



The April Dunn Act

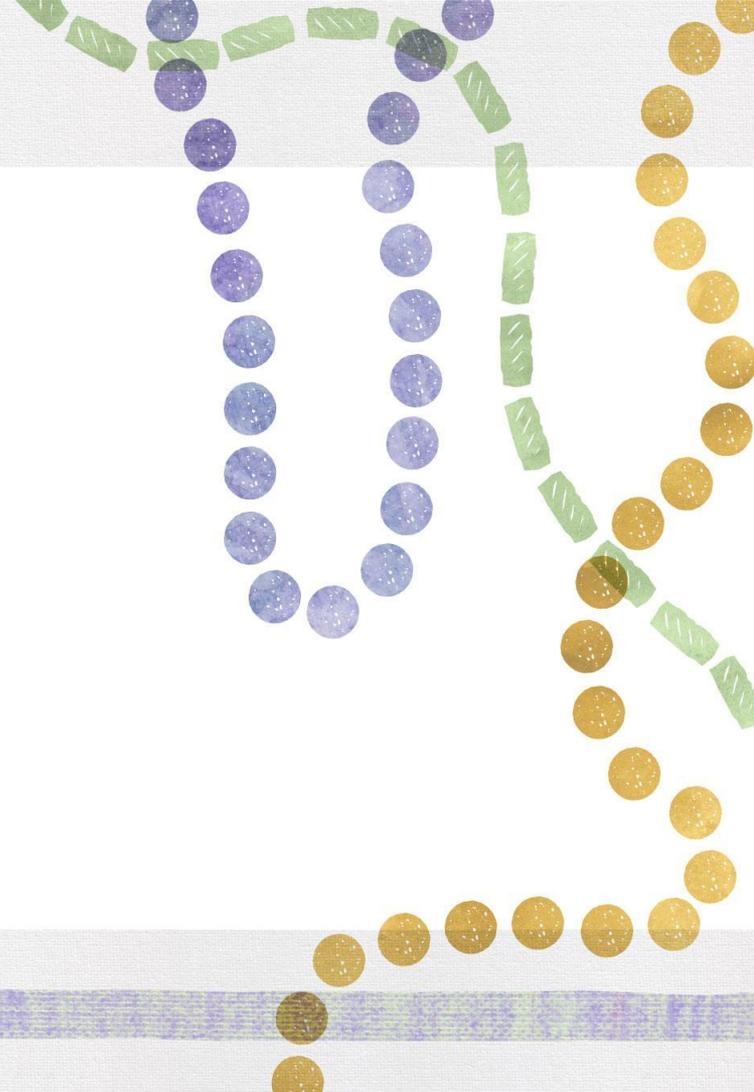
A Parent Guide to
Understanding the Law

Objectives

Provide an overview

- [The April Dunn Act](#)
- [Graduation requirements in Louisiana](#)
- [Eligibility for the April Dunn Act](#)
- [Individual performance criteria](#)
- [Developing and applying individual performance criteria](#)
- [Help your child succeed](#)
- [A resource for you](#)

The April Dunn Act



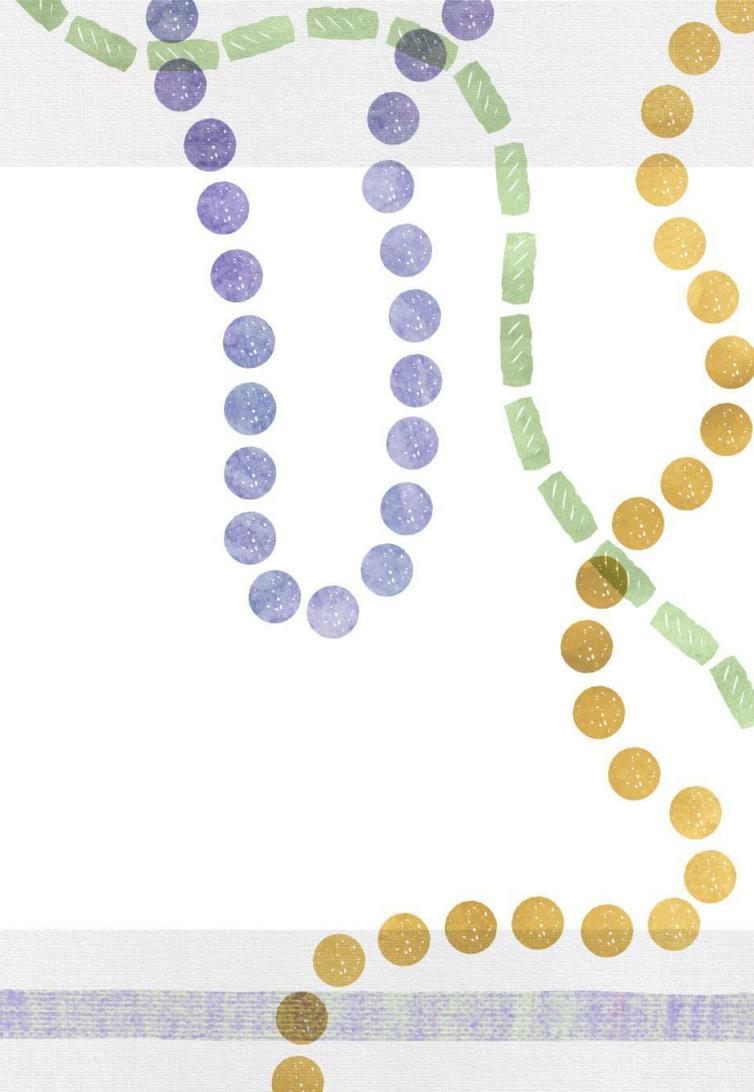
What is the April Dunn Act?

The April Dunn Act is a **law** named after a Baton Rouge local April Dunn. Ms. Dunn was champion for students with disabilities.

The law allows students with disabilities, that are eligible for the April Dunn Act, to earn a high school diploma by meeting graduation requirements through **individual performance criteria** created by their IEP team.

To understand April Dunn Act, we first have to understand what your child must achieve to earn a Louisiana high school diploma.

Graduation Requirements in Louisiana



Graduation Pathways in Louisiana

Louisiana currently has two choices or pathways a student can take to earn a diploma:

- The University Pathway
- The Jump Start Pathway

The University Pathway is a traditional high school pathway that prepares your child to go to a 4-year college.

The Jump Start Pathway is a career pathway that prepares your child to go to work and/or continue their education at a 2-year community college.

Graduation Pathways in Louisiana

The University Pathway requires a student to do the following to earn a diploma:

- earn a minimum of 24 Carnegie credits
- score Approaching Basic or above on state assessments called the LEAP 2025 that are taken after certain courses
- complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

After successful completion, your child will leave with a diploma, ready to attend a 4 year college.

Graduation Pathways in Louisiana

The Jump Start Pathway requires a student to do the following to earn a diploma:

- earn a minimum of 23 Carnegie units
- score Approaching Basic or above on the state assessments called LEAP 2025 taken after certain courses
- earn a credential or an Industry Based Certification (IBC)
- complete a FAFSA.

After successful completion, your child leaves with a diploma, an Industry Based Certification, and ready to go to work or continue their education.

April Dunn Act and The Graduation Pathways

When comparing the pathways, you see similar requirements including the state assessments. This is a graduation requirement on both pathways.

If your child is eligible for the April Dunn Act, the IEP team has the right to develop individual performance criteria, or goals and objectives, for your child to show they have mastered and understand the course material, in lieu of achieving the state established benchmark on the LEAP 2025 assessment.

Next, let's take a look at how your child becomes eligible for the April Dunn Act.

Eligibility for the April Dunn Act



Who is Eligible for April Dunn Act?

Any student with a disability, as defined in R.S. 17:1942(B), except a student identified as gifted and talented and who has no other exceptionality, **should be examined by IEP teams for eligibility** for the April Dunn Act.

- In other words, any student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), not an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)*, should be examined for eligibility for the April Dunn Act.
- Also, if your child has an IEP and has been identified as gifted and talented, they must have another exceptionality to be considered for the April Dunn Act.

**IAPs are provided to students who receive 504 accommodations.*

How Your Child Becomes Eligible for April Dunn Act

The IEP team will determine April Dunn Act eligibility when your child

- enters high school without achieving (does not pass) the state-established benchmarks on the LEAP 2025 state assessment for two of the three most recent school years, or
- does not achieve (does not pass) the state-established benchmarks after two attempts of the same LEAP 2025 high school assessment.
 - IEP teams should use this criteria for determining eligibility once the student has taken at least one high school state assessment.

When Should An IEP Team Exam Eligibility?

There are several critical times that your child should be examined for eligibility for the April Dunn Act:

- upon entering high school
- after each high school state assessment, or LEAP 2025 Assessment.

At a minimum, your child's IEP team should examine eligibility at these points.

Meet Emma and Malik



Emma

Let's use two student examples to understand how a student becomes eligible for the April Dunn Act!

Meet Emma and Malik!
Emma is entering the 9th grade.
Malik is currently a 10th grader.



Malik

Determining Eligibility

We will start with Emma!

- Emma is entering the 9th grade.
- Her IEP team must determine if she is eligible for April Dunn Act.

To be eligible for the April Dunn Act, Emma must

- enter high school without having achieved the state-established benchmarks on the LEAP 2025 state assessment for two of the three most recent school years (6th, 7th, and 8th).



Determining Eligibility

To pass a LEAP 2025 state assessment in these grades, Emma must score the following

- 6th and 7th grades - at least a Basic on at least two of four assessments administered (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies).
- 8th grade - at least a combination of Basic (B) and Approaching Basic (AB) in either ELA or Math. (For example, your child would score AB on the ELA assessment and B on the Math assessment or AB on the Math assessment and B on the ELA assessment.)



Determining Eligibility

In looking over the past test information, the IEP team finds Emma scored the following:

- 6th Grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA, Basic on Math, Approaching Basic on Science and Approaching Basic on Social Studies (did **not** achieve score required by state)
- 7th Grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA, Approaching Basic on Math, Basic on Science and Basic on Social Studies (achieved score required by state)
- 8th Grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA and Approaching Basic on Math (did **not** achieve score required by state)



A Quick Review!

The IEP Team found Emma did not meet (did not pass) the state required benchmarks on the LEAP 2025 State Assessments in two of the three most recent years (6th and 8th grades).

Emma is eligible for the April Dunn Act.



Determining Eligibility

Now let's look at a Malik, a student that is entering the 10th grade.

- Unlike Emma, Malik was NOT eligible for April Dunn Act when he entered the 9th grade.
- Since entering high school, Malik has taken at least one LEAP 2025 state assessment.



Graduation Pathways and Requirements

At the end of the 9th grade, Malik took a LEAP 2025 high school assessment. His IEP team checked him for eligibility after these tests.

- At the end of the 9th grade, Malik took the LEAP 2025 Algebra I Assessment.
- The IEP team found that he scored “Unsatisfactory” on this LEAP 2025 Algebra I Assessment.
- Malik took summer remediation.



Graduation Pathways and Requirements

- After summer remediation, he again took the LEAP 2025 Algebra I Assessment. Again, he scored Unsatisfactory.
- Because Malik did not achieve (did not pass) the state-established benchmarks after two attempts of the same LEAP 2025 high school assessment, **he is now eligible for the April Dunn Act.**



When Should An IEP Team Exam Eligibility?

From Emma and Malik, we see there are different times a student can be examined for eligibility for the April Dunn Act.

- Emma was examined upon entering high school, prior to the 9th grade.
- Malik was examined upon entering high school and found ineligible. Then, he was examined again when he was in high school and took a state assessment.

At a minimum, your child's IEP team should examine eligibility at these points.

Individual Performance Criteria



What are Individual Performance Criteria?

For a student with a disability, eligible for the April Dunn Act, the IEP team can develop individual performance criteria, or goals and objectives, for the courses your child is taking.

Individual performance criteria allow students to

- show mastery of course standards through an alternate means, and
- are expressed in goals and objectives on the IEP.

If your child achieves the goals and objectives, then, for the purposes of graduation, they achieve the state assessment requirement for that course.

Note: Your child will still have to attempt all LEAP 2025 state assessments related to the courses they take.

What Individual Performance Criteria Does NOT Mean

The April Dunn Act does **NOT** give IEP teams the authority to compromise the standards or requirements of any course!

IEP teams are expected to

- develop individual performance criteria, or goals and objectives, that address the entire course!
- maintain the rigor and expectations of academic achievement!

Your child must achieve the requirements of the course.

If you feel the IEP team has failed to create rigorous individual performance criteria speak up!

Developing and Applying Individual Performance Criteria to Courses

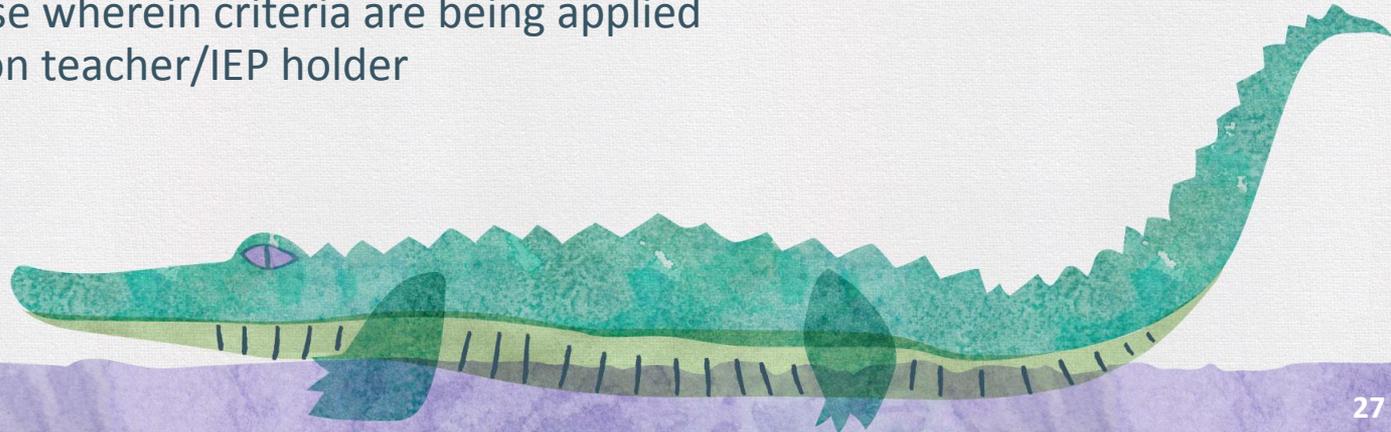


Developing and Applying Individual Performance Criteria

The IEP team is responsible for developing and applying individual performance criteria to certain courses your child will be taking during the upcoming school year.

The following key people should be in attendance at the IEP meeting

- an administrator
- teacher of course wherein criteria are being applied
- special education teacher/IEP holder
- student/parent



Developing and Applying Individual Performance Criteria

When creating individual performance criteria, or goals and objectives, IEP team members should

- collaborate with all teachers to determine strategies and supports needed for your child,
- write measurable goals that reflect the strategies and supports discussed with the teachers,
- create goal-aligned objectives,
- ensure the individual performance criteria maintain rigorous learning expectations, are aligned with the entire course, and
- develop the goals and objectives **within the first 30 days** of the student entering the course.



Developing and Applying Individual Performance Criteria

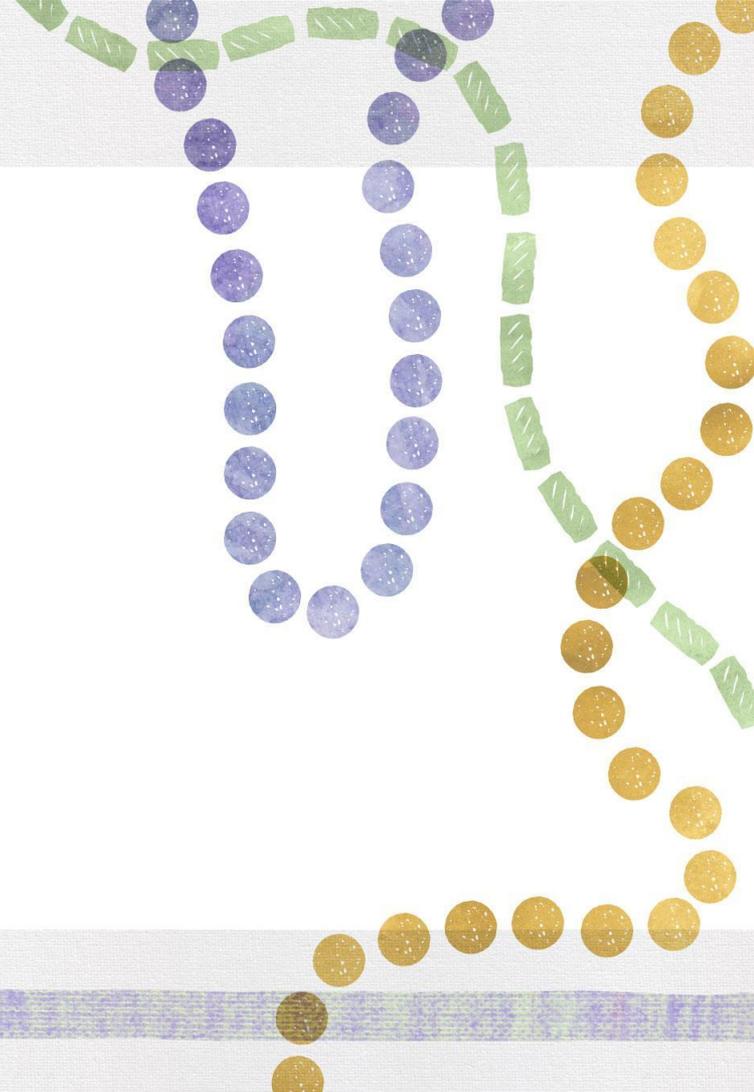
When choosing which course to apply the individual performance criteria, IEP teams should

- identify your child's strengths and weaknesses relative to their disability, and
- review the data such as
 - state assessment scores
 - performance on student learning targets
 - course grades, and
 - scores on benchmark assessments.

Developing and Applying Individual Performance Criteria

- review your child's schedule/Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) to determine the course(s) any LEAP 2025 subject assessment requirements and/or IBC, and
- determine, on a course-by-course basis, if individual performance criteria should be established/applied.

Help Your Child Succeed



How to Help My Child Succeed

As a parent of a child with a disability, there are action steps you can take to ensure:

- your child is examined for eligibility for the April Dunn Act, and
- the IEP team applies the provisions of the April Dunn Act in a timely manner, while upholding rigorous and high expectations.



Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 1

Know when your child will/should be examined for eligibility for the April Dunn Act!

Your child should be examined for eligibility for April Dunn Act

- upon entering the 9th grade, and
- in high school, after taking any LEAP 2025 state assessment.

Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 1

Be prepared to discuss your child's eligibility for the April Dunn Act when they are entering the 9th grade. (Like Emma)

If your child is not eligible upon entering high school, be prepared to reexamine eligibility each time your child takes a high school state assessment. (Like Malik)

If your child's IEP team does not discuss the April Dunn Act, please ask about the law and when your child will be examined for eligibility.

Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 2

Action Step 2: Know your child's assessment scores!

Your child meets eligibility for the April Dunn Act when they

- enter high school without achieving the state-established benchmarks on the LEAP 2025 state assessment for two of the three most recent school years, or
- do not achieve the state-established benchmarks after two attempts of the same LEAP 2025 high school assessment.
 - IEP teams use this criteria for determining eligibility once your child has taken at least one high school state assessment.



Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 2

Eligibility for the April Dunn Act is based on LEAP state assessment scores.

Knowing the scores your child makes on a LEAP 2025 state assessment beginning in the 6th grade would be useful information to bring to an IEP meeting for discussing eligibility for the April Dunn Act.



Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 3

Know when the April Dunn Act MUST be applied to your child's courses.

The law requires April Dunn Act to be applied to a course "...within the first 30 days of a student entering the course."

Note: It is EXTREMELY important that your child's IEP team review eligibility for the law and establish alternate means or goals and objectives prior to the 30 day deadline!



Help Your Child Succeed - Action Step 4

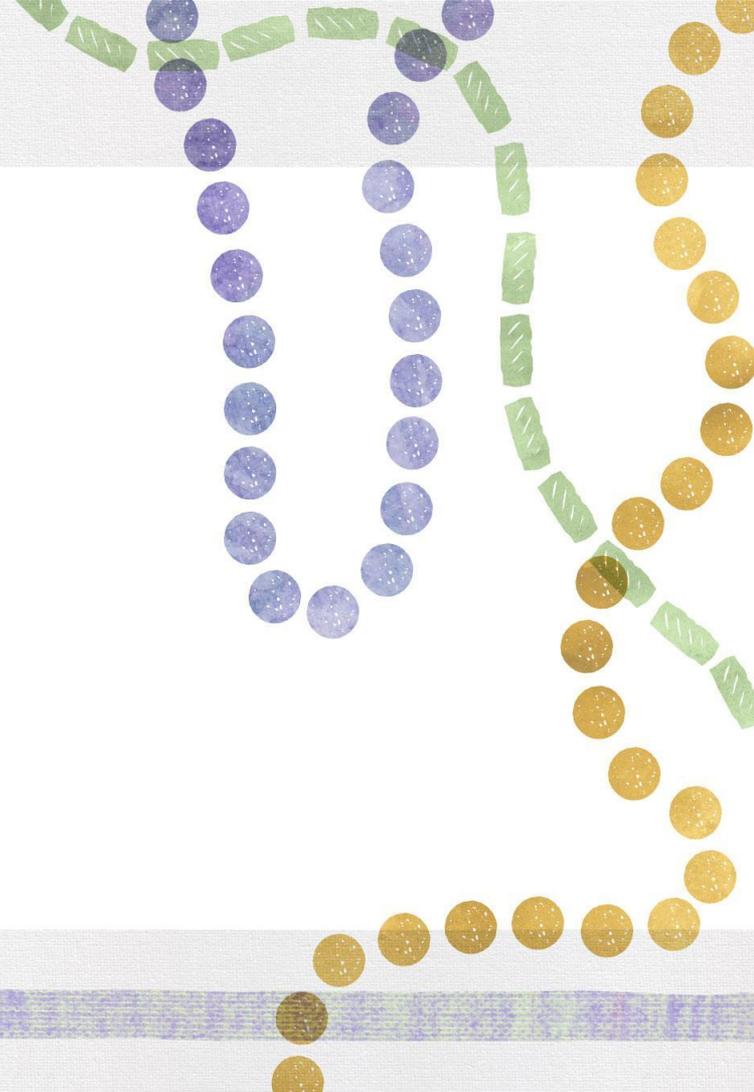
Review the individual performance criteria to ensure they maintain the rigor and high expectations required of any other student.

The April Dunn Act does **NOT** give IEP teams the authority to compromise the standards or requirements of any course!

IEP teams are expected to develop goals and objectives that

- address the entire course,
- maintain the rigor and expectations of academic achievement, and
- do NOT compromise the standards of the course!

A Resource for You!

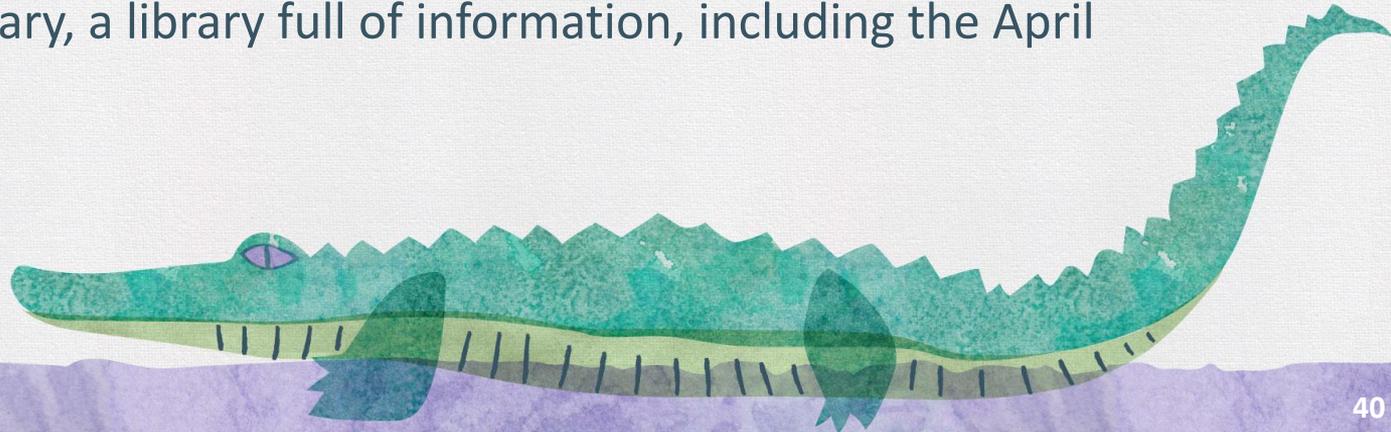


A Great Resource!

The Louisiana Department of Education has resources related to the April Dunn Act available for your use.

“The April Dunn Act: An Alternate Means to Graduation for Students with Disabilities” is a great resource.

The next several slides will direct you to the Students with Disabilities Library, a library full of information, including the April Dunn Act.



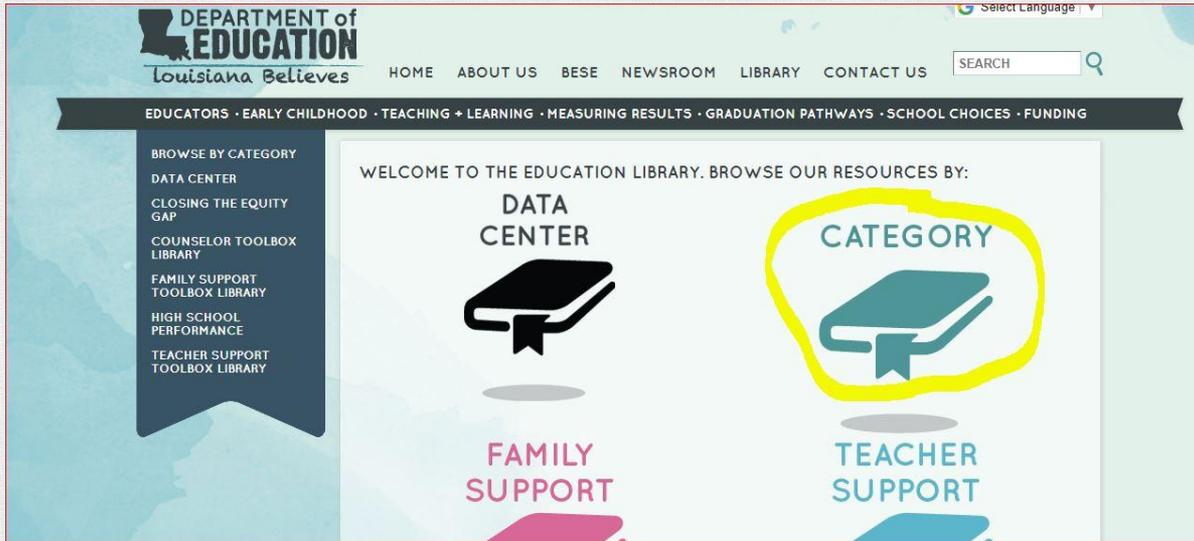
Students with Disabilities Library

Navigating to the [Students with Disabilities Library](#). From [Louisiana Believes](#) website, click on Library.



Students with Disabilities Library

Click on Category.



Students with Disabilities Library

On the right side of the page, click on [Students with Disabilities](#) (*not Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*).

The screenshot shows the Louisiana Department of Education website. The header includes the logo "DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION Louisiana Believes" and navigation links: HOME, ABOUT US, BESE, NEWSROOM, LIBRARY, CONTACT US. A search bar is also present. Below the header is a dark navigation bar with links: EDUCATORS, EARLY CHILDHOOD, TEACHING + LEARNING, MEASURING RESULTS, GRADUATION PATHWAYS, SCHOOL CHOICES, FUNDING. The main content area is divided into three columns: EDUCATORS, EARLY CHILDHOOD, and TEACHING + LEARNING. The 'TEACHING + LEARNING' column contains a list of links, with "Students with Disabilities" highlighted in yellow. Other links in this column include "Planning Resources", "Academic Standards + Grade Level Expectations", "Afterschool Resources", "Compass", "Curricular Resources", "ELA Guidebooks", "English Learners", "Gifted and Talented Program", "Louisiana Content Leaders", "Principal Support", "Special Education Reporting and Funding", "Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities", "Standards Review Committee", and "Students of the Year".

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- [Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#)
- [Standards Review Committee](#)
- [Students of the Year](#)

Students with Disabilities Library

This is the Students with Disabilities Library.

The screenshot shows the Louisiana Department of Education website. At the top left is the logo with the text "DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION Louisiana Believes". To the right are navigation links: HOME, ABOUT US, BESE, NEWSROOM, LIBRARY, CONTACT US, and a search bar. A "Select Language" dropdown is in the top right. Below the navigation is a dark banner with links: EDUCATORS, EARLY CHILDHOOD, TEACHING + LEARNING, MEASURING RESULTS, GRADUATION PATHWAYS, SCHOOL CHOICES, FUNDING.

On the left side, there is a vertical menu titled "BROWSE BY CATEGORY" with the following items: DATA CENTER, CLOSING THE EQUITY GAP, COUNSELOR TOOLBOX LIBRARY, FAMILY SUPPORT TOOLBOX LIBRARY, FEDERAL SUPPORT AND GRANTEE RELATIONS LIBRARY, HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, PANDEMIC RELIEF GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES LIBRARY, and TEACHER SUPPORT TOOLBOX LIBRARY.

The main content area is titled "ACADEMICS" and contains a section for "GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM". Below this is a table with two columns: "File" and "Download".

File	Download
2014 Gifted & Talented Self-Review Form	Download
Backgrounder - About the Gifted Program	Download
Backgrounder - Certification of Talented Teachers	Download
Backgrounder - Overview of Gifted Program	Download
Brochure - Characteristics of Gifted Children	Download
Brochure - Rights of Gifted and Talented Students	Download
Checklist - Academically Gifted	Download
Gifted Students Rights Handbook	Download
Gifted Students Rights Handbook - Chinese	Download
Gifted Students Rights Handbook - Spanish	Download
Gifted Students Rights Handbook - Vietnamese	Download
IEP Forms Gifted Talented 2016	Download
Policy - Excerpt from Bulletin 1508 about Gifted and Talented	Download

Below the table are sections for "STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES", "CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES", and "STRONG START RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES". Each of these sections has a table with "File" and "Download" columns, but the content is partially obscured.

Students with Disabilities Library

If you scroll down the page, you will see the April Dunn Act information.

PARENT INFORMATION	
File	Download
2021-2022 Louisiana Back-to-School Guide for Parents of Students with Disabilities	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Arabic	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Chinese Mainland	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Chinese Taiwan	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - French	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Spanish	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Urdu	Download
Louisiana's Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (2020) - Vietnamese	Download
Resources for Parents of Students with Disabilities	Download
Family Support Survey	
Advocate-Parent Guide	

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE - SPECIAL EDUCATION	
File	Download
Graduation Resources for Students with Disabilities	Download
Individual Graduation Plan (LEAP Connect) Fillable Form	Download
Overview of Pathways to Graduation for Students with Disabilities	Download
Planning Appropriate High School Experiences for Students Eligible for Alternate Assessment	Download
Post-School Transition Survey	Download
Special Education - Addendum 1 Guidance	Download
Special Education Course Codes (May 2015) - LAA1	Download
Special Education Guidance for High School Students	Download

APRIL DUNN ACT RESOURCES	
File	Download
April Dunn Act - An Alternate Means to Graduation for Students with Disabilities	Download
April Dunn Act - Developing Policies and Procedures for Effective Implementation	Download
April Dunn Act - Emma and the University Graduation Pathway	Download
April Dunn Act - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	Download
April Dunn Act - Goal Summary Form Instructions	Download
April Dunn Act - IEP Checklist	Download
April Dunn Act - Malik and the Jump Start Graduation Pathway	Download
April Dunn Act - Sample Individualized Performance Criteria	Download

Questions, comments, or concerns?

Contact: specialeducation@la.gov