



LDOE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

March 9, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

One year ago Governor Edwards made the difficult decision to close all Louisiana school buildings. Cases of COVID-19 were rising and much was uncertain about this new virus. For Louisiana educators, March 13, 2020, is one of those days you remember exactly what you were doing.

I was superintendent of Jefferson Parish Schools. I remember being called out of a meeting and informed of the Governor's announcement. It was a Friday the 13th (of course it was). Our leadership team held an emergency meeting Saturday morning. I still have a picture of that meeting, as I feel it represents what was happening in schools and school systems across our state. Teachers and leaders were coming together, operationalizing, to find a way for children.

What we first thought would be a two-week, maybe one month, closure ended up being the last time we would have students in our buildings for 2019-2020. In Jefferson and in many school systems across the state, we stood up virtual offerings, printed learning packets, established homework help lines in multiple languages, provided meals, loaned technology, checked-in on families, offered mental health support and created new avenues to celebrate teachers and students.

Louisianans are resilient and know how to respond in a crisis. We spent the summer laser-focused on being ready for the first day of school. Early on, we developed mitigation efforts that were employed at schools across the state. No matter what day one looked like, we would be there for our children.

Today, nearly 70 percent of our students benefit from in-person instruction. This while many other states grapple with how to reopen school buildings. Louisiana has been ahead of the curve in safely providing in-person instruction. Medical professionals testified during the December BESE meeting that when following our mitigation efforts, Louisiana schools are one of the safest places for children in our state.

Even when the pandemic ends and schools return to normal, it's important we continue to mark this anniversary. As terrible as this pandemic has been, our drive and ingenuity have led to silver linings. It has forced us to prioritize the digital divide. As a state, we now have more devices than students, and concrete steps are being taken to connect every child to broadband. We have been widely successful in Louisiana at building a community of practice, networking across school system lines for ideas and support. This crisis has also brought into focus what we have known all along, our educators, schools and early childhood centers are essential — not just to the success of children but to a functioning society.

It's been hard, but educators find a way. So much was unknown and untested when this started, but educators find a way. There have been tears, frustrations and sheer exhaustion, but educators find a way.

It's been an honor to work alongside you during this critical time. Together we will continue to meet the challenges of this pandemic and move Louisiana forward.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

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Important Dates for School Systems

Office Hours	
Office Hours Title	Zoom Link
Education Technology Office Hours	March 11 at 9 a.m.
Data Coordinator Office Hours	March 11 at 1 p.m.
Career and College Readiness Office Hours	March 11 at 3 p.m.
SRCL TA Office Hours	March 15 at 1 p.m.
Educator Development Office Hours	March 16 at 12 p.m.
Early Childhood Lead Agencies Office Hours	March 16 at 3 p.m.
K-2 CLASS® Pilot Office Hours	March 23 at 12 p.m.
Assessment and Accountability Office Hours	March 23 at 3:45 p.m.
Monthly Calls*	
Monthly Call Title	Zoom Link
Charter Authorizers Monthly Call	March 10 at 11 a.m.
BESE Authorized Charter School Monthly Call	March 10 at 3 p.m.
SPED Leader Monthly Call	March 11 at 2 p.m.

Legislative and Policy Support Monthly Call	March 15 at 10 a.m.
Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call	March 16 at 3:45 p.m.
Nonpublic Monthly Call	March 17 at 2 p.m.
Student Well-Being Monthly Call	March 17 at 3:30 p.m.
Federal Support and Grantee Relations Monthly Call	March 18 at 10 a.m.
Career and College Readiness Monthly Call	March 18 at 3 p.m.
AE Leadership Community of Practice	March 24 at 10 a.m.
Academic Content and Educator Development Monthly Call	March 24 at 1 p.m.
Education Technology Monthly Call	March 25 at 9 a.m.
System Leaders Roundtable	March 26 at 9 a.m.
Literacy Monthly Call	April 1 at 10 a.m.
Data Coordinator Monthly Call	April 1 at 1 p.m.
Nutrition Support Monthly Call	April 1 at 1 p.m.
System Leaders Monthly Call	April 9 at 9 a.m.
*Monthly call presentations are available in the School Improvement Library . View the School System Support Calendar to access a complete schedule of events.	
Upcoming Events	
Event Title	Zoom Link
LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar: TOPS Processing (Part 1)	March 16 at 9 a.m.
LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar: TOPS Processing (Part 2)	March 16 at 12:30 p.m.
LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar: TOPS Processing (Part 2)	March 17 at 9 a.m.
LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar: TOPS Processing (Part 1)	March 17 at 12:30 p.m.
<i>Achieve!</i> Launch	March 30 at 3:45 p.m.
Important Deadlines	
Spring 2021 Accelerate Math Content Developer Application	March 12 at 5 p.m.
CLASS® Pilot Survey	March 12
Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application	March 31
Jump Start Construction Scholars Program Applications	April 12

Operations

Federal Support and Grantee Relations

Achieve! Launch

Last year the Department released [Strong Start 2020](#), which included planning guidance and resources, along with a specific application in eGMS for school systems to plan and budget CARES Act funds. To support school systems with planning for and budgeting new funds under the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 \(CAA\)](#), LDOE will be launching *Achieve!*.

On [March 30 at 3:45 p.m.](#), LDOE will host an official *Achieve!* launch webinar to share guidance documents to support LEAs with planning for and submitting budgets in eGMS.

School systems will also have access to an *Achieve!* resource library through the [Louisiana Believes website](#).

Please contact LDOE.grantshelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Nutrition Support

Nutrition Support Resources

The Department created the following Child Nutrition Program Prospective New Sponsor Checklists to streamline the application process for organizations that wish to sponsor one or more of the federal child nutrition programs:

1. [National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program](#)
2. [Summer Food Service Program](#)
3. [Child and Adult Care Food Program - Day Care Centers](#) (includes the At-Risk After School Meals Program)
4. [Child and Adult Care Food Program - Family Day Care Homes](#)

Visit the [Nutrition Support landing page](#) for additional information on [USDA Child Nutrition Programs](#), including the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program](#), as well as partnerships with [Seeds to Success](#) and [Louisiana Fit Kids](#).

Please contact childnutritionprograms@la.gov with questions.

Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities

Special Education

Statewide Deaf Education Chat

The Special School District (SSD) and Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) will host a statewide Deaf Education Open Chat on **March 24 at 6 p.m.** The chat will provide the opportunity for teachers of the Deaf, educational interpreters, educational audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and other related professionals serving Deaf and hard of hearing children to learn about support offered from the SSD.

Interested participants should [pre-register](#) to receive the Zoom link.

Please contact ndelgado@lsdvi.org with questions.

School System Financial Services

FY 2020-2021 Agricultural Science Allocation and Additional Guidance

The FY2020-2021 Agricultural Science allocation payments have been processed according to HB1 of the FY20 First Special Session.

The Department is providing additional guidance related to the Agricultural Science [allocation](#) that was recently released to school systems. Please refer to the attached [FAQ](#) to answer some of the commonly posed questions.

Please contact schoolfinancehelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Teaching and Learning

Accelerate

[Accelerate](#), Louisiana's pre-K-12 tutoring strategy, is designed for school systems to implement equal-access tutoring at scale in order to achieve significant results for all students. Grounded in the most impactful research-based practices, Accelerate is a just-in-time tutoring model that addresses unfinished learning by building knowledge and connecting it to skills in current lessons.

March 15: Phase 4 release of ELA resources

- Final set of the [knowledge packs](#) for grades 3-8 released

The Department has opened [applications](#) for expert pre-kindergarten through high-school math educators interested in building out additional [Accelerate math](#) resources. [Applications](#) must be submitted by **5 p.m. on March 12**. Work will begin this spring and continue through the 2021-2022 school year. Compensation will be provided. Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

For more support on unfinished learning, leaders and teachers can use the School Support Institutes: Addressing Unfinished Learning Series Day 1 [ELA](#) and [Math](#) Community of Practice presentations on the [Accelerate website](#).

Please contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

Academic Content

National Foreign Language Week: March 7-13

Please share with K-12 administrators with World Languages programs.

March 7-13 is [National Foreign Language Week](#). In existence since 1957, this annual celebration highlights the importance and benefits of being bilingual and biliterate. This year's theme is "Open Your Mind to Language." Please take this opportunity to learn about the bilingual community, highlight World Languages and Dual Language Immersion programs, and celebrate world language teachers and bilingual students and staff.

Please contact language.acquisition@la.gov with questions or for more information.

BESE Tuition Program for Teachers: Applications for Summer and Fall 2021 Open Now

The [BESE Tuition Program for Teachers](#) provides tuition funding for selected classroom teachers to enroll in courses at regionally accredited colleges or universities in Louisiana. Online applications for coursework funding for the summer and fall 2021 semesters are open now through April 9. Program details, as well as a link to the application, can be found on the [Continuing Opportunities for Educators page](#).

For questions about the BESE Tuition Program for Teachers, visit the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) or contact STEM@la.gov.

Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics

For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts

K-2 Formative Assessments

- K-2 formative assessments will no longer be available to school systems beginning July 1.

LEAP 2025 Grades 3-8

- The LEAP 2025 Grades 3-8 shipments 2 and 3 are scheduled to arrive in school systems on April 7. School systems that will be closed on April 7 are asked to contact DRC Louisiana Customer Service by the following deadlines to reschedule those shipments to deliver after April 7.
 - Shipment 2 (computer-based test materials): March 8
 - Shipment 3 (paper-based test materials): March 16
 - Louisiana Customer Service Number: 888-718-4836

ACT Match/No Match Rosters

- ACT Match/No Match rosters have been updated and are available in the secure FTP.
- School systems should review the new list of students on the ACT match list.
 - The cost of testing in March for students on the ACT Match list will be the responsibility of the school system.
 - Students on the ACT No Match list must participate in March testing unless there is an appropriate accountability code for them.
- **Important Update:** Access MyACT to enter student codes using the [Information for Examinees webpage](#).
- Please check the [ACT State Testing](#) site for an updated [Schedule of Events](#).

- **February 1-March 18:** Create and assign students to test sessions for March 9-11, 16-18 online ACT testing.
 - Accommodation and/or supports materials by calling ACT Accommodations at 800-553-6244, ext. 1788.
- **February 15-March 12:** Window to order for Test Window 2:
 - Additional standard time materials for use on March 23
 - Non-college reportable materials for use on March 23-26, 29-31, and April 1-2
 - Accommodation and/or supports materials by calling ACT Accommodations at 800-553-6244, ext. 1788.
- **March 9-17:** Complete Site Readiness, including mock administration, ProctorCache (if applicable), and set up for online testing for Window 2
- **March 17:** Validate configuration and lock down devices for online testing for Window 2
- **Week of March 15:** Receive testing materials based on the receipt window selected in [PANext](#)
- **Now-March 23:** Verify and, as needed, correct each examinee's grade level and other identifying information in [PANext](#) for Test Window 2.
- **Resources**
 - [Non-Test Instructions for Test Coordinators](#)
 - [Non-Test Instructions for Students](#)
 - [Taking the ACT PDF](#)

LEAP Connect

- To request LEAP Connect Graphic Files or Suggested Materials Lists, please send a request, including grade levels and subjects, to assessment@la.gov. The files must be considered secure and can only be provided via FTP.

NAEP 2021

- **Additional Monthly Survey**
 - By Executive Order, a NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey will be collected from approximately 90 schools in Louisiana to understand the impact of COVID-19, including the status of in-person learning.
 - Nationally, the survey will collect data from approximately 3,500 schools that enroll fourth-graders and an equal number of schools that enroll eighth-graders.
 - The administration window is the last full week of each month through June (March 22-26, April 19-23, May 24-28, and June 21-25).
 - The status of in-person learning will be disaggregated by student demographics, including race/ethnicity, disability, English Learner status, and an economic disadvantage indicator.
 - The public will have access to data about school reopenings for in-person instruction and how students are learning.
 - For questions or additional information, please email jennifer.baird@la.gov or rebecca.frederick@la.gov.
- **Student and Teacher Questionnaire**
 - The NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaire will be open in MyNAEP for principals and teachers from selected schools beginning soon; the date has not yet been announced. A principal may assign the questionnaire to another school administrator. Questionnaires must be completed by **March 26**.
 - All states are awaiting official approval from the OMB to start this questionnaire.
 - Results will be released in the fall of 2021 and include state and national-level data dependent on participation.
 - For questions or additional information, please contact Rebecca Frederick at 225-963-8197 or email rebecca.frederick@la.gov.

Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours

The next Assessment and Accountability **monthly call** will be on **March 16 at 3:45 p.m.** A password will now be required for office hours. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 16 at 3:45 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164
- **Passcode:** 2020202!

Educator Development

CLASS® Pilot

The LDOE is excited to announce that the K-2 CLASS® Pilot will continue and expand. CLASS® measures instructional effectiveness for teachers and measures interactions between teachers and students. The focus with the K-2 CLASS® Pilot is to support schools in improving high-quality, positive interactions between teachers and students in any setting.

The Department encourages current pilot participants to continue and/or scale their participation and new systems are invited to join the pilot. LDOE will support this pilot work by covering the cost of training for up to 600 observers and up to 6,000 teachers. School systems that are new to the pilot work as well as currently participating pilot school systems should complete the [CLASS® Pilot Survey](#) and include any current or potential schools and classrooms in their responses.

This survey is due **March 12**. Following the close of the survey, LDOE will contact school systems about training registration.

Please contact laurie.carlton@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit Office Hours

To best support Louisiana educators, the Department has scheduled six office hours where our team will be on hand to offer guidance and support related to the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit and 2021 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series. The office hours will have no set agenda but will function as a question-and-answer opportunity. The next office hours will take place on **March 16**. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 16 at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95156488766>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-250-9358
- **Meeting ID#:** 951 5648 8766
- **Passcode:** 764044

Please contact LDOEEvents@la.gov with questions.

Literacy

SRCL Technical Assistance

Beginning this month, technical assistance (TA) will be provided in the form of office hours for Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant recipients as they make preparations to wrap-up the final year of the grant. Important information and deadlines will be shared, and there will be time for questions and discussions around completing reimbursement requests by the June 30 deadline. Any school system that received SRCL funds for the 2020-2021 school year should plan to attend these monthly office hours. The first SRCL TA Office Hours will take place on [March 15 at 1 p.m.](#)

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 15 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97947687837>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 979 4768 7837
- **Passcode:** 079311

Please contact lisa.holliday@la.gov with questions.

Reminders

- **Operations Reminders**
 - **Federal Support and Grantee Relations Reminders**
 - **Nutrition Support Reminders**
- **Career and College Readiness Reminders**
- **Legislative Affairs, Policy, and Workforce Support Reminders**
 - **Healthy Communities Reminders**
- **School System Financial Services Reminders**
- **Teaching and Learning Reminders**
 - **Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics Reminders**
 - **Educator Development Reminders**

Operations Reminders

Federal Support and Grantee Relations Reminders

Consolidated Monitoring Schedule for 2020-2021SY (3rd Quarter)

The Department conducts annual monitoring of school systems to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements. To assist school systems in thoughtful planning and preparation for a scheduled monitoring event, the Department is releasing the [consolidated monitoring schedule for the 2020-2021 school year](#)*. This schedule is tentative and the agency reserves the right to make adjustments as necessary.

Quarterly updates will follow this newsletter announcement. Additionally, the assigned program monitoring team leader will send a more detailed monitoring notification reminder, along with any necessary planning documents or instructions, directly to superintendents and federal program directors of each school system appearing on the monitoring schedule. The [third quarter monitoring schedule](#) is now available. Statewide monitoring schedules can be found in the [Federal Support and Grantee Relations Library](#).

Please contact tasha.anthony@la.gov with questions about the monitoring schedule or program monitoring related to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For questions related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), please contact cindy.hilton@la.gov.

**School systems that have been severely impacted by a disaster and are currently listed on the schedule are encouraged to contact tasha.anthony@la.gov.*

Nutrition Support Reminders

Seeds to Success Program Gardening Materials for Teachers

The **Louisiana Farm to School Program** recently launched **Seeds to Success**, which offers classroom growing materials, as well as engaging educational materials linked to Louisiana School Science Standards that can be used in both classroom and virtual learning. Lessons, activities, and practical growing information for school gardens are conveniently located on the [Seeds to Success](#) website. The Louisiana Farm to School Program is a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Education and LSU AgCenter.

Last month, Seeds to Success distributed seed packets to over 1,500 schools across the state. Louisiana **teachers may request additional seed packets and other free gardening materials** by creating an account on the [Seeds to Success](#) website.

Please contact melissa.campbell@la.gov with questions.

Career and College Readiness Reminders

Postponed: 2021 Individual Graduation Planning Seminar

The 2021 Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar has been postponed. Details about the new webinar are forthcoming. The rescheduled webinar will cover the same topics: provide an overview of Louisiana IGP policies, legislative updates, and information on resources from the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Please contact leslie.gilliland@la.gov with questions.

Jump Start Construction Scholars Program Applications Deadline Extended

Please share with counselors.

The Louisiana Construction Education Foundation (LCEF) Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program is accepting [applications](#) for up to forty \$1,000 scholarships. The scholarship is geared toward students who have earned the Jump Start Diploma, earned a National Center for Construction Education and Research credential, and plan to enroll in an LCTCS campus on a construction pathway or in an Associated Builders and Contractors training program. Applications are due **April 12**.

This is the state's first and only scholarship dedicated exclusively to Jump Start graduates. This effort is a collaboration of LCEF, LCTCS, and LDOE.

Please contact megan.thompson2@la.gov with questions.

Achieve to Believe: Louisiana ACT® NOW

Please share with school system leaders, high school administrators, district test coordinators, and high school counselors.

The [Louisiana ACT® NOW program](#) provides vouchers for eligible students in grades 10 and 12 to take an upcoming ACT®. Louisiana ACT® NOW will give students an additional opportunity to be placed in appropriate entry-level college courses, earn TOPS, qualify for scholarships, and gain admission to the college of their choice. It can also help students become eligible for a dual enrollment program or other academic programs that require an ACT® score. Vouchers can be used for the April 17, June 12, or July 17 administrations this school year.

Students in grade 12 are eligible for an ACT® voucher if all of these apply:

- The student has not earned an ACT® score that qualifies them for college admissions or TOPS, or who are seeking an opportunity to enhance their current level of TOPS Tech, TOPS Opportunity, TOPS Performance, TOPS Honors, or to seek other merit-based scholarship opportunities.
- The student is on target to complete all coursework necessary to graduate no later than August 31.
- The student is on target to meet all state assessment graduation requirements no later than August 31.

Students in grade 10 are eligible for an ACT® voucher if:

- The student requires an ACT® score to qualify for enrollment in a [Dual Enrollment program](#) or other academic program(s) that require an ACT® score.

Please contact meredith.mcgovern@la.gov with questions.

LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar: TOPS Processing

Please share with school counselors.

Offered by Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), the 2021 TOPS Processing Webinars for Professional School Counselors are interactive, virtual events to help schools minimize TOPS processing errors for their graduating seniors.

Part 1: Comprehensive Review of TOPS Processing. This webinar provides an overview of the TOPS processing cycle and reviews solutions to common errors that prevent or delay TOPS processing.

Dates and times available for Part 1:

- [March 16 at 9 a.m.](#)
- [March 17 at 12:30 p.m.](#)

Part 2: Preparing Your Seniors for TOPS Processing. This webinar focuses on the steps required to ensure seniors process error-free and includes best practices for submitting documents to LOSFA.

Dates and times available for Part 2:

- [March 16 at 12:30 p.m.](#)
- [March 17 at 9 a.m.](#)

Please use the links above to register for the webinar(s) of your choice.

Please contact rhonda.bridevaux@la.gov at LOSFA with questions.

Legislative Affairs, Policy, and Workforce Support Reminders

Healthy Communities Reminders

Kids Marathon Race and Virtual Challenge

The Department is partnering with Blue Cross and Blue Shields (BCBS) and Louisiana Kids Marathon to promote the [Kids Marathon Race and Virtual Challenge](#).

Teachers, students, and families may use this platform to use the challenge for free. While there is no t-shirt or medal, there are digital badges and certificates teachers, students, and families may print when they complete the challenge. They have the opportunity to receive the t-shirt or medal, for an extra fee. The overall goal is to just get as many kids moving.

The Kids Marathon Challenge will extend the date for completion through the 2021 school year.

Please contact stephen.guccione@la.gov with questions

School System Financial Services Reminders

FY 2020-2021 Final MFP-Career Development Fund (CDF) Payments

Final MFP-CDF payments for FY 2020-2021 were released by the Department on March 4. Funds should appear in school systems' bank accounts within one to three business days depending on the banking institution with which a school system or school conducts business. Additional details regarding these payments are available for reference in the [MFP Library](#).

Please contact LDOEMFPhelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Teaching and Learning Reminders

Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics Reminders

FTP File: January 2021 Quarterly Home Study Report

The Quarterly Home Study Report for January 2021 is available via the Data Management FTP (with user names ending in @datamgmt) in zipped files named "LEACode_LEAName_Jan2021HomeStudy" and will remain on the FTP through April 2021.

Within the zipped file, there will be the following:

- Statewide enrollment numbers of SBESE-Approved Home Study students
- Statewide enrollment numbers of Registered Nonpublic Schools, not Seeking State Approval
- Detailed list of students from your LEA enrolled in Home Study program
- Detailed list of students from your LEA enrolled in Registered Nonpublic Schools, not Seeking State Approval
- Each student's home study approval notification letter

Please contact sue.millican@la.gov with questions.

Educator Development Reminders

CIS End of Year Closeout

The Department has issued a [CIS Timelines one-pager](#) to guide school systems through the evaluation process deadlines for the 2020-2021 school year. These deadlines apply to all public and charter schools within the state and are a requirement even if an alternate rubric waiver has been approved.

At this time, all sites should have completed the following tasks in [CIS](#), the system of record for professional practice evaluation data. If these tasks have not yet been completed, they should now be a priority:

- Updated rosters to reflect only 2020-2021 educators
- Assigned evaluators to each educator
- Assigned SLTs to each educator

CIS will shut down for the 2020-2021 school year on September 1. This means that ideally by end of school year and at the latest by the end of August, the following tasks must be completed in [CIS](#). After September 1, no data for 2020-2021 school year will be able to be amended or added.

- Enter both SLTs for leaders and teachers
- Enter both professional practice scores

For the 2020-2021 school year only, the employees earning “Highly Effective” or “Effective: Proficient” on the first observation do not require a second observation, therefore the final evaluation score will be entered into CIS twice.

Example:

Ms. Smith earns a 3.85 on her first observation, which correlates to “Highly Effective.” Her 3.85 score will then be entered into CIS twice. This will ensure an average score of 3.85.

Please contact compass@la.gov with questions.