

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



May 19, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Louisiana was recently approved for the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, which provides extra help buying groceries for the families who normally receive free and reduced-price meals at school. This includes all families attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.

To receive these benefits, families must be notified of the benefits and must complete an application. The Louisiana Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services, the agencies jointly overseeing this program, have publicly communicated this information, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture requires schools to also reach out to their eligible families through their regular family communication channels by May 25. School systems are encouraged to utilize [the digital flyer](#), which provides key information and links to the [application portal](#).

The application portal went live on Monday, and despite heavy traffic slowing the site in the morning, nearly 120,000 applications were successfully approved within the first 24 hours. The application portal will remain open until June 8.

In order to ensure success for the remainder of the application period, the state will need your assistance in answering questions from the families of our more than 600,000 eligible children. Among the common questions you might receive:

- "How will I know if I am approved?"
- "How long will it take to receive my card?"
- "Why isn't my child's school listed in the portal?"
- "I think we now qualify for free and reduced price meals at school. Can I complete an application?"
- "Why did I receive an ineligible message?"

The answers to these questions—and more—can be found in [the list of Frequently Asked Questions](#), which will be continually updated.

As you will see in the FAQs, we have advised families to contact their schools and school systems to verify their information if the applicant believes they are eligible but were denied in the application process. The information submitted by parents and the information submitted by school systems must be an exact match.

For all other inquiries, please contact the LAHelpU Call Center at 1-888-524-3578.

We are thrilled to offer these benefits to our children, and we appreciate your patience and your partnership.

Thank you,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

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Important Dates for School Systems

Upcoming Events

- [Student Opportunities Office Hours](#): May 20 at 3:00 p.m.
- [Career and Technical Education Webinar](#): May 21 at 1:30 p.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(North Cohort\)](#): May 26 at 10:00 a.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(Lafayette Cohort\)](#): May 26 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Office Hours](#): May 26 at 4:15 p.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents\(Baton Rouge Cohort\)](#): May 27 at 10:00 a.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(New Orleans Cohort\)](#): May 27 at 1:00 p.m.
- [School Support Institute Office Hours](#): May 28 at 1:00 p.m.
- [School Support Institute Office Hours](#): May 29 at 9:00 a.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(Make-up\)](#): May 29 at 1:00 p.m.

Important Deadlines

- **FY 19-20 High Cost Services Round 1 & 2 Add/Drop** deadline: May 22
- [2020-2021 TLA Application for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#) deadline: May 29
- [Strong Start 2020 Application](#) deadline: May 29
- [MOU with Partnering Teacher Preparation Provider](#) deadline: May 30
- [Mentor Ancillary Certificate Application](#) deadline: June 1
- [2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series Registration](#) deadline: June 5
- [Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities RFA](#) deadline: June 15
- [2021 ESSA MOE Verification](#) deadline: June 15
- [2021 IDEA MOE Verification \(Eligibility Review\)](#) deadline: June 15

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**. View the most recent [Louisiana 2020 Census Self-Response Weekly Highlights](#) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau Atlanta Region.

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

Please contact doecommunications@la.gov with questions.

New: Strong Start 2020

Strong Start 2020 Applications are due May 29 in eGMS. School systems can use the [Strong Start 2020 Planning Guide](#) and [presentation](#) to support the submission of the Strong Start 2020 application. Resources supporting each priority are located in the [Strong Start 2020 Library](#).

The [recording](#) of the CARES Act Equitable Services Protocols [webinar](#) is now located in the [Strong Start 2020 Library](#) and provides guidance to school systems and nonpublic schools about the calculation of equitable share and consultation related to Strong Start 2020.

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

New: Strong Start 2020 Instructional Material and PD Vendor Guide Updates

Please share with Chief Academic Officers, curriculum coordinators, professional development coordinators, and purchasing directors.

The Strong Start 2020 plan includes [Instructional Materials Guidance](#) and [Professional Development Guidance](#), and the Department continues to work with publishers and vendors to update each guide as they build and refine their supports.

This week, the following entries have been added:

Instructional Materials Guidance:

- Carnegie Learning High School Math Solutions: Carnegie Learning
- Collections: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
- Connect 4 Learning: Kaplan Early Learning Company
- Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA): Amplify
- DIG. Develop. Inspire. Grow: Frog Street Press
- EL Education: LearnZillion
- ELA Guidebooks: LearnZillion
- Eureka Math: Great Minds
- Frog Street Press: Frog Street Press
- Illustrative Mathematics: LearnZillion
- IQWST: Activate Learning
- JUMP Math: JUMP Math
- Learn Everyday: Kaplan Early Learning Company
- Studies Weekly Social Studies: Studies Weekly, Inc.

Professional Development Guidance:

- CLASS: TeachStone
- Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA): Leading Educators
- Creative Curriculum: Teaching Strategies
- EL Education: ANet
- Eureka Math: ANet, New Directions Educational Solutions
- Gold: Teaching Strategies
- ELA Guidebooks: ANet, LearnZillion, New Directions Educational Solutions, The Writing Revolution, NIET
- Illustrative Mathematics: New Directions Educational Solutions, Leading Educators, ANet
- JUMP Math: JUMP Math
- Studies Weekly Social Studies: Studies Weekly, Inc.
- Zearn Math: ANet, New Directions Educational Solutions, Zearn

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

New: ELA Guidebook Text Access to Support Distance Learning

Please share with Chief Academic Officers, curriculum coordinators, and purchasing directors.

The Department has released [Strong Start guidance](#) for implementing Louisiana's ELA Guidebooks in high- and low- tech environments. In order for school systems to implement distance learning in any situation, access for [ELA Guidebook unit texts](#) and unit materials must be secured.

In order to make decisions about the order of units for the 2020-2021 academic year and receive unit texts before instruction begins, please consult the timeline chart in the American Reading Company [purchasing portal](#). In order to receive the first unit the week of July 27, choose a unit with an 8-week turnaround and place orders by **May 22**.

For school systems that require a low-tech, analog, print-only solution, Distance Learning Guidebook Companion documents will be developed for two units per grade level in grades 3-8 and one unit per grade level will be developed in grades 9-12. A release schedule for Distance Learning Guidebook Companions is [available](#).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

New: 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series

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.

The Department recently released the [session list](#) in conjunction with the event app. Sessions include a variety of topics for teachers, school leadership, and school system staff. In an effort to ensure as many Louisiana educators as possible are able to attend sessions, on May 22, the Department will release a list of sessions to be broadcasted live on YouTube. The live broadcasts will allow educators across the state to attend the sessions live regardless of event registration. This means that educators who were waitlisted or unable to register will be able to view the sessions on YouTube as they happen.

Though not all sessions will be broadcasted live, all sessions will be recorded and posted to the [Teacher Leader Library](#) shortly following the event.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

New: July 2020 Math Lesson Broadcasting

Please share with Chief Academic Officers, curriculum coordinators, purchasing directors, and principals.

The Department, in partnership with Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB), Great Minds, Illustrative Math (IM), and SchoolKit, will broadcast Eureka (K-5) and Illustrative Math (6-Algebra I) lessons. These lessons will air on LPB from July 6 through Friday, July 31 on a regular daily schedule. They will also be available on-demand at the [Great Minds](#) and [Illustrative Mathematics](#) websites.

To ensure accessibility for students with disabilities, live broadcasts will have closed captioning and on-demand videos will be available with closed captioning and audio description.

To support school systems as they plan for summer learning and ensure students are prepared for on grade-level learning by August 1, [this guidance document](#) contains information about the following:

- Purchasing student materials
- Watching live broadcasts
- Watching on-demand
- Lesson details

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Leadership Learning Series Update

The Leadership Learning Series will launch virtually on May 26. Registered CIR/UIR-A school participants will receive an email from SchoolKit with cohort-specific login information. This virtual delivery will include:

- Academic Strategy/LAP Overview Session
- School Support Institutes Building Blocks

Registered CIR/UIR-A school participants should have received an email from SchoolKit with cohort-specific login information on May 12. However, the Department has received numerous reports of **bounced-back, missing, or blocked emails**. In order for registered participants to receive their invitation to this series, **immediate steps** are required by each school system. Please work with IT providers to **whitelist “@schoolkitgroup.com”** as all further messages from SchoolKit will provide vital participation information to CIR/UIR-A school leadership teams.

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. Superintendents should plan to join based on their cohort. No registration is required for this session. Information needed to join this session is included below.

A Guide for Superintendents and School System Leaders Virtual Session					
	North	Lafayette	Baton Rouge	New Orleans	Make-up
Date and Time	May 26 at 10:00 a.m.	May 26 at 1:00 p.m.	May 27 at 10:00 a.m.	May 27 at 1:00 p.m.	May 29 at 1:00 p.m.
Webinar Link	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85399061852	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89814695771	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86096044839	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81425495316	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89160264438

The Department invites the leadership teams of CIR/UIR-A schools to also participate in optional office hours.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 28 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91005357641>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 910 0535 7641
- **Webinar Password:** 994930

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 29 at 9:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92086368130>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 920 8636 8130
- **Webinar Password:** 632682

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: Expanded SNAP Benefits

Last week [Louisiana received approval](#) for the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program. This program will provide extra help buying groceries for the families who normally receive free and reduced-price meals at school. This includes all families attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school. To receive these benefits, families must be notified of the benefits and must [complete an application by June 7](#).

While there will be a statewide communications campaign to notify parents of their eligibility, USDA requires that schools also reach out to eligible families by May 25. This communication can be made through the school system's normal family communication channels. The Department has created a [digital flyer](#), which links to the application portal and FAQs, that can be used to notify parents of their eligibility for these benefits.

Please contact kim.nesmith@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 are 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 June, the Department will request a change in policy to waive the assessment requirement for a high school assessment-eligible course earned during the regular school year in 2019-2020 (not including summer credit recovery) 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 is under review. Revised dates will be released as soon as they are final.

Update: ACT

- The Department posted new [K-12 ACT COVID-19 Preventative Measures Guidance](#) to the [Assessment Library](#). The document outlines actions required to protect the students and adults who will participate in the June 2 state ACT administration. While ACT will issue its own guidance, the Department guidelines supersede ACT guidelines. The ACT Administration FAQ, which includes general information about the June 2 administration, has been updated to include a link to this document.
- 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 in March or June. The Department will cover the cost for one administration per student.

Update Cohort Graduation Data Certification

- Cohort graduation data certification 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 Office Hours** will be on **May 26 at 4:15 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 26 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: Career and Technical Education Webinar

Please share with CTE leaders.

The Department will host a Career and Technical Education webinar on **Thursday, May 21 at 1:30 p.m.**

The webinar will include updates on the following:

- Jump Start 2.0 implementation
- Carl D. Perkins
- Jump Start Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities
- Continuous Learning Supports for CTE
- Teacher Leader Summit

Webinar Information:

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 21 at 1:30 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98544142335>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 985 4414 2335
- **Meeting Password:** 742078

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

New: High School Planning Guide

Please share with high school principals and professional school counselors.

The Department will release the annual 2020-2021 High School Student Planning Guide tomorrow, May 20. The guide is a key resource for counselors and includes information on the key policies and programs that support the needs of all high school students.

The 2020-2021 HSPG includes the following sections with applicable updates:

- Plan for Student Success
- Focusing on Core Academics: 9th and 10th Grades
- Developing Advanced College & Workplace Skills: 11th and 12th Grades
- Student Planning Resources
- Jump Start Opportunities
- Alternate Pathways to a High School Diploma for Students with Disabilities
- Graduation Requirements Chart
- Sample Individual Graduation Plan Forms

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

New: Course Choice/SCA Reporting

Please share with professional school counselors and district high school coordinators.

The window for SCA/Course Choice providers to submit final grades for Spring and Full Year is open and will close on June 30. The date was extended to allow additional time for students to complete courses.

SCA MFP allocation for the 2019-2020 school year will not be redistributed. If school systems have unspent funds, the remaining balance will carry over for the next school year to be available for additional SCA/Course Choice enrollments.

Registration for Course Choice 2020-2021 will open on July 1. The preliminary [2020-2021 Preliminary Course Choice Catalog](#) is now available.

Please contact sca@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.

Educator Preparation

New: Mentor Provisional Certificates

Beginning in September, every teacher who serves as the mentor of an undergraduate or post-baccalaureate candidate must hold the Mentor Ancillary Certificate or the Provisional Mentor Ancillary Certificate.

In light of COVID-19 school facility closures, BESE has extended the validity of the Provisional Mentor certificate from 12 months to 18 months for individuals who hold this certificate in the 2019-2020 academic year. The additional six months of provisional certification will be applied to [applications](#) submitted by **June 1**. Provisional applications issued after this academic year are valid for 12 months.

Provisional Applications must include:

- Completed application
- Certificate of training completion, which can be requested from the training provider

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov for more information.

Reminder: Department Names 2021 Teacher and Principal of the Year Semi-finalists

The Department is proud to announce the [2021 Teacher and Principal of the Year Semi-finalists](#). These educators are making exceptional gains with students. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

Congratulations to these outstanding educators!

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov for more information.

Reminder: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Partnering Teacher Preparation Provider

As part of Super App, all CIR and UIR-A schools were required to identify teacher workforce needs in advance and establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a teacher preparation provider that matches this need. As a next step, school systems should submit a copy of their MOU with partnering preparation providers by emailing the MOU to believeandprepare@la.gov no later than **May 30**.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

Reminder: Remote Praxis Exams

ETS is launching a solution that will allow educators to take a Praxis exam at home while test centers are closed due to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Tests will be proctored remotely by a trained specialist.
- The 30 most frequently used tests launched on May 18.
 1. Tests in the first wave include Praxis Core and most content tests
 2. Registration for these exams opened May 15
- PLTs and school leadership assessments are expected to launch June 1.

Visit the [ETS Testing Updates webpage](#) for additional updates.

Special Education

Reminder: 2018-2019 Draft LEA Determination Packages

Please share with data managers.

Each year, the Department is required to issue LEA Determinations to assess the performance of school systems on the provision of special education and related services. Please note that LEA Determinations are made at the school system level required by IDEA, while plans to improve struggling schools identified as UIR for students with disabilities is a separate process required by ESSA.

The draft 2018-2019 LEA Determination packages were posted on May 18 on the FTP site with the name "LEA Code_LEA Name_2018-2019 Draft LEA Determination." Special education leaders should obtain results from their FTP site and review for accuracy. If school systems have questions about the results or

wish to seek additional clarification, they must do so by June 1. The Department will issue final results to school systems in mid-June.

To submit clarifications or for more information, please contact specialeducation@la.gov.

Reminder: Teacher Leader Advisor for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Applications

The Department is seeking excellent English language arts, math, and special education teachers to become Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs) for the 2020-2021 school year. TLAs will build resources for students with significant cognitive disabilities in both math and English language arts, grades K-12. TLAs will either pilot the design and implementation of lessons from the ELA Guidebook Companion Resources (grades 3-8) or will develop additional supports aligned to the mathematics and ELA Connector standards (grades K-12).

The [application](#) for TLAs for students with significant cognitive disabilities is open until **June 5**. Please share this opportunity broadly with ELA, mathematics, and special education teachers.

Please contact kelly.mcclure@la.gov with questions.

Federal Programs

New: Title IV Part A CARES Act Fiscal Waiver Flexibilities

All school systems are encouraged to take advantage of the Title IV Part Cares Act Fiscal Waiver Flexibilities. These fiscal waiver flexibilities allow local school systems to do the following:

1. Target Title IV Part A funds directly to specific needs of school systems without having to adjust the needs assessment.
2. Disregard the content area required percentages to get the maximum fiscal flexibility driven by the school system's Title IV Part A 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 the Effective Use of Technology content area.

School systems can access the Title IV fiscal flexibilities immediately by amending their 2019-2020 Super App. The areas that will need to be amended will be (1) signing off on the Title IV waiver assurances, (2) noting changes on the Amendment Description page, and (3) adjusting the appropriate domain budget page.

Note: These flexibilities apply only to 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Title IV Part A funding.

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

Safe and Healthy Schools

Reminder: Attendance Awards

The Department, in collaboration with the local school systems, is pleased to recognize students with exemplary attendance during the current school year. Each school system establishes criteria for the attendance awards and may use the [Meritorious Attendance Award](#), the [Perfect Attendance Award](#), or the [Excellence in Attendance Award](#) to recognize their students.

Please contact janice.zube@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: School-based Medicaid

Effective for dates of service on or after March 20, 2019, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has approved Louisiana's State Plan Amendment, which amended the provisions governing school-based medical services covered in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program, and school-based behavioral health services.

The expansion will allow for payment for services that are provided to Medicaid eligible students pursuant to an Individual Health Plan (IHP), an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), a Section 504 plan, or services that are otherwise medically necessary. Payment for services provided pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will continue to be provided under the expanded program.

The expansion also amended the reimbursement methodology to expand allowable billing providers for direct/therapy and nursing services and added applied behavioral analysis and personal care services.

The Department is in the process of modifying the school-based Medicaid handbook to address these changes.

Please contact janice.zube@la.gov with questions.