

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

A Resource to Inform and Celebrate
Louisiana's Building-Level Leaders

February 22, 2022

In This Issue

- [Principal Corner](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Educator Opportunities](#)
- [Student Opportunities](#)
- [Principal Appreciation & Shout Outs](#)
- [Principal Newsletter Signup](#)
- [Dates to Consider](#)

Principal Corner

Acceleration is the Word at Valverde Elementary School



When the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) released the 2020-2021 LEAP scores last August, the predicted and anticipated dread of the pandemic's effects on teaching and learning was surreal. Don't get me wrong, there was room for academic growth across Louisiana prior to the pandemic. Still, the challenges we faced during the pandemic and the negative impacts post-pandemic forced all involved in educating students to pay serious attention to the fact that our students were not receiving the equitable education they deserved. As it turns out, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for immediate and urgent change in educational practices.

After the initial shock and realization that the scores on the spreadsheet I looked at repeatedly (as if they would miraculously change) belonged to Valverde Elementary, my school, the school that I was the leader of, my mind went into overdrive. Reflecting on feedback I received from a pre-pandemic needs assessment, it was apparent that if my school was to make recognizable growth, I had to pinpoint an area of focus and be great. I had to sharpen my saw!

In the days following the 2020-2021 LEAP score release, the LDOE launched "Louisiana Comeback," a campaign effort to recover from the previous year's learning loss. My district, Pointe Coupee Parish, was on board and willingly committed to spending a portion of the relief funds it received to do just that. No time was wasted. School leaders and support staff were immersed in

professional development to support the intentional implementation of practices to accelerate learning loss. Thus, “Core Supports” was born.

Our district curriculum team rolled out the framework for how Core Supports (Accelerate) was to be implemented at the school level. Each school would provide 30 minutes of dedicated time prior to core instruction. Students would be placed in small groups based on formative assessments of prerequisite standards before the upcoming lesson. The intended purpose of Core Supports was to identify students who lacked prerequisite skills and knowledge to provide “just in time support” that would enable them to access grade-level standards and master them. This practice required us to change how we viewed teaching and learning. In the past, our approach focused on remediation rather than acceleration. The belief was that before students could master grade-level skills, they had to have their unfinished learning addressed. With our changed practices and mindsets, we see student learning being accelerated through this model.

This year, we have learned that three essential practices have made the Accelerate model successful at our school. (1) Setting time aside - We intentionally added the dedicated 30 minutes of Core Support time to our master schedule, which showed teachers and students that this time was sacred. (2) Collaboration – We formed an instructional leadership team (ILT) which consists of administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers. This time is used to look at student work and teacher walkthrough data to put support plans in place for both students and teachers. (3) Identify champions – We have identified models of excellence within our school where other teachers can visit to see the planning and thinking behind Core Supports. The champions also visit their peers to provide feedback. This effort has created a safe space for teachers to learn and grow from each other.

Valverde’s goal is to improve the overall educational growth of our students. We genuinely believe that through collaboration and shared leadership, we can and will reach our goal to accelerate student learning.

Tara Glaser
Principal, Valverde Elementary School, Pointe Coupee Parish Schools

Announcements

Principal Webinar Series

In February’s webinar, the LDOE will partner with Student Achievement Partners for this month’s topic of effectively addressing and planning for acceleration to address unfinished learning.

- Webinar Date/Time: February 24 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.
- Webinar Link:
<https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/94171949379?pwd=b3d3SVRHc25zL3RWdzlyNy9Pb3BYQT09>
- Meeting ID: 941 7194 9379
- Passcode: 216254

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with any questions.

Analyzing Mid-Year Literacy Data Guidance

The Department's Literacy Division has released a set of resources to support teachers and leaders with analyzing mid-year literacy screener data. These resources can be accessed in the [Literacy Library](#) under the Literacy Goals pillar. For convenience, they are also linked below:

- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data to Maximize Impact](#) (recording)
- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data for Maximum Impact](#) (slide deck)
- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data - Screener Support Guide](#)
- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data - School Reflection Guide and Action Plan](#)
- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data - School and Teacher Scenarios](#)
- [Analyzing Mid-Year Data - Scenarios with Ideal Responses](#)

Please contact sarah.stohlman@la.gov with questions.

School Improvement Best Practices

The [School Improvement Best Practices](#) strategy is designed to support schools in adopting the essential components that drive professional and student growth and will continue during the 2022-2023 school year. LDOE has partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to develop, implement, and support five [School Improvement Best Practices](#). The five best practices are:

- instructional leadership team support,
- teacher collaboration support,
- teaching standards support,
- principal standards support, and
- career pipeline support.

Educators may use this [link](#) to learn more about the [School Improvement Best Practices](#) strategy training sessions, what's new for Summer 2022, and the requirements for CIR and UIR-A schools.

Please contact Markecia.Barthelemy@la.gov with questions.

Building a Pool of Mentor Teachers

In order to build a robust Mentor pool, school systems should be utilizing all options for Mentor certification. Below are a few suggestions for increasing your Mentor pool.

1. Determine all educators in your system who are trained TAP evaluators.
2. Determine all educators in your system who are trained CLASS evaluators.
3. Determine all educators in your system who hold the EDL, EDL eligibility letter, or older supervisor credentials (elementary principal, etc.).
4. Identify outstanding educators in your system and support their completion of a Mentor training program.

[Apply](#) for the mentor credential for all of the above educators.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with questions.

Professional Practice Scores

BESE approved a proposal moving through the formal rulemaking process this October **for the 2021-2022 academic year only** regarding observations. Only **one** formal observation for the 2021-2022 academic year is required for those who earn a rating of **Highly Effective** or **Effective: Proficient** (score of 2.5 or higher) on the first observation. Individuals earning *Highly Effective* or *Effective: Proficient* on the first observation can receive a second observation upon request. This is applicable to all evaluated positions.

Any teacher or administrator who earns an observation rating of Ineffective or Effective: Emerging (2.4 or lower) will require two observations.

ELPT

Exemptions from the listening and/or speaking domains of the ELPT are finalized and school systems have been notified. Please be reminded that there are no exemptions for all domains, and the exemptions for listening and/or speaking must be approved by the department.

ACT

The telephone number provided in the Louisiana Questions document was incorrect. The correct direct line for Louisiana is 319.337.1579.

The [ACT Technical Guide for Online Testing](#) provides information for preparing for the ACT online test including minimal hardware requirements for TestNav.

Now-February 25: Order non-college reportable materials for use in the ACT test window March 8-11.

Recruitment & Retention

COVID-19 has increased the recruitment and retention challenges school system leaders face. The Louisiana Department of Education is committed to supporting systems in addressing educator workforce needs.

This [document](#) outlines some short- and long-term strategies including those the United States Department of Education is urging school systems across the nation to take.

School systems can continue to use [ESSER funds](#) for strategies to address staffing shortages.

Listed below are links school systems can reference for guidance on spending.

- [Achieve Compensation Guidance](#)
- [Achieve Allowable Uses](#)
- [Achieve ESSER II & III Funding Allowability and Cost Guidance Crosswalk](#)
- [Additional Staff](#)

All recruitment and retention questions can be sent to brandy.branigan@la.gov, and all funding questions can be sent to LDOE.GrantsHelpdesk@la.gov.

Events

Teacher Leader Summit 2022: Making a Comeback!

The 2022 Teacher Leader Summit will be held Tuesday, May 31 - Thursday, June 2. The Department is celebrating both “Making a Comeback” and our 10th year for this event. Teachers can access the [Summit Overview document](#), [registration portal](#), and [presenter applications](#) on the [Teacher Leader Summit webpage](#).

The objectives for the Teacher Leader Summit are to improve the everyday practice of educators in Louisiana by building their knowledge and skill in key areas related to their role; to provide opportunities for educators to collaborate and share best practices; to introduce high-quality strategies, resources, and professional development aligned to the state priorities that can be adopted and scaled in schools and school systems across Louisiana and to foster a culture that celebrates and engages educators and empowers and inspires them to take on an even greater leadership role within their classrooms, schools, and school systems.

To enhance the experience of educators attending the Teacher Leader Summit, Teacher Leader Summit will include

- keynote speakers;
- an expanded audience of attendees including arts teachers, librarians, counselors, and other teacher roles;
- Whova, an event app which allows attendees to register and schedule sessions within the same platform and to use features such as being able to communicate with event managers and engage in multiple contests;
- networking opportunities, including vendor sponsored morning and evening socials;
- adjustments to the schedule so that days end earlier; and
- a two-day Education Expo to facilitate networking with professional learning partners and non-profits.

Registration is first come, first served, and [early bird registration](#) opened Monday, January 10. To commemorate the 10 year anniversary of the Teacher Leader Summit, a Summit t-shirt and tote bag will be included in the registration.

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Resources

ELA RESOURCES

ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) Pilot Updates

The Department is excited to announce a partnership with [The Writing Revolution](#) to incorporate an explicit writing progression utilizing The Hochman Method® in the ELA Guidebooks. The following updated ELA Guidebook units for grades 3-5 have been added to the [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#): Because of Winn-Dixie (3rd grade), The Whipping Boy (4th grade), and The Birchbark House (5th grade).

These units include core and optional activities to support diverse learners and progressive writing strategies to strengthen students’ writing skills. The Department will be soliciting teacher feedback on the updated units and the ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) [feedback form](#).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks 6-8 (2018) Future Development

The Department is excited to announce the planning for updates to [ELA Guidebooks for grades 6-8 \(2018\)](#). The first phase of development will occur during the 2022-2023 school year, and the units will be available for piloting in 2023-2024. Instructional leaders should encourage educators in grades 6-8 to submit feedback on the current units prior to March 4, 2022 through the [Louisiana ELA Guidebooks 6-8 Feedback Form](#). More details about these updates and future release dates will be announced in future department communications.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks 9-12 (2020) Updates

[Louisiana's ELA Guidebooks 9-12 \(2020\) Pilot Overview document](#) has been updated to include the most recent information about the 9-12 units on Louisiana Curriculum Hub.

The Photojournalism unit for grade 9 is now available on [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#). Three new ELA Guidebooks 9-12 units will be released by April: Bioethics (10th grade), Film In America (11th grade), and In the Time of the Butterflies (12th grade).

The Department is also soliciting teacher feedback through [Louisiana ELA Guidebooks 9-12 Feedback Form](#) for the units being implemented this year. Please encourage educators to bookmark this link for use throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

LITERACY

Best Practices in the Classroom

The [Literacy Library](#) is full of ready-to-use resources for teachers and leaders to support and maximize literacy instruction. One resource is the [Literacy Classroom Practices](#) guidance which outlines evidence-based best practices for literacy learning including examples and non-examples of how to implement those practices into your daily classroom instruction. Teachers can use the guidance to effectively implement literacy through their curriculum. The library is frequently updated with resources and tools for teachers and leaders of all grade levels to support literacy implementation.

The [Literacy Library](#) now has three sets of phonological awareness activity cards in the **Instruction, Intervention, and Extension** section. These activity card sets increase in challenge level and provide a bank of activities that can be done anywhere. They include engaging multi-sensory activities to build phonological awareness skills in students. Sets 1 and 2 includes mostly single syllable words with some blends and vowel teams while Set 3 adds in additional blends and multi-syllable words. These activities are suitable for students at any grade level that may be learning new skills or need additional support.

[Phonological Awareness Activity Card Set 1](#)

[Phonological Awareness Activity Card Set 2](#)

[Phonological Awareness Activity Card Set 3](#)

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

Resources for School Librarians

Please join the LASL [mailing list](#) to receive resources and information on professional development and to celebrate with Louisiana school librarians. Information is also located on the [LASL Website](#), on [Facebook](#), and on [Twitter](#).

Below are upcoming training opportunities:

- March 20, 2022 - Professional Development Event

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

SCIENCE RESOURCES

New and Updated Science Resources

To assist teachers, schools, and systems with science planning, the Department has released several new science resources and updated existing resources, all of which appear on the [K-12 Science Planning Page](#).

New and updated resources include

- [Grade 3 LSSS and NGSS Crosswalk](#),
- [Grade 4 LSSS and NGSS Crosswalk](#), and
- [Distance Learning Guidance for OpenSciEd Grade 8 - Energy in Chemical Reactions](#).

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

New and OpenSciEd Science Resources Released

To assist teachers, schools, and systems with piloting the OpenSciEd middle school courses, the Department updates guidance resources as revised public units are released. Two new units now available include

- Cells and Systems, Unit 6 on the [Louisiana Guide to Piloting OpenSciEd Grade 6](#); and
- Natural Resources and Human Impact, Unit 5 on the [Louisiana Guide to Piloting OpenSciEd Grade 8](#).

Natural Selection and Common Ancestry, the last middle school unit, is scheduled for release February 24th.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES RESOURCES

Social Studies Standards Review Update

The Department presented public comment on the 2021 Draft Social Studies Standards to BESE on December 14, 2021. All stakeholder public comment on the standards, summary documents, and the BESE presentation deck are available in the [Standards Review Committee Library](#).

BESE charged the Department with reviewing the public comment in order to present a revised set of standards in March 2022.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

MATH RESOURCES

Asynchronous Learning Modules for Math Teachers and Leaders

The Department is partnering with the Charles A. Dana Center to publish a series of five asynchronous video-based learning modules for teachers and math leaders to support best practices for using acceleration to address unfinished math learning. The two [Acceleration in Math: Self-Paced Professional Learning Modules](#) available now are Classroom Strategies to Scaffold Math Learning and Formative Assessment Processes for Acceleration in Math. Each module includes a recorded presentation and accompanying handouts. These resources are designed to fit flexibly in a variety of professional learning formats. Modules may be accessed asynchronously for an “at your own pace” style of PD. The materials are designed so that learning can happen collaboratively, such as during common planning, or individually.

The final three modules are Critical Mindsets for Math Educators and a two-part series focused on Planning to Address Unfinished Learning will be posted this month.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Accelerate Math Updates

[Accelerate Math](#) resources are built for teachers and tutors as proactive support for upcoming classroom content in order to ensure students’ readiness for grade level mathematics.

[Accelerate Math](#) tutoring resources for use during the academic year include

- Acceleration Tools, which function as screeners to diagnose unfinished learning ahead of a topic of instruction;
- Google Slides for teachers and/or tutors to plan for and deliver individualized supports; and
- Tutoring Exit Tickets to monitor student understanding.

For systems implementing tutoring as part of a Summer Learning Program, please see the [Accelerate Math Summer Learning](#) guidance.

In an effort to continually improve [Accelerate Math](#) resources, updates will be made this summer. Complete the [Accelerate Math feedback](#) form to help shape future updates and improvements. The Department is seeking content-strong math educators interested in contributing to this work, and [applications](#) are now open.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Educator Opportunities

Middle and High School Professional Development Series

A new professional development series focused on middle and high school literacy will be released weekly on Tuesdays beginning February 8 in the [Literacy Library](#). Beginning with an introduction to the science of reading and how it connects to middle and high school instruction, recorded sessions will include topics designed to build knowledge around implementing literacy strategies and best practices across all content areas in the middle and high school grades. Teachers and leaders can access the [Middle and High School PD Schedule](#) for a listing of session titles, session descriptions, and release dates.

Accelerate Professional Development

The Louisiana Acceleration Series will culminate this month. These full day sessions are designed to help educators target their instruction and coaching on the most effective strategies. Educators interested in attending the free training sessions may use this [link](#) to register.

There is one remaining session in the series:

Strengthening Content-Specific Strategies for Learning Recovery in ELA	February 16-March 22
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The target audience for these sessions are math and ELA teachers and school and district leadership teams.

Please contact Markecia.Barthelemy@la.gov with any questions.

Assessment Development Educator Review Committees

The Division of Assessment Content will convene assessment committees in June and July to

- develop scoring parameters for field tested constructed-response items or extended-response tasks,
- review newly developed items and passages for content and bias or sensitivity concerns,
- review leased items for alignment to the Louisiana Student Standards, and
- review data from field-tested items.

Interested educators should access the [Assessment Development Educator Review Committees document](#) for information on exact dates, meeting details, and links to apply to participate on specific committees.

The deadline to apply is March 18th.

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

STEM Teacher Micro-Credentialing Opportunity for High School Educators

The Department is seeking Louisiana high school teachers who are currently teaching or planning to teach coursework within the Pre-Engineering or Digital Design and Emergent Media high school [STEM Pathways](#) to participate in a study aimed at developing a new mechanism for professional support and a credentialing system for STEM teachers.

In addition to receiving a stipend for participation, teachers selected will receive support for facilitating project-based STEM learning; reflect on practices, evaluate lessons, and use data driven instruction; and engage with collaborative online cohorts with experienced STEM educators.

Interested educators should visit the [research project information page](#) for additional information and complete this [brief survey](#).

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Quality Science and Mathematics (QSM) Grant Opportunity Round 2

The [QSM Grant Program](#) was established for the purpose of providing Louisiana public school teachers with non-consumable instructional materials and equipment in math, science, and STEM.

- Full-time classroom teachers assigned to teach math, science, or STEM courses in a PreK-12 public regular education program including public charter schools are invited to apply.
- Applications may be submitted via the QSM [grant portal](#) beginning January 24.
- The application deadline is March 7 at 11:59 p.m.
- \$1,000 grants are available for Pre-K-3 teachers and up to \$1,500 grants for 4-12 teachers.
- Applications must demonstrate that the grant materials will enhance the quality of instruction for regular education students enrolled in mathematics, science or STEM classes within the normal school day. After-school, Talented & Gifted, and Special Education (SPED) programs are not eligible.

Please contact Spencer Roby at gsminfo@lsu.edu with questions.

NASA Distance Learning Webinar Opportunities for Educators through Texas State University

NASA and Texas State University are partnering to offer twenty-eight free [online webinars](#) to help connect STEM practices, careers, current research, and NASA programs with classrooms. Attendees of these evening webinars will earn a certificate that can be part of their professional development portfolio and will be able to network with educators from across the country.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Lagniappe Podcast

[Teacher Leader Lagniappe](#) offers a little something extra for Louisiana educators. As educators, we are leaders - leaders of our families, classrooms, schools, teams, and systems. Host Em Cooper shares inspiring stories from leaders in Louisiana and across the country. You'll hear from innovators, change agents, and experts that will empower you to grow in your profession. Educators can subscribe to the [podcast](#) and listen to the latest episode.

Share Your Stories: Educators can submit [pictures](#) of the great things happening in your school and system for our What's Making Me Smile segment.

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

Louisiana Science Teachers Association (LSTA) Extends Complimentary Membership

[LSTA](#) is excited to offer resources for science educators to review, monthly email newsletters, and a place to create a collaborative community in Louisiana. The professional resources offered by LSTA are often great tools to help educators build partnerships and learn about innovative resources. LSTA is waiving their membership fees until June 30. LSTA invites science teachers to complete the [LSTA Complimentary Membership Form](#) and to please share this opportunity with their colleagues.

Please contact pierre.lacaze@rpsb.us or stephen_knight@saintmartinschools.org with membership or LSTA questions.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

2022 NASA STEM Enhancement in Earth Science (SEES) Internship

NASA, the Texas Space Grant Consortium, and The University of Texas at Austin Center for Space Research have joined forces to encourage high school students' interest in STEM careers. The [SEES project](#) offers distance learning modules and guided remote work prior to onsite internships at the University of Texas in Austin from July 16-30. Participants conduct authentic research while working with scientists and engineers in their chosen areas of work. Housing, transportation, and meals will be provided. Application deadline is **February 21** and is open to students in grades 10 and 11.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Science Camp Opportunity for Graduating Seniors

The [National Youth Science Camp](#) (NYSCamp) is a virtual program available to STEM enthusiasts graduating between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Students from around the country are challenged academically and given the opportunity to meet STEM professionals. Two students are selected to represent each state and Washington, D.C. at no cost to the students, schools, or districts. Students may [apply](#) through **March 31**.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Jump Start Construction Scholarship Application

The application window is now open for the [Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program](#). This is a joint initiative of the Louisiana Construction Education Foundation (LCEF), Louisiana's Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

Up to forty one-time scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each will be awarded to students enrolling at an LCTCS program or an Associated Builders and Contractors training program. This scholarship will assist graduates in gaining the necessary training to earn industry employment in construction crafts fields aligned to four and five star jobs that may lead to management positions. Applications are due April 12.

Please contact megan.thompson2@la.gov with questions.

Principal Appreciation

Take a minute to send a shout-out of appreciation to a colleague who is a building-level leader using this [survey link](#). This note of appreciation will be included in our next monthly newsletter.

Shout Outs:

Amber Carr from Sherwood Forest in Einstein Charter System: “Ms. Carr's dedication to students directly impacts the way she coaches teachers and provides feedback to them. She is constantly thinking of ways to support teachers so their level of instruction increases and advances student achievement.”
Nominated by Amy Henley

Nicole Usie from Cecilia High School in St. Martin Parish: “Ms. Nicole Usie works tirelessly to keep her school, staff and students thriving despite the daily challenges she faces from staff shortages to overwhelming student quarantines. I'm not sure she realizes what a great job she is doing under these difficult circumstances.” *Nominated by Kevin Dugas*

Christina Casey from Rayville Elementary School in Richland Parish: “Ms. Casey is an extraordinary instructional coach who goes above and beyond to support the RES vision! She's dedicated to doing whatever it takes; she supports administrators, teachers and students!” *Nominated by Elycia Hill*

Principal Newsletter Signup

Do you have a colleague who would benefit from receiving this newsletter? Forward this copy along with [this link](#) and they will receive our next monthly newsletter.

Dates to Consider for Building-Level Leaders

Upcoming Events	
Event Title	Zoom Link
Principal Webinar Series	February 24 at 2 p.m.
Accelerate Strengthening Content-Specific Strategies for Learning Recovery in ELA (1 day webinar)	February 16 - March 22
Upcoming Deadlines	
Teacher Leader Summit Registration	First Come, First Served
QSM Grant Applications Due	March 7
Assessment Development Educator Review Committees	March 18