

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



March 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Louisiana Department of Education continues to monitor the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and its impact on our communities, our schools, and our early childhood centers. The Department also continues working to ensure education leaders at all levels are properly informed and supported during this extraordinary time.

In the time since the [Governor's emergency proclamation](#) was issued to close all public school facilities to students, the Department has taken steps forward in that effort. It has secured numerous waivers from the [state's education board](#) that offer flexibilities to schools and centers related to required instructional time, teacher evaluations, childcare services, and special education, among other key policy areas.

It has also secured waivers from the federal government to provide more options in how schools can establish school meal sites and serve children in their communities during the extended closures, regardless of that child's family income or location. To date, [235 schools across 63 parishes](#) have stepped up to fill this vital need in creative ways, such as grab-n-go, curbside pickup, and even meal delivery services.

While many next steps remain unclear, the Department will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Education regarding 2019-2020 state assessment and accountability requirements, but continue to offer access to optional state assessments, as desired by schools and parents.

Moreover, at the start of this week, BESE and the House Education Committee [penned a letter](#) to the Governor asking for statutory relief related to state assessments, annual performance scores, and diploma requirements from graduating seniors. The Governor is expected to sign off on these asks, affording our schools the chance to prioritize the health and safety of educators and students above all else.

It will also continue to roll out resources and guidance to schools, centers, and families, including new academic resources for educators, at-home learning materials for families, and an interactive map of school meal sites. All information will be continually updated on the Department's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

Please complete the [School District/Charter School COVID-19 Education Planning Survey](#) by 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, March 18, to notify the Department as to whether you will provide educational services while school facilities are closed to children.

Schools may have closed their classroom doors, but our work continues. Thank you for all you do for our children—now and always.

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

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Important Dates for School Systems

Upcoming Events

- [Assessment and Accountability Office Hours](#): March 24 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Special Education Advisory Panel \(SEAP\) Webinar](#): March 25 at 9:30 a.m.

Important Deadlines

- [Leadership Learning Series Registration](#) deadline: March 20
- [Louisiana Fit Kids Photo Contest Submission](#) deadline: March 30

Postponed/Canceled Events

- EL Community of Practice Session 3 Cohort Meetings (March 16–18 meetings postponed; new date TBA)
- Early Childhood March Collaboratives (March 17: Bossier City; March 20: Lafayette; changed to a [webinar](#) on Friday, March 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.)
- Superintendent Advisory Council (March 19 meeting canceled)
- Early Literacy Commission (March 23; new date TBA)
- Special Education Advisory Panel (March 25 meeting canceled)
- Student of the Year events (More information about virtual interviews will be sent to participants next week)
- 40th Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice (April 7–9 conference postponed; new date TBA)
- Spring 2020 Counselor Institutes (April 2020; rescheduled as virtual institutes)

Please note: The [2019-2020 School System Support Calendar](#) has been updated to include these changes.

School System Support

New: Covid-19 Guidance

Effective Monday, March 16, all public schools in the State of Louisiana closed facilities to students until April 13. Decisions about whether staff report to school facilities remains the decision of local governing authority.

- Schools may offer complete distance learning, as capabilities exist.
- With appropriate social distancing measures, schools shall continue to provide meals or other essential services with applicable staff.
- Instructional minute requirements shall be temporarily suspended for distance education courses and for curriculum delivery.
- The required 63,720 instructional minute requirement per year shall also be suspended.
- The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall report to the Governor and the Legislature any further actions necessary to ensure that eligible students achieve successful student grading, promotion, and graduation.

Please reference the Department's [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#) webpage for regularly updated guidance. Review the [K-12 Frequently Asked Questions](#) document that is specific to the concerns of school systems for the most up-to-date information. Child care providers should refer to the [Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions](#) for specific guidance.

Please contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health at 1-855-523-2652 from 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with questions.

New: Leadership Learning Series Registration

The Department recently announced the [Leadership Learning Series](#) as part of the Teacher Leader Summit and shared plans for year two of the School Support Institutes (SSIs).

The Leadership Learning Series is a series of sessions at the Teacher Leader Summit that will equip school leaders and their leadership teams of CIR and UIR-A schools to develop strong school-based academic plans. Principals of CIR/UIR-A schools should:

- [register](#) their three-person leadership team to attend the Teacher Leader Summit using the CIR/UIR ticket type, and
- [register](#) their three-person leadership team for the Leadership Learning Series by March 20.

Both registrations are separate and required.

Please contact delaina.larocque@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: School System Planning

Super App: School systems will begin receiving feedback on their Professional Development Plan from their network coach. School systems will upload their updated Professional Development Plans in [eGMS](#) in June.

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

Reminder: Teacher Leader Advisors Application Coming Soon

The Louisiana Department of Education is searching for highly-motivated educators to support the mission and vision of the Department. Educators do not need to be a school-site Teacher Leader in order to apply. Louisiana's [Teacher Leader Advisors](#) are an exceptionally talented group of educators across Louisiana who play an influential role in raising expectations for students and in ensuring that fellow educators across the state have access to high-quality instructional materials and resources and curriculum-aligned professional development. Teacher Leader Advisors participate in the Department's [Instructional Materials Review](#) process, create tools for the [Teacher Support Toolbox](#), and develop and lead both virtual and in-person professional development for educators across Louisiana. Application links will be available in the [TLA Flyer](#) on April 11. Additional information will be shared in upcoming newsletters.

Please contact louisianateacherleaders@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Every Child Counts – 2020 Census

Census Day is observed nationwide on April 1. By this date, every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census count impacts the federal funds that communities receive each year for programs and services that are critical for schools, students, and younger children, such as:

- Special education, Head Start, after-school programs, and classroom technology.
- Food assistance, including free and reduced-price school lunches.
- Maternal and child health programs.

Completion of the census ensures federal funding to support Louisiana students. The Department encourages school systems to explore the newly available [2020 Census Toolbox](#) to find activities specially designed to be engaging and appropriate for each grade level, from counting for kindergarteners to examining career statistics for high schoolers.

Please contact ldoecommunications@la.gov with questions.

Assessment and Accountability

For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts

Update: All ACT testing dates have been postponed. Schools should return secure materials using one of the options below.

- Meet FedEx on the regularly scheduled return date of **Thursday, March 19.**
- Contact ACT to reschedule: 1-800-553-6244, ext 2800
- Take materials to FedEx for return to ACT

Update: DRC Deliveries and Opening of Test Setup

- DRC deliveries scheduled for Monday, March 16 and the opening of test setup in DRC INSIGHT, also scheduled for Monday, March 16, have been postponed. DTCs will be notified when revised schedules have been finalized.

Update: NAEP Age 17 Long-term Trend (LTT) Assessments

- NAEP Long-Term Trend (LTT) assessments that were scheduled for March 16 for students aged 17 have been suspended. All schools should have received notification from the NAEP helpdesk.

Update: Cohort Graduation Data Certification

- The opening of cohort graduation data certification scheduled for this week has been postponed. Accountability contacts will be notified when a new schedule has been finalized.

ACT Match/No Match

- The March updated ACT Match/No Match Rosters are now available on the secure FTP.
 - The updated ACT Match list should be used to identify students who have an ACT score on file with the Department and can only be retested at the expense of the school system.
 - The updated ACT No Match list includes the names of students who do not have an ACT score on file and who will need to either test or have an accountability code applied to excuse them from testing (including students who took LEAP Connect).

Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours

The next **Assessment and Accountability Office Hours** will be on **March 24 at 1:00 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 24 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164

Special Education

New: Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) Meeting Canceled

Out of an abundance of caution, **the March 25 SEAP meeting has been canceled.** In lieu of the in-person open meeting, the Department is hosting a presentation on **March 25 at 9:30 a.m.** to share updates with the SEAP panel and members of the public.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 25 at 9:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/605042847>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 605042847#

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Special Education Parent Involvement Surveys

Each year, the Department samples a group of school systems to participate in a parent survey, as required by the IDEA. The parent survey measures how school systems engage parents to improve services and results for students with disabilities.

The Department notified school systems included in the 2019-2020 school year parent survey via email. School systems will receive survey packages this week and should plan to distribute surveys to parents using their preferred method. School systems should also encourage parents to complete the survey to ensure good representation of parent responses across the state.

Please contact ashley.augustine@la.gov with questions.

Data

New: Economically Disadvantaged Students

Yesterday, the Department released the February 2020 data file of economically disadvantaged students for each school system for the purposes of informing grants, federal funding, and subgroup determinations. The single Excel file, *LEA Code LEA Name Feb 2020 Economically Disadvantaged*, will be available through June 1 on the Data Management FTP. FTP coordinators should locate their individual school system file and share it with their federal program and finance staff.

Please email systemsupport@la.gov with questions.

Finance

New: Proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 MFP

The BESE adopted MFP resolution and formula was submitted to the Legislature on March 15. The proposed MFP documents for FY2020-2021 are available in the Department's [Minimum Foundation Program Library](#).

Please contact ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools

Reminder: Louisiana Fit Kids Photo Contest

Louisiana Fit Kids is hosting the "Eat Right, Bite by Bite" photo contest to celebrate National Nutrition Month. Schools are invited to submit photos that showcase Louisiana school meals programs in their school system. The deadline to submit photos is **March 30**. Submission details and additional information can be found on the [Louisiana Fit Kids](#) website.

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