



July 19, 2018



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

In March 2017, BESE approved a set of policy changes to [School Readiness Tax Credits](#) set to take effect with the 2018 Star Ratings. These revisions were made to strengthen and preserve these invaluable tax credits while aligning them with the unified rating system as well as new expectations for child care teachers. These revisions include:

- Beginning with the 2018 tax credits, directors are now able to earn credits based on site performance, and teachers may earn more based on earning an [EC Ancillary Certificate](#) . No staff will lose their current credit based on these revisions.
- By 2020, teachers with an EC Ancillary Certificate can earn up to ~\$3,300 annually for working at a publicly-funded center and receiving tax credits for two or more years.
- Stars are now awarded to sites based on overall scores under our unified rating system through [Early Childhood Performance Profiles](#) . These ratings are used for the Provider, Family, and Business Credits and can be found at www.louisianaschools.com .
- The last CCAP bonus payment based on 2017 star levels was for the last quarter of 2017 and was paid in February 2018. CCAP bonus payments have been increased by 3% in 2018 to support improvements for two-star, three-star, four-star, and five-star providers.
- Bonus payments for two-star providers will be reduced to zero by 2021 to incent providers to meet quality threshold. The pilot bonus has been phased out since statewide implementation of the quality rating system has been achieved.

With this policy transition, there are a few key things for child care providers, teachers, and staff to be paying attention to:

- Directors and teachers must be enrolled in Pathways with their updated credential information in order to benefit from the 2018 changes taking effect.
- Teachers that are applying the EC Ancillary Certificate will be able to enroll in Louisiana Pathways by submitting a complete EC Ancillary Certificate Application. All current EC Ancillary Certificate holders recently received a postcard with information about this optional process, details can be found below.
- For providers the 2018 star rating will be used to file for 2018 tax credits, which will be filed in early 2019. The 2018 star rating is based on the Performance Profile results that were released in November 2017. Providers

must have been open on July 1, 2018 and have received a Performance Profile in November 2017 to qualify for 2018 tax credits.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children.

John

John White
Louisiana Department of Education
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UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Lead Agency Webinar/Conference Call (*lead agencies only*) - July 24 at 3:00 p.m.
 - [Ready Start Commission meeting](#) - August 1 at 1:00-4:00 p.m.
-

TEACHING AND LEARNING

EARNING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE: ATTENDING APPROVED PROGRAMS

As of July 1, 2018 the following credentials and training providers can be used to earn the [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate](#) :

Qualifying Credential	Requirements for Completing Qualifying Credential
1. CDA	Training for CDA credential (120 hours) must be completed at a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program . *Exception: Individuals who had completed more than 36 hours of CDA training prior to July 1, 2018, may complete their training at any location or program.
2. Technical diploma in early childhood	Coursework must be completed at a BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program . *Exception: Individuals who began coursework prior to July 1, 2018, may complete their course of study.
3. Associate's degree in early childhood	Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.
4. Bachelor's degree or higher	Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.

The Department hosted a webinar discussing the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate on Friday, July 13. This webinar provided additional details regarding credentials and training for providers qualifying for the certificate. You are invited to watch our [webinar](#) or contact [Erin Carroll](#) for additional information.

NEW: 2018-2019 K-2 PERFORMANCE TOOLS PILOTS

In response to feedback from school and school system leaders and informed by the recommendations from a K-2 educator working group, the Department plans to pilot a system of age-appropriate, standards-aligned tools to evaluate K-2 classroom experience and student mastery of fundamental skills. These pilots will build on schools' experience with CLASS® and reinforce the priorities outlined in the state's ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) plan for school redesign.

The Department estimates it will award 40-48 subgrants to LEAs to pilot the K-2 performance tools in the 2018-2019 school year. A brief [application](#) is now available. Additionally, interested LEAs are invited to watch our [webinar](#) or contact [Jill Slack](#) for more information.

GOLD® 2018-2019 TRANSITION BACK TO ONE LICENSE

On July 1, 2018, the Abbreviated Pilot licenses (AB1 and AB2) shut down and all users returned to using the original 'Comprehensive' license of Teachstone GOLD®.

- For more information about the transition to one license, review the [2018-2019 GOLD® Guidance](#) or watch the [2018-2019: Next Steps for Early Childhood GOLD® Users](#) webinar.
- If users have forgotten login credentials for the original license, they should use the 'Forgot Password' or 'Forgot Username' options on GOLD®'s website to have their password reset.
- Beginning July 1st, the Department set up sites and administration accounts for all new sites that were never in the original license. Administrators for those sites should anticipate receiving an email with instructions to set up their account.
- If you have any questions about using GOLD® in 2018-2019, contact [Taylor Dunn](#).

EARLY CHILDHOOD: ALTERNATE BIRTH TO FIVE ASSESSMENT WAIVER FOR 2018-2019

Programs proposing to use an assessment in place of GOLD® must complete and submit a [waiver](#) application by Friday, July 21, 2018, to [Ivy Starns](#). The assessment must include domains in GOLD®: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language/Literacy, Cognitive (Approaches to Learning), Math, Science/Technology, Social Studies, and Arts. Programs with approved waivers will be expected to provide results on the [LDE template](#) at the standard checkpoint periods in October, February, and May.

Programs using the assessments embedded in a Tier I or Tier II curriculum **DO NOT** need to submit an assessment waiver application and should continue to use the GOLD® system. Documentation from curriculum assessments should be uploaded into children's portfolios created in the GOLD® system.

NOTE: Waivers are granted for a period of **one year**, and programs must reapply for subsequent years.

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

NEW ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR PRE-K PROGRAMS

In April 2018, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in an effort to align the "at-risk" definition for Early Childhood programs to K-12's "economically disadvantaged" definition, approved a change to Bulletin 140 that increased the income limit for school-based pre-K programs to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. This change will go into effect in August 2018. In order to provide guidance on how this change should be implemented, the Department presented an updated eligibility webinar. You may view the information presented in the webinar [here](#). If you have any questions, contact [Lindsey Bradford](#).

EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE POSTCARD - SRTC

Individuals with Early Childhood Ancillary Certificates may qualify for School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC). To qualify for the SRTC, individuals must work in the same participating Type III child care centers for a minimum of 6 months for an average of 30 hours a week.

Individuals currently holding an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate should have received a postcard notification of the SRTC in earlier this month.

The SRTC qualifying levels are managed by [Louisiana Pathways](#). To potentially qualify for the SRTC, the Department needs to share information about current EC Ancillary Certificate holders with Louisiana Pathways. The Department will securely share contact information, qualifying credentials, and social security numbers of current Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate holders with Louisiana Pathways. Louisiana Pathways will contact individuals with information about the SRTC.

If EC Ancillary Certificate holders do NOT want their information to be shared and do not wish to participate in this tax credit opportunity, please send a written notice of this, including your name and certificate number to certification@la.gov. All notices must be received by July 31, 2018.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

BULLETIN 137 UPDATES (CORRECTION)

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has exercised a [Declaration of Emergency](#) of [Bulletin 137](#), *Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations*. The proposed policy revisions provide that for owners, directors, and director-designees of Type III early learning centers, crimes of fraud be limited to those that have occurred within the past 10 years. The revisions also provide for a BESE review process if there was a conviction related to these crimes within the past 10 years. This Declaration of Emergency, effective **June 20, 2018**, will remain in effect for a

period of 120 days, or until finally adopted as Rule. These documents were also submitted to the Office of the State Register on June 27, 2018.

NEW STAFF IN EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

The provider of an early learning center or an entity identified in §1809 shall request from the Louisiana Department of Education a new CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes for each required person. After a request has been made, the provider shall wait on a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility (**Eligible** or **Provisionally Eligible**) from the Department prior to the person being present or performing services at the center when children are present. Please note: a status of *In Progress* does **not** constitute as a determination of eligibility. Your CCCBC Roster must be checked regularly to ensure all staff members are eligible. If hired, an ineligible staff member must be terminated immediately. [Bulletin 137](#)

REMINDER: ALL EXISTING STAFF MUST APPLY FOR A CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK (CCCBC) PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

The deadline for existing staff to apply for the CCCBC is September 30, 2018. Send staff as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays. The \$25 fee for searching the State Central Registry (SCR) will be applied to all applications submitted after September 30, 2018. A webinar was given to provide updates on how the DCFS fee for the State Central Registry will be applied. The webinar slides can be viewed [here](#).

For more information about Child Care Criminal Background Checks, visit the [website](#) or email [Valerie Black](#).

CHOOSE SAFE PLACES FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

The Louisiana Department of Health's Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology (SEET) has partnered with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to reduce children's risk of being exposed to dangerous chemicals during their care through a program called Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education (CSPECE). The goal is to protect children in early care and education programs from potential exposure to chemicals such as arsenic, lead, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). By educating child care professionals about the risks of exposure and by providing guidance to child care professionals, we hope to prevent exposures. SEET has developed a [questionnaire](#) for child care providers to use as they consider possible locations for their facility. Please click on the [link](#) to access the survey.

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

WEEKLY WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL FOR LEAD AGENCIES

The Early Childhood Team holds weekly webinar/conference call question and answer sessions for lead agencies. The sessions are held on most Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and all lead agency staff are invited to join. The Early Childhood Team will provide updates and reminders. Additional topics will be determined by caller questions. A meeting invitation containing the connecting information to the new Zoom webinar account has been sent to all lead agency contacts. Contact [Kaye Eichler](#) if you have questions.

Upcoming Schedule for Weekly Webinar/Conference Call for Lead Agencies

- July 24

NEW PLATFORM FOR THE LEAD AGENCY WEEKLY WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL

The Department is using a new platform called Zoom for the Weekly Webinar/Conference Call for lead agencies. If you have not used Zoom before, please allow time to download the program and install it on your computer before the meeting begins. Two one-minute videos about Zoom that you may find to be helpful are "Joining a Meeting" and "Joining & Configuring Audio & Video" and can be accessed using this [link](#).

OTHER

READY START COMMISSION - MEETING ON AUGUST 1

The Ready Start commission, established in [Act 639](#), will meet on Wednesday, August 1. This will be the first meeting for the Ready Start Commission, which has been charged with creating a vision and framework for the future of early childhood care and education in Louisiana.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 1 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. in the Claiborne Building, located at 1201 N Third Street, Baton Rouge. This meeting will be open to the public. You can stream the meeting [here](#). For additional information about the Ready Start Commission, please email earlychildhood@la.gov.

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