

# LDOE Weekly Newsletter



**April 7, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards last week extended the state's stay-at-home order, and with it the closure of school facilities, until at least April 30.

As we continue to navigate these unprecedented and uncertain times, the Louisiana Department of Education stands committed to supporting school system leaders to make decisions based on the unique needs of their communities.

In line with that commitment, the Department has:

- Continued to secure regulatory flexibilities from the state and federal levels, with [the latest request](#) for an extension of key federal education funding sent to the U.S. Department of Education on April 6;
- Maintained twice-weekly meetings with school system leaders and publicly posted meeting materials to [the COVID-19 page on its website](#), along with other key resources and updated information;
- Equipped school systems with [information and resources to help them start or continue to make academic and workforce decisions](#), including a toolkit of sample distance education models and schedules, instructional materials, and guidance related to staffing needs;
- Released [guidance related to continuous education specifically for students with disabilities](#), including information about remotely providing direct student services, like occupational therapy or counseling, and instructions on how to ensure compliance with special education timelines and requirements; and
- Detailed [next steps for the Class of 2020](#) regarding course credits, assessments, graduation ceremonies and the like.

In order to continue to serve you to the best of our ability, we need to better understand your unique needs for support now and in the coming months. With that, we ask that you please complete a brief survey no later than Tuesday, April 14.

The survey, which focuses on technology, academics, and teacher professional development, [can be found here](#).

Thank you for all you do for our children—now and always.

In service,

Beth Scioneaux  
Acting State Superintendent

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## Important Dates for School Systems

### Upcoming Events

- [April SPED Leader Webinar](#): April 9 at 2:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call](#): April 21 at 4:15 p.m.

### Important Deadlines

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

### Postponed/Canceled Events

- Student of the Year events (Postponed)
- 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)
- 2020 Jump Start Super Summer Institutes

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: 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 has been posted to our [School Improvement Library](#).

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

## **New: Leadership Learning Series Update**

In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May in person, as scheduled. As a result, the Department will deliver portions of the Leadership Learning Series virtually, including “School Support Institutes: Building Blocks.” Additionally, the Department will deliver “School Support Institutes 2020-2021: A Guide for Superintendents and School System Leaders” virtually.

More details will be forthcoming in future weekly newsletters. Please contact [delaina.larocque@la.gov](mailto:delaina.larocque@la.gov) with questions.

## **Reminder: 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).

## **Reminder: 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.

## **Assessment and Accountability**

### **New: Assessment Development Educator Review Committees, Summer 2020**

All LEAP 2025 Social Studies, LEAP 2025 ELA, and LEAP Connect Item Content and Bias Review committees will convene virtually. Review the [Assessment Development Educator Review Committees](#) document in the [Assessment Guidance Library](#) for more information and to access links to complete interest surveys. All LEAP 2025 Rangefinding, Data Review, and Alignment Review committees are postponed until summer 2021.

Please contact [michelle.mcadams@la.gov](mailto:michelle.mcadams@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 Monthly Call** will be on **April 21 at 4:15 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 21 at 4:15 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164

## **Reminder: 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.

## High School Pathways

### **Reminder: 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

### **Reminder: April SPED Leader Webinar**

The Department will hold its monthly webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education this **Thursday, 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.

### **Reminder: 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**. The grant application and public comment survey are [now available](#) in Spanish, Arabic, and Vietnamese.

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

## Safe and Healthy Schools

### **Reminder: 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.