

Louisiana Believes

Special Education Leader Webinar
August 2020

Agenda + Logistics

- I. **Strong Start 2020**
- II. **School System Planning**
- III. **Graduation Pathways**
- IV. **Teaching and Learning**
- V. **Data Systems / SER Updates**
- VI. **Measuring Results**
- VII. **Closeout**

Logistics

If you are experiencing audio difficulties, please make sure that your speakers are on and that your volume is at a suitable level.

The call will be in the listen only mode to ensure we get through the information. Please type questions into the chat box as we go along.

Dial in by phone: 646 876 9923

Meeting ID: 921 3595 1551

STRONG 20
START 20

The image features a vibrant blue watercolor background with horizontal white lines. The central text is 'STRONG 20' on the top line and 'START 20' on the bottom line. 'STRONG' is written in a bold, yellow, rounded font with a slight shadow. 'START' is written in white, bold, rounded letters inside a blue arrow-shaped banner that points to the right. The '20's are in a bold, orange, rounded font. Small sunburst icons are placed around the 'S' and the '20's. The overall style is playful and energetic.

Strong Start Resources

To ensure a Strong Start to the 2020-2021 school year, the Department is focused on helping school systems address unfinished learning from the 2019-2020 school year, set the foundation for continuous learning in 2020-2021 and prepare for potential modified operations in the future.

Resources for school systems can be found on the Department's Strong Start [web page](#).



Strong Start 2020: Special Education Guidance

Last week, the Department released a suite of resources to guide school systems in supporting students with disabilities in the 2020-2021 school year. The resources are located on the Department's [Strong Start web page](#) and [Students with Disabilities web page](#).



- [Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Special Education Leaders PDF](#)
- [Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Direct Service Providers PDF](#)
- [Family Toolbox: Strong Start 2020 Support for Students with Disabilities PDF](#)

Coming soon: Timelines and Documentation [guidance](#) updates.

Strong Start 2020: Special Education Guidance

The rights of students with disabilities under IDEA have not changed. All students with disabilities have the right to FAPE in the least restrictive environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

BESE policy and LDOE guidance provide flexibility to meet the needs of students with disabilities. For example, disability impact exception, student group composition flexibility, and essential visitor status for special education providers,

IEP teams will play a key role in the success of Strong Start Reopening. The IEP team will play a critical role in special education and related services decisions, including decisions about instructional delivery methods.

Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Special Education Leaders

The [Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Special Education Leaders](#) builds off the Department's [School Reopening Guidance and Resources](#) to help school systems and educators prepare for a successful reopening that meets the needs of students with disabilities.

The guidance document includes guiding principles and considerations for supporting students with disabilities in facility reopening plans, staffing plans, academic plans, and delivery of direct services across virtual, traditional, and hybrid learning scenarios.



REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERS

As the 2020-2021 school year begins, school systems are preparing reopening plans across three possible scenarios: virtual, hybrid and traditional. Across these scenarios, students with disabilities must continue to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment, consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students and staff. This guide will help school systems and educators prepare for a successful reopening that meets the needs of students with disabilities.

School system leaders should:

- **Understand the guiding principles** for supporting students with disabilities during school reopening.
- **Ensure facility reopening plans** specifically address and support the unique needs of students with disabilities.
- **Ensure staffing plans** meet the needs of students with disabilities including well-being, schedules, and training.

Educators and service providers should:

- **Ensure academic plans** continue the use of high-quality instructional materials to support students with disabilities across learning scenarios.
- **Ensure delivery of direct services** continues across learning scenarios as outlined by each student's individual educational program (IEP).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The rights of students with disabilities under IDEA have not changed.
All students with disabilities have the right to FAPE in the least restrictive environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Regardless of the method of instructional delivery—virtual, hybrid or traditional—the rights of students with disabilities have not changed. School systems must continue to follow **timelines and documentation** requirements.

BESE policy and LDOE guidance provide flexibility to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
In alignment with CDC guidelines, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) adopted **policies** for school reopening that address the unique needs of students with disabilities. These policies and the [Strong Start Reopening Guidelines and Resources](#) provide flexibility to support the needs of students with disabilities. For example,

- school systems can use a disability impact exception for **face coverings**;
- school systems have flexibility with **student group composition** (e.g. static groups) to ensure special education and related services continue; and
- special education providers can enter schools and early learning centers as **essential visitors**.

IEP teams will play a key role in the success of Strong Start Reopening.
The IEP team will play a critical role in special education and related services decisions, including decisions about instructional delivery methods. These may not be the same for every student, goal, or service, and may change over time. For example, the IEP team could decide, consistent with IDEA and BESE policy, that

- a student receiving virtual instruction requires in-person support for related services such as adapted physical education or occupational therapy; or
- a student receiving in-person instruction requires virtual or remote delivery of speech therapy.

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Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Direct Service Providers

The [Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Direct Service Providers](#) offers information and considerations for planning and implementing direct services during the 2020-2021 school year. This guidance document provides strategies for direct service providers to

- deliver services across learning environments (traditional, hybrid or virtual) and
- incorporate technology and remote learning strategies with in-person services.

The guide includes both K-12 and early childhood special education (ECSE) specific information.

STRONG START 2020 REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Family Toolbox: Strong Start 2020 Support for Students with Disabilities

There are many ways families can support students with disabilities during the 2020-2021 school year. The [Family Toolbox: Strong Start 2020 Support for Students with Disabilities](#) guides families to

- know their rights under IDEA,
- promote health and safety,
- collaborate with the IEP team,
- prepare their children for the academic year,
- create a supportive home-based learning environment,
- support the use of accommodations and accessibility, and
- support instruction and direct services.



FAMILY TOOLBOX FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To ensure a strong start to the 2020-2021 school year, school systems across Louisiana are preparing for three flexible learning scenarios: instruction offered virtually, traditionally, or through a hybrid combination of both. While learning may look different across parishes, schools, and students, all schools must continue to provide high-quality instruction and specialized services that support the unique needs of students with disabilities.

No matter which of these scenarios your child's school system uses, there are concrete ways that you can support your child's experiences and learning. This document gives you, as a family member of a student with a disability and a valuable member of the IEP team, a brief overview of the ways you can work collaboratively with the school to support your child's learning this year.¹

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

All students with disabilities have the right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The rights of students with disabilities have not changed, no matter which way your child is receiving instruction this school year.

PROMOTE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Above all, a strong start to the 2020-2021 school year means staying healthy and protecting the well-being of yourself and your child.

- Talk with your child about the importance of following [CDC health and safety measures](#). You can use [stories, pictures, and other visuals](#) to help them understand the steps for washing hands, wearing face coverings, and social distancing. You can also give them positive reinforcement (praise, a small reward) for unfamiliar activities like wearing a mask.
- Work with your child's IEP team to find flexible and creative solutions for safety measures that may be hard for them, based on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's [minimum health and safety standards](#). Make sure there is a plan to address health needs such as toileting, feeding, and/or complex medical needs.
- Understand that your child may feel [frustrated, worried, or scared](#) about the upcoming school year and new safety precautions. Talk together and acknowledge your child's feelings. If your child needs additional classroom support, reach out to their teacher.

COLLABORATE WITH THE IEP TEAM

IEP teams—including parents—are still the key decision-makers to ensure students have access to FAPE in the least restrictive environment. Collaborate with the IEP team to make sure your student has the support they need this year.

- Talk to your child's IEP team about the learning scenario that will best support your child's unique needs. Develop a plan for how instruction and direct services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) will be provided this year. Remember that instruction and direct services can and must continue across all learning scenarios.
- Decide on a point person for communication about your child's progress, challenges, and needs for support. This could be your child's classroom teacher, a special education teacher, or another service provider. Talk to them about the best way to communicate (e.g. email, phone, video call) and how often (daily, weekly, bi-weekly).
- Talk with the IEP team about options for holding IEP meetings. Since parents may not be able to access school buildings, other options like [virtual meetings](#) or meetings before or after the school day may be needed.
- Reach out to the IEP team if your student is struggling or needs more support in any area. Remember that you always have the [right to call an IEP meeting](#) to discuss your child's needs.

¹ The information in this document is a summary and does not provide every detail, exception or circumstance. Nothing in this document is meant to state new law or take the place of any federal or state laws, regulations or requirements.

UPDATED AUGUST 3, 2020 | LEARN MORE AT LOUISIANABELIEVES.COM

Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Special Education Leaders

Reminder. Strong Start 2020 plans include actions school systems must take including conduct a review for compensatory services for every student with a disability, and provide compensatory services to eligible students, based on their individual need.

School systems should continue to address compensatory services by

- reviewing data for all students with disabilities,
- determining necessary compensatory services, and
- providing compensatory services, as soon as possible, to eligible students, based on their individual need.

To assist school systems with this planning, the Department recently released the [Strong Start Compensatory Services Guidance](#).

Strong Start 2020: Special Education Guidance Children's Hospital New Orleans Town Hall Series

The Children's Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care (504-837-7760) offers guidance to school nurses and school administrators.

The Children's Hospital New Orleans Town Hall Series for Schools is being conducted every two weeks through July and August. The next Town Hall is **August 18, 2020 at 1 p.m.**

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/95976608543?pwd=Wm1YR1dkMXA4TW8vY0NWNTVXZDdXQT09>

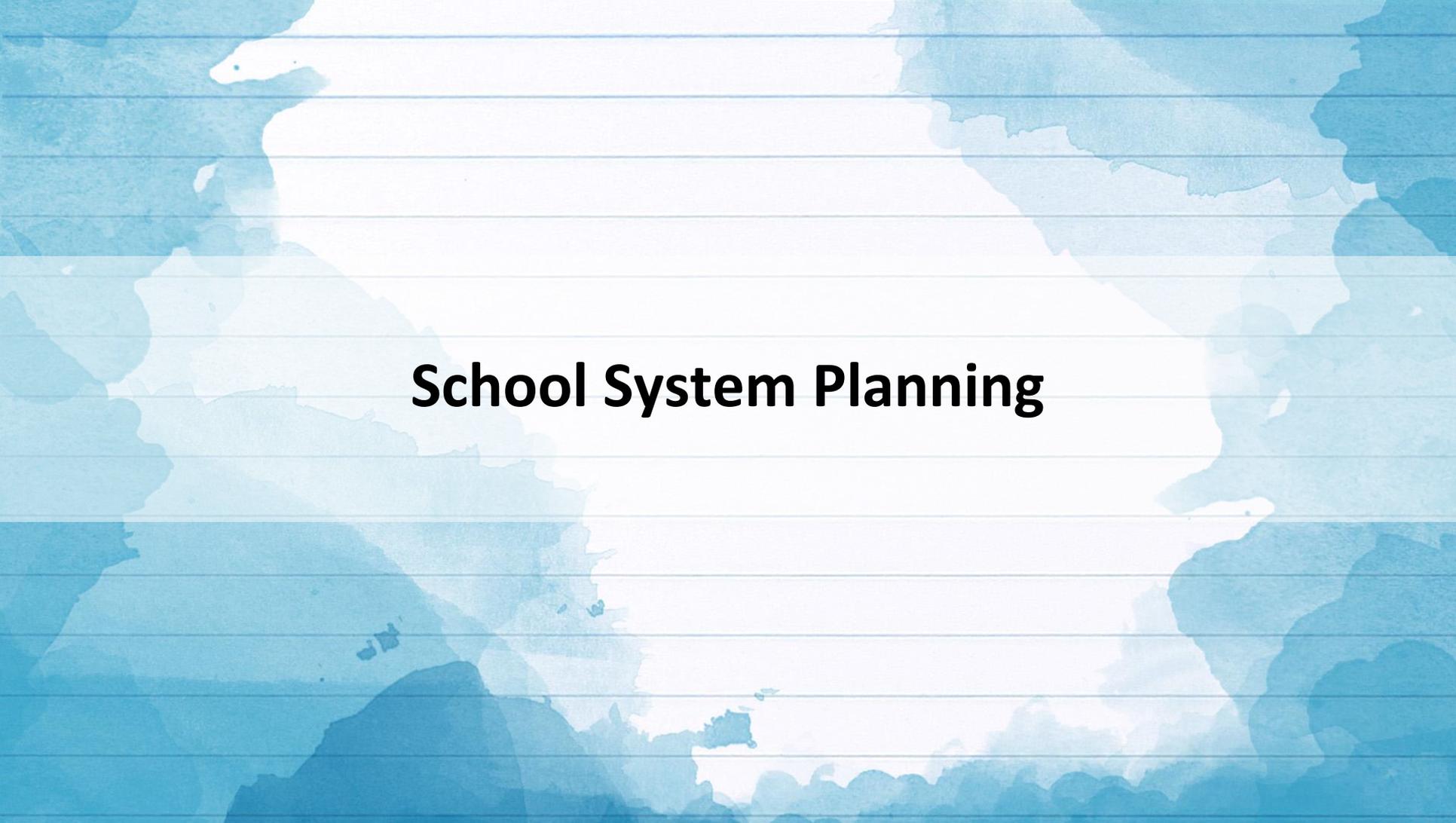
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Webinar ID: 959 7660 8543

Dial-in Number: +13126266799

Dial-in ID: 95976608543#

Dial-in Password: 8182020#



School System Planning

Partnerships for Success Guide Updates

To support school systems in preparing for a Strong Start to 2020, the Department has updated the [Partnerships for Success Guide](#) to include:

- **Professional Development to Deliver Specialized Supports** for children with disabilities in early childhood educational centers.
- **Professional Development for Direct Service Providers** to support the continued delivery of direct services throughout virtual or remote learning.

Inaugural SPED Fellow Academy Cohort

Fifteen Louisiana special education leaders have been selected to participate in the inaugural cohort of the SPED Fellow Academy, a yearlong, comprehensive development program for aspiring and novice special education leaders across the state. The inaugural cohort represents the following school systems:

- Ascension Parish
- Avoyelles Parish
- Bienville Parish
- Catahoula Parish
- Evangeline Parish
- Iberville Parish
- Richland Parish
- St. Tammany Parish
- Crescent City Schools
- Encore Academy
- KIPP New Orleans
- Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy
- New Harmony High Institute
- Redesign Schools Louisiana
- Young Audiences of Louisiana



SPED Fellow Academy Mentor Coaches

Participants in the SPED Fellow Academy will receive coaching from five experienced special education leaders with extensive leadership experience and track records of improving outcomes for students with disabilities. These coaches represent a diversity of experiences in public and charter school systems across Louisiana. The mentor-coaches include:

- Amanda Baram, FirstLine Schools
- Cheramie Kerth, St. Bernard Parish Public Schools
- Dr. Sheila Lockett, Caddo Parish Public Schools
- Carla Parrie, Sabine Parish Public Schools
- Emily Waterfield, KIPP New Orleans

Alternate Assessment Participation Review Process

Each year, school systems that need to exceed 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment must take certain actions. These actions outlined in the alternate assessment participation review incorporate requirements of Bulletin 111 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

All school systems must review participation data. Additionally, school systems exceeding 1.0 percent participation must also

- participate in student level file reviews conducted by the Department;
- complete the alternate assessment review request document;
- describe how the school system will address any disproportionality in participation rates;
- provide evidence IEP teams followed the State's guidelines for participation; and
- provide assurance IEP teams received training on participation guidelines.

Files for the alternate assessment review process are now available on FTP with the file name:
LEA Code_LEA Name_AA_2020.

Alternate Assessment Participation Review Actions and Timeline

Below are school system actions and timeline for the alternate assessment review process.

Month	School System Actions
Early August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive and review alternate assessment packages, including data
August 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend webinar to receive support and guidance on completing the alternate assessment review process
Mid August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review data, prepare student-specific files, and complete review request
September 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upload the requested student-specific files to the FTP and submit review request document
Late September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive notification of alternate assessment participation review outcomes

Alternate Assessment Process Support Webinar

The Department will host a webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education on August 18 at 2 p.m. to help school systems exceeding 1.0 percent participation complete the alternate assessment review process. Pre-registration is not required.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** August 18 at 2 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92293524383>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923 (for dial-in only)
- **Meeting ID#:** 922 9352 4383

New Definition of Dyslexia

In June, Governor Edwards signed into law [Act 206](#), which revises the definition of dyslexia. The Dyslexia Resource Center is hosting a free webinar on **August 20 at 12 p.m.** to discuss the bill and how it impacts students with dyslexia. Speakers include Kayla Reggio, Director of the Dyslexia Resource Center, and Representative Joe Marino, who authored the bill. Interested participants can [register](#) in advance.

Guidance for Child Care Criminal Background Checks

All essential visitors and contractors, including mental health consultants and special education service providers, must have a child care criminal background check (CCCBC) in order to provide services at an early learning center and a registered in-home or family home provider.

K-12 essential visitors and contractors may arrange to provide services outside of early learning centers when possible. Otherwise, a CCCBC is required. More information on the process for obtaining a CCCBC is available on the Department's Criminal Background Checks [page](#).

Graduation Pathways

Jump Start Fact Sheet Update

Last month, the Department released the first set of newly redesigned [Industry-Based Certification Fact Sheets](#). The redesigned fact sheets appear in the file box labeled updated fact sheets.

The fact sheets have been improved or have the following additions:

- Industry-based certification (IBC) STS code and an example of each IBC
- Certification resources to prepare for the exam
- System requirements for computer-based testing
- Direct links to accommodations and language access information (when available)
- Information on costs (when available)

Teaching + Learning

Teaching Strategies GOLD[®] OSEP Guidance

TSEP Gold OSEP Administrators can find updated resources for *Teaching Strategies GOLD[®] OSEP*, including [OSEP Guidance and Support](#) and the [OSEP Administrator Contact List](#), in the Early Childhood Classroom Supports [Library](#).

Additionally, the following OSEP training webinars are now available for any administrators, teachers or service providers that have access to the OSEP license. PDF versions of each webinar can be located in the Classroom Supports [Library](#).

- [TS GOLD[®] OSEP Background and General Information](#)
- [TS GOLD[®] OSEP Administrators Getting Started Checklist](#)

If there are any changes to your OSEP Administrator for the 2020-2021 school year, please email brittany.braun@la.gov.

SER/Data System Updates

Special Education Reporting (SER) Deadlines

Date	Action Item
August 31, 2020	End of Year Collections. The SER Exit Count final run will take place on August 31. Turn in your 2019-2020 SER February 1 MFP Statement of Affirmation , which was due March 13.

SER Enhancement - Evaluation Tab

The evaluation tab in SER will now include two additional fields for evaluations, including reevaluations that exceeded timelines due to the extended school facility closure.

Re-Evaluation

Permission Request/Start Date:

Disseminated Date:

Days Past Due:

Is this evaluation past due as a result of the extended school facility closure?
 Yes No

Re-Evaluation Reason:

Initial Evaluation

Permission Request Date:

Parent Decision:

Decision/Start Date:

Eligibility Determination Date:

Report Disseminated Date:

Days Past Due:

Is this evaluation past due as a result of the extended school facility closure?
 Yes No

Measuring Results

Seclusion and Restraint Data Verification Reports

The Department is required to collect and annually report the use of seclusion and restraint for students with disabilities.

The 2019-2020 Seclusion and Restraint Data Verification Report is now available to provide school systems the opportunity to verify their data before the final report is published.

Please contact your FTP coordinator to retrieve the report with the file name:

LEA Code_LEA Name_2019-2020 Seclusion and Restraint Data Verification Report.

School systems must make all updates in SER, if needed, and submit new or revised seclusion and restraint policies to specialeducation@la.gov by **August 14** to be reflected in the final report.

Universal Screeners

In order to ensure a strong start to 2020-2021, educators use [diagnostic assessments and screeners](#) to ensure that every child's learning needs are met and parents feel informed about their child's academic strengths and needs. Universal screeners are administered on all students, including students with disabilities.

As schools administer required universal screeners and diagnostic assessments, they should consider the appropriateness of the screening tool and any necessary accommodations for students with disabilities.

Every Child Counts: Census 2020

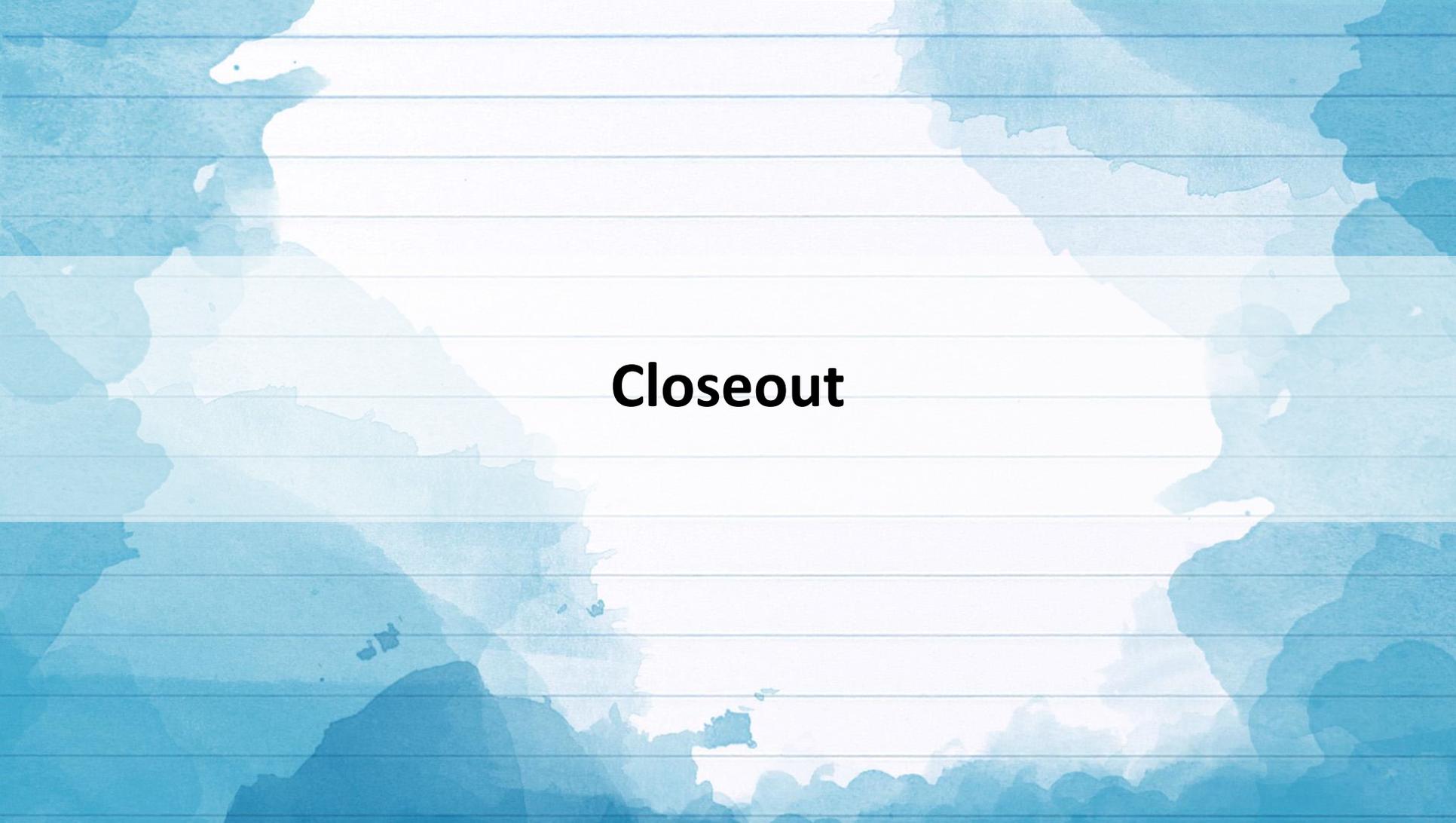
By now every home has received an invitation to participate in the [2020 Census](#).

The 2020 Census count impacts the federal funds that communities receive each year for programs and services that are critical for schools, students, and [younger children](#), such as:

- **Special education**, Head Start, after-school programs, and classroom technology.
- Food assistance, including free and reduced-price school lunches.
- Maternal and child health programs.
- Planning, preparedness, and recovery efforts for all types of national emergencies, including [COVID-19](#).



Self-responses, which can be completed [online](#), by phone, or by mail until October 31, **ensures federal funding to support Louisiana students**. The Department encourages school systems to explore the [2020 Census Toolbox](#) to find activities specially designed to be engaging and appropriate for each grade level, from counting for kindergarteners to examining career statistics for high schoolers.



Closeout

Call Summary

Month	Key Deadlines	Support and Resources
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Submit new or revised seclusion and restraint policies to specialeducation@la.gov by August 14.● Attend the Alternate Assessment Process Support Webinar on August 18.● Submit the SER MFP Statement of Affirmation before the SER Exit Count final run on August 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Special Education Leaders● Strong Start 2020: Reopening Guidance for Direct Service Providers● Family Toolbox: Strong Start 2020 Support for Students with Disabilities
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Upload alternate assessment review request documents to the FTP by September 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● September 10 Special Education Leader Webinar

Newsletters

The Department has a series of weekly newsletters to keep you informed. Of particular interest,

For School Districts - click [here](#) to subscribe



For Charters - click [here](#) to subscribe

