

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

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

December 14, 2023

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Principal Corner



Wow, it is hard to believe that we are just around the corner from being halfway through the school year. It seems like we started school only a short while ago. My faculty and I began the 2023-2024 school year eagerly awaiting the release of our school performance score (SPS). In fact, we were more eager than we've ever been before. The COVID-19 pandemic, the two 2020 hurricanes that devastated Calcasieu Parish, and a historic flood in 2020 resulted in significant learning loss for our students. Many students were displaced and had not been enrolled in school due to the impact of the natural disasters which destroyed our city. My team and I devised and implemented a plan, and our plan led to the most success we've experienced in closing achievement gaps. We based our plan on research-supported strategies which have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student performance. Below, I outlined some of the key strategies we implemented.

Research continues to reveal that the most significant factor influencing student achievement is the presence of an effective teacher. Our instructional leadership team functions to positively impact teacher effectiveness. This is done by engaging teachers in job-embedded professional learning communities, anchoring instructional decisions in the mastery of content standards as evidenced in student work, and maintaining a laser focus on the school vision.

Our master schedule allocates daily collaboration time for teachers. More specifically, teachers participate in content-specific clusters complemented by grade-level content-specific data meetings. Each week, the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) members are assigned specific content areas to specialize in, fostering expertise in each content area. To anchor our teachers in analyzing student work, the focus of data meetings is to assess how students are progressing in mastering standards across each content area. During these data meetings, teachers receive focus questions that guide discussions. The ILT member facilitates conversations among teachers while also examining student work samples. Questions embedded in these meetings cover aspects such as holistic observations of student work, identification of trends, mastery of standards, and intervention plans for students who have yet to master standards.

Key questions in these meetings include the following:

- Reflecting on student work, what observations did you make?
- When reflecting on student work, what questions arise for you?
- What trends have you observed in the data?
- Which standards have students mastered? What steps will be taken to challenge those who have mastered the standards?
- Which standards have students not mastered? What interventions are planned for those who haven't mastered the standards?

While data analysis has always been part of our approach, a needs analysis prompted our leaders to refine our practices toward a more intentional data examination. We used feedback from teacher surveys to completely revamp how we analyze student data. During cluster meetings, ILT members provided teachers with a model to track individual student data according to weekly assessments. Some of the key components of the data tracker are the standards being tracked and notations that indicate whether the student is on track to mastering the standards under review. The tracker offers teachers a quick overview of how students or groups of students are progressing. After reviewing data, teachers develop support plans for those students who need additional support and extension plans for students who are on track. Teachers begin implementing intervention and support plans which are part of each student's daily schedule.

In our commitment to enhancing student achievement, fostering teacher effectiveness through a culture embracing a growth mindset has proven crucial. This mindset is adopted by teachers, students, and leaders alike, forming the foundation for professional learning communities focused on mastering curriculum delivery. Our initiatives also involve a cycle of learning where each teacher is provided with areas of reinforcement and refinement. Additional measures include analyzing teacher data, assigning mentors to every teacher, promoting self-reflection, and creating a continuous observation and feedback cycle all of which are aligned to our school vision.

Our roadmap to positively impact student achievement has not always been clear. We took a few wrong turns along the way, but recent data shows that we are finally on the right road to success. We were able to significantly impact our school performance score bringing our school letter grade from a D to a C. We anticipate that students will continue to thrive in all classes as we continue to dream big, work hard, and make it happen!

Dr. Shonna Guillory-Anderson, Principal, Ray D. Molo Middle School, Calcasieu Parish

LDOE Corner



EdTech has become integral to modern education, offering countless opportunities for students and educators. It facilitates personalized learning experiences, enables access to a vast repository of educational resources, and promotes interactive and engaging lessons.

Integrating EdTech into our classrooms requires more than providing access to technology. We must equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to leverage these tools effectively. The LDOE recognizes the immense potential of EdTech and is committed to harnessing its benefits for the benefit of our students. To that end, we have implemented several initiatives to support teachers and schools in integrating technology into their classrooms.

Access to Kami

The LDOE is excited to announce that all Louisiana educators and students can now access [Kami](#), a powerful annotation and document collaboration platform, at no charge. The LDOE is providing free access to K-12 students and teachers in the 2024-2025 school year. School systems looking to adopt this platform sooner can obtain access now. Kami allows teachers to digitally access and embed dynamic engagement with high quality instructional materials.

SAMR Framework for Effective Technology Integration

To ensure that EdTech is used effectively in our classrooms, the [SAMR](#) model helps educators understand how to integrate technology and provides a valuable roadmap for ensuring technology is used strategically to enhance learning outcomes.

The SAMR framework includes four categories of classroom technology integration:

- **Substitution:** Technology acts as a direct replacement for traditional tools.
- **Augmentation:** Technology enhances traditional tools with new features or functionalities.
- **Modification:** Technology allows for the creation of new tasks or activities that were not possible before.
- **Redefinition:** Technology fundamentally changes the way learning is conceived and delivered.

By using the SAMR model, educators can ensure they use technology in truly transformative and impactful ways.

Digital Citizenship: Empowering Students to be Responsible Digital Learners

In today's digital world, equipping students with the skills and knowledge they need to be responsible digital citizens is more important than ever. The LDOE is committed to providing resources that help teachers integrate Digital Citizenship education into their curriculum. This includes topics such as online safety, cyberbullying prevention, and responsible use of social media.

Currently, LDOE offers the following resources for Digital Citizenship support:

- [Digital Citizenship - Cybersecurity for Students](#)
- [Digital Citizenship - Elementary Student Guide](#)
- [Digital Citizenship - Parent Guide](#)
- [Digital Citizenship - Student Guide \(Secondary\)](#)
- [Digital Citizenship - Teacher Guide](#)

In today's digital age, it is more important than ever that students develop the skills and knowledge they need to be responsible digital citizens. We are committed to integrating Digital Citizenship education into our curriculum.

Working Together to Empower Our Students

EdTech is not just a tool; it's a transformational force that can revolutionize education and prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. The LDOE is proud to be at the forefront of this educational revolution, and we look forward to continuing our work to provide every student in our state with the tools they need to succeed in the digital age.

Continue to check the LDOE [Digital Learning](#) page for resources for [teachers and leaders](#).

Bonnie Chelette, Director of Educational Technology, Office of Teaching and Learning

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Principal's Webinar Series

The LDOE hosts a monthly webinar series for current school leaders and principal supervisors on best practices in school leadership aligned to the state's priorities. Each month, the webinar features state and national experts who share strategies and tools on a specific topic necessary for being effective in the school leadership role. January's webinar will feature using Edlink to identify workforce data and trends.

Webinar Date and Time: January 29 at 1:00 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97054177103?pwd=Vm9DYmZpNXhKSGQrVnJwSjVMb25aZz09>

Webinar Phone Number: 346-248-7799

Meeting ID#: 970 5417 7103

Passcode: 310386

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Teacher and Principal of the Year Application Online Portals Are Now Open

The online portals for coordinators and state-level applicants for Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year are now open. All application materials and links to the online portals are available in the [Library](#) and on the [Awards](#) page.

All school systems are encouraged to select up to three teachers and three principals, one per division (elementary, middle, and high), as their local-level honorees and submit these selections to the state process. School systems without a formal selection process in place may elect to send their candidates directly to the state-level process.

State-level applications are due by January 11, and must be submitted via the online application portal.

The dates and times of future webinars are listed in the [Informational Webinars for Candidates and Stakeholders document](#).

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions.

New Teacher of the Year Application Process Open

The New Teacher of the Year application process for the 2023-2024 school year is now open. The application materials and timelines are available in the [Library](#) on the [Awards](#) page.

All school systems are encouraged to select up to three new teachers (with less than one year of teaching experience), one per division (elementary, middle, and high) as their local-level honorees, and submit the selections to the state process.

State-level applications must be submitted via an [online application portal](#) by **January 26**. [The New Teacher of the Year Timeline document](#) includes all important dates and upcoming informational webinars for new teachers advancing to the state-level process.

Please contact laurie.carlton@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit: Leading the Next Level

The 12th annual [Teacher Leader Summit](#) will be held **May 28-30, 2024**, in New Orleans at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. We are excited to begin “Leading the Next Level.” The [Teacher Leader Summit Overview](#) includes registration, scheduling, and hotel information.

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’s priorities that can be adopted and scaled in schools and school systems across Louisiana;
- 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.

Early Bird Registration will open January 5, on a first-come, first-served basis and will close February 2. Regular registration will open February 3 and will close March 15 or at sellout.

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

Compass Information System (CIS) and Evaluation Updates and Resources

Evaluators may begin entering data into the [Compass Information System \(CIS\)](#) for 2023-2024. The [2023-2024 CIS Timeline](#) provides a suggested timeline to ensure timely entry. Entering evaluation data in CIS aids in the process of certification renewal and advancement.

As a reminder, for the 2023-2024 school year, all school leaders and teachers require a minimum of two observations/site visits and two student learning targets (SLTs). Please refer to the following resources to complete the evaluation process.

- [2023-2024 Rater Reliability Companion](#)
- [SLT Guidance and Sample Templates](#)
- [SLT Assessment Identification Guide](#)
- [CIS User Guide](#)

Additional resources are available in the [Compass Library](#) to assist with evaluation implementation and data entry.

Please contact compass@la.gov with questions.

Educator Evaluation Pilot Update

The Educator Evaluation Pilot year is underway with 17 systems piloting updates to the evaluation system. The Louisiana Educator Rubric is being utilized for three teacher observations. The evaluation process also includes a professionalism survey, self-assessment, follow-up coaching cycles based on refinement areas, and student surveys to gather additional information. The Louisiana Leader Rubric is being utilized for leaders. The leader evaluation process includes goal setting, two formal scored conferences, self-assessment, and teacher surveys.

The Learning Year will take place in 2024-2025. Compass will not be used. Face-to-face training for system and school leaders, as well as designated observers, will take place this summer. Training dates

are listed on the [Leader and Educator Rubric and Evaluation Training Guidance](#). Registration will open in January.

Please contact compass@la.gov with questions.

RESOURCES

ACADEMICS

Assessment Literacy Initiative

The LDOE Assessment Content Team and the Center for Assessment will host the January session of the monthly webinar series on January 11. The focus of this session is “Beyond Multiple Choice: How Can Teachers Use Quality Classroom Assessments? How Can Leaders Support the Use of Quality Classroom Assessments?”

Each session in the [Effective Assessment Practices](#) series will provide opportunities for Louisiana educators—both leaders and classroom educators—to learn about and discuss the most important and practical topics related to assessment in school systems and classrooms. An optional question and answer session will take place immediately following the webinar. For your convenience, we will record the webinar.

Webinar Date and Time: January 11 at 3:30 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83183752599>

Webinar Phone Number: 646-931-3860

Webinar ID#: 831 8375 2599

Passcode: 817705

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

ELA

ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) Fluency Supports

The ELA team is partnering with educators across the state to create ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) unit-aligned fluency supports. The Fluency Utilized to Engage Learners (FUEL) materials are designed to provide intensive support for students performing well below the benchmarks on ELA assessments and/or foundational reading assessments.

The FUEL materials will be released on [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#) as they become available, with all materials available for use in the 2024-2025 school year. Review the [FUEL Overview](#) document for implementation guidance.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Professional Learning Series

The [ELA Professional Learning Series](#) now includes all updated sessions available for asynchronous professional learning. Teachers and instructional leaders can complete this learning series to explore the interactive supports, updated mentor sentence, and vocabulary activities in ELA Guidebooks 9-12 (2020);

the newly released Let's Set the Context videos; and Accelerating Learning in ELA. View the videos to learn more about each resource, and incorporate this new information during your instructional planning.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks Let's Set the Context Activities

Let's Set the Context activities aligned with the updated ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) units are now available. The videos are located on each unit's homepage on the [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#). Materials and implementation guidance are included in the appropriate activities throughout each unit. During instructional planning, consider how to utilize these resources to support student knowledge building around the substantive topics included in each unit.

Teacher Leader Advisors are currently developing Let's Set the Context activities to align to the ELA Guidebooks 6-8 (2024) units and the ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) development 6 units. These activities will be available as the new units are released throughout the spring.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Resources for School Librarians

The [Louisiana Library Association Conference 2024](#) will be held March 10-12 in Shreveport. Please join the [LASL mailing list](#) to receive resources and information on additional professional learning opportunities and to celebrate with Louisiana school librarians. Information is also located on the [LASL website](#), on [Facebook](#), and on [Twitter](#).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

MATH

FLAME: Unit 2 is Now Posted

[Foundational Lessons to Accelerate Math Education](#) (FLAME) resources are now available to support the development of foundational skills and fluency for math students in grades K-5. The new resources are designed to complement your adopted high-quality instructional materials. FLAME offers short, engaging lessons and tools for teachers to track and inform parents of student progress. Units 1 and 2 are now posted, and Unit 3 posts in January. To learn more, reference the recording of the [FLAME kickoff webinar](#).

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum Update

All grade 3 Bayou Bridges units are now available. Please navigate to the [Bayou Bridges Resource page](#) to access. Units are aligned to meet the [2022 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies](#). All grade 6 units will be published by January 18.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

SCIENCE

High School Science Regional Professional Learning

To support learning acceleration in high school science, LDOE is hosting a series of professional learning sessions in early January for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics teachers. These in-person, two-day sessions will take place in five regions across the state and will be open to any teacher planning to implement at least one of the [OpenSciEd High School Pilot units](#) in the spring of 2024. To request a seat in this training, please complete the [registration form](#) by **December 19**.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

DIGITAL LEARNING

Kami Update

Add some tech sparkle to the classroom with Kami! Kami will be available to all K-12 students in the 2024-2025 school year. The rollout is now in full swing, and licenses are being distributed as school systems sign up. It's time to get digital! Professional learning opportunities will be shared in future communications. Additional information about Kami and tutorials are now available on [Kami's website](#).

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

Chromebook Care Resources

The LDOE recently published two resources designed to empower students with Chromebook Care knowledge and best practices. These resources are particularly relevant to foster a culture of responsible technology use among learners.

- [Chromebook Care Guidance](#)
- [K-5 Chromebook Care](#)

Both of these resources and more educational technology integration information can be found on the [Digital Learning page](#).

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

DIVERSE LEARNERS

Special Education Playbook

The LDOE has released a [Special Education Playbook for System Leaders](#) that outlines three best instructional practices to support all students with disabilities. This guidance has been reviewed with many system leaders, school leaders, and general education and special education educators, but we encourage additional review, self assessment, and implementation planning including sharing with school instructional leadership teams and IEP teams.

The Playbook is intended to promote the widespread adoption of these best practices and is focused on teaching and learning strategies for students with disabilities. Leadership of cross-departmental teams are required to implement these best practices. Students with disabilities need 1) access to high quality core

instruction, 2) extra time to learn built into their schedule, and 3) content strong educators to support them. Additional implementation support and professional development will continue throughout the spring and at Teacher Leader Summit 2024.

Please contact diverselearnersupport@la.gov with questions.

LITERACY

K-3 Literacy Screener

It is time for the middle of the year literacy screener. State law mandates that all students in kindergarten through third grade participate in a single statewide literacy screening three times per year, once at the beginning of the year and then again in December and January. This includes students with IEPs or IAPs, English learners, non-readers, and students who qualify for alternate assessment based on the [K-2 Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-making Tool](#) for K-2 and the LEAP Connect criteria for grade 3.

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Teacher Leader Advisor Applications - Now Open

The LDOE is currently accepting applications for Teacher Leader Advisors. Our [Teacher Leader Advisors](#) (TLAs) are highly motivated educators who work alongside the LDOE team to support the mission and vision of the Louisiana Department of Education. TLAs serve an essential role in supporting key priorities by creating resources for teachers, engaging in work that allows them to develop their understanding of curricula, and providing training for teachers. Teacher Leader Advisors are paid for the work they complete, and the experience allows educators to expand their positive impact beyond the classroom. Learn more about [Teacher Leader Advisors](#) today! [Applications](#) for the 2024-2025 Teacher Leader Advisors are now open and close on January 12. Educators are not required to be school-site Teacher Leaders to apply.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Nominations are now open for the 2024 [Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching](#) (PAEMST). This award is the highest and most prestigious honor bestowed by the U.S. government specifically for outstanding K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers. This year's cycle will recognize teachers of grades K-6. [Nominations](#) close on January 8.

Please contact info@paemst.org or STEM@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit Presenter Applications

LDOE is looking for talented educators to apply to present sessions at this year's Summit. [Presenter applications](#) will be accepted beginning January 5. Applications are due February 2. Applicants are required to submit their final presentation slides with their applications.

Applications on the following topics will be prioritized during selection:

- High Quality Professional Learning Cycle
- Observation and Feedback
- [Professional Learning Roadmap](#) Implementation
- Instructional Leadership Teams
- Teacher Collaboration
- Career Pipeline

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Do you have a colleague who would benefit from receiving this newsletter? Forward this copy and encourage them to [subscribe](#) to receive our next monthly newsletter.

PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION

If you have an extraordinary building-level leader you would like to recommend to be highlighted in future newsletters, please submit information about the outstanding leader using the [LDOE Principal's Newsletter Leader Spotlight Nomination Form](#). This note of appreciation will be included in our next monthly newsletter.

DATES TO CONSIDER FOR BUILDING-LEVEL LEADERS

Important Dates	
High School Science Regional Professional Learning registration due	December 19
Teacher Leader Summit early bird registration begins	January 5
Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching nominations due	January 8
Effective Assessment Practices webinar	January 11 at 3:30 p.m.
Teacher Leader Advisors applications due	January 12
Monthly Principal webinar	January 29 at 1 p.m.