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September 28, 2017

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

Act 3 has brought about major changes in Louisiana. We have unified our early childhood system and are improving interactions and instruction across our pre-K, Head Start and child care sites. This means more Louisiana children enter kindergarten ready. Moreover, children who benefit from high quality early childhood programs carry those gains with them. No state in the nation showed greater improvement in 4th grade reading on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress, for example, than did Louisiana.

But there is evidence that we would be even more effective if we were to provide the focus and support to teachers in grades K through 2 that we have given to teachers of both younger children. Simply put, many students come into third grade struggling to comprehend texts and struggling to write. Improving in this area would have a profound impact on the future of many young people and on our state's school system.

To that end, the Department recently released a [Pre-K through Third Grade Guidebook](#), detailing specific steps centers and schools can take to provide focus and support teachers from pre-K through third grade. Naturally, the Guidebook includes programs and assessments that will assist sites to equip students with essential skills, such as identifying letters, sounding out words, and putting words together into complete sentences.

The Guidebook also supports teachers in helping students to build knowledge about specific topics and express their thoughts on those subjects through writing and drawing. It is this knowledge of content-the stuff children read or that is read to them -that allows them to comprehend the meaning behind the words.

There may be no issue more essential to school success than literacy, and there are no ages more important than those covered by the early childhood and the primary grades.

We invite you to download and use this [new guidebook](#). If there are questions, please email [Erin Carroll](#).

And 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 Office Hours- *lead agencies only*: October 3 at 3:00 p.m.
- Child Care Criminal Background Check Roadshow- *all programs*: October 2 and 5 at 10:00 a.m., New Orleans

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

- **By September 30:** Deadline for school systems to submit CLASS™ for Compass rubric waiver and return to Compass@la.gov.
 - **By October 1:** All pre-K and toddler classrooms in publicly-funded sites must be set up in CLASS™
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

USING CLASS™ FOR COMPASS IN 2017-2018

Local Education Agencies and Charter Organizations are encouraged to use CLASS™ as the rubric for evaluating professional practice of public school pre-K teachers in all or some of their schools. For more information please see the [Compass Choices for Early Childhood Networks 2017-2018](#). LEAs that choose to use CLASS™ as the Teacher Professional Practice Rubric for public school pre-K teachers for 2017-2018 must complete the waiver and return to Compass@la.gov by **September 30**.

LOCAL CLASS™ OBSERVATIONS

All pre-K and toddler classrooms in publicly-funded sites must be set up in the CLASS™ System, with observation orders scheduled by **October 1**. Note all classrooms must be set up with the correct classroom configuration by **October 1**. Fall observations must be completed by **December 15**.

If a network is choosing to use just-in-time scheduling for any sites, the opt-in form is located in your FTP. The opt-in form must be completed by October 1 and uploaded to the FTP folder.

The following enhancements have been made to the CLASS™ System

- Lead Agencies have the ability to assign read only access to site coordinators.
- Third party feedback form will be available in the CLASS™ System.

Any guidance needed on the CLASS™ system can be found in the [CLASS™ System User Guide](#).

For questions, please contact [Tara Baylot](#) or [Nasha Patel](#).

SETTING UP CLASSROOMS IN GOLD®

GOLD® has a new look! Through MyTeachingStrategies™, users have access to either the comprehensive GOLD® assessment tool (with all objectives) or one of the abbreviated versions. Whether your program is using the original GOLD® tool or one of the abbreviated versions, the process for adding teachers, classes and other users such as Principals, co-directors, etc. has changed. Program administrators can use the [Directions for Adding Sites and Classes in GOLD®](#) sheet for instructions on performing those functions.

If you have any questions, contact [Ivy Starns](#).

2017-2018 CURRICULUM INITIATIVE

In 2016-2017 child care centers were able to choose instructional materials that best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. The Department supported programs in identifying curricula appropriate for children age birth to five that are grounded in helping teachers provide quality interactions and instruction by rating and reviewing [early childhood curriculum](#).

Through the first [Child Care Curriculum Initiative](#) grant, child care centers were eligible to receive reimbursement for a portion of the costs of a Tier I curriculum. Over 200 child care centers have benefited from this grant. The Department is committed to supporting teachers in the classroom by continuing this initiative for Type III child care centers for the 2017-2018 school year. Centers that purchased curricula last school year will be allowed to purchase up to two additional curriculum kits this year. Centers are encouraged to consult with their local [Child Care Resource and Referral Agency](#) before purchasing curricula.

For more information, child care centers should reach out to their Resource and Referral Agency or to [Mary Jo Smith](#).

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENT

OCTOBER 1 CHILD COUNT

Bulletin 140 requires that all publicly-funded children are counted as they were enrolled on October 1, and that the count be submitted to the Department by **October 31**.

For the purposes of these counts, children are considered part of the age cohort they belong to on September 30, for the entire 2017-2018 school year. For example, if a child is three on September 30, but turns four on November 22, that child is counted as part of the three-year-old age cohort for the 2017-2018 school year. Please work with your Lead Agency to submit accurate October 1 child counts.

For questions please contact [Dominick Robinson](#).

CHILD SAFETY AND WELFARE

NEW: THE DEPARTMENT APPROVES A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WAIVER EXTENSION

On September 26, 2017, the Department approved a criminal background check (CBC) waiver requested by the Child Care Association of Louisiana (CCAL). The waiver now terminates on **December 31, 2017**. This waiver allows some relief on the CBC requirements due to unexpected delays. The waiver includes several stringent requirements in order to maintain the safety and health of children. This waiver applies to anyone who has recently submitted a fingerprint-based CBC request and has not received a response.

For more information, [click here](#).

For questions regarding this waiver, call Andrea Burl at 225-342-9905 or email [LDElicensing](#).

NEW CHILD CARE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK UPCOMING ROADSHOW DATES

Thank you to all that have been attending the webinars. For those that were unable to attend, you can now view the [September 6 webinar](#) on the Department's website.

There were several roadshows that addressed the launch of the new Child Care Criminal Background Check (CCCBC) in September and they will continue into October. Please keep in mind, these changes will go into effect **March 1, 2018**.

CCCBC Roadshow Schedule		
New Orleans	Monday, October 2 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Parkview Baptist Church 6301 Camphor St. Metairie, LA 70003
New Orleans	Thursday, October 5 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Educare 3801 St. Bernard Ave. New Orleans, LA 70122
Baton Rouge	Friday, October 6 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Louisiana Department of Education Claiborne Building Louisiana Purchase Room 1201 N. 3 rd St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802

For more information about CCCBC, please email LDEchildcareCBC@la.gov.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

An early learning center shall register with the Louisiana State Police Sex Offender Registry at www.lsp.org to receive updates when a sex offender moves within two miles of the center ([Bulletin 137](#) , §1901.D).

At no time shall a center permit an individual convicted of a sex offense as defined in R.S. 15:541 to have physical access to the center, even if the individual is a parent of the child attending the Child Care Center ([Bulletin 137](#) , §1901.E).

FOOD SERVICE AND NUTRITION

Children shall be allowed a reasonable time to eat meals and snacks. Children shall not be forced to finish all their food ([Bulletin 137](#) , §1919.D.3)

Centers who do not serve breakfast shall have nutritious food available for children who arrive in the morning without having eaten breakfast ([Bulletin 137](#) , §1919.D.1).

CHANGE IN DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR DESIGNEE

Each center shall have a qualified director or qualified director designee ([Bulletin 137](#) , §1707.A).

Directors should receive a letter of qualification from the Division of Licensing prior to serving in this capacity. Centers must request to add a director by reporting the change on the CAFÉ Portal. Educational documentation and a letter of experience verifying employment in a licensed Early Learning Center or comparable setting should accompany the request.

Upon termination or resignation of employment, the last date of employment and reason for leaving should be submitted to the Division of Licensing.

For additional questions, please call your Licensing Consultant at 225-342-9905  or e-mail LDELicensing@la.gov.

LEAD AGENCY SUPPORT

OFFICE HOURS FOR LEAD AGENCIES

The Early Childhood Team is holding weekly conference call question and answer sessions for lead agencies. The calls will be scheduled for **Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.** and all lead agency staff are invited to join. The Early Childhood team will provide updates and reminders. Additional topics covered will be determined by caller questions. A meeting invitation containing the connecting information will be sent to all lead agency contacts.

Upcoming Schedule for Office Hours

- October 3
- October 10

OTHER

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL - OCTOBER 4

The next Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday, October 4 at 1 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the **Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA.**

This meeting is open to the public and can be live streamed. Please click [here](#) for directions on accessing live streamed meetings.

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