

# LDOE Weekly Newsletter



**March 31, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

As the Louisiana Department of Education continues to monitor the spread of COVID-19, and its impact on our communities, our schools, and our early childhood centers, we are working diligently to ensure that our meetings and events are responsive to the guidelines and protocols put forth by public health officials. During this extraordinary time, the Department urges everyone to follow these guidelines and protocols.

In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the in-person 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May, as scheduled. This was a difficult decision and one that was not taken lightly, but the health and safety of educators, presenters, staff, and the community as a whole are paramount.

In keeping with the Department's commitment to supporting educators, there will be a shift to a virtual session presentation platform for as many sessions as possible. Additional details, including the list and schedule of these sessions, will soon be announced.

All registrants will automatically be unregistered from the event. Those who paid for a ticket will automatically receive a refund, minus processing fees, by the end of April to the card on file. Confirmation of the cancellation will be sent to the purchaser's email address. This means that if a principal purchased tickets, that principal will receive the confirmation of cancellation and refund.

The Department will cancel all hotel rooming blocks listed in the [Overview Document](#). However, individuals should contact the hotel directly if they require proof of cancellation. Some school systems may have chosen to contract their own hotel blocks. Those school systems should contact the hotel directly to arrange cancellation of their contracts.

The Department looks forward to being in touch regarding virtual session offerings and hopes to see everyone at next year's event!

Thank you for your continued patience, as well as your continued commitment to our students and school leaders.

Beth Scioneaux  
Acting State Superintendent

## **In This Issue**

- [School System Support](#)
- [Assessment & Accountability](#)
- [High School Pathways](#)
- [Special Education](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Safe and Healthy Schools](#)

## Important Dates for School Systems

### Upcoming Events

- [Special Education During School Closure Webinar](#): April 2 at 12:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Office Hours](#): April 7 at 4:15 p.m.
- [April SPED Leader Webinar](#): April 9 at 2:00 p.m.
- [Super App Competitive Funding Webinar](#): April 23 at 11:00 a.m.

### Important Deadlines

- [IDEA Draft Grant Application Public Comment](#) deadline: April 24

### Postponed/Canceled Events

- Accountability Commission (March 16 meeting postponed; new date TBA)
- EL Community of Practice Series Meetings (Canceled)
- Early Childhood March Collaboratives- (March 17- Bossier City; March 20- Lafayette; changed to a [webinar](#) on 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)
- Teacher Certification Appeals Council (March 27 meeting postponed; new date TBA)
- Student of the Year events (Postponed; more information about virtual interviews will be sent to participants)
- April School System Planning Call (Canceled; presentation will be posted to the [School Improvement Library](#) on April 8)
- Spring 2020 Counselor Institutes (April; rescheduled as virtual institutes)
- 2020 Teacher Leader Summit (May, in-person convening canceled; virtual session offerings will be shared in coming weeks)

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

## School System Support

### New: Covid-19 Guidance

In response to the ongoing health crisis, all public schools in the state of Louisiana are currently closed.

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. For education-specific information, contact the Department at [LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov](mailto:LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov).

Please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211 with questions about coronavirus, or text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available.

## **New: COVID-19 Cyber Risk Management Bulletin**

In addition to the health concerns and significant disruption to businesses currently being experienced, there is an increase in phishing and malware campaigns exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic, which the state's Emergency Support Function-17 (ESF-17) is monitoring. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), ESF-17, and the Department encourage school systems to guard against COVID-19-related phishing attacks and disinformation campaigns by taking precautions detailed in the [COVID-19 | ESF-17 Cyber Risk Management Bulletin](#).

Please report any cyber incident related to COVID-19-themed emails, attachments, or scams to the Louisiana FUSION Center at [lafusion.center@la.gov](mailto:lafusion.center@la.gov).

## **New: Teacher Leader Summit**

In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the in-person, **2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May, as scheduled.**

In keeping with the Department's commitment to supporting educators, there will be a shift to a virtual session presentation platform for as many sessions as possible. Additional details, including the list and schedule of these sessions, will be announced soon in upcoming newsletters.

Please contact [ldoeevents@la.gov](mailto:ldoeevents@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: April School System Planning Call**

**The April School System Planning Call scheduled for April 8 at 1:00 p.m. has been canceled.** The presentation will be posted to our [School Improvement Library](#) on April 8.

Please contact [districtsupport@la.gov](mailto:districtsupport@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: Distance and Home Learning Supports**

The Department [posted](#) distance and home learning supports for educators, students, and caregivers including:

- [Academic resources](#) for math, ELA, social studies, science, early childhood, and special education including increased access to digital content and virtual lessons.
- Resources to teach young children about COVID-19.

Also, the Department is working with Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) to do the following:

- Ensure their "[At-Home Learning](#)" website includes links to Department-produced guidance.
- Assist them in choosing educational programming that is most closely connected to Louisiana student standards, whenever possible. Access the [LBP broadcasting schedule](#).

Later this week, the Department will release:

- IDEA Timelines and Documentation During School Closure Guidance
- Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services

The Department will announce further availability of these resources through all upcoming school system planning calls and newsletters.

## **Reminder: School System Planning**

A **Super App Competitive Funding Webinar** will be held on **April 23 at 11:00 a.m.** to review important information regarding Super App competitive funds. Federal Programs Directors and Super App Planning Team members directly involved in budgeting funds should attend. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 23 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/212342956>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 212 342 956

Please contact [ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov](mailto:ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: Early Elementary CLASS® Pilot Opportunity**

The Department is gearing up for the CLASS® pilot for the 2020-2021 school year. In addition to kindergarten, the pilot will extend to grades 1 and 2. School systems that have not signed up and are interested in doing so are encouraged to complete the [CLASS® Pilot 2020-2021 Form](#) by **May 1**. Benefits include funding for K-3 CLASS® observer training and certification, professional development, and coaching.

For more information about the early elementary CLASS® pilot, visit the [Accountability Pilots Library](#).

Please contact [brandy.brunson@la.gov](mailto:brandy.brunson@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: Student of the Year Update**

**The 2020 Student of the Year final selection process will be postponed.** School systems that were unable to submit student writing samples by the March 24 submission deadline will have the opportunity to resubmit. The Department will reschedule in-person interviews at a later, to be determined, date. More information will be released in forthcoming newsletters.

Please contact [marian.johnson@la.gov](mailto:marian.johnson@la.gov) with questions.

## **Assessment and Accountability**

### **New: ACT Spring Testing**

**ACT spring testing has been rescheduled for June 2.** This administration is not mandatory for students, since there is no accountability reporting this fall; however, it does provide juniors, as well as seniors with no ACT score on record, with an opportunity to take the assessment free of charge. The Department is also planning for an ACT administration in early fall for juniors who become seniors in 2020-2021.

**Schools should return secure ACT materials that were shipped for March testing using one of the options below.**

- Contact ACT to reschedule at 800-553-6244, ext 2800.
- Take materials to FedEx for return to ACT.

Please contact [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov) with questions.

## **For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts**

### **Update: Waivers for Testing**

- To date, the only students who have a waiver from the assessment graduation requirements are graduating seniors who were enrolled at the time of school closing. The Department continues to review potential waivers for other students, and guidance will be provided as soon as possible.
- The current waiver does not apply to students who were not enrolled in school or students who are not yet eligible to graduate.

### **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 has been postponed. Accountability contacts will be notified when a new schedule has been finalized.

### **Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours**

The next **Assessment and Accountability Office Hours** will be on **April 7 at 4:15 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 7 at 4:15 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164

## **High School Pathways**

### **New: 2020 Jump Start Summer Institute Digital Training Model**

In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the 2020 Super Summit Institute will not occur in June and July via a face-to-face model, as scheduled. This was a difficult decision and one that was not taken lightly, but the health and safety of educators, presenters, staff, and the community as a whole are paramount. The Department urges everyone to follow the guidelines and protocols put forth by public health officials.

In lieu of face-to-face training opportunities, trainings are being transitioned to a digital training model. The dynamic [2020 Jump Start Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities](#) guide provides a list of professional development and training opportunities. This list is not comprehensive and will continue to be updated as additional training options are confirmed.

[A list of FAQs](#) regarding Jump Start Super Summer Institute is available in the [All Things Jump Start](#) web portal.

Please contact [jumpstart@la.gov](mailto:jumpstart@la.gov) with questions.

## Special Education

### **New: Special Education During School Closure Webinar**

Later this week, the Department will release guidance for school systems on continuous learning opportunities for students with disabilities and special education compliance during school closure. The Department will hold a webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education to review this guidance on **April 2 at 12:00 p.m.** Pre-registration is not required.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 2 at 12:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/515598121>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923 (for dial-in only)
- **Meeting ID#:** 515 598 121

Please contact [specialeducation@la.gov](mailto:specialeducation@la.gov) with questions.

### **New: April SPED Leader Webinar**

The Department will hold its monthly webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education on **April 9 at 2:00 p.m.** Topics will include COVID-19 updates, upcoming deadlines, guidance, and training opportunities. Pre-registration is not required.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 9 at 2:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/836904974>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923 (for dial-in only)
- **Meeting ID#:** 836 904 974

Please contact [specialeducation@la.gov](mailto:specialeducation@la.gov) with questions.

### **New: IDEA Draft Grant Application Public Comment**

Each year, the Department completes an Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant application that outlines the use of IDEA Part B 611 state-level set aside funds. These funds are reserved for a variety of specified activities such as support and direct services, technical assistance and personnel preparation, monitoring and mediation, and improving the use of technology in the classroom.

Louisiana's IDEA Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 grant application is available for [public comment](#) until **April 24.**

Please contact [specialeducation@la.gov](mailto:specialeducation@la.gov) with questions.

## **New: ELA Guidebook Accessible Educational Materials**

The Louisiana Accessible Educational Materials (LA-AEM) center provides resources for students with low-incidence disabilities to access high-quality curriculum. Large print and braille downloads of most ELA Guidebook Unit tests for all levels are now available on the new [LA-AEM website](#). The website also includes links for read-aloud access to books and information on professional development opportunities.

The LA-AEM website will be updated as additional accessible materials become available. School systems that need a large print or braille file that is not yet available are asked to please [submit a request](#) to LA-AEM.

Please contact [administrator@ssdla-aem.org](mailto:administrator@ssdla-aem.org) with questions.

## **Finance**

### **Reminder: Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Fiscal Requirements**

**Please share with business managers and financial officials.**

Meeting yearly Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements are a part of the business process to confirm compliance and determine eligibility of federal grant funds for ESSA and IDEA grants. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires an annual review that determines if each school system:

1. has not decreased spending of general fund dollars, and
2. is budgeting expenditures to meet the MOE standards.

There are three MOE measurements submitted in the eGMS system:

- 2019 IDEA MOE Confirmation (Compliance) deadline for submission is April 30.
- 2021 ESSA MOE Verification updates are in progress and will be available in the near future.
- 2021 IDEA MOE Verification (Eligibility) updates are in progress and will be available in the near future.

**Please note:** The Department has enhanced the MOE system to include a technical assistance feature that shows if the school system has not met the MOE requirement for IDEA. School systems are encouraged to start early and work through the new technical assistance feature found at the consistency check.

The [MOE Quick Reference Guide](#) is available to assist with the new feature and submitting all three MOE applications.

Please contact [nakia.jason@la.gov](mailto:nakia.jason@la.gov) regarding noticed delays with MOE that are COVID-19 related or with questions regarding the MOE review process. For technical inquiries or support, please contact [jason.berard@la.gov](mailto:jason.berard@la.gov).

## **Reminder: Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Mid-Year Adjustments**

**Please share with business managers and financial officials.**

The transmittal memo, in addition to the March 2020 Budget Letter, has 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](mailto:ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: Final Charter School Per-Pupil Amounts for FY2019-2020**

**Please share with business managers and financial officials.**

The final [FY2019-2020 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](mailto:ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov) with questions.

## **Safe and Healthy Schools**

### **New: School-based Medicaid Reimbursement for Telehealth Services**

The Department has been in contact with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)-Medicaid regarding the use of telemedicine to provide services to Medicaid eligible students in accordance with their current IEP and was informed by LDH that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) allows for flexibility for telehealth services and LDH is posting guidance to the providers periodically [to their website](#).

This guidance is mostly directed to the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) but provides information for school systems related to billing for telemedicine. While a secure HIPAA-compliant platform is preferred, providers may use other communication (audio/visual cellular phones) during the COVID-19 emergency.

LDH-Medicaid stated the following changes are necessary when submitting claims for Medicaid reimbursement:

- Place of Service = Code 02
- For behavioral health services provided by an LMHP, school systems must bill the procedure code (CPT) with modifier "95."

School systems must adhere to the [LA Medicaid EPSDT Health and IDEA – Related Services fee schedule dated January 2, 2017](#).

Reminder: In accordance with CMS requirements, school systems may only claim reimbursement for behavioral health services provided by Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHPs) as defined by CMS - LCSWs, LPCs, LMFTs, and/or Licensed Psychologists. CMS does not recognize Licensed Specialist School Psychologists as an LMHP.

Please contact [janice.zube@la.gov](mailto:janice.zube@la.gov) with questions.