

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



May 5, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

This week, educators across the nation are being celebrated as part of [Teacher Appreciation Week](#). And how. If there is ever a time to recognize the creativity, dedication, and life-changing power of teachers, it is now, as the ongoing public health crisis forces us to rethink the ways we educate our children.

Despite these uncertain and unprecedented times, Louisiana teachers have gone above and beyond. They've [created YouTube channels of music and art lessons](#) to engage students from afar. They've [hand-written letters to students](#) to show they care. They've [distributed laptops](#) to students to ensure continuous learning. They've used classroom tools to [create protective equipment for frontline workers](#). They've even [toted portable graduation stages to the homes of high school seniors](#) to give them a proper send-off.

For all of this—and for the work they do every day for our children—we owe them our gratitude.

And now, we invite them to join us as we develop and implement plans to ensure a strong start to the 2020-2021 school year.

Last week, the [Department distributed to school systems nearly \\$260 million in federal funding](#) to address unfinished learning from the 2019-2020 school year, set the foundation for continuous learning in 2020-2021, and prepare for potential modified operations in the future.

To help school systems prioritize how they spend these dollars, the Department [released a guide](#) that outlines how they should build on the 2020-2021 academic plans they had developed before school facilities were closed to meet new academic and operational demands. In its guidance, the Department articulated a strong start to 2020-2021 will ensure:

- Every student's academic needs are identified at the beginning of the year using high-quality diagnostic tools and assessments that align to Louisiana's learning standards.
- There is a plan for every student, including extra time and support for students with the greatest unfinished learning from the prior year.
- There are clear next steps for every high school student and recent graduate who will enter a new economy.

Additionally, the Department advised all school systems to have strong yet agile continuous education plans that provide standards-aligned instruction using high-quality curriculum during future school facilities closures or modified operations, including provisions for:

- 1:1 device and internet access, including assistive technology for students with disabilities;
- A strategic communications plan to connect with every student on a daily basis, provide weekly feedback on students' work, and communicate a family's role in supporting their child's continuous learning;
- Versatile delivery methods for instruction, related services, and professional development;
- Adaptive staffing models that optimize teaching talent and student support; and
- Flexible and opportunistic calendars and school schedules that maximize learning opportunities in a dynamic public health context.

The Department will soon release additional resources to support these actions, as well as launch a dedicated page on its website to house them. Back-to-school resources for families will follow.

We look forward to working with you to ensure a strong start to the new year and to a strong future.

In service,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

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Important Dates for School Systems

Upcoming Events

- [Student Opportunities Office Hours](#): May 6 at 3:00 p.m.
- [Strong Start 2020 Webinar for Nonpublic Consultation for CARES Act Funding](#): May 7 at 11:00 a.m.
- [May SPED Leader Webinar](#): May 7 at 2:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call](#): May 12 at 4:15 p.m.

Important Deadlines

- [Get Out the Count Video Prize Challenge](#) deadline: May 7
- [Special Education Advisory Panel \(SEAP\) Vacancy Application](#) deadline: May 8
- [FY 19-20 High Cost Services Round 1 & 2 Add/Drop](#) deadline: May 22

School System Support

New: COVID-19 Guidance

On April 15, Gov. John Bel Edwards [signed a proclamation](#) to extend the closure of public school facilities to students for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, to curb the spread of COVID-19. School systems are currently engaging students in distance education.

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.

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: Every Child Counts – 2020 Census

By now, every home has received 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.
- Planning, preparedness, and recovery efforts for national emergencies, including [COVID-19](#).

Self-responses, which can be completed [online](#), by phone, or by mail until October 31, **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.

Census Activity Opportunity

The U.S. Census Bureau is hosting a [Get Out the Count Video Prize Challenge](#). This challenge enables individuals, including students, to explain why the census matters in a short (30 seconds to 3 minutes) video, designed for a platform such as YouTube, that uses entertainment, emotion, creativity, and/or humor to motivate people to respond. Cash prizes are available, including \$10,000 for a student prize. The deadline for submissions is **this Thursday, May 7**.

Please contact ldoecommunications@la.gov with questions.

New: Strong Start 2020

Last Thursday, the Strong Start 2020 plan was launched to support school systems in planning for the upcoming school year. The [Strong Start 2020 Planning Guide](#) and [presentation](#) outline the priorities, funding guidance, and resources for school systems to use to complete the Strong Start 2020 application within eGMS by May 29.

The Department will host an informational webinar specific to nonpublic equitable services **this Thursday, May 7 at 11:00 a.m.** to provide guidance to school systems and nonpublic schools about the calculation of equitable share and consultation related to Strong Start 2020. Webinar details are below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 7 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99005940474>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 990 0594 0474
- **Password:** 022972

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

New: Expanded SNAP Benefits

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 enables temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Children who would receive free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Act if school facilities were currently open are eligible for benefits. This includes all students attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.

To receive these benefits, families must complete an application. Without the requested information, the Department of Children and Family Services cannot issue the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card and provide benefits.

The anticipated launch of the application is set for the week of May 18. The Department will publicize the eligibility of these benefits, and in an effort to ensure families receive these benefits during this challenging time, school systems will receive communications to share with eligible families the week of May 11.

Please contact kim.nesmith@la.gov with questions.

New: Leadership Learning Series Update

The School Support Institutes will launch virtually on May 26. Registered leadership team members from CIR/UIR-A schools will receive communications directly from SchoolKit with their assigned session dates, times, and login information. This virtual delivery will include sessions on:

- Academic Strategy and LAP Overview
- School Support Institutes Building Blocks

Additionally, the Department will deliver School Support Institutes 2020-2021: A Guide for Superintendents and School System Leaders virtually. This is a 60-minute session and will be offered multiple times. The dates, times, and Zoom links will be in next week's newsletter.

These sessions are separate from the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: Virtual Series sessions. Participants are able to attend Summit sessions scheduled outside of their assigned Leadership Learning Series sessions.

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

Reminder: 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series

The Louisiana Department of Education is shifting the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit from its in-person format to a series of **free interactive webinars** for as many sessions as possible.

The 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will take place from **May 28 to June 5**. It will bring together a host of educators and content experts who are focused on creating meaningful growth for every student, every day. Educators will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

Due to popular demand, all tickets for The Virtual Series were reserved within 24 hours; however, the Department is excited to announce that the cap has been raised. **[Registration](#) will remain open through June 5.**

Last week, the Department released the [draft session list](#). It includes a variety of sessions for teachers, school and school system staff, and preparation providers. The Department will open up the Teacher Leader Summit app, Shed, on May 13 allowing registrants to build their specific schedules at that time. To ensure the sessions remain interactive, sessions will have capacity limits. As with the in-person event, all sessions will be first come, first served.

Additional information about Teacher Leader Summit can be found in the [K-12 Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: May School System Planning Call

The [May School System Planning Call](#) scheduled for tomorrow, May 6 at 1:00 p.m. has been canceled. The presentation is now available in the [School Improvement Library](#).

Please contact districtsupport@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: State's Designated Central Book Depository

Please share with purchasing directors, curriculum supervisors, and textbook adoption supervisors.

[State law](#) requires that school systems be provided with options to order state-reviewed instructional materials either directly from a publisher or from a central book depository named by the state. [School Book Supply Company of Louisiana](#) has agreed to continue its services as the state's designated book depository for ordering all materials that have been state reviewed. School systems may contact Debbie Tullos at DTullos@schoolbook-la.com or visit the [School Book Supply Company of Louisiana's](#) website for information. Publisher contact information is shown on individual price lists posted in the [Curricular Resources Library](#) webpage.

Please contact louisianacurriculumreview@la.gov with questions.

Assessment and Accountability

For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts

New: LEAP Connect and ELPT

- LEAP Connect and ELPT student reports will be available this week and will be accessible to district and school test coordinators in the following reporting systems:
 - LEAP Connect: DRC INSIGHT
 - ELPT: AIRWays Reporting System (AWR)

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 and were in the February 1 enrollment report.
- The current waiver does not apply to students who were not enrolled in school or students who are not yet eligible to graduate.
- In May, the Department will request a change in policy to waive the assessment requirement for a high school assessment-eligible course earned in 2019-2020 for students who would have been initial testers in spring 2020. Students who failed a subject test in a prior administration will not be eligible for the waiver of the assessment requirement.

Update: High School Summer Test Administration

- The high school summer test administration schedule has not changed. As listed in the assessment calendar, the administration is scheduled for June 15–19.

Update: ACT

- ACT announced new flexibilities for summer testing and new test-at-home options that will become available in the fall and winter. Information about at-home testing with remote proctoring will be shared as it becomes available.
- ACT National Test Date
 - Although students are only able to register for June 13 and July 18 for national test administrations in the summer, testing sites can request a one-week delay in administration (June 20 and July 25)
- ACT State Administration
 - June 2 standard paper
 - June 2–4 online
 - June 2–8 accommodated window
 - October 6 and October 20 paper-based administration only for students who were juniors in 2019-2020 and were unable to test

Update Cohort Graduation Data Certification

- Cohort graduation data certification will open on May 6 and will remain open until June 5. Accountability contacts will be notified prior to the official opening date.

Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours

The next **Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call** will be on **May 12 at 4:15 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 12 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: Board of Regents Dual Enrollment Policy Update

Please share with high school principals and counselors.

In response to COVID-19, the Board of Regents provided an [updated policy](#) regarding students currently enrolled in Dual Enrollment classes and an updated policy for the minimum entry requirements for students enrolling in Dual Enrollment classes for the 2020-2021 school year. The [webinar slides](#) are available along with a [FAQ](#) regarding the updated policy.

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

New: Advanced Placement Exam Updates

Please share with AP Coordinators, high school counselors, and AP teachers.

The College Board has released an [updated AP Exam Day testing guide](#). This guide should be distributed to AP teachers and made available for students. It provides details for how to access exams, specific browser requirements for exam day, and other important details.

The College Board has also released an [AP Exam Day Student Checklist](#) for students to reference during the AP Exams.

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

Reminder: Student Opportunities Office Hours

Please share with school system supervisors, administrators, and counselors.

The Office of Student Opportunities is holding office hours weekly through May 31 to answer questions about student planning and promotion.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Every Wednesday from 3:00–4:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/411290309>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 411 290 309
- **Meeting Password:** 031058

Please contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

Special Education

New: SPED Fellow Academy Applications

The [SPED Fellow Academy](#) 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.

The Department will select up to 15 novice SPED Leaders who are ready to improve their instructional leadership and increase their influence in the special education field. Interested fellows should complete the [application](#) by **May 12**. This program is free for accepted participants.

Please contact kristijo.preston@la.gov with questions.

New: Request for Applications: Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities

Last week, the Department released a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities. The Department is seeking to partner with an organization that can provide families of children and youth with disabilities access to a suite of high-quality, web-based, multimedia resources regarding key topics in early childhood and post-secondary transitions. Applications are due on **June 15**.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

New: Request for Applications: Special Education Professional Development and Support for Direct Services

Last week, the Department released a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for Special Education Professional Development and Support for Direct Services. The Department is seeking to partner with local and national organizations to provide:

1. Professional development in areas of specialized support
2. Direct services, through one or both of the following:
 - a. Certified providers of direct services
 - b. Professional development to support delivery of direct services

Vendors selected through this RFA will be added to the Department's [Partnerships for Success Guide](#). Applications are due on **July 2**.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: May SPED Leader Webinar

The Department will hold its monthly webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education **this Thursday, May 7 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:** May 7 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 with questions.

Finance

New: Proposed FY2020-2021 Minimum Foundation Program

School systems at this time of year are looking to create budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. As a reminder, the proposed MFP documents for FY2020-2021 are available in the Department's [Minimum Foundation Program Library](#). The document titled "50% of 2.75% Increase for Pay Raise" contains both a summary of the projected BESE adopted allocation for FY2020-2021 and the projected Continuation/Standstill MFP allocation.

Please contact LDOEMFPHelpDesk@la.gov with questions.

New: Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Fiscal Requirements **Please share with business managers and financial officials.**

Meeting yearly Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements are 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.

Now Available:

1. 2021 ESSA MOE Verification – Deadline for submission is **June 15**
2. 2021 IDEA MOE Verification (Eligibility Review) – Deadline for submission is **June 15**

Previously Available:

3. 2019 IDEA MOE Confirmation (Compliance review) – Deadline for submission was *April 30*

Helpful documents for completing MOE requirements are listed below.

- The [MOE Quick Reference Guide](#) is available to assist with submitting all three MOE applications.
- Description of [Allowable Exceptions](#) to IDEA MOE
- Calculator - [Local Only Revenue Spreadsheet](#)

Please contact nakia.jason@la.gov with questions about the MOE review process and jason.berard@la.gov for technical inquiries or support.

Federal Programs

New: Strong Start 2020 Webinar for Nonpublic Consultation for CARES Act Funding

A Strong Start 2020 Webinar will be held **this Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.** This webinar, as referenced in the “School System Support” section will provide information regarding the implementation of the CARES Act funding as it relates to the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund and the Governors’ Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund for Nonpublic consultation and equitable services. LEAs federal program directors and key personnel, Nonpublic school officials, and charter schools should participate in this webinar. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 7 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99005940474>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 990 0594 0474
- **Password:** 022972

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

New: High Cost Services Round 1 & 2 Add/Drop

The deadline for LEAs to add/drop students in the FY 19-20 High Costs Services Round 1 and Round 2 application is **May 22**.

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