Objective:
- Outline next steps for fully unifying Louisiana’s early childhood system.
- Encourage collaborative discussion on how to address shared challenges and work together to ensure all Louisiana children enter kindergarten ready for school.

Sections:
- Leading up to 2015: Background, Vision, and Shared Challenges
- Challenge 1: Developing Policies to Fully Unify the System
  - Unify Expectations
  - Support All Teachers to be Excellent
  - Give Families Equitable Access to Quality Choices
- Challenge 2: Ensuring Families Can Choose Quality
- Challenge 3: Expanding Pilots Statewide
- Bringing It All Together: Full Implementation
"Our forward-thinking leaders and their teachers have joined pilots and are stepping up to the challenge of preparing our children for school. As the providers who are responsible for our youngest children, we are excited about the potential of a unified system that recognizes all providers and their efforts in preparing children well."

- Alan Young, President, Child Care Association of Louisiana

"Head Start programs have been key partners in pilots across the state. We look forward to working with our colleagues to develop policies that fully unify this work."

- Alvin Jones, President, Head Start Association of Louisiana
Louisiana’s fragmented early childhood system led to Act 3 (2012), which calls for a unified system to ensure all children enter kindergarten ready.

- **2012**: BESE approves multi-year plan for implementation
- **2013**: 13 Early Childhood Community Network Pilots launch
- **2014**: 16 more Community Network Pilots launch. Additional legislation is passed to unify licensing, enrollment, and funding
- **2015**: Full implementation of Act 3 required by August
Each year Louisiana continues to make progress toward a unified system.

### Fragmented System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Unified System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are falling through the cracks and are not consistently prepared</td>
<td>High standards for what children should learn and what excellent teaching looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are not equally prepared nor rewarded for their work</td>
<td>Teachers who are excellent at interacting with children and guiding learning are supported and rewarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families do not have easy-to-use information to make the best choice</td>
<td>Families apply through shared processes and are satisfied with their children’s experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers are subject to inconsistent expectations and do not have equitable resources to achieve outcomes</td>
<td>Consistent expectations for health, safety and learning, and adequate funding levels across programs based on serving children well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Act 3 requires a unified system by August 2015. The shared challenges are to:**

1. Develop policies to fully unify the statewide early childhood system
2. Pursue funding needed to ensure families can choose a quality option
3. Expand Early Childhood Networks to every community in Louisiana

**Getting Feedback**
Multiple opportunities are planned to include all stakeholders in the process.

- **Advisory Council**
  Official council that will review draft state policies, beginning in October

- **Road Show**
  Town halls around the state with the Superintendent, starting in September

- **Roundtables**
  Informal roundtables hosted by pilots and partners to discuss specific issues in depth, beginning in October
Challenge 1: Developing Policies to Fully Unify the System

Unify Expectations
Early childhood leaders, teachers, and families need simple, actionable information on how well programs using public funds are preparing children for kindergarten.

Louisiana should develop a licensing and report card system that:

1. **Defines and measures core elements needed for high-quality child outcomes**
   - Licensing should cover health and safety while report cards focus on learning
   - Leaders and teachers understand elements and why they matter for children

2. **Provides simple, clear information about performance**
   - Leaders and teachers should easily understand how they are doing

3. **Clearly articulates a path to improvement**
   - Leaders and teachers understand what changes they need to make
   - Support systems understand how to help leaders and teachers improve

4. **Gives families a simple way to compare choices in their community**
Developing Report Cards will be a multi-year process based on work in the field.

In 2014-15, LDE will streamline licensing and build a two-level report card system that evaluates both programs and community networks on how well they do.

Starting in October 2014, LDE will

• Oversee licensing and unify health/safety expectations for early learning centers
• Field test a report card system that:
  – Bases letter grades on teacher practice, using CLASS observations to provide simple, clear information about how programs are teaching and how to improve
  – Provides information such as teacher-child ratios to make families aware of additional elements typically found in quality environments
  – Evaluates networks on how well they support all programs, teachers and children

To prepare for a Learning Year for Report Cards (2015-16), these issues should be addressed:

• Transitioning from Quality Start to Report Cards
• Defining expectations for each local partner (e.g., school district, Head Start, NSECD, child care) in supporting all teachers
• Linking Early Childhood Report Cards with School Performance Scores

All publicly-funded programs must participate in the 2015-16 Learning Year. Programs that do not participate may lose their license or funding.
Unify Expectations
Report Card Field Test in 2014-15

Approach will be tested with 7 Cohort 1 Pilots

- Ascension
- Lafayette
- Calcasieu
- New Orleans
- Ouachita
- Rapides
- Iberville

These pilots will be asked to:

- Observe every teacher 2 times using CLASS
- Assist teachers to use curriculum and assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD) consistently and reliably
- Support teachers through tools and coaching
- Participate in a family survey

Through field test, the state seeks to learn how to:

- Gather reliable information from all programs
- Determine letter grades in a fair and transparent way using CLASS observations
- Ensure all teachers have access to practical, effective training, tools, and supports

“Our community is excited to be part of the field test and build on the work we are doing to improve child outcomes.”

- Tony Authement, Superintendent, Rapides Parish Schools
“Early childhood educators should be professionals who continue to improve themselves through higher academic pursuits. With support through scholarships, Quality Start, and tax credits, most of our staff have a CDA and 75% are pursuing an Associate or Bachelor Degree. Children are benefitting through better prepared teachers and staff are benefitting from increased compensation.”

- Bob Lansing, Director/Owner, Central Academy & Child Care
Support All Teachers To Be Excellent
Addressing Differences in Supports for Teachers

**Issue: Teachers do not have equitable access to training, tools, feedback, and coaching.**

Teachers are the most critical factor in achieving high-quality outcomes for children. Louisiana should unify and strengthen systems so children have access to teachers who:

1. **Are Prepared**
   - *Have education and experience needed to teach young children*

2. **Are Professional Educators**
   - *Have time and support to set goals, plan daily activities and instruction, and adjust teaching based on ongoing assessment of children’s progress*

3. **Are Continually Improving**
   - *Receive ongoing feedback and coaching on interactions and instruction*

4. **Are Rewarded for Quality Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child Care</th>
<th>Head Start</th>
<th>PreK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credential</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>50% - BA Degree, Others AA</td>
<td>BA Degree, Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training, Tools and Support</strong></td>
<td>Varies by center with limited access to statewide resources</td>
<td>Training, <em>CLASS</em> observations and tools, and assistance from program and region</td>
<td>Training, teacher observations and tools, and assistance from district and state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Compensation</strong></td>
<td>75% earn &lt; $20,000/yr($10/hr) No benefits</td>
<td>~$26,000/year Some benefits</td>
<td>~$39,000/year Full benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support All Teachers To Be Excellent
Preparing Teachers

By unifying expectations for teacher credentials, Louisiana helps professionalize the workforce and ensure teachers develop and refine their skills at quality prep programs.

1. Maintain BA Degree AND teaching certificate requirement for teachers in public and nonpublic PreK for four-year-olds

2. Establish new Ancillary Teaching Certificate as a minimum expectation
   • Base on Child Development Associate (CDA) credential
   • Starting in 2019, require that all lead child care teachers in licensed, publicly-funded programs have an Ancillary Teaching Certificate or higher

3. Create new Birth to Kindergarten BA field of study and teaching certificate
   • Enables specialization in development and education of younger children
   • Courses align with Ancillary Teaching Certificate so teachers can stack courses

4. Support teachers to pursue credentials and reward performance
   • Ensure higher education and alternate providers in Louisiana offer coursework that helps teachers be successful in the classroom
   • Increase scholarship program from $500K to $5M and prioritize publicly-funded teachers
   • Strengthen School Readiness Tax Credits and link to report cards after 2015-16 learning year

Requirements will be phased in based on increase in scholarships, availability of quality preparation options, and adequate funding for providers
Support All Teachers To Be Excellent
State and Networks Provide Tools, Training, Feedback, and Coaching

In 2014-15, Louisiana should align efforts to support teachers on a day-to-day basis.

All teachers should have access to:
1. Practical, standards-based curricula
2. Tools that connect curricula, Teaching Strategies GOLD, and CLASS
3. Ongoing training and coaching

The LDE will support teachers by:
• Reviewing existing curricula and tools – and developing new tools where needed
• Aligning statewide resources such as Resource & Referral Centers and Teacher Leaders
• Collaborating with pilots to replicate models for coaching and mentoring

Community Networks will support teachers by providing:
• Effective training on curricula, tools, and assessments
• Ongoing observations and feedback from CLASS-reliable observers
• Coaching on how to organize their activities and improve instruction
• Time and support to set goals, plan and collaborate with other teachers

Through the Report Card Field Test, Louisiana will explore how to best support teachers so tools and best practices can be scaled in the 2015-16 Learning Year.

“The quality of our teachers determines how ready our children will be. That is why Lafayette invested in staff specifically to assist child care teachers.”

- Pat Cooper, Superintendent, Lafayette Parish Schools
Challenge 1: Developing Policies to Fully Unify the System
Give Families Equitable Access To Quality Options

“Coordinated enrollment helped us to identify for the first time all the students who need services or a slot in an early childhood program.”

- Patrice Pujol, Superintendent, Ascension Parish Schools
Give Families Equitable Access To Quality Options
Addressing Enrollment

**Issue:** Most families in Louisiana find it difficult to access early childhood options.

Families must be empowered to choose what is best for their child.
No single provider (school, Head Start, child care) can serve all families and prepare all children.

Louisiana should have locally-managed enrollment systems that:

1. **Coordinate Information:** Families know of all available seats
   - Inform families about the availability of publicly-funded programs
2. **Coordinate Eligibility:** Families easily know what programs they qualify for
   - Ensure families are referred to available publicly-funded programs
3. **Coordinate Applications:** Families apply to all programs through one application
   - Collect family preferences regarding enrollment choices
4. **Match Based on Preference:** Families enroll their child in the highest ranked preference available
   - Enroll children based on family preference so no one occupies more than one seat

Transitioning the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) enables LDE to unify eligibility for providers and families, enabling full participation in coordinated enrollment.

"Because my community coordinated enrollment, I had the knowledge to make a choice for my son's educational setting."

- Katherine Tabalno, Vernon Parish Parent
Give Families Equitable Access To Quality Options

Current Challenges

Recent coordinated enrollment self-assessment shows communities making progress, but still need to improve.

- Most communities are minimally or not yet coordinating enrollment
- Cohort 1 Pilots are better prepared and coordinating more than rest of state
- When communities coordinate, families benefit
- Communities that coordinate will continue to have autonomy; if not coordinating, BESE may step in to make processes easier for families

Next Steps: What the Law Requires

- By June 2015, State Board sets policy for establishing enrollment coordinators when required due to lack of local coordination
- By October 2015, State Board publishes a list of communities where there is no coordinated effort
Challenge 2: Ensuring Families Can Choose Quality
Ensuring Families Can Choose Quality Funding Providers to Meet Family Demand

Pilots support quality but funding needs to address family demand for quality.
  • Parents want to choose a quality option but providers find it nearly impossible to address this desire without the ability to pay for quality teachers
  • Even Networks that integrate professional development and provide job-embedded supports cannot overcome challenge of underpaid, underprepared child care workforce
  • There are families of at-risk four-year-olds that want a slot but cannot get one

Louisiana should explore investment options for funding that:

1. **Upgrade Quality:** Provide funding for a well-prepared teacher in child care
   - Providers need a base of funding that supports hiring and retaining a high-quality, CDA-educated teacher

2. **Create Equity:** Provide funding that creates equity between PreK and kindergarten
   - Current state PreK funding is not equitable with state kindergarten funding, making it difficult for schools and child care centers to sustain four-year-old PreK programs

3. **Increase Access:** Provide a PreK slot for all at-risk families who choose one
   - Kindergarten-readiness depends on all at-risk four-year-olds having access to a quality option, based on family preference

Increasing funding depends on stakeholders working together to secure resources.
Ensuring Families Can Choose Quality
Funding the Demand for Quality Options

Three needs remain to ensure families can choose the quality option best for their children, enabling full implementation of Act 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Benefit to Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Upgrading Quality</strong>: Providing funding for a well-prepared teacher in child care</td>
<td>Up to 12,000 birth to four-year-olds will have access to a CDA-educated teacher, improving child care quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Creating Equity</strong>: Providing state funding that creates equity between PreK and kindergarten</td>
<td>Up to 20,000 four-year-olds in school and child care settings will be funded at an equitable level to how they will be funded in kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Increasing Access</strong>: Providing a PreK slot for all families who choose one</td>
<td>Families of up to 5,000 at-risk four-year-olds will be able to choose PreK if they want it, serving all at-risk four-year-olds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any new funding should be phased in over several years based on parent demand and capacity of providers to offer quality slots.
Challenge 3: Expanding Early Childhood Pilots Statewide
Expanding Early Childhood Pilots Statewide
Cohort 3 – Opportunity to Scale

*Every at-risk child in Louisiana should have access to a local unified early childhood system with shared standards, excellent teaching, and coordinated enrollment.*

**Why Apply:**
- Cohort 3 is the final opportunity for state support to implement Act 3
- Being in a pilot gives communities:
  - Opportunity to build a collaborative leadership structure
  - Financial support to help teachers learn to use new tools
  - Assistance with developing a coordinated enrollment system
- Pilots help shape state policy and processes

**Timing:**
- Applications will be available soon and are due by November 12
- Funding may start as early as January 2015

**How to Get Involved:**
- Application will be available on [www.louisianabelieves.com](http://www.louisianabelieves.com)
- If you are already part of a pilot, recruit peers who have not yet joined

“We decided to expand and coordinate a pilot in Cohort 2 so we could identify the diverse strengths and needs of different communities in our region. This has been important in advising development of the early childhood system.”

- Maureen Gallagher, Director of Operations and Early Childhood Programs, Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana
Louisiana has made great progress since Act 3 was passed in 2012. Pilots have launched, communities have led the way, and important lessons have been learned.

For full implementation by August 2015, Louisiana should ensure:

1. Every community has its own Early Childhood Network Pilot

2. Policies are in place for a fully unified system

   **Unified Expectations**
   - All early learning centers operate under streamlined regulations with LDE license
   - All publicly-funded programs are participating in the 2015-16 learning year

   **Supported Teachers**
   - Every teacher has access to ongoing training, feedback, and coaching to improve
   - Teachers use scholarships to obtain coursework at BESE-approved providers

   **Easier Enrollment for Families**
   - Community Networks continue coordinating enrollment processes for 2016-17

3. Funding is gradually increased to ensure families can choose a quality option for their children
Each of the policies discussed goes to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) after the new Advisory Council reviews and provides recommendations.

- October 2014: Advisory Council
- December 2014: Licensing Policy
- January 2015: Funding Model
- March 2015: CCAP Provider Registration
- June 2015: Report Card System Policy
- August 2015: CCAP Eligibility & Funding Policy

- ✔ Join or recruit your peers for Cohort 3
- ✔ Help shape policies by participating in Advisory Council, Road Show, or Roundtables

www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood