WHAT IS A READY START NETWORK?

Prior to the passage of Act 3 in 2012, Louisiana had no statewide unified system of early childhood care and education. Louisiana's unified system of 65 community networks helps to maximize resources for early childhood, streamline enrollment processes for families, and support teachers across diverse settings. In 2018, legislation passed that allowed the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to create and fund pilot programs, called Ready Start Networks, to expand those local responsibilities to include access to quality.

Driven by local data and context, Ready Start Networks will:

- assess local demand for early care and education and create a blueprint to address gaps;
- recruit stakeholders to expand early childhood coalition;
- establish local governance structures to make collaborative decisions; and
- implement fundraising strategies to satisfy local demand.

WHAT SUCCESS HAVE READY START NETWORKS HAD IN LOUISIANA?

Launched in 2019, there are currently 26 pilot networks.

"Becoming a Ready Start Network helped our team and advisors take an opportunity to take stock on what we were doing well, assess what we needed to improve, ask bigger questions about how to address our City's early childhood needs, and facilitated a new plan for a brighter future for our City's youngest learners."

- Jen Roberts, Executive Director, New Orleans Early Education Network (NOOEN)

"Having a diversified leadership group that represents the perspectives of local educators, philanthropists, business, advocacy groups, and others is the best way to ensure we can address local needs of local children. Ready Start Networks provide a comprehensive framework to bring these interests together and align their efforts to help ensure strong local support for our earliest learners."

- Tony Davis, BESE member, District 4

WHAT’S NEXT FOR READY START NETWORKS?

Through their newly established local governance, Ready Start Networks will raise community awareness of the importance and need for early care and education and begin taking steps to develop local funding and resources to support quality and access.