



LDOE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

March 23, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Despite the heroic efforts of educators, students have lost out on more than academics during the pandemic. In many cases, they've also missed music, art, P.E, library visits and the social connection with classmates and educators. We're encouraging school systems to approach summer learning in a new way. The [summer learning program guidance](#) we released in February helps systems develop offerings that mirror summer camp. Along with core content tutoring in small groups, the sample structure we provided includes field trips, the arts, recess and well-being supports.

Summer learning programs offer additional opportunities for learning and growing during the summer months. Our guidance includes sample structures, schedules, staffing, academic offerings and enrichment activities school systems can use as they fund summer opportunities for incoming K-8 students. The guidance also recognizes the long-term benefits of systems connecting with community partners to support their work.

School systems can utilize multiple funding sources to support implementation. These include general funds, Title I, CARES, CAA and Direct Student Services allocations. We're pleased systems are considering our guidance utilizing their pandemic funding to rethink summer school. Families deserve the choice of full-day, enriching activities with high-quality educators.

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised its guidance on social distancing. The Louisiana Department of Health now recommends that, with universal masking, students should maintain a distance of at least 3 feet in classroom settings. The guidance also includes revisions for the use of physical barriers and partitions in schools. BESE President Sandy Holloway has approved revisions to the state's minimum COVID-19 health and safety standards for Louisiana school facilities. We've created [updated physical distancing guidelines](#) that cover some of these details. These changes will be covered in greater detail during Thursday's [Career and College Readiness call](#). It's our hope that these new guidelines will support teachers and leaders as we safely welcome more children back to our schools.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

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Important Dates for School Systems

Office Hours	
Office Hours Title	Zoom Link
Data Coordinator Office Hours	March 25 at 1 p.m.
Career and College Readiness Office Hours	March 25 at 3 p.m.
Early Childhood Lead Agencies Office Hours	March 30 at 3 p.m.
Assessment and Accountability Office Hours	March 30 at 3:45 p.m.
K-2 CLASS® Pilot Office Hours	April 6 at 12 p.m.
Education Technology Office Hours	April 8 at 9 a.m.
SRCL TA Office Hours	April 12 at 1 p.m.
Teacher Leader Summit Office Hours	April 13 at 3 p.m.
Educator Development Office Hours	April 20 at 12 p.m.
Monthly Calls*	
Monthly Call Title	Zoom Link
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.
SPED Leader Monthly Call	April 8 at 2 p.m.
System Leaders Monthly Call	April 9 at 9 a.m.
Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call	April 13 at 3:45 p.m.
Charter Authorizers Monthly Call	April 14 at 11 a.m.
BESE Authorized Charter School Monthly Call	April 14 at 3 p.m.
Federal Support and Grantee Relations Monthly Call	April 15 at 10 a.m.
Career and College Readiness Monthly Call	April 15 at 3 p.m.
Legislative and Policy Support Monthly Call	April 19 at 10 a.m.
Nonpublic Monthly Call	April 21 at 2 p.m.
Student Well-Being Monthly Call	April 21 at 3:30 p.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
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 3)	March 25 at 9:30 a.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 4)	March 25 at 11 a.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 5)	March 25 at 1 p.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 6)	March 25 at 2:30 p.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 7)	March 30 at 10:30 a.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 8)	March 30 at 1 p.m.
Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours (Region 9)	March 30 at 2:30 p.m.
<i>Believe!</i> Launch	March 30 at 3 p.m.
<i>Achieve!</i> Launch	March 30 at 3:45 p.m.
Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar	March 31 at 9 a.m.
Staffing and Scheduling Best Practices Webinar	March 31 at 1 p.m.

2021-2022 Pupil Progression Plan Webinar	April 6 at 9 a.m.
Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar	April 7 at 9 a.m.
2021-2022 Pupil Progression Plan Webinar	April 13 at 9 a.m.
Important Deadlines	
Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application	March 31
Jump Start Construction Scholars Program Applications	April 12

Operations

Federal Support and Grantee Relations

Pandemic Relief Funding Allowability Correction

The Department is releasing corrected language regarding the use of pandemic relief funding. This information has also been updated in the [FAQ](#).

Can ESSER II funding be used to provide stipend pay for employees?

The Department generally does not consider the following to be an allowable use of ESSER funds, under any part of 18003 of the CARES Act:

- Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of the SEA or LEAs, or
- Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations.

ESSER funds generally will not be used for stipends, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures resulting from COVID-19.

School systems can use ESSER funds to provide stipends for faculty and staff if those are related “to preventing, preparing for, and responding to coronavirus.” Below are additional compensation examples:

One-time stipends to address pandemic-related recruitment or retention challenges

- Additional compensation to teachers and other staff that work in-person
- Additional compensation to teachers and other staff that have assumed new duties because of pandemic
- One-time stipends to incentivize effective teachers to move to schools with vulnerable students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic
- Additional pay to substitute teachers where there are shortages

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

Achieve! Launch and Planning Resources

The Department will host a launch for school systems and release guidance when ESSER II funds are loaded into eGMS, providing school systems with pertinent information for creating their budgets in alignment with the priorities and focus areas outlined in [Believe to Achieve: Louisiana's Educational Priorities](#). The launch will take place on [March 30 at 3:45 p.m.](#)

FAQ Updates

New items were added to the [ESSER II New Funding FAQ](#) including information on indirect cost rate, allocations to charter schools, and pre-approval regulations and process.

Allowable Use of Funds Resource

The Department released a [new allowable use of funds](#) resource that provides allowable use of funds examples for school systems to support strategic, high-impact planning.

New Planning Resources

Release Date	Resource	Summary
March 23	Achieve! ESSERF Use of Funds Examples	Provides allowable use of funds examples for school systems to support strategic, high-impact planning with the new pandemic relief funding.
March 26	Allowability and Cost Guidance Crosswalk for ESSER II Funding	Contains examples of investments systems could make in their initiatives based on the ESSERF allowabilities in alignment to the agencies priorities.
March 26	ESSER III Funding Overview	Contains a high-level overview of the new ESSER funding allocated under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) . The document will include information on notable differences between ESSERF I, II, and III, key considerations systems should begin thinking about, and anticipated timelines for allocations and planning.

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

Equipment and Other Capital Expenditures - Edgar 200.439

The Department is implementing a new process for school systems seeking pre-approval for equipment and capital expenditures.

The following types of expenditures would require use of the pre-approval process (Rules 1 & 3):

1. General equipment purchases (van, bus, etc.,)
2. Land purchases
3. Building purchases
4. Improvement to general equipment, land, and/or building that increase the value or use life

The following rules of allowability must apply to equipment and other capital expenditures in accordance with Edgar 200.439:

1. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct charges, except with the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

2. Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more have the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.
3. Capital expenditures for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment that materially increase their value or useful life are unallowable as a direct cost except with the prior written approval of the pass-through entity (LDOE).

Note: The eGMS application approval serves as pre-approval for special purpose equipment (servers, smartboards, body scan thermometers, etc.) Rule 2

To submit a pre-approval request for equipment/capital expenditures please complete and submit the [Pre-Approval for Equipment/Capital Expenditures Form](#). The equipment/capital expenditure pre-approval form can also be accessed via the [FSGR Library](#). Once received, LDOE staff will review the request and provide either an approval or denial response to the request.

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

ESSER II Funding Guidance for Stipend Pay

The Louisiana Department of Education generally disclaims consideration of the following as an allowable use of ESSER funds, under any part of 18003:

1. Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of the SEA or LEAs, or
2. Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations.

ESSER funds generally will not be used for bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures **unless related to disruptions or closures resulting from COVID-19**.

Additional information regarding Stipend Pay can be referenced in the [Achieve! - ESSER II Funding Guidance FAQ](#).

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

Career and College Readiness

2021-2022 Pupil Progression Plan Webinar

Please share with district administration.

The Pupil Progression Plan (PPP) is the comprehensive plan developed and adopted by each school system, based on student performance. The plan also addresses student placement, promotion, retention, and specific policy decisions of the school system.

The Department will hold two webinars to address the submission of the 2021-2022 PPP. These presentations are being offered on two dates with the same content. Please select the session that works best. The PPP template will be posted in the school policy library in early April.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 6 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93454423348>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-381-2552
- **Meeting ID#:** 934 5442 3348

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 13 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97684188992>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-250-9358
- **Meeting ID#:** 976 8418 8992

Please contact ppp@la.gov with questions.

Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities

Special Education

Reevaluation Pilot Office Hours

The Department will host informational office hours on reevaluation and waiver changes in SER. Pupil appraisal staff, special education coordinators and directors, data coordinators, SER managers, SER clerks, and any other staff who work with reevaluation and waiver processes in SER should plan to attend.

Region	Date and Zoom Link	Region	Date and Zoom Link
1: Orleans, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. Bernard	Tuesday, March 23 at 10:30 a.m.	6: Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, Winn	Thursday, March 25 at 2:30 p.m.
2: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana	Tuesday, March 23 at 1 p.m.	7: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster	Tuesday, March 30 at 10:30 a.m.
3: Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, Terrebonne	Thursday, March 25 at 9:30 a.m.	8: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll	Tuesday, March 30 at 1 p.m.
4: Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, Vermillion	Thursday, March 25 at 11 a.m.	9: Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington	Tuesday, March 30 at 2:30 p.m.
5: Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis	Thursday, March 25 at 1 p.m.		

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

School System Financial Services

Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Mid-Year Adjustments

Please share with business managers and financial officials.

The transmittal memo, in addition to the March 2021 Budget Letter, have been updated to include the October and February mid-year adjustments for students and the final local per-pupil amount for charter schools. The supporting documentation is provided in the Department's [Minimum Foundation Program Library](#).

Please contact ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Final Charter School Per-Pupil Amounts for FY 2020-2021

Please share with business managers and financial officials.

The final FY2020-2021 Charter Per-Pupil amounts have been completed and are [now available](#). The local revenue representation per-pupil amount for charter schools is required to be updated from the initial to the final amount and used in the MFP formula allocation according to Louisiana Revised Statute 17:3995.

Please contact ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 MFP

Please share with business managers and financial officials.

The BESE adopted MFP resolution and formula was submitted to the Legislature on March 15. The proposed MFP documents for FY 2021-2022 are available in the Department's [Minimum Foundation Program Library](#).

Please contact ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Teaching and Learning

Summer Learning Programs

The [Summer Learning Program Guidance](#) has been updated to include a matrix to show the enrichment connections among sample activities and links to one-pagers in these enrichment areas:

- Arts
- PE and health, outside activities
- STEM
- Literacy
- Career and college exploration

System leaders should review the checklist items for this month when planning. February-April checklist items include:

- Create applications for staff hiring
- Create a registration process and timeline for students including the collection of accommodations and medical plans
- Engage with partners for supports (local government, organizations, public library, universities, etc.)
- Determine school site locations

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

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

- March 22: Test setup is now open in DRC INSIGHT for high school LEAP testing
- March 29: Test setup in DRC INSIGHT will open for grades 3-8 LEAP testing
- March 29: DTCs should submit all test schedules

ACT Match/No Match Rosters

- **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](#).
- After materials are received: Distribute non-test instructions and Taking the ACT to all students. Students must complete the non-test information in MyACT.
- **March 19-April 1:** Precache test content for the makeup window (if utilizing proctor caching)
- **March 23-26, 29-31, April 1-2:** Administer the ACT on paper with accommodations and/or supports (test only on weekdays)
- **March 23-25, 30-31, April:** Administer the ACT online with standard time or accommodations and/or supports (tests only available Tuesday-Thursday)
- Prescheduled FedEx picked up at the district office to return test booklets, used answer documents, and test administration forms from the March 23 standard time test date (Receipt deadline at ACT is March 30; late arriving answer documents will not be scored)
- **April 2:** Purge cached test content from all proctor caching computers (test content must be purged after each testing window)

- **April 5:** Prescheduled FedEx picked up at the district office to return test booklets, used answer documents, and test administration forms from the March 23-26, 29-31, and April 1-2 accommodations and/or supports or online testing to ACT (Receipt deadline at ACT is April 9; late arriving answer documents will not be scored)
- **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](#)

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 submission windows have been extended to accommodate spring break (March 17-26, April 14-23, 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 office hours will be on **March 30 at 3:45 p.m.** A password will now be required for office hours. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 30 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

Teacher Leader Summit: T-shirt Sales

The Department announces with great pleasure for the first time a student has won the Teacher Leader Summit t-shirt design contest. Ayla Voitier, an eleventh-grade student at Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts in St. Landry parish and a student of Kimberly Nelams-Becnel, won the contest open to both students and educators.

T-shirts are now available for [purchase](#). The vendor producing the t-shirts will donate \$1 from each t-shirt sold back to Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts. The t-shirt design is inclusive of both the in-person Teacher Leader Summit and the Virtual Series. One does not have to be registered for either event to purchase a t-shirt.

T-shirts will be available for purchase on the website until early May to account for shipping to ensure all t-shirts arrive in advance of the in-person event. It has not yet been determined if the t-shirt vendor will be able to be onsite during the mornings of the in-person event and thus those interested in purchasing a t-shirt are encouraged to do so via the website.

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit (In-person) Session Scheduling

[Registration](#) for the in-person Teacher Leader Summit is underway. The session schedule and app will be released to early bird ticket holders on April 7 and April 9 for regular registration ticket holders.

Session scheduling will be done via the same method the Department has utilized in the past - Sched. To ensure ease of scheduling, registrants are encouraged to delete the 2020 app from their phones. A new version of the app will need to be downloaded to register for the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit. A newsletter entry will be forthcoming when the new app is available for download.

New this year, educators have the opportunity to download graphics to share across their social media platforms to celebrate attending the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit. The graphics can be found in the “*I’m Going Passes*” section of the [Summit Materials page](#). Be sure to use the #LATeacherLeaders in social posts.

More information regarding the in-person Teacher Leader Summit can be found in the [Overview](#).

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series Registration

To maximize the [delivery of content](#) and educator development, The Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will take place from June 1-11, and sessions will be accessed remotely. The format will be similar to the Virtual Series offered during spring 2020.

There will be a max overall registration limitation of 8,000 for which the Department is not allocating seats. [Registration](#) for the Virtual Series will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Paid ticket holders of the Teacher Leader Summit in-person event will receive an access code allowing them to register for and participate in the Virtual Series at no additional cost. These codes will be sent in advance of registration opening on April 1 and weekly thereafter. Each code will be one-time use and must be used only by the original ticket holder. Codes are not transferable.

[Registration](#) for the Virtual Series will occur in two phases:

- Early bird registration (April 1 through April 25)
- Regular registration (April 26 through sellout)

Ticket Type	Purchasing Window	Ticket Price
Early Bird Registration	April 1-25	\$50.00
Regular Registration	April 26 - sell out	\$65.00

Tickets are inclusive of all days of the event. The session schedule and app will be released to early bird ticket holders on May 10 and May 12 for regular registrants. More information on the Virtual Series can be found in the [Overview](#).

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Reminders

- **[Operations Reminders](#)**
 - **[Federal Support and Grantee Relations Reminders](#)**
 - **[Nutrition Support Reminders](#)**
- **[Career and College Readiness Reminders](#)**
- **[Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities Reminders](#)**
 - **[Special Education Reminders](#)**
- **[Legislative Affairs, Policy, and Workforce Support Reminders](#)**
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 - **[Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics Reminders](#)**

Operations Reminders

Federal Support and Grantee Relations Reminders

Title IV, Part A, CARES Act Fiscal Waiver Flexibilities for SY 2020-2021

In addition to the Title IV Waiver Flexibilities currently available for Title IV, Part A Funds for 2019-2020 **prior year** funds, all school systems are encouraged to take advantage of the Title IV Fiscal Waiver Flexibilities for the current year, SY 2020-2021, Title IV award.

These recently extended fiscal waiver flexibilities allow local school systems to apply the following provisions to the current school year 2020-2021:

- Target Title IV, Part A funds directly to specific needs of school systems within the intent of Title IV programming without having to adjust the Title IV Needs Assessment.
- Disregard the Content Area 'Required Percentages' in order to get the maximum fiscal flexibility driven by the school system's current needs. For example, school systems will be allowed to target more funding toward technology infrastructure (i.e. student devices, internet connectivity, etc.) without being limited to the fifteen percent requirement for Infrastructure/TIN in the Effective Use of Technology section.

School systems can access the Title IV fiscal flexibilities immediately by amending their 2020-2021 Super App. The following areas must be amended:

1. Signing off on the Title IV waiver assurances
2. Noting changes on the Amendment Description tab
3. Aligning actual amounts projected on the Title IV Allowable Uses Page
4. Adjusting the appropriate Domain Budget Detail page

Note: These flexibilities apply to Title IV, Part A funds for the prior year 2019-2020 and current year 2020-2021 currently available in the 2020-2021 Super App for each LEA.

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

Nutrition Support Reminders

School Meals Waivers Extended Through September 30

On March 9, the United States Department of Agriculture announced the extension of several child nutrition program [waivers](#) through **September 30**. The extension will allow child nutrition program sponsoring organizations the flexibility necessary to provide children with access to free meals through the summer months.

Please contact childnutritionprograms@la.gov with questions.

Career and College Readiness Reminders

NCCER ICTP/Core Instructor Training

Share with CTE supervisors, principals, counselors, and secondary supervisors.

NCCER ICTP/Core teacher certification will be held virtually from April 12-16 and continues April 19-23. NCCER Master Trainer Chance Plaisance will serve as the instructor. The master trainer will work with craft instructors to complete performance profiles.

To receive the registration link, documentation of skill of the requested craft is required. The NCCER card number and any one or all of the following should be submitted to troy.borne@la.gov.

- Resume with industry experience including professional contacts to verify experience in requested craft area(s)
- Diploma with transcript from postsecondary institution in requested craft area(s)
- Registered apprenticeship in requested craft area(s)

The cost of the certification class for ICTP/Core is \$600.00. Instructors that only need ICTP or Core should reach out to troy.borne@la.gov. Registration costs will be paid via the registration link provided. Perkins and/or CDF funds may be utilized for training costs.

Please contact troy.borne@la.gov with questions.

2021 Jump Start Super Summer Institute Catalogue

Please share with CTE supervisors.

The dynamic [2021 Jump Start Super Summer Institute Catalogue](#) provides a list of professional development and training opportunities available this summer. This list is not comprehensive and will continue to be updated as additional training options are confirmed. School systems can submit training opportunities and/or training requests to jumpstart@la.gov for review.

Registration costs for the summer sessions are paid directly to the provider. Carl Perkins and Career Development Funds are eligible funding sources for registration.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

LEAP 2025 Graduation Regulatory Flexibility Options for 2020-2021

Please share with secondary supervisors, high school administrators, district test coordinators, and counselors.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has granted a [LEAP 2025 graduation regulatory flexibility options](#). This option will allow opportunities for high school seniors to meet the LEAP 2025 and Career Diploma IBC credentialing requirement. The aforementioned opportunities are available to high school seniors who meet the following qualifications:

1. Met all other graduation requirements
2. Attempted all LEAP 2025 assessments at least one time
3. Were enrolled during the spring 2021 semester and are graduating by August 31, 2021

All high school seniors who meet the qualifications listed above have the option to substitute the following in lieu of the LEAP 2025 high school assessment requirement and/or Career Diploma credential requirement:

LEAP 2025 Substitution Opportunities

1. An ACT composite score of 17 or higher for all students; or
2. An ACT subject score of 17 or higher in the corresponding LEAP 2025 high school assessment; or
3. A score of Silver or better on ACT WorkKeys for students pursuing a Career Diploma; or
4. The student participates in 20 or more extended learning hours per LEAP 2025 high school assessment subject pair for which the student has yet to achieve level 2 (approaching basic/fair) or above, with such instruction provided by a qualified teacher. A template will be provided to LEAs to document the extended learning hours and the level of achievement.
 - a. School systems will determine the number of extended learning hours needed (minimum 20) and the assessment method used to determine whether or not the student is performing at the equivalent of Approaching Basic
 - b. Qualified teacher is defined as holding a valid and current teaching certification or a final COMPASS evaluation of Effective: Emerging or better

Career Diploma IBC Credentialing Requirement Opportunity

1. WorkKeys Silver and above can also substitute for an IBC credential for the purpose of meeting graduation requirements for Career Diploma students.

Please review the [dynamic FAQs](#) for additional information.

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar

Please share with school counselors.

All middle and high school counselors are encouraged to attend the (rescheduled) 2021 IGP Webinar on either **March 31 or April 7 from 9 until 11 a.m.** The LDOE will provide attendees with an overview of Louisiana IGP policies and recent updates to Act 238, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) will demonstrate how school counselors can use related LWC resources. A Zoom recording and deck will be available to those unable to attend.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 31 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95873761113>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 958 7376 1113

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 7 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95873761113>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 958 7376 1113

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

Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunities Reminders

Special Education Reminders

SPED Fellow Information Sessions

[SPED Fellow](#) is a year-long, comprehensive development program for novice special education leaders (administrators) across the state. SPED Fellow will instill the knowledge and skills the next generation of special education leaders need to lead and sustain change to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Learning will cover topics such as strategic budgeting, stakeholder engagement, laws, and policies, leveraging data, leadership development including managing teams, and sustaining change. In addition to a robust curriculum, the program will support fellows in examining a systems-level problem of practice, developing a theory of action to address the problem of practice, and developing an action plan to lead systems-level change. This program is free for accepted participants.

The second cohort of SPED Fellow will run in 2021-2022. The Department will hold informational sessions on the SPED Fellow on **March 25 at 9 a.m. and at 2:30 p.m.** The application will open on **April 12**.

Please contact rachel.brown@la.gov with questions.

Legislative Affairs, Policy, and Workforce Support Reminders

Healthy Communities Reminders

How to Introduce Mindful Movement into the Classroom Webinar

The Department, in partnership with LDH-Well Ahead, is hosting a webinar on How to Introduce Mindful Movement into the Classroom.

Educators know that children learn best when they are comfortable, safe, and relaxed. Mindfulness is a practice of self-awareness that helps to relax the body and mind and reduce stress. Join the How to Introduce Mindful Movement into the Classroom Webinar, scheduled for **March 31 from 1:30-3 p.m.**, to gain skills to lead students through simple mindfulness exercises, including breathing techniques and mindful movement that can be used to boost classroom physical activity. During this 90-minute webinar, attendees will practice planning how to integrate bite-size mindful movement lessons into daily routines.

[Register in advance](#). After registering, attendees will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Please contact stephen.guccione@la.gov with questions.

Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action

The Department, in partnership with LDH-Well Ahead, is promoting The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Take Down Tobacco program empowers youth to stand up and speak out against the tobacco industry.

This year's Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action will be held virtually on **April 1**. The Department and LDH-Well Ahead encourage teachers, students, families, and student organizations to participate in Take Down Tobacco Day by:

- Planning a [Take Down Tobacco event](#)
- Displaying or sharing event [resources](#) such as fact sheets, data, and campaign promotional materials
- Connecting students to [information](#) on youth initiatives and training opportunities for youth groups or youth leaders
- Supporting high school students in entering the Louisiana High School Next Era Take Down Tobacco Day Short Video contest. Selected entries will earn a stipend prize. For details, visit [Next Era's](#) website.
- Joining the virtual night of comedy and empowerment against Big Tobacco on April 1 from 6-7 p.m. Registration and event details [are now available](#).

The Department and LDH-Well Ahead encourage schools that participate to register their events on the [Take Down Tobacco website](#) and post on social media platforms using the #TakeDownTobacco hashtag. For additional information on Take Down Tobacco Day or resources for helping youth stay or geaux tobacco-free, visit [wellaheadla.com](#).

Please contact stephen.guccione@la.gov with questions.

Teaching and Learning Reminders

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.

May 14: Summer resource guidance released
May 20: Summer Resources Webinar at 1 p.m.

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

Staffing and Scheduling Best Practices Guidance

The Staffing and Scheduling Best Practices Guidance will be released **March 30**. This guidance will provide systems and school leaders best practices, staffing and scheduling models, cautions and tips for implementation, and information on ongoing implementation support available. A webinar will be held on March 31 to walk through the guidance and provide information on ongoing implementation support available. System leaders that supervise special education, English Learners, academics, human resources, and elementary and secondary schools should attend.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 31 at 1 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95029666833>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 950 2966 6833
- **Passcode:** 952068

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

Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL)

[Real-time Early Access to Literacy \(REAL\)](#) provides early literacy support for students in pre-K through grade 3. Funding allocations were provided to school systems to support pre-K through grade 3 students enrolled in CIR and UIR-A schools with tutoring from an approved [LDOE Tutoring Service Provider](#). The first tutoring cycle is underway and will end on May 8. The deadline for eGMS application submission has been **extended to April 1**. More information will be communicated about additional funding for the summer tutoring cycle in April.

For more information about REAL, visit the [REAL](#) landing page.

Please contact catasha.edwards@la.gov with questions.

Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics Reminders

February 2021 Economically Disadvantaged Student Rosters

The Department released the February 2021 data file of economically disadvantaged students for each school system for the purposes of informing grants, funding, and subgroup determinations. The single Excel file, LEA Code LEA Name Feb 2021 Economically Disadvantaged, is available through June 1 on the Data Management FTP site. FTP coordinators should locate their individual school system file and share it with their federal program and finance staff.

Please contact systemsupport@la.gov with questions.