Louisiana Believes

Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting
March 29, 2017

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Public Comment Procedures

Public Comment Overview

- Comments will be allowed on all agenda items for a maximum of three minutes per person
  - The panel will receive all comments and may engage in further dialogue on the agenda item as a result of the comments received
- A person may only comment once per agenda item unless allowed an exception by the chair
- Comment cards must be submitted to the chair or LDE staff member prior to the vote on the motion
- The order and time of comment is left solely to the chair
- Persons making public comments shall identify themselves and the group they represent, if applicable
- Persons addressing the panel shall:
  - confine remarks to the merits of a specific agenda item before the panel
  - refrain from attacking a panel member's motives
  - address all remarks through the chair
  - refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending
  - refrain from disturbing the meeting

Approval of November 16, 2016 and January 25, 2017 meeting minutes

Objectives

- Approve revised minutes of November 16, 2016 meeting
- Approve minutes of January 25, 2017 meeting

Consideration of scheduling a panel retreat

Proposed Retreat

The panel retreat will be an opportunity for current and new members joining the panel in July of 2017 to come together and establish panel goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

Date: June 21, 2017

Time: 12:30-3:30

Location: North Dakota Room 1-155

Consideration of a discussion of students with disabilities in Louisiana's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan

ESSA in Louisiana

- On July 1, 2017, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind as the country's federal education law. The law will be in effect when the 2017-2018 school year begins.

- ESSA provides Louisiana with an opportunity to collaborate with educators, parents, business and community leaders to create an improved K-12 education system that provides all students with equal access and opportunity to high-quality learning.

- ESSA requires that every state capture these improvements in a state plan that is submitted to the federal government.

- Louisiana intends to submit this state plan to the U.S. Department of Education during the April 2017 submission period with the goal of receiving feedback and final approval of the plan prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year in order to provide educators and families with clarity and consistency.

Louisiana's ESSA Plan Development

- After engaging with stakeholders for months, the Department released a draft ESSA framework on September 28, to provide the general public with examples of what policies, supports, and resources could be used to provide targeted support for disadvantaged students.

- Since that release, the Department has been in continuous conversations with educators, advocacy groups, civic leaders and others to refine the proposals within the framework.

- During this time, the Louisiana Accountability Commission has also been meeting to make recommendations regarding the state's accountability system. To view the Commission's recommendations, you can view previous meeting videos and presentations in the Accountability library.

- On Monday, February 6, the Department released an updated framework that included greater detail from the initial framework as well as stakeholder feedback.

- On February 20, the Department released the draft state plan for public comment. On March 15, the Department released a revised draft state plan adding three modest clarifications requested by the new federal administration.

Improvements to Louisiana's K-12 System

Louisiana's ESSA plan, highlights several unique improvements to Louisiana's K-12 system:

- raise fundamental expectations for students to be equal with their peers across the country;
- reduce end-of-year state testing, while simultaneously improving the quality and depth of information provided to educators and families;
- recognize growth for all students;
- allow students taking the LAA 1 the opportunity to earn diplomas in the state graduation rate;
- deliver targeted funding to students and schools who are the most in need;
- foster and fund relationships between persistently struggling schools and partners that have demonstrated success in turning around struggling schools;
- place future teachers in classrooms under a mentor educator for full–year, classroom-based residencies that prepare them for day one in their own classrooms; and
- provide every student with enriching experiences and a well rounded education that is recognized in the state's accountability system.

Students with Disabilities

In addition to unique improvements to the overall k-12 system, Louisiana's ESSA plan also highlights several important opportunities for Louisiana's students with disabilities:

1. Building a workforce of current and aspiring educators that is prepared to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities;
2. Measuring growth of all students in the accountability system;
3. Rewarding diplomas earned by students who take the alternate assessment in the cohort graduation rate;
4. Establishing structures for early identification of disabilities and appropriate interventions and support; and
5. Providing competitive funding opportunities for schools who need support improving outcomes for their students with disabilities.

Note: The full version of the "Opportunities for Students with Disabilities in Louisiana's ESSA Plan" presentation can be found here.

Data Reporting

In Louisiana's ESSA plan, the state is committed to providing families:

1. reports of individual student performance in the core subjects, as well as whether they are on track to proficiency (when not yet proficient)
2. school and district report cards that include not just overall scores and ratings, but specific data on:
    1. how well the school supported the academic growth of all students--historically high-achieving students as well as students who have struggled or have unique learning needs due to a disability;
    2. how well the school is preparing the whole child for success in college or a career (e.g., access to rigorous coursework, college enrollment and persistence);
    3. the extent to which students in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students or students of color are taught by qualified, effective teachers; and
3. the per-pupil expenditures, by funding source, at each school.

Improvements to Louisiana's Accountability System

Louisiana's ESSA plan represents three critical shifts in the design of the accountability system.

1. **Ensuring an "A" in Louisiana's letter grade system signals mastery of fundamental skills.** This will be achieved by raising expectations for what is required in order for a school to earn A-level points based on student achievement and growth.

2. **Adjusting school rating calculations to value more the progress of every individual child, including (a) measuring whether a student is on a path to master fundamental skills; and (b) measuring how effectively every student is advancing relative to their peers.** This growth index will replace the current progress point system.

3. **Expanding the school performance score formula to emphasize interests and opportunities for students, in addition to traditional assessment and graduation outcomes, as five percent of school scores.**

K-8 School SPS:
Student Growth Example

LOUISIANA'S NEW GROWTH MEASURE

In January, the Louisiana Accountability Commission recommended a two-step elementary and middle school growth model for the accountability system that asks the questions:

1. How well are students progressing toward "Mastery" by 8th grade?
2. How well are students growing relative to similar peers?

THIS IS CARSON.

CARSON SCORES A 688 ON LEAP,
A GROWTH OF 13 POINTS FROM HIS 3RD GRADE YEAR.

1. BASED ON HIS PRIOR ACHIEVEMENT, CARSON WAS EXPECTED TO GROW **15 POINTS** ON HIS 4TH GRADE LEAP TEST TO BE **ON TRACK TO "MASTERY"** IN 8TH GRADE.

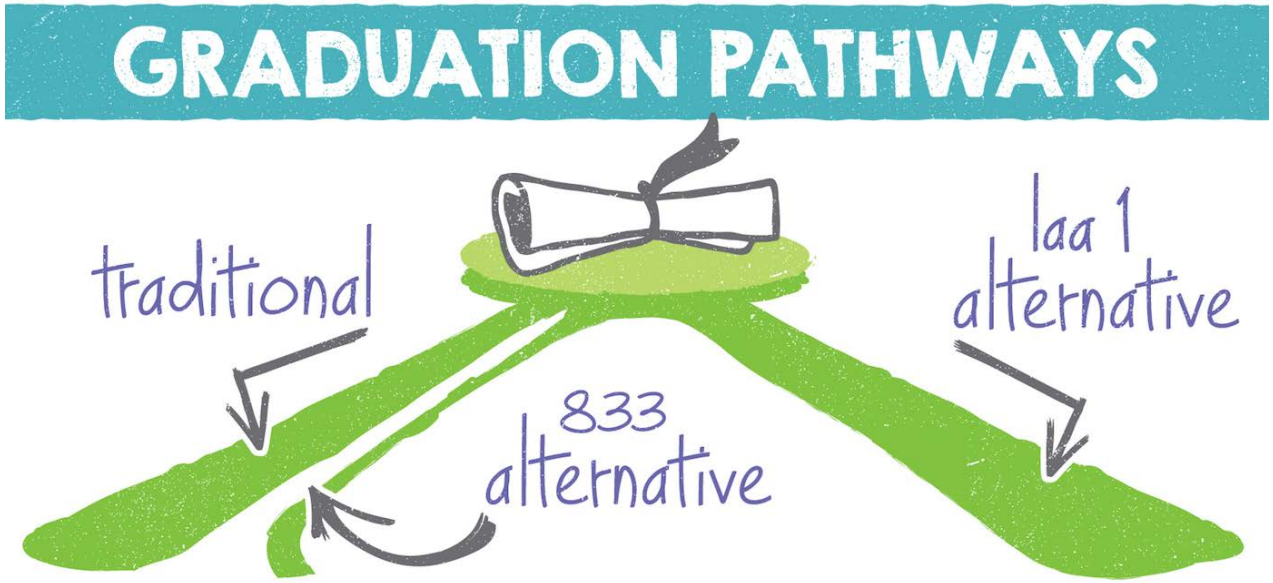
DOES THE SCHOOL GET AN "A" FOR CARSON? ✗ NO

2. CARSON ONLY GREW **13 POINTS, BUT OUT-PERFORMED HIS PEERS** ACROSS THE STATE WHO HAVE THE SAME DEMOGRAPHICS.

DOES THE SCHOOL GET AN "A" FOR CARSON? ✓ YES

ESSA and Diploma Pathways

The regulations do not impact the diploma pathways available to students with disabilities in Louisiana or how the culminating credential is presented to the student. The ESSA regulations differentiate between a “regular high school diploma” and a “state-defined alternate diploma” for purposes of school and district accountability.



Louisiana's Plan

ESSA provides states the opportunity to include a "state-defined alternate diploma" for students who take the alternate assessment in the cohort graduation rate. Under the old law, these diplomas could not be included in the calculation.

Diploma Requirements

Students who take the alternate assessment and meet the academic, assessment, workforce readiness, and high school transition components of the diploma pathway are eligible to obtain a Louisiana high school diploma at the point in which they are ready to exit high school (and in accordance with the provision of a free and appropriate education)

Accountability

Beginning with graduates in 2018, students will be included in the cohort graduation rate and strength of diploma index for the year in which they graduated, or the year in which they exited, after at least four years in high school with no subsequent re-enrollment by October 1 of the following academic year.

Recognizing all diplomas, including diplomas for students with significant disabilities, in the graduation rate equitably values outcomes

Consideration of a discussion of
Louisiana's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

SSIP: Timeline and Structure

The SSIP is a comprehensive, multi-year plan focused on improving results for students with disabilities. The SSIP is broken up into three "phases", with specific development and reporting requirements. LDOE reports on progress annually.

Phase I – Analyze	**Phase II – Plan**	**Phase III – Implement and Evaluate**

• Data Analysis
• Infrastructure Analysis
• State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)
• Theory of Action
• Coherent Improvement Strategies
	• Multiyear Plan:
	  • Infrastructure Development
	  • Support LEAs in Implementing Evidence-based Practices
	  • Evaluation Plan
		• Report on Progress Including:
		  • Activities Planned and Completed
		  • Results of Ongoing Evaluation

Completed and Approved	Completed and Approved	Due April 2017 - 2020

SSIP: SiMR and Cohort

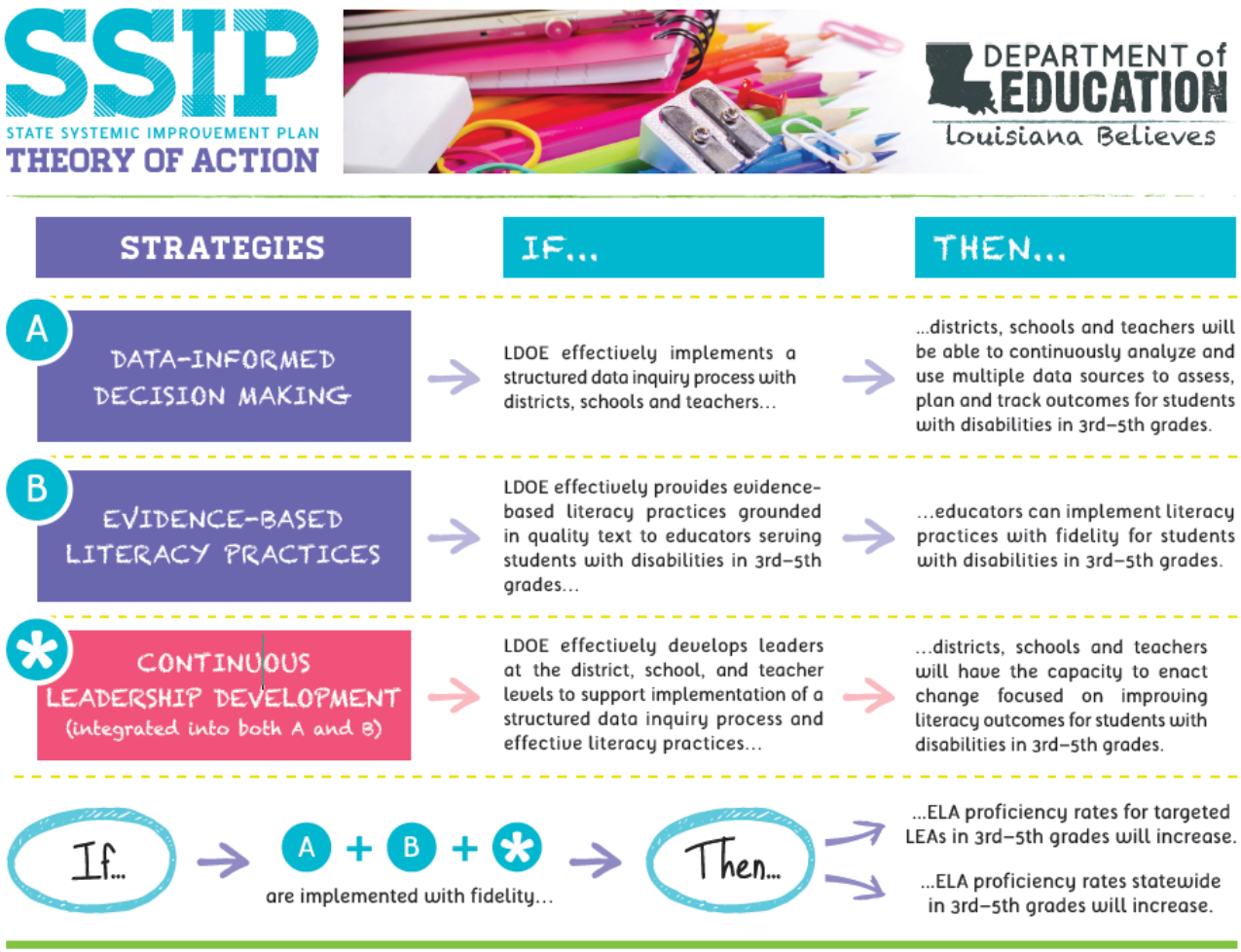
State-identified Measureable Result (SiMR):

Louisiana will increase ELA proficiency (basic and above) rates on statewide assessments for students with disabilities in grades 3-5, in 9 LEAs across the state.

Final SSIP Cohort		
Algiers Charters – Behrman	Algiers Charter - Eisenhower	Bossier
Calcasieu	Pointe Coupee	Sabine
St. Bernard	Vermilion	West Baton Rouge

All SSIP LEAs participate in the State Personnel Development Grant.

SSIP: Theory of Action



SSIP: Updated Results & Targets

Results

- Results for FFY 2013 (SY 2013 -2014) – FFY 2015 (SY 2015 -2016) ELA proficiency rates (basic and above) on statewide assessments, in the SSIP cohort, grades 3-5. Updated to reflect the finalized SSIP cohort.

FFY	2013	2014	2015
Data	36%	37%	35%

Targets

- SSIP Stakeholder Group recommended updated targets to reflect rigorous but achievable progress in the finalized SSIP cohort over the remainder of the SSIP lifecycle.

FFY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Previous Target	34%	34%	34%	36%	38%	40%
Updated Target	36%	36%	36%	37%	39%	42%

SSIP: Key Activities

LDOE & the State Personnel Development Grant are developing and implementing these key activities with the SSIP cohort.

Data	Activity	Status
February – May 2016	Data-informed decision making training for districts (initial & ongoing)	Complete
June – December 2016	Data-informed decision making training for schools (initial & ongoing)	Complete
Spring 2016 – end of project	District and school leadership teams meetings (quarterly)	Begun; ongoing
Summer 2017 – Winter 2017	Literacy practices foundational training for district and schools leaders, and teachers (initial & ongoing)	Final planning
Summer 2017	Data-informed decision making and leadership skills for district and school leaders (intermediate)	Final planning
Fall 2017 – end of project	Professional development to practice: follow-up coaching for teachers (multiple times a semester)	Final planning

Consideration of a discussion of
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) draft grant application

IDEA Funding Sources

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides states with multiple funding sources. Louisiana currently receives funds from all parts of the IDEA but not all are managed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

	IDEA Part C	IDEA Part B 619	IDEA Part B 611	IDEA Part D
Students Served	Ages 0-3	Ages 3-5	Ages 3-21	N/A
Grant Focus	Formula grant that assists states in providing early intervention services for infants and toddlers	Formula grant targeted specifically at children ages 3-5 with disabilities to provide a FAPE	Formula grant to provide funding for the provision of FAPE for students ages 3-21	Discretionary grants to support research, technical assistance and dissemination, technology, personnel development and parent-training and information centers. (LA Ex: SPDG and LAPTI)
State Agency	LDH	LDOE	LDOE	Anyone who applies for specific grants
Application Required	N	N	Y	Y

IDEA 611 Grant Overview

The IDEA Part B 611 grant award details the amount that must be spent in the following three categories of expenditures:

IDEA Flow Through

The state must flow this money directly to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for the provision of special education services to eligible students. This historically comprises 85 percent or greater of the total award.

IDEA State Set Aside

Set aside funds are approximately 10 percent of the total grant award and are managed at the state level to support projects that improve outcomes for students receiving special education services. This section requires states to complete a budget outlining how funds will be spent in general categories as part of the application.

IDEA State Admin

The administrative funds are approximately 2 percent of the total grant award. These funds are reserved at the state level to carry out administrative functions of the grant (grant administration, database management, travel, etc.)

IDEA 611 Set Aside Grant Application Categories

The US Department of Education IDEA grant application requires states to outline how state level set aides funds will be spent in 15 different categories. Each state is required to devote some set aside funds to a complaint enforcement and monitoring system and has the option of devoting funds in categories that support activities such as technical assistance, high risk pool, provision of assessment accommodations and an alternate assessment, work force development, building an effective transition process, and use of technology.

Though states are required to project the use of funds in certain categories in the grant application, final awards are not broken out or monitored by categories listed in the application. The are only separated by IDEA flow through, state set aside, and state admin.

A full break down of the application categories, corresponding activities, and proposed use of funds can be found here.

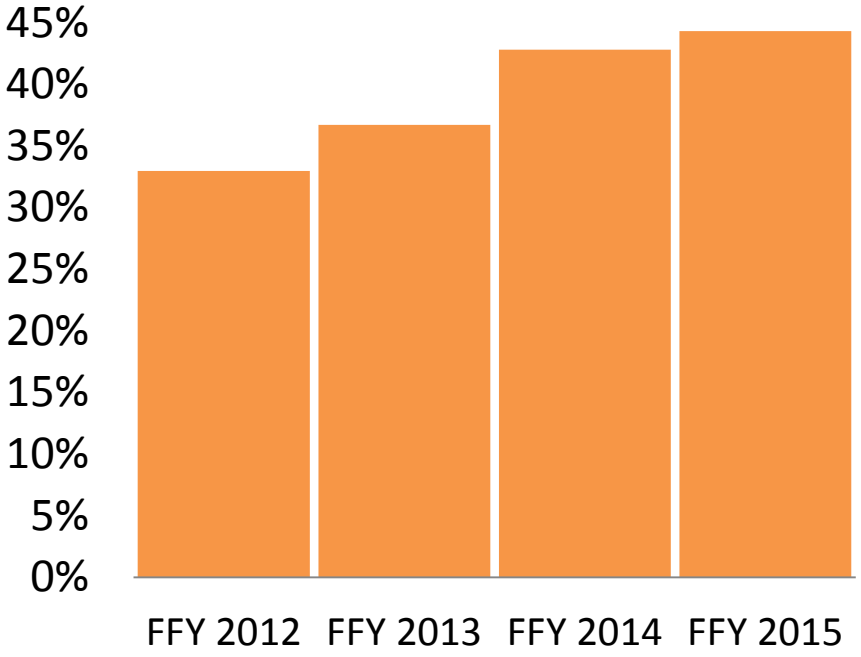
Background and Development Process for Louisiana's IDEA 611 Draft Grant Application

Historically, Louisiana's IDEA grant applications have been developed with an emphasis on continuing existing activities and partnerships and making minor spending adjustments based on cost inflation and feedback from the field. While there is value in the continuity of how state level IDEA funds are spent, it also limits the states ability to be responsive to current needs of students, LEAs, and the special education community. Therefore, the LDOE committed to taking a hard look at the use of IDEA set aside funds and developing the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 17 IDEA grant application based on the current needs of the state.

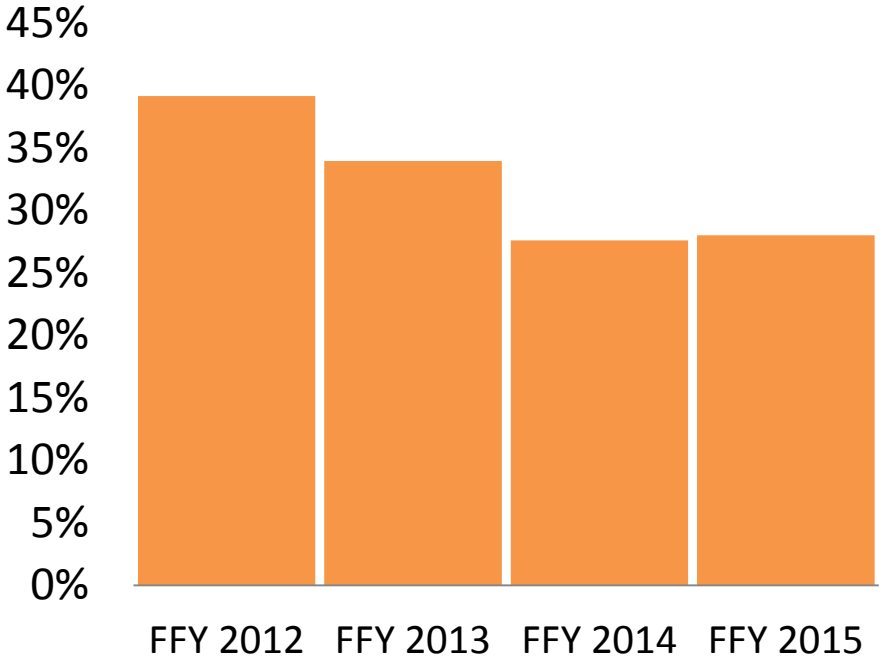
In the Fall of 2016 the LDOE began analyzing the use of IDEA set aside funds and established a process for developing an IDEA grant application based on set of funding priorities that will address the current needs of our state. As a result the FFY 17 IDEA draft grant application is rooted in a set of guiding principles, priority areas, and proposed activities to be considered for funding by the set aside portion of the grant and will culminate with a competitive search for partnerships to carry out the activities and priorities as necessary.

Culminating Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities have Improved, but Work Remains

The percentage of students with disabilities **graduating** from high school with a regular diploma has increased by over 11 percentage points in four years, but we are still graduating less than half.



The percentage of students with disabilities **dropping out** of high school has decreased by over 11 percentage points in four years, but approximately one in four still drop out.



Louisiana's IDEA 611 Draft Grant Application

Louisiana's IDEA FFY 17 draft grant application was developed by the LDOE after consultation with a diverse group of state holders and is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students, educators, and families. It is intended to be:

1. Responsive to and provide additional support to the overall education funding environment specific to students with disabilities;
2. Aligned to larger education initiatives across the state and have a specific focus on students with disabilities; and
3. Rooted in a system of routine data analysis and response to outcomes.

Funding Priority Areas

Louisiana believes that all students, even those with the most significant disabilities, deserve an education that prepares them to be independent and successful in life after high school. The IDEA FFY 17 draft grant application prioritizes funding activities and initiatives for the 2017-2018 school year that will support:

1. Building a workforce that is prepared to respond to the needs of all students with disabilities;
2. Developing standards aligned tools and resources that support the growth of students with disabilities and minimizes redundant work across the state;
3. Providing support for understanding and appropriately responding to the unique ways different disabilities manifest in the classroom; and
4. Establishing structures that ensure students have their individual needs identified and appropriately supported provided as early as possible and ensure students experience effective transitions to life after high school.

Funding Priority Areas

Focus Area

Building a workforce that is prepared to respond to the needs of all students with disabilities

Activities

- Full year residencies and mentorships for aspiring teachers working with students with disabilities
- Creating and/or expanding preparation programs in special education fields
- Establishing teacher leader advisors and training opportunities with a special education focus for current educators
- Developing a special education leadership training program for aspiring leaders

Funding Priority Areas

Focus Area

Developing standards aligned tools and resources that support the growth of students with disabilities and minimizes redundant work across the state

Activities

- Enhancing English language arts and math guidebooks to include strategies and tools that support teachers working with students with disabilities
- Statewide training opportunities aligned to Louisiana's State Systemic Improvement Plan
- Training and resources on the use of technology to support individual learning needs and differentiate classroom instruction
- Implementation and training related to the Louisiana Connectors
- Review and recommend intervention and special education support tools
- Develop IEP guidance and professional development

Funding Priority Areas

Focus Area

Providing support for understanding and appropriately responding to the unique ways different disabilities manifest in the classroom

Activities

- High cost pool to support additional costs associated with students with complex needs
- Guidance and professional development to support teachers with addressing autism, unique communication, complex medical, and behavior/ mental health needs of students in their classrooms

Funding Priority Areas

Focus Area

Establishing structures that ensure students have their individual needs identified and appropriately supported as early as possible and ensure students experience effective transitions to life after high school

Activities

- Support leadership development and career preparation as student transition between middle and high school
- Review and provide recommendations on employability/ career readiness programs, tools, and resources
- Establish innovative partnerships between LEAs and Institutes of Higher Education to support students with disabilities within regional communities
- Support effective and proactive career counseling for students with disabilities
- Provide technical assistance and support on developing systems and coordinated structures with an LEA that facilitate appropriate identification and delivery of services

Necessary Activities

In addition to the priority areas, the IDEA FFY 17 draft grant application includes a plan for activities that the state must conduct to ensure the provision of FAPE is available to students across the state.

Necessary Activities:

- Implement a monitoring and complaint investigation system *
- Support the provision of assessment accommodations and implement an alternate assessment
- Employ staff to provide assistance and support to LEAs
- Support the special education services for students enrolled in programs supported by the special school district
- Provide support and professional learning opportunities for families
- Maintain a Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) *

* Indicates that this is a requirement of the IDEA

Support for Families and the Community

The IDEA grant application requests states to outline the use of funds in many areas but does not include a specific item about family and community support. The LDOE believes this is a critical component of an effective state plan. Therefore, the IDEA FFY17 draft application includes funding to support:

- **Special education regional community meetings**
  - These events will be hosted by the LDOE and are opportunities for families, advocates, educators, and administrators to come together for collaborative conversations and trainings to support our students with disabilities across the state
- **Regional technical assistance and individual support to families**
  - This will include partnerships between the LDOE and regional liaisons to provide guidance and individual support to families on how to understand the opportunities available to their child with a disability and effectively navigate the local education system
- **Online tools and resources**
  - This will include enhancements to the LDOE website to include tools, resources, and data for families about critical components of special education and necessary partnerships with organizations who can help support the development of these materials

Assessment Support

The IDEA FFY17 draft application includes funding to support the:

- Provision of assessment accommodations
  - State assessment contracts require that any assessment accommodation an IEP team deems necessary for a student is provided. Recognizing that the needs of students with disabilities and their corresponding assessment accommodations vary greatly and individual accommodations are not itemized in contracts, the LDOE uses the methodology of budgeting a certain percentage of IDEA funds to support every assessment contract based on the percentage of students with disabilities in the state.
- Development and implementation of an alternate assessment
  - The 2017-2018 school year will be the first year of an alternate assessment based on the Louisiana Connectors for Students with Significant Disabilities in both ELA and math. This will require additional funds for the development of the new assessment.

SEAP Support

IDEA requires that each state establish and maintain a special education advisory panel (SEAP). The IDEA FFY17 draft grant application includes a plan to provide professional development and training to SEAP through the annual retreat.

Application Assurances

The IDEA grant application requires states to ensure that their state policies, including statues and regulations, are consistent with Part B of the IDEA.

The IDEA FFY 17 draft application includes the assurance that Louisiana policies are consistent with all aspects of the IDEA outlined in the application.

Maintenance of Financial Effort (MOE)

The IDEA grant application requires states to determine if the state has maintained the required State Financial Support for children with disabilities and related services. To determine if the current level of available funding equals or exceeds the funding made available in the prior year, the latest available budgeted data is used for each data source. The draft grant application outlines that Louisiana met the MOE requirements.

Data Elements Included in Calculation:

- *State Activities*- Includes expenditures for State funded salaries and administrative costs associated with the administration of the IDEA program and other services for students with disabilities

- *Subgrantee Assistance*- Includes non-federal funds passed through to the LEAs such as the Laura I Consent Decree (ESYP) – included in prior years, student scholarships for educational excellence program (SSEEP) funding for special education services, and school choice program scholarships funding for students with disabilities

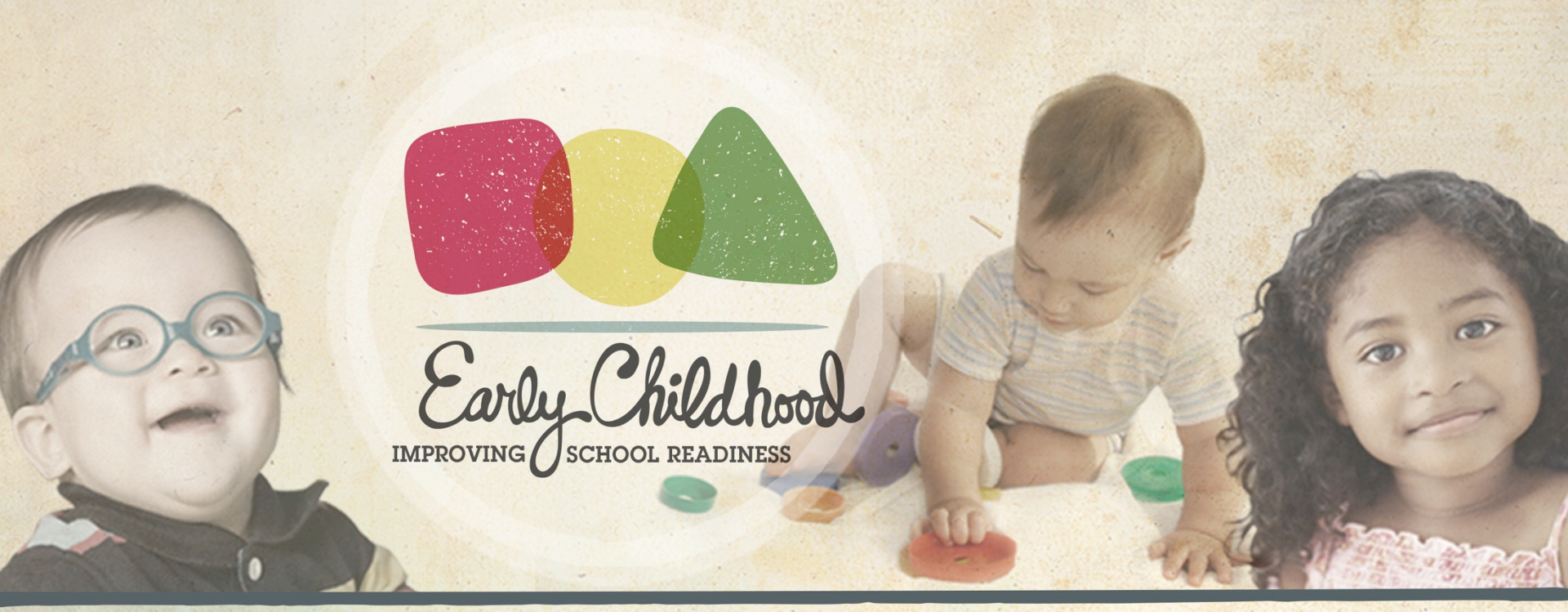
- Minimum Foundation Program dollars allocated to the LEAs- includes RSD/OPSB differentiated funding for students with disabilities, high cost services (HCS) funding, and discretionary funding used for students with disabilities

- *Other State Agencies*- Includes the State dollars allocated to other state agencies that provide special education services such as the Special School District (SSD), Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), and Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (LSDVI)

Louisiana's IDEA 611 Grant Application Timeline

- **December 2016 - March 2017:** Work group meetings and consultation
- **January 25, 2017:** SEAP discussion of funding priority areas
- **March 10, 2017:** IDEA grant draft application posted on LDOE website
- **March 29 - April 30, 2017:** Public comment period
- **May 1 - May 8, 2017:** Final revisions to application based on public comment
- **May 9, 2017:** IDEA Part B 611 grant application finalized and mailed to OSEP
- **Summer- Fall 2017:** Louisiana receives IDEA Part B 611 grant award and begins implementing priorities for the 2017-2018 school year
    - This includes releasing competitive applications for partnerships with the LDOE to implement priorities where appropriate

Consideration of an update on opportunities for students with disabilities in early childhood settings



Supporting FAPE in the LRE in Early Childhood Programs

March 29, 2017

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

State Efforts to Offer Free and Appropriate Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- **BESE Policies**
- **Provision of quality programs serving children with disabilities**
  - Public/Nonpublic pre-K
  - Preschool Development Grant (PDG) – PreK Expansion Grants
  - Expansion of Head Start
  - Type III licensed child care centers
- **Coordinated Enrollment**
- **Investments in services to children with disabilities**
  - Increase CCAP eligibility and funding
  - School Readiness Tax Credits
  - Improve teacher effectiveness through *CLASS™* and access to Ancillary Certification Programs
  - Utilize curriculum and assessment sensitive to needs of children with disabilities
- **Messaging to programs**
  - Supervisor/Teacher Leader Collaboratives
  - Teacher Leader Summit
  - LDOE and Early Childhood Connect Newsletters
  - Resources posted to LDOE website

BESE Policy

BESE Policy

State mandated policies in place :
Bulletin 1706 – Regulations for Implementation of the Children with Exceptionalities Act

Chapter 1. State Eligibility

Subchapter A.
FAPE Requirements

§101. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

A. General. **A free appropriate public education shall be available to all students residing in the state between the ages of 3** and 21, inclusive, including students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school as provided for in §530.D.

Subchapter C. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

§114. LRE Requirements

A. General

1. Except as provided in §324.D.2 (regarding students with disabilities in adult prisons), the LDE adopts the policies and procedures in this Section and in §§115 through 120 to ensure that public agencies in the state meet the federal LRE requirements of this Section and §§115 through 120.

2. Each public agency shall ensure that:
   a. to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, **are educated with students who are nondisabled**; and

   b. special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

What This Means for Children:
Children will Receive Free and Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Provision of Quality Programs Serving Children with Disabilities

Provision of Quality Programs Serving Children with Disabilities

Significant state and federal investments provide high-quality programs that serve children from birth to five years old, including those with disabilities.

Public/Nonpublic pre-K	Preschool Development Grants – PreK Expansion Grants	Expansion of Head Start	Type III Licensed Child Care Centers
• Include # Programs/Classes • Include # children with disabilities	• Description and info on requirement to include children with disabilities • Include # Programs/Classes • Include # children with disabilities	• Description of Child Care/Head Start expansion program • Include # Programs/Classes • Include # children with disabilities	• Include # of centers • Academic Approval process

What This Means for Children:
Children will have Access to high-quality settings with typically developing peers.

Coordinated Enrollment

Coordinated Enrollment

Every community submits a plan to coordinate enrollment across programs for families.

- Plans address the four key areas of coordinated enrollment:
  - Coordinated Information Campaign
  - Coordinated Eligibility Determination
  - Coordinated Application
  - Matching Based on Preferences
- Overall, communities have identified a few key improvements from last year, including:
  - Adding multiple enrollment events for families to attend, in order to reach more families
  - Using a more coordinated approach to referrals and waitlist processes across a given region
  - Including important supports for families, such as homeless liaisons, EarlySteps (Part C), Child Find, SPED coordinators, interpreters and ELL teachers
- Communities working to coordinate a matching process that does not rely on first-come, first-served basis but rather on the needs of the child and the family

What This Means for Families:
Families of children with disabilities have options to select programs that best meet the needs of their child.

Investments in Services to Children with Disabilities

Increase CCAP Eligibility and Funding

The Department has worked to increase the number of families that can access CCAP and the amount of tuition subsidy available for families that have a child with a disability.

- **Explanation of CCAP**
- **Changes in employment qualification and full/part-time student status**
  - All qualifying applicants must be employed for 20 hours per week
  - Qualifying applicants that have a child with special needs must be employed for 15 hours per week.
  - Full-time status is determined by the training institution, which must be accredited by the state of Louisiana or a national organization; must result in degree or certificate designed to promote job skills
- **Describe increase in subsidy for children with disabilities**

What This Means for Families:
More families qualify for assistance and recognize reductions in financial burdens.

School Readiness Tax Credits

School Readiness Tax Credits are a $16 million investment annually in quality child care, which includes centers serving children with disabilities.

This package of five tax credits, which were made law in 2007, have served as an important incentive for:

1. Families to choose quality rated centers;
2. Providers to serve vulnerable, at-risk children whose parents could not otherwise afford quality care;
3. Directors and staff to pursue additional education or credentials;
4. Businesses to donate to child care centers to help improve quality; and
5. Businesses or individuals to donate to resource and referral centers in order to help improve child care quality within a region.

These tax credits play a vital role in supporting the child care industry which has an $830 million impact on the Louisiana economy. This funding helps secure more than $80 million in federal funds (CCDF).

Improve Teacher Effectiveness Through *CLASS*™ and Access to Ancillary Certification Programs

Using CLASS has improved the quality of interactions and instruction within a classroom. The Certification programs have allowed teachers to attain higher credential and certification.

Improving Interactions as Measured by *CLASS*	Credentials and Certification
• Teachers receive training on *CLASS*™ (e.g. Intro, Looking at *CLASS*rooms) • Go through 2 *CLASS*™ observations/year • Receive feedback and support based on observation results • Early Childhood Special Education Pilot – Coaching/mentoring support through MyTeachingPartner (MTP), myTeachstone, Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI)	• Teachers attain CDA or higher • Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate • Program approval for Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs (Believe and Prepare)

What This Means for Children:
Teachers will be equipped with skills and competencies to provide high-quality interactions and instruction to meet the needs of the children.

Utilize Curriculum and Assessments Sensitive to the Needs of Children with Disabilities

Teachers differentiate instruction and utilize assessment information to support children in meeting IEP goals.

Quality Curriculum	Appropriate Assessment (G*OLD*®)
• Curriculum review process • Quality curriculum (Tier I) includes guidance for teachers on adapting instruction to meet the needs of individual children • Curriculum Initiative provides opportunity for early learning centers to purchase Tier I curriculum	• Observation-based assessment selected through rigorous process (G*OLD*®) • Assessment is sensitive to children with or suspected of having a disability • *Team Central* feature allows service providers (e.g. SLT, OT, etc.) to enter assessment information which can be shared with classroom teacher; allows for sharing/creating lessons to meet IEP goals

What This Means for Children:
Children will receive instruction based on their needs to support progress and achievement of IEP goals.

Messaging to Programs and Staff

Messaging to Programs and Staff

The Department provides information and updates to programs and staff.

- Quarterly Supervisor/Teacher Leader Collaborative Meetings
- Teacher Leader Summit – June
- LDOE Newsletter
- EC Connect
- Resources posted to LDOE website

What This Means for Supervisors and Teachers:
Supervisors and Teachers will receive up-to-date information and guidance on best practices relative to inclusion and providing FAPE in the LRE.

Follow-up/ Next Steps