency in math and / or ELA on state assessments
 - Increase the percent of students with disabilities in New Orleans that achieve proficiency on state assessments
- (3) Provide a budget narrative that describes the activities that a CSP best practices dissemination sub-grant will enable your community of practice to complete. Include:
 - A description and justification of the way that grant funds will be used
 - If applicable, the way in which CSP funds will be used in conjunction with other federal funds

As Appendix A, complete the CSP Budget Form. The budget form should be submitted as an Excel file and the file name should indicate the applicant name, Appendix A, and Budget Form.

Part 2: Equity

Respond to the prompt below in no more than one page:

- (1) Provide a detailed description of your school's admission process, including admissions requirements, lottery exemptions, lottery weights, and lottery timeline and procedures. You may reference specific page numbers in your approved charter application (Appendix B) or charter contract (Appendix F) if these descriptions are already provided.²

Part 3: Authorizer Review

CSP best practices dissemination sub-grants may only be awarded to Type 1, Type 3, and Type 3b charter schools whose authorizers meet certain standards. Type 1, Type 3, and Type 3b charter schools should submit the following documents that will be assessed against standards for authorizer quality.

² Applicants using a weighted lottery will not receive CSP sub-grants until USDOE confirms Louisiana's compliance with federal requirements for weighted lotteries.

Each document should be saved as a PDF file, except for the financial plan, which should be submitted as an Excel file, and should be submitted as a separate document. Document file names should include the appendix letter, LEA name, and document name.

- **Appendix B:** The charter school's approved charter school application
- **Appendix C:** The charter school's approved financial plan
- **Appendix D:** The local school board's charter school pre-opening checklist
- **Appendix E:** The local school board's performance framework, describing its academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations for the charter school.
- **Appendix F:** The local school board's charter contract with the charter school

Assurances

As the last page of your CSP Best Practices Dissemination sub-grant application, provide a signed assurances document, agreeing to abide by the following assurances:

- (1) Our charter school does not request any waivers of any Federal statutory or regulatory provisions. We do not believe that such waivers are necessary for the successful operation of the charter school. In addition, we understand that RS 17:3996 describes the State rules, generally applicable to public schools, from which charter schools are exempt.
- (2) Our charter school will annually provide the LDE, and through them the USDOE, such information as may be required to determine if our charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives of the charter school.
- (3) Our charter school will cooperate with the LDE, and through them the USDOE, in evaluating the charter school's CSP project.
- (4) [if applicable – district-authorized charter schools only] Our charter school has provided a copy of our CSP best practices dissemination sub-grant application to our authorizer.

Additional Information

Definition of a High-Quality Charter School

In order to qualify as a high-quality charter school, a Louisiana charter school must satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

- Received an “A” letter grade in the most recent school year
- School Performance Score exceeds the District Performance Score of the district in which the charter school is located in the most recent school year
- A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in ELA, as determined by Louisiana’s school-level value-added model
- A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in math, as determined by Louisiana’s school-level value-added model
- A majority of high school students meet or exceed the median score of the predicted composite score range on the Explore, Plan, ACT series, as determined by the ACT series
- BESE-approved alternative charter meeting the top tier of expectations on an Alternative Charter Evaluation Framework

In addition, all high-quality charter schools must satisfy their at-risk requirements and may not have any outstanding notices of concern or breach issued by their authorizer.

Overview of CSP Performance Measures

Increase the number of high-quality charter school authorizers:

- CSP-eligible authorizers annually demonstrate high-quality application and oversight process policies and procedures
- Increase from 9 to 15 the number of non-SEA authorizers that have currently authorized charter schools
- Increase by 5% annually the number of non-SEA authorizers have a charter school portfolio with an average school performance equivalent to at least a “C”

Increase the number of high-quality charter schools in Louisiana:

- At least 5 aspiring charter organizations incubated through dissemination grants are authorized
- At least 10 high-quality charter schools are authorized annually, including 5 annually by non-SEA authorizers
- All BESE-authorized charters and CSP sub-grant recipients meet all pre-opening requirements established by their authorizer

Improve achievement for educationally disadvantaged students in Louisiana charter schools:

- 90% of CSP sub-grant recipients with eligible grades demonstrate 5 points of growth annually from their Pre-Assessment Index or a letter grade of “C”
- At least 6 high-quality, data-driven best practices dissemination projects are funded
- Increase to 46% the percentage of students with disabilities in New Orleans who demonstrate proficiency on state assessments

CSP Best Practices Dissemination Sub-Grant Rubric

In order to receive funding, CSP applicants must meet all standards for which they are eligible. BESE-authorized charter schools must meet all standards in Parts 1 and 2, and district-authorized charter schools must meet all standards in Parts 1, 2, and 3.

Information submitted to meet standards labeled as “technical standards” will be reviewed by Department staff for compliance with Louisiana law or CSP regulations, as applicable. All other standards are quality standards and will be reviewed by a team of independent evaluators.

Part 1: CSP Best Practices Dissemination Plans

Question 1: Project Description

- (A) The external organization facilitating the community of practice has a logical approach for helping schools improve student achievement.
- (B) The project convenes staff who have the same or similar roles in different schools or CMOs for a set of shared learning experiences.

Question 2: Alignment with LDE CSP Goals

- (C) The project clearly delineates three distinct outcomes to be achieved.
- (D) The project will improve Louisiana’s outcomes on all three LDE CSP performance measures listed in this question.

Question 3: Budget Plan

- (E) All project expenditures support the community of practice.
- (F) Projected expenditures align with the school’s use of funds secured from other federal and state grant programs, if applicable.

Part 2: Equity

- (A) [Technical Standard] Rules for admitting students, including student sub-groups, and admissions procedures comply with BESE policies described in Bulletin 126, §2705–2711.
- (B) [Technical Standard] When applied to the last cohort of students admitted prior to the implementation of a weighted lottery, or the average of the last two cohorts if applicable, the charter school’s lottery weights would produce a cohort of new students whose demographics no more than equal the school’s at-risk requirements.³

Part 3: Authorizer Review

Appendices B and C:

- (A) [Technical Standard] The charter school’s approved application and financial plan includes the required CSP sub-grant application components identified in Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002, section 5203(b)(3).

Appendix D:

- (B) [Technical Standard] The local school board’s charter school pre-opening checklist includes, at a minimum, all items on the LDE’s charter school pre-opening checklist.

Appendix E:

- (C) [Technical Standard] The local school board’s performance framework articulates academic performance expectations that align with the LDE’s CSP performance target for all authorizers have a charter school portfolio with an average school performance equivalent to at least a “C”.
- (D) [Technical Standard] The organizational criteria included in the local school board’s performance framework ensure compliance with all laws and policies applicable to charter schools.

³ Applicants using a weighted lottery approved by a federal court in order to comply with a federal desegregation court order are exempt from this standard.

- (E) [Technical Standard] At a minimum, the financial criteria included in the local school board's performance framework include a review of the charter school's annual financial audit to evaluate the charter school's financial viability.
- (F) [Technical Standard] The local school board's performance framework includes an oversight timeline in which the school board conducts an annual evaluation of each charter school against the identified performance criteria.

Appendix F:

- (G) [Technical Standard] The responsibilities of the local school board and the responsibilities of the charter school are clearly articulated in the local school board's charter contract with the charter school.