September 15, 2014

Early Childhood Policy Blueprint

Unifying the Early Childhood System in 2014-15

Department of Children & Family Services
Building a Stronger Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

Early Childhood Policy Blueprint
Objective and Sections

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

Leading up to 2015:
Background, Vision, and Shared Challenges

"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

Leading Up to 2015: Background, Vision, and Shared Challenges

Making Progress

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

Leading Up to 2015: Background, Vision, and Shared Challenges

Vision for Unified System

Each year Louisiana continues to make progress toward a unified system.

Fragmented System	Unified System
Children are falling through the cracks and are not consistently prepared	High standards for what children should learn and what excellent teaching looks like
Teachers are not equally prepared nor rewarded for their work	Teachers who are excellent at interacting with children and guiding learning are supported and rewarded
Families do not have easy-to-use information to make the best choice	Families apply through shared processes and are satisfied with their children's experience
Providers are subject to inconsistent expectations and do not have equitable resources to achieve outcomes	Consistent expectations for health, safety and learning, and adequate funding levels across programs based on serving children well

Leading Up to 2015: Background, Vision, and Shared Challenges

Working Together to Develop Policy, Address Funding, and Scale Pilots

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

Unify Expectations
Addressing Inconsistencies

Issue: Inconsistent expectations for health, safety, and learning across programs.

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**

Unify Expectations
Streamlining Licensing and Building Report Cards

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 <u>both</u> 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 <u>all</u> 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
- Calcasieu
- Iberville
- Lafayette
- New Orleans
- Ouachita
- Rapides

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD ORGANIZATION
2014-2015 • Community Network
Enrolled

All data is for demonstration only and does not indicate how grades will be determined.

B

Infants ## · 1yr olds ## · 2yr olds ## · 3yr olds ## · 4yr olds ## · 00% Receiving Special Education Services

TEACHER PRACTICE

High-quality teacher-child interactions, including how engaging teachers are, how organized teachers are, and how well teachers build on concepts and make connections are essential for children's learning and developing.

CLASS MEASURES (1-7 Scale)		SITE	PEERS	STATE	NATIONAL
PreK	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	6.10/A	5.66	5.59	5.99
	CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION	4.00/B	4.93	4.99	5.63
	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	3.25/B	3.28	2.86	2.72
Toddlers	EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT	5.60/B	5.36	5.30	N/A
	ENGAGED SUPPPORT FOR LEARNING	3.12/B	3.17	3.12	N/A

KEY ITEMS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE CHILD OUTCOMES

TRAINED TO ASSESS

Teachers must be reliable on the child assessment tool in order to measure children's progress and provide instruction that meets their needs.

PERCENT TEACHERS TRAINED TO ASSESS

0 75-68 100

ONGOING ASSESSMENTS

Teachers have to assess children on an ongoing basis to know what individual support each child needs.

PERCENT CHILDREN WITH ONGOING ASSESSMENTS

50% CHILDREN

ASSESSING ACCURATELY

Teachers have to accurately document children's learning and development to know how they are progressing.

ARE TEACHERS ASSESSING ACCURATELY?

PARTIALLY

NO UERY

TEACHER:CHILD RATIOS

Individual child needs are unique in early childhood. Teachers must be able to manage the room and reach every child, which ratios indicate.

PERCENT CLASSROOMS MEET OR BETTER THAN STATE RATIOS

50% MEET | 50% BETTER THAN

PREPARED TEACHERS

Preparation and training impacts a teacher's ability to improve children's growth and learning.

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINED

5% No degree	15% Child Development Associates	10% Associates
50% Bachelors	20% Masters +	65% TOTAL CERTIFIED

QUALITY, STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM

Using a quality, standards-based curriculum can help ensure instructional alignment to widely-held expectations for growth and development.

USING A QUALITY, STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM?? ✓YES

FAMILY SATISFACTION

Families are key partners in educating and caring for children.

ARE FAMILIES SATISFIED?

YES

NO UERY

Early Childhood

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

"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

Challenge 1: Developing Policies to Fully Unify the System

Support All Teachers to Be Excellent

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**

	Child Care	Head Start	PreK
Credential	None	50% - BA Degree, Others AA	BA Degree, Certified
Training, Tools and Support	Varies by center with limited access to statewide resources	Training, *CLASS* observations and tools, and assistance from program and region	Training, teacher observations and tools, and assistance from district and state
Average Compensation	75% earn < $20,000/yr($10/hr) No benefits	~$26,000/year Some benefits	~$39,000/year Full benefits

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.

Need	***Benefit to Families***
1. Upgrading Quality*:* Providing funding for a well-prepared teacher in child care	Up to 12,000 birth to four-year-olds will have access to a CDA-educated teacher, improving child care quality
2. Creating Equity*:* Providing state funding that creates equity between PreK and kindergarten	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
3. Increasing Access*:* Providing a PreK slot for all families who choose one	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

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
- If you are already part of a pilot, recruit peers who have not yet joined

Join Your Peers!

"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

Bringing It All Together: Full Implementation

Bringing It All Together: Full Implementation

Unified Early Childhood Network by August 2015

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**

Bringing It All Together: Full Implementation

Policy Timeline and Next Steps

Each of the policies discussed goes to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) after the new Advisory Council reviews and provides recommendations.

- ✓ **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