Louisiana Believes

Accountability Commission
June 22, 2018

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Guiding Beliefs

Louisiana's students—all of them, no matter race, disability, or creed—are as smart and capable as any in America. They have gifts and talents no lesser than those given to any children on this earth.

Louisiana has worked hard to raise expectations for students, and as a result, students are performing at higher levels than ever before.

While Louisiana has made great strides in increasing life opportunities for its students, there remain serious challenges in Louisiana's schools. Often these challenges are experienced to the greatest extent by children of historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

As educators, we have a powerful role to play in helping all students overcome the challenges they will experience on the way to leading healthy and productive lives as adults.

Agenda

- Alternative Education
- K-2 Education
- Upcoming Meetings

Challenges

In 2015-16, more than 18,000 students enrolled in one of Louisiana's 35 alternative education schools or 127 alternative education programs. The AE Study Group Report concluded that these students often do not receive appropriate and effective interventions and supports to address the root cause of their exit from the home school.

- Students in Louisiana alternative education settings rarely receive academic, behavioral, social and emotional services needed to address the root cause of their exit from the home school. As a result, students referred to an alternative school in Louisiana are **five times more likely than their peers to drop out** of school.
- Many students are exited from home schools for minor to moderate infractions, resulting in both **too many students in alternative settings** and **unfortunate racial and socioeconomic disparities**.
- **Louisiana's accountability system fails to recognize the unique mission of alternative education**. Of 35 alternative schools in Louisiana, all but two earn an F under the state's school accountability system, while the system does not report on the quality of the state's 127 alternative programs serving more than 18,000 students.

Timeline of AE Work

The Department has been working with stakeholders and BESE for over a year to develop recommendations for alternative education policy and practice.

Spring 2017	• LDOE convened an AE Study Group to explore current practice and educational services provided in alternative schools and programs.
March-June 2017	• The AE Study Group met four times and the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline met concurrently to review existing statute and policy related to behavioral intervention and systems of support to address chronic misbehavior.
October 2017	• LDOE presented the AE study group report to BESE, who passed a motion directing LDOE to continue redesign work.
April 2018	• LDOE presented BESE a working definition of AE schools and programs to use as a framework to develop new accountability performance measures for AE, consistent with state ESSA plan.

BESE Approved Definitions

In April 2018, BESE approved a working definition of alternative education (AE) schools and programs to use as a framework to develop new accountability performance measures.

Alternative education schools serve students referred for long-term services due to long-term suspensions or expulsions or needing other intensive services. Alternative education schools should thus be evaluated based on annual outcomes of students. Accountability scores for these sites should be based on students who are present at the site on October 1 through the end of the fall semester and those who are present on February 1 through the end of the spring semester. Any exception to this duration of services should be approved by the local superintendent.

Alternative education programs are responsible for serving students for shorter periods of time. They are not evaluated based on the annual success of students. As such, they should not be considered schools and should not receive a summative evaluation like schools.

Expectations

All AE programs or schools should provide students with five core student experiences, as outlined in the study group recommendations.

Behavioral Intervention

Students receive evidence-based supports and master strategies to manage and/or eliminate disruptive behavior.

Academic Intervention

Students receive access to remedial instruction and academic supports to help them earn Carnegie credits and address academic deficiencies, as measured by state assessments.

Specialized Staff Engagement

Students have access to supplemental services from external partners – i.e. mental health counselors.

Student Learning Plan

Students receive a documented plan, upon entry to AE & coordinated with an IGP, to include interventions and supports that address the root cause of need for services.

Teacher Engagement

Students have access to teachers who are skilled to impact the academic, behavior, and social and emotional learning.

Alternative Education Framework

Improving alternative education requires systems change that extends beyond school accountability. The Study Group report and BESE work group recommendations directed the Department to develop a comprehensive proposal, which is outlined below.

All sites must meet minimum qualifications for designation as an alternative school or program based on an external review.

AE schools earn a score and rating comparable to the state's traditional school accountability ratings.

Public reporting tells parents and communities how school systems are providing effective interventions for students in AE.

Safeguards must ensure alternative programs are implemented with fidelity, providing students with appropriate and effective interventions.

1) Alternative Education Site Approval Process

Sites must meet minimum qualifications for official designation as an alternative education site.

Recommendation: State law requires BESE to regulate how alternative education is provided to public school students. Sites seeking official designation as an alternative education school or program should be required to demonstrate that they provide five core student experiences, as verified through external review pursuant to quality standards identified by the LDOE. These expectations would be codified in policy.

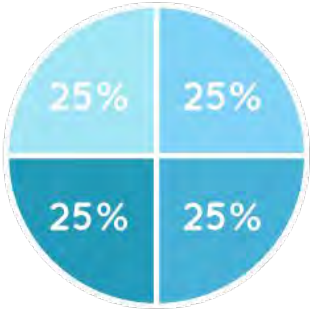
The review may consider:

- Use of high quality educational resources for behavioral and academic intervention
- Use of high quality external partnerships
- Evidence of a transition process to gauge student needs and create individualized plans
- Evidence of trained teachers and mental health professionals

2) Alternative Education School Rating Formula

Alternative education schools serve students referred for long-term services and should thus be evaluated based on annual outcomes of students.

Recommendation: Alternative schools would earn a school performance score and A-F rating based on a formula that mirrors the general accountability system weights. The metrics would be equally rigorous but place greater emphasis on growth and reflect the additional work of AE schools.



High School Accountability

- State Assessment Performance and Progress
- ACT/WorkKeys
- Strength of Diploma
- Graduation Rate

Alternative School Accountability

- Academic Assessment Performance and Progress Measure
- College/Career Readiness Measure
- Credential Attainment Measure
- Diploma/HiSET Progress Measure

3) School System Reporting

Students needing academic and/or behavioral interventions are served in a variety of settings. Public reporting would provide transparency for parents and communities to better understand how well Louisiana's school systems are providing effective interventions for these students.

Recommendation: The Department would annually produce school system reports on alternative education student outcomes. All students assigned to an alternative education program or school would be included. The report may include school accountability measures, as well as others such as:

- Recidivism rates (students suspended or expelled multiple times in the same school year)
- Re-engagement rate of students who previously dropped out of school
- 5- and 6-year graduation/HiSET rates
- Law enforcement referral rates

4) Policies to Protect Students

Policies provides safeguards to ensure alternative programs are implemented with fidelity, providing students with appropriate and effective interventions.

Recommendation: The Department would identify, based on research, data analysis, and national best practice, reasonable numbers/percentages of students that should be enrolled in alternative education schools in any school system. The Department would conduct a review of any school systems exceeding this percentage.

Other existing safeguards in policy:

- Per Louisiana's approved ESSA plan, schools with out-of-school suspension rates exceeding twice the national average for multiple consecutive years are labeled Urgent Intervention Required and school systems must submit improvement plans.
- Per Bulletin 111, when students attend an alternative education program for less than 45 days, the sending school continues to be accountable for their educational outcomes.

Next Steps

- LDOE will bring draft indicators to the Accountability Commission during Summer 2018 and will continue to engage group for feedback/input.

- LDOE will present final policy recommendations to BESE during Fall 2018.

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Challenges

Current Challenges

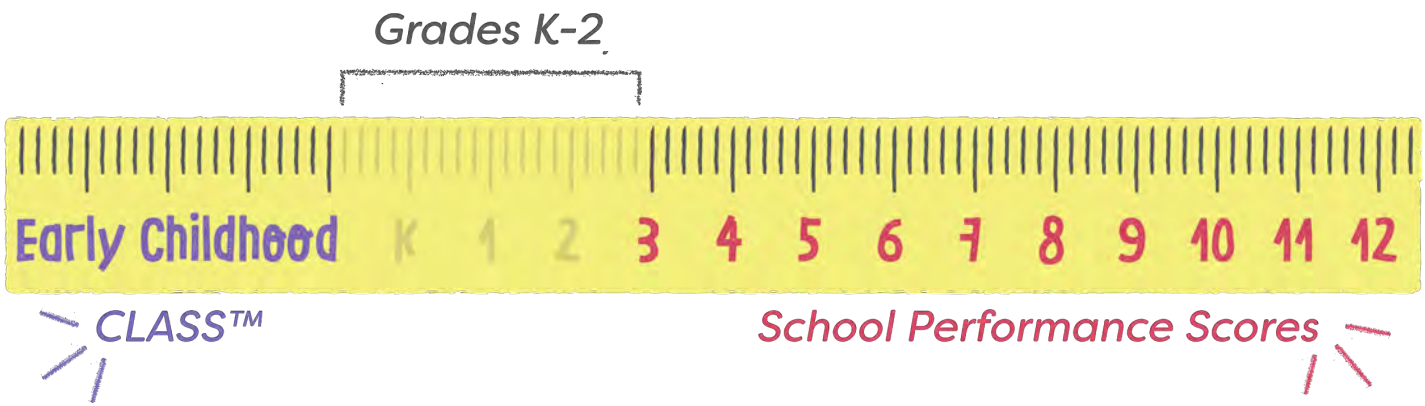
Louisiana has a long history of accountability aligned to the academic focus on grades 3-12 and has recently expanded accountability to publicly-funded early childhood programs. However, Louisiana currently lacks measures to reflect the success of grades K to 2 specifically.

- Schools serving grades K-2 only are evaluated based on their “paired” school, where students matriculate to 3rd grade. K-2 school leaders have expressed ongoing frustration with this policy, which does not recognize the work that happens in the lower grades.
- Additionally, Louisiana’s move to greater focus on student progress in grades 4 to 12 does not offer a solution for measuring student growth in schools ending third grade.

Vision

Louisiana's Early Education and K-12 Accountability Systems

Louisiana's infant, toddler, and pre-K classrooms are observed using CLASS™, a nationally recognized tool that measures how well classrooms support children's growth and development. Beginning in grade 3, Louisiana's accountability system measures how well a school is preparing all of its students for the next level of study.



Vision for K-2 Classrooms

All young children will be ready to master skills and content knowledge aligned to grade-level, age appropriate content standards in order to be academically successful in third grade and beyond.

Teachers provide strong, active instruction to make sure all students:

- learn through purposeful play and exploration;
- read and write about texts to build knowledge and fluency;
- engage in meaningful conversations around read-alouds of complex texts; and
- solve real-world math problems that require them to apply their understanding in increasingly sophisticated ways every day.

K-2 Accountability Priorities

Louisiana's accountability system (1) informs and focuses educators through clear expectations for student outcomes; and (2) provides objective information about school and site quality to parents and other community stakeholders.

In developing tools to measure K-2 performance, Louisiana seeks to:

- Define a cohesive set of expectations for teachers and school systems birth-grade 2
- Utilize a limited, coherent, and efficient set of tools to monitor outcomes across districts and schools
- Provide maximum consistency across grade levels to support ease of use by educators
- Reflect the academic goals of K-2 in the way that schools are measured

The Louisiana Primary Review

K-2 Work Group

A work group of K-2 teachers, school leaders, and system administrators from across the state met in Spring 2018 to inform the development of Louisiana's K-2 accountability system.

Envision excellence	Recommend values	Recommend metrics	Translate to a system	Chart path forward
▪ Common characteristics of K-2 schools and classrooms that prepare students for success in 3rd grade and beyond	▪ Core values define the purpose and scope of an accountability system	▪ A metric is a valid and reliable statistic that reveals something about school effectiveness	▪ A cohesive system of K-2 academic goals and measures based on recommended values and metrics	▪ How the system is piloted and ultimately implemented in schools and school systems

What Does Excellence Look Like?

The work group explored what it looks like when teachers are ensuring students are ready to master the skills and content knowledge aligned to grade-level expectations. Their definition of excellence fell into three categories: school and school system supports, classroom experience, and mastery of fundamental skills.

Classroom Experience

Mastery of Fundamental Skills

School and School System Supports

Tools to Review K-2 Performance

The work group recommended that the Department move forward with piloting four tools to review K-2 performance by measuring students' classroom experience and mastery of fundamental skills.

Classroom Experience

- Kindergarten CLASS™
- Review of curriculum implementation (external review)

Mastery of Fundamental Skills

- Review of student work samples (external review)
- Age-appropriate, standards-aligned 2nd grade skills checkup

Details on K-2 Performance Tools

The Department will pilot these four K-2 accountability tools beginning in the 2018-2019 school year in order to implement statewide no earlier than 2019-2020.

Tool	What it Measures	Implementation
Kindergarten CLASS™ (Year 2)	Measure and improve teacher-student interactions that promote positive social and academic development	Local and third party classroom observations
Curriculum Implementation	Measure and strengthen teachers' use of materials that impact student learning experiences	Third party classroom observations
Student Writing Samples	Measure students' written expression and knowledge of language and conventions	Third party review via online portal
2nd Grade ELA and Math Skills Check-Up	Measure students' mastery of ELA and math skills that meet the standards.	Computer-based administration

Timeline and Next Steps

Pilot Next Steps

The Department is seeking school system partners to pilot one or more K-2 accountability tool in the 2018-2019 school year.

- Share pilot participation application and host webinar for school system leaders (week of June 25)
- BESE approves SCRL grants for pilot sites (August)
- Implement pilots in the 2018-2019 school year

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Upcoming Meetings

- August 20
- September 24
- October 29
- December 10