

# CORE CONNECTION

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FOR LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES



August 12, 2020

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## Teleworking Logs

**Due Weekly**

As a reminder, each employee working remotely should continue to download and complete the weekly [teleworking log](#), or a similar log, and submit to their supervisor for approval at the beginning of each week (outlining tasks) and at the end of each week (outline notes relative to each task).

Employees continuing to work remotely every day each week (Monday - Friday) should continue to download and complete the weekly [teleworking log](#), or a similar log, and submit to their supervisor for approval each week.

## COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance for LDOE Employees

### Phase Two Extended

On Tuesday, August 4th, [Gov. John Bel Edwards extended the Phase Two](#) order until Friday, August 28th, including the statewide mask mandate.

In alignment with guidance issued from the Governor's Office and LDH, the Department has provided the [COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance for LDOE Employees](#).

#### **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)**

We would like to remind all employees of the FFCRA Act which requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020. For more information, click [here](#).

#### **Facial Coverings Required**

A mask, scarf, bandanna or other such facial covering **must be worn** upon entering and leaving the office building. A mask **must be worn** anytime you step away from your desk and enter into a common space such as hallways, walkways, stairwells, elevators, kitchens, break rooms, meeting rooms, and restrooms.

\*\*Employees assigned to private offices or individual cubicles may remove the facial covering **only while working alone** within their designated work space. The facial covering must fully cover the mouth and nose area and may not contain images or text that is inappropriate or may be offensive to others.

Please note that **not all staff are expected to report to the Claiborne building** at this time. If you are expected to return to the building, your Assistant Superintendent will notify you before the end of the week. Staff who do not regularly report to the Claiborne building should continue to work remotely unless otherwise specified by your Assistant Superintendent.

The health and wellness of our employees is of the utmost importance. As such, remote work authorization will continue for employees with high-risk medical conditions and childcare needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your manager.

As always, thank you for your incredible dedication during these uncertain times and for your continued commitment to providing the necessary supports for all Louisiana students.

## FY19-20 PES Final Evaluations

### July 1st - August 31st

The FY19-20 performance year is coming to an end and the **FY19-20 PES Final Evaluation Period** will begin July 1st. Supervisors should review each classified employee's FY19-20 planning session and midyear evaluation in preparation for conducting and rendering their final evaluation. Between **July 1st and August 31st**, supervisors should schedule time to meet with each employee to review and provide feedback on their progress for the entire performance year, and discuss their final performance rating.

IMPORTANT PES DATES	
<b>July 1 - August 31</b>	FY19-20 PES Final Evaluation Period
<b>November 2</b>	FY19-20 PES Final Evaluation Forms DUE to HR
<b>July 1 - September 30</b>	FY20-21 PES Planning Period
<b>November 2</b>	FY20-21 PES Planning Forms ( <u>copies</u> ) DUE to HR

Employees hired or promoted to a new position on or before June 30th will need an FY19-20 PES Planning. If the newly hired or promoted employee has worked less than 3 months in the performance year and it is determined that not enough time has passed to rate the employee's performance, the supervisor may select a rating of "Not Evaluated." The rating of "Not Evaluated" is equivalent to a "Successful" rating and may only be used in accordance with Civil Service Rule 10.6(b).

Before submitting the FY19-20 PES Final Evaluation to HR, please ensure that each PES document submitted accurately contains the following information:

- Employee Name
- Employee Personnel Number

- Civil Service Job Title (i.e. EPC 2)
- Performance Year (2018-2019)
- Evaluating Supervisor Personnel Number
- Second Level Evaluator Personnel Number
- Dates are on or before August 31st and in order (evaluating supervisor, then second level evaluator, and then employee)
- Documentation supporting the rating (if applicable)

If you have questions or concerns regarding PES, evaluations, final ratings, etc., please email [Staci.Johnson2@la.gov](mailto:Staci.Johnson2@la.gov).

## FY20-21 PES Planning Period

### July 1st - September 30th

As we begin conducting FY19-20 PES Final Evaluations, the FY20-21 PES Planning Period is approaching and it is time to begin thinking about goals and expectations for the new performance year. Between July 1st - September 30th, supervisors will establish goals and expectations for their employees and meet with each employee to review the goals and expectations set for the FY19-20 performance year. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely; and support the overall goal or mission of your office.

Each PES should include at least one Work Expectation and one Behavior Expectation. Civil Service has compiled a [Web-based Bank of Expectations](#) to provide supervisors with sample expectations relevant to the performance evaluation system. These sample expectations may be used as listed or modified to more accurately reflect the duties of the employee. Supervisors are not required to use expectations from this site; however, they provide an example of acceptable expectations for employee evaluations.

\*\*As a reminder, all classified fulltime employees should have a PES Planning conducted and submitted to HR within 90 days of their hire date.

Before submitting the FY20-21 PES Planning to HR, please ensure that each PES document submitted accurately contains the following information:

- Employee Name
- Employee Personnel Number
- Civil Service Job Title (i.e. EPC 2)
- Performance Year (2019-2020)
- Evaluating Supervisor Personnel Number
- Second Level Evaluator Personnel Number
- Dates are on or before October 31st and in order (evaluating supervisor, then second level evaluator, and then employee)

The [PES Planning & Evaluation Form](#) can be found on the Google Team Drive (LDOE Documents and Training>Human Resources>Performance Evaluation System). **Keep the original PES document and submit a copy to Human Resources by Monday, November 2, 2020.**

If you have questions or concerns regarding PES, please email [Staci.Johnson2@la.gov](mailto:Staci.Johnson2@la.gov).

## Prohibited Political Activity for Classified Employees

In preparation of the upcoming election season, the Department of State Civil Service would like to remind classified state employees of the "do's and don'ts" of political activity. It is important that classified employees are aware of the restrictions that apply to you, and your spouse, in regards to ALL local, state, and federal elections.

Article 10, Section 9 of the State Constitution and Civil Service Rules 14.1(e), (f), and (g) govern the political activities of classified state employees. The United States Supreme Court has recognized that a state has the right to limit the political activity of its workers in order to ensure the enforcement and application of laws for the common good and not for the good of one candidate or political party. The Supreme Court has also recognized the right of a state to restrict such activity in order to avoid the appearance of such support. **This means that classified state employees must avoid the ACTUAL support of a candidate, party, or faction and avoid the APPEARANCE of giving such support.**

You may click [here](#) to view General Circular Number 2020-048 for specific details related to prohibited political activity.

The prohibited political activity training can be found in [LEO](#) under the **My Training** tab. Simply search **CPTP Prohibited Political Activities WBT** on the left hand side of the screen under **Find**.

If you have questions about what political activities you may or may not be involved in as a classified state employee, please contact the LDOE Human Resources team, or the Department of State Civil Service at P.O. Box 94111, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9111, by phone at (225) 342-8274, or email [scsinfo@la.gov](mailto:scsinfo@la.gov).

## LaCarte and Travel Card Courses

### Annual Cardholder/Approver Certifications Due September 1st

## Annual Cardholder/Approver Due September 1st

The following annual LaCarte and Travel Card Certification courses are available in LEO for Fiscal Year 2021.

- OSP LaCarte P-Card Cert for Approvers
- OSP LaCarte P-Card Cert for Cardholders
- OSP Travel Card Cert for Approvers
- OSP Travel Card Cert for Cardholder

The courses must be completed by all Bank of America LaCarte and Travel cardholders and approvers. Please use Firefox or Chrome when taking these courses, as other browsers may cause issues with receiving credit for course completion.

Please note, the courses contain agreement forms at the end of each course. **The agreement form along with the certification of completion for the course must be completed and printed, AND submitted to LDOE Central Receiving located on the 5th floor in entry 5-264 by September 1, 2020.** The certification from these courses are needed to satisfy the annual compliance requirements set by The Office of State Travel.

**\*\*Any cardholder/approver that has *not* completed the required training or submitted the required forms to Central Receiving by September 1, 2020, will have their cards deactivated until compliance requirements are met.**

Please click [here](#) to view the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Travel Training Guide.

## Access2day Health

### \$0 Co-Pay at Access2day Health Clinics

Were you responsible for one of the 50,000 Access2day Health clinic visits last year? They were a big hit with state employees and their families. Why? **NO CO-PAY, NO OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES, NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!**

All OGB members, including covered spouses and dependents, are ALREADY VIP members if enrolled in one of the following BCBSLA health plans:

- Pelican HRA1000
- Magnolia Local Plus
- Magnolia Open Access
- Magnolia Local

As an OGB member participating in one of the above mentioned BCBSLA health plans, you are automatically enrolled in the Access2day Health program. When you arrive at an Access2day Health clinic, simply present your Access2day Health membership card and your BCBSLA insurance card. You will be placed at the head of the line.

Click [here](#) or download the mobile app for access to:

- Clink Finder
- Ask a Question
- Request Additional Membership Cards
- Learn More About Services Available to Members

Rest assured that all Access2day Health clinics are **safe, clean, and following all CDC guidelines** to protect patients during the COVID-19 pandemic while providing the highest level of care to you.

Don't have a **VIP membership card** or have a question? Call 844.214.9540 and a friendly customer service team member will assist you!

## Live Better Louisiana

### August Newsletter

#### August is National Immunization Awareness Month - "Be Wise and Immunize"

National Immunization Awareness Month is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccinations for people of all ages. This annual observance emphasizes the importance of getting recommended vaccines throughout your life. You have the power to protect yourself and your family against serious diseases through on time vaccination. You can talk to your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional to ensure you and your family are up to date on recommended vaccines. Click [here](#) to learn more information on adult immunizations.

#### Live Better Louisiana Health Capsule - Are your children up to date on their shots?

Have your children gotten their age-appropriate vaccines? Blue Cross Medical Director and Pediatrician Dr. Tracey Lemelle explains that while most vaccines are given in early childhood, there are vaccines recommended for early childhood, and others recommended for adolescence or even young adulthood. It's important for parents of children of all ages talk to their children's doctors every year to make sure they've gotten the shots they need for their age group. Also, most day cares, school systems,

colleges and universities require proof of vaccination before a child can enroll.

### Don't Forget - Mask Up Louisiana

In Louisiana, we love our football games and tailgate parties. We're hoping we can enjoy both in the months ahead, but if we don't take proper precautions against COVID19, we'll miss out on our beloved traditions. So, let's all Mask Up now so we can tailgate later!

Please click [here](#) to view the August Live Better Louisiana Newsletter for more information from OGB.

## 2021 Insurance Premium Credit

### Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2021 premium credit in just one step: by completing your preventive health checkup. Blue Cross works with an industry leader, Catapult Health, to bring preventive checkups to **a site near you**. You can schedule a free checkup with a licensed nurse practitioner and health technician through the online scheduler. You'll get **lab-accurate diagnostic tests** and receive a full **Personal Health Report** with checkup results and recommendations.

### What do you do?

Schedule your appointment online at [www.TimeConfirm.com/OGB](http://www.TimeConfirm.com/OGB) or call **1-877-841-3058**. Complete your clinic to get the credit. If you are not able to go to a clinic, have your doctor fax a completed [Primary Care Provider Form](#) to Catapult Health.

### Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Due to clinics being canceled in response to the COVID-19 stay at home order, OGB has extended the deadline to complete your wellness visit until **October 30, 2020!**

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date (Week)	Location
08/10 - 14/2020	Bienville Building (Baton Rouge) University of Louisiana Lafayette (Lafayette) DOTD District 07 (Lake Charles) Housing Authority of New Orleans (New Orleans) LA Retirement Systems Building TRSL (Baton Rouge) DCFS (Thibodaux) Louisiana Motor Vehicle Commission (Metairie) Calcasieu Child Welfare (Lake Charles) Central Office - Jefferson Parish School Board (Harvey) Vernon Parish School Board - Central Office (Leesville)
08/17 - 21/2020	Central Office - Concordia Parish School Board Probation and Parole (Alexandria) South Louisiana Community College (Lafayette) Central Office - Jefferson Parish School Board (Harvey) Rayburn Correctional Center (Angie) Claiborne Building (Baton Rouge) Northwestern State University (Natchitoches) SOWELA Tech Community College - Arts and Humanities Bldg. (Lake Charles) South Louisiana Community College (Morgan City)
08/24 - 28/2020	Central Louisiana State Hospital (Pineville) Delgado CC City Park (New Orleans) Nunez Community College (Chalmette) Jefferson Parish School Board Emenes Building (Harahan) ULL New Iberia Research Center (New Iberia) DOTD District 04 (Bossier City) Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (Jackson) DCFS (Bogalusa)  LSU Ag Center (Baton Rouge) Office of Public Health Laboratory (Baton Rouge) Vernon Parish School Board - Hornbeck High School (Hornbeck)
08/31/2020	Bienville Building (Baton Rouge) Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond) Pennington Center South Central LA Human Services Authority -Admin Office (Houma) Central Office - Jackson Parish School Board (Jonesboro) Central LA Technical Community College (Alexandria) LA Rehabilitation Services - Workforce Commission (Shreveport)

## LA Deferred Compensation Plan and The CARES Act



**The CARES Act provides relief for retirement plan participants.** Congress recently passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) to provide expanded access to retirement plan accounts for distributions and loans for many Americans during this unprecedented time.

While taking a loan or withdrawing money from your retirement account early should be a last resort, we understand that sometimes unusual times call for unusual actions.

**CARES Act relief applies to individuals who:**

- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a test approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Have a spouse or dependent who has been diagnosed.
- Are experiencing adverse financial consequences due to being furloughed, quarantined or laid off; having their paid work hours reduced; being unable to work due to lack of childcare; or having to close or scale back a business due to coronavirus

To help, the Louisiana Deferred Compensation Plan has adopted the following provisions:

**Retirement Plan Loans**

For a coronavirus need, the maximum loan amount is increased from \$50,000 (or 50% of your vested account balance) to \$100,000 (or 100% of your vested balance). This increase applies to loans taken through September 22, 2020.

For eligible individuals, the CARES Act allows new or existing loan repayments which occur between March 27, 2020, and December 31, 2020, to be delayed. Remaining loan repayments beginning in 2021 will be reamortized and the loan maturity date will be extended to reflect these repayment delays, plus accrued interest.

*To apply for a coronavirus loan, call 800-937-7604 to request a form.*

**Withdrawals and Distributions**

The 10% IRS tax on pre-age-59½ early withdrawals (if applicable) is waived for coronavirus-related distributions of up to \$100,000 through December 2020. These withdrawals are taxable as income, but the tax can be spread over three years, and the participant can elect to repay it within three years. Additionally, the 20% standard income tax withholding at the time of distribution is not required.

*To apply for a coronavirus-related withdrawal, log in to your account online, click on the plan name and select Plan forms to access the request form.*

For more information, visit the Public Employees Deferred Compensation Plan website [here](#).

## Online Tax Withholding Elections Now Available in LEO

**Tax Withholding** elections for Federal and State are now available as a self-service feature in LEO on the **My Info > Personal Info** tab. The screens have a different look than previous election screens, but have the same functionality.

Employees may reference the [My Info Quick Reference Card](#) and a [W-4 Comparison](#) of the LEO and Federal forms for more information.

The IRS changed criteria and filing status options for the FEDERAL W-4 form. If an employee has not made a new election for 2020 and has an old Filing Status of 01-Single or 02-Married, they will need to use the **ADD** button to create a new record rather than updating the existing record.

For further questions, please contact Human Resources at (225) 342-3774.

## 1st Quarter Safety Review by September 30th

The 2020 Hurricane Season officially began on June 1st - November 30th. Now is the time to make sure you have an emergency plan in place for you, your family, and your pets. Consider any potential changes needed due to the ongoing COVID-19 threat and adjust your personal plans and emergency supplies.

During a tropical event, the state could be impacted by tidal surge, flooding and wind damage. It is important that you listen for crucial information from [GOHSEP](#), other state agencies, local officials and your local weather experts.

Take action:

- Update emergency contact information in LEO
- Sign up for text and email alerts pertaining to state employees such as emergency office closures [here](#).
- Information for gathering supplies, evacuation information, and more can be found [here](#).

Reviewing the topics below will ensure you are prepared this hurricane season.

- [Hurricane Safety](#)
- [Watches and Warnings](#)

- [Watch and Warning](#)
- [After a Hurricane](#)

## LDOE Employee Support Website

The [LDOE Employee Support Google Site](#) is a newly designed, dedicated space for the most up-to-date information for LDOE staff. By now, all LDOE employees should have received an email granting access to the site, which includes information about COVID-19, tools and resources for managing and working remotely, HR resources, as well as guidance from the Office of Technology Services (OTS).

In addition to reviewing content found on the [LDOE Employee Support Google Site](#), employees are strongly encouraged to continue reading Core Connection, which includes pertinent information for all state employees.

We hope this new intranet will be a helpful resource for all LDOE employees. For questions regarding the site, please contact [doecommunications@la.gov](mailto:doecommunications@la.gov).

## LDOE Brand and Communications Style Guides



Both guides can be found in your Google Team Drive under LDOE Documents and Training > Public Affairs > Branded Documents, and will be updated as new templates and tools are created. You can provide feedback to the Office of Public Affairs by emailing [\\_DOE-PublicAffairs@la.gov](mailto:_DOE-PublicAffairs@la.gov).

## Employee Birthdays - August



<b>1st</b> Mona Erickson Veronica Johnson	<b>2nd</b> Danita Kitts Shelia Campbell Leslie Doyle	<b>3rd</b> Ivy Brumfield	<b>4th</b> Joni Lacy Nicole Bono Kaya Foster	<b>5th</b> Careneisha Williams Michele Braud
<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b> Kaylie Loupe Barrett Adams Holli Kipker	<b>8th</b> Tangla Washington	<b>9th</b> Jennifer Baird	<b>10th</b> Mary Cheatham Boris White Kenneth Austin Denise Bourgeois
<b>11th</b> Vicky Thomas Maranda Rispone Latoya Jones	<b>12th</b> Andrew Palermo Carla Trahan Danna Clinton Angela Louis-Kelly Jill Cowart	<b>13th</b> Raphael Curtis	<b>14th</b> Sonia Moran	<b>15th</b> Alicia Dawkins Tomeka Tate-Clayton
<b>16th</b> Ronda Miles Mary Utz Elizabeth Cosse	<b>17th</b> Latresha Banks	<b>18th</b>	<b>19th</b> Anthony Martin	<b>20th</b> Rey Valldejuli

<b>21st</b> Mahogany Gates	<b>22nd</b>	<b>23rd</b> Emily Cooper	<b>24th</b> Jolin Passantino Jerrick Hornbeak	<b>25th</b>
<b>26th</b> Nasha Patel	<b>27th</b> Samantha Chaisson Rosa Knox Clynethia Gilbert	<b>28th</b>	<b>29th</b>	<b>30th</b> Javonna Lewis
<b>31st</b> Michael Comeaux Natashia Ordogne				

## Team Member Spotlight

Do you want to brag on a team or team member? Have great news to share? Please email [Maranda.Risponse@la.gov](mailto:Maranda.Risponse@la.gov) to be featured in the edition of the Core Connection.

*\*Submissions for the September 9th Core Connection must be received by Wednesday, September 2nd.*

## Welcome Our Newest Employees

**LDOE is pleased to welcome our newest employees to our team!**

Kelli Peterson - Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities

Georquel Goodwin - Budget Analyst - Fiscal Operations (Education Finance)

Erika Roberson - Budget Analyst - Fiscal Operations (Education Finance)

Anna Novogratz - Administrative Program Specialist A - Fiscal Operations (Grants Management)

Amanda Young - WAE Administrative Coordinator - Academics (Early Childhood - Contact Center)

Kimberly Eckert - Director of Educator Development - Academics (Educator Development)

Kathy Noel - Director of Accountability - Academics (Accountability)

Chuancey Carr-McElwee - Education Program Consultant - Fiscal Operations (Grants Management)

Keith Leger - Assistant Superintendent for Policy & Governmental Affairs

Ashley Jones - Licensing Consultant - Academics (Licensing)

Tisha McKinney - WAE Administrative Program Specialist A - Fiscal Operations (Grants Management)

Sabrah Kingham - Executive Director of Portfolio Opportunities - Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities

Chaquera Caldwell - Accountant - Fiscal Operations (Expenditure Control)

### LDOE Contacts

Cade Brumley  
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### LDOE Links

[LDOE Website](#)  
[Contact Us](#)



