



Bayou Bridges Pilot Report

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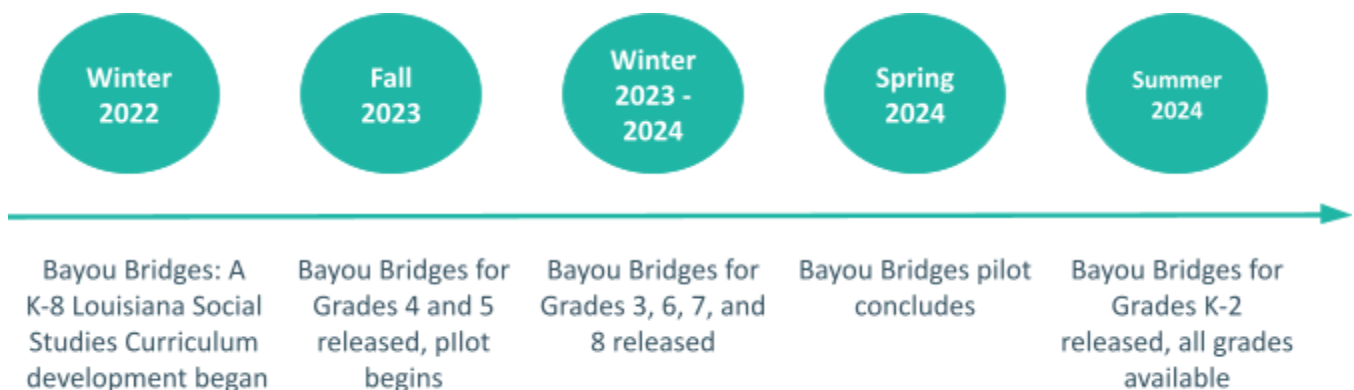
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Introduction

Bayou Bridges is a K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum for whole-class instruction created in partnership with the non-profit Core Knowledge Foundation®. Bayou Bridges is designed to align with the student expectations of the 2022 K-8 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies and was created using criteria similar to the quality indicators of the instructional materials review rubric.

Bayou Bridges units are a coherent set of plans that ensure students have broad and deep knowledge about the world, can express reasoned and nuanced arguments, and are prepared to participate in civic life. Each unit topic is organized around a framing question, such as “How did the Louisiana colony change under Spanish rule?” and contains engagingly written texts along with color illustrations, photographs, maps, and primary source documents.





Bayou Bridges Overview

Bayou Bridges chapters and units use a backward design model so that the lessons build toward two types of assessments:

1. **Chapter Assessments:** The Chapter Assessments test knowledge of each chapter using standard testing formats.
2. **Performance Tasks:** The Performance Task Assessment requires students to apply and share the knowledge learned during the unit through either an oral or a written presentation.

Bayou Bridges contains up to seven units for whole-class instruction for each grade level. The lessons include student-facing text and slides, teacher guides with questions and student look-fors, handouts, writing rubrics, and tasks that integrate knowledge and skills for expressing sound claims supported by well-chosen evidence.

The purpose of this report is to identify feedback received from the pilot and to clarify the next steps so that school systems can make informed decisions about high-quality curricular materials and associated professional development.

Pilot Methodology

Eight school systems participated in the Bayou Bridges Pilot: Bossier, Caddo, St. Charles, Central, InspireNOLA, St. Landry, West Baton Rouge, and Zachary.

The pilot consisted of teachers 1) participating in curriculum specific professional learning, 2) trying out materials for units within the 4-5 grade band and offering ongoing feedback, 3) being observed implementing materials, 4) collecting student work samples, and 4) answering questions in focus groups.

The LDOE supported the pilot by 1) conducting initial and ongoing professional learning supporting curriculum implementation, 2) creating opportunities for feedback through surveys, observations, focus groups, and office hours, and 3) culminating the year of new learning by producing a pilot panel session at Teacher Leader Summit and a detailed pilot report with next steps.



Pilot Lessons Learned

1. **Bayou Bridges is a useful guide for whole-class instruction.** Student readers provide a firm narrative foundation from which students can explore primary sources and make sound claims about historical content. The materials give teachers a set of quality sources at their grade level and guide them to help students make meaning through questions and prompts.
2. As Bayou Bridges is implemented state-wide and iterated upon, attention needs to be paid to ease of implementation **with additional resources to simplify planning and more opportunities for formative and summative assessment.**

Based on these takeaways and the following feedback, the LDOE plans to engage with Core Knowledge in these next steps to ensure that Bayou Bridges remains a high-quality and user-friendly curricular option for districts:

1. Build out **unit workbooks** that streamline the use of the targeted non-fiction excerpts found in the additional activities, and provide note catchers and questions from the Teacher Guides, along with additional geography practice.
2. Build out **lesson slide decks** that help teachers make lesson pacing and formative checks seamless.
3. Provide support and samples for implementing and scoring the **Performance Task**.
4. Offer further **guidance on pacing** and provide **alternate sequences** that integrate Additional Activities into Core Lessons.

Feedback Summary

The following is a summary of the feedback we received from all pilot engagement opportunities. In addition to the feedback opportunities listed below, the Department hosted office hours for teachers and districts to call in for instructional support for Bayou Bridges units.

Pacing: Most classrooms found the pacing to be ambitious, especially for students reading below grade level. Teachers also found the sample pacing guidance less than ideal and desired to have the Additional Activities integrated within the core lessons rather than in standalone lessons delivered at a later time.

Materials Ease of Use: Teachers generally found the Additional Activities difficult to locate with “too many clicks” being required to get to the desired documents. Participants expressed appreciation for how the LDOE “bundled” the chapter



assessments and activity pages into single PDFs. Many teachers felt that additional practice was needed for social studies skills, like spatial and chronological thinking.

Student Reader: The response to the substance and presentation of the Student Readers has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers appreciate the full-color images, large easily readable maps, and the full-page primary sources included in every Student Reader. Teachers found the text approachable and engaging for students, serving as a useful narrative anchor before exploring primary sources.

Teacher Guide: Participants found the teacher guides helpful, particularly the focus objectives, questions, and supports found throughout the lesson plans. Participants wished the student reader text were inlaid in the Teacher Guides and found having to plan with both documents cumbersome. Some participants felt that the Core Guided lessons should give more opportunities for students to write responses instead of answering orally.

Assessments: Generally, there were two concerns. First, participants indicated their district’s grading policy as well as administrator and parent expectations of the number of assessments used to calculate a student’s grade seemed to contradict the approach taken in Bayou Bridges. Participants expressed the desire for additional formative and summative assessments. Second, participants felt that the chapter assessments did not adequately mirror the design of the state’s LEAP assessment. While the chapter assessments contain a wide variety of sources, multiple select, and two-part questions, participants worried that organizational differences (not having sources listed in “sets”, and the wording of test questions) would confuse students.

Slide Decks: Teachers felt the slide decks were useful as visual aides, and also for reviewing content before having students answer a chapter’s Framing Question. Some participants indicated they would have preferred to have more built-out decks that closely follow the lesson plans laid out in the Teacher Guides. Other teachers acknowledged that creating this resource for their classroom helped them plan lessons effectively and deepen their understanding of the content and Bayou Bridges resources.



Appendix

Bayou Bridges Implementation Pilot Roles and Responsibilities

School system staff	Schools	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure schools and teachers have access to the necessary technology and printed materials. • Provide schools and teachers with the pilot timeline. • Encourage school leaders and teachers to complete the professional learning workshop prework. • Attend and encourage piloting teachers to attend the one-day professional learning workshop. • Inform schools and teachers of the office hours. • Provide schools and teachers with any needed support in how to implement the units. • Work with LDOE to identify piloting teachers to be observed and to participate in a focus group. • Determine a plan for conducting a focus group (i.e., time, space, secure any needed substitutes, etc.). • Provide a copy of the anonymous (without PII) student work samples from the piloted units to LDOE during the focus group. • Ensure at least 90% of the piloting teachers complete the feedback survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the necessary print materials and technology for teachers implementing the units. Teachers should have the following per unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a teacher guide, ○ a student reader per student, ○ access to instructional slide decks, and ○ a copy of each student activity page per student. • Support teachers in accessing texts and gathering materials (i.e., copies, art supplies, index cards, etc.) • Work with school system staff to provide implementation support for piloting teachers, such as encouraging piloting teachers to attend office hours. • Work with school system staff to ensure at least 90% of piloting teachers complete the feedback survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have the following for each unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a teacher guide, ○ a student reader per student, ○ access to instructional slide decks, and ○ a copy of each student activity page per student. • Complete the professional learning workshop prework. • Attend the one-day professional learning workshop and/or complete the async professional learning modules. • Complete the Unit Study Tool prior to teaching each unit. • Read the unit sources before teaching the unit. • Review the unit overview to understand what students are expected to do by the end of the unit. • Complete the Exemplar Unit Performance Task and Chapter Assessments prior to teaching the unit. • Review and annotate the “What Teachers Need to Know” documents for each chapter. • Review the lessons to identify and gather needed materials. • Use the sample pacing guide and your school calendar to create your own pacing guide. Build in extra time for small-group time and coordinate with other subjects as appropriate. Review highly suggested additional activities for each chapter topic and incorporate into your pacing guide. • Gather and organize high, medium, and low anonymous (without PII) student responses to the unit Performance Tasks. • Participate in the office hours for additional support. • Complete the feedback survey.



Bayou Bridges Implementation Guiding Questions

The purpose of these observations and the focus group is for the LDOE to collect feedback on the pilot year of implementation of the Bayou Bridges curriculum. We want to keep a laser-like focus on the curricular materials and improve on what's already there and identify the need for additional resources to fill any gaps.

Guiding Questions for LDOE Staff During Observations:

- Focus on Logistics and Facilitation
 - Did the materials seem adequate for the classroom? Consider the quantities and quality (e.g., suggested number of student readers, student materials access, etc.)
 - Were the materials easily/smoothly facilitated? Consider logistics (e.g., transitions, locating and distributing materials, etc.)
- Focus on Lesson Content
 - Does the lesson “flow” and make sense to teachers, students, observers?
 - How adaptable was the lesson content (e.g., directions, questions, prompts, handouts) when necessary?
 - Was the pacing right and were adjustments made when necessary?
 - What evidence of student learning is demonstrated in the lesson? Does it meet intended expectations of the lesson content?
- Specific Examples
 - Notes on any adjustments made to the curriculum.
 - Highlights from the lesson that stood out.

Guiding Questions for Teachers to Provide Feedback to LDOE:

- What is working? What aspects of the curriculum do you like? (Positive/Glow)
 - Read Alouds and Guided Lessons?
 - Additional Activities?
 - Assessments?
- How are you (teachers/coaches) preparing for the new content and implementation of the curriculum?
- What support has the district staff, school staff, or classroom teacher created or implemented?
- What are some areas where teachers need more support with the curriculum? (Negative/Grow)