Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

November 19, 2020

Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Consideration of the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council membership

III. Roll Call

IV. Approval of the Minutes of July 22, 2020

V. Election of a Chair and Vice Chair

VI. Consideration of the Early Childhood Care and Education Workgroup

VII. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 139, *Louisiana Child Care Development and Funds Program*

VIII. Consideration of proposed revisions to Bulletin 140, *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*

IX. Consideration of the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Quarterly Report – Quarter 3

X. Adjournment

Proposed Emergency Policy Revisions

Proposed Policy Revisions

Emergency Revisions to Bulletin 139 and Bulletin 140

In December 2020, the Department will recommend two emergency rules to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to provide support during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1. Bulletin 139: School Readiness Tax Credits
   - Temporarily adjust minimum work requirements for 2020 Tax Year SRTC eligibility.
2. Bulletin 140: CLASS® Observations
   - Temporarily allow classrooms that score 4.50 or higher in the fall observation period to be exempt from a second local observation.

Emergency Revisions to Bulletin 140, *Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network*

Proposed Policy Revisions
Bulletin 140 CLASS® Observation Requirements

The Department is recommending a one-time emergency rule, consistent with Bulletin 130, that will exempt classrooms scoring 4.50 or higher on fall CLASS® observations from a spring local observation.

- On October 14, BESE approved a one-time emergency rule for Bulletin 130, regarding the use of COMPASS observations for the 2020-2021 academic year only.
  - Teachers and administrators receive one observation.
  - Any teacher or administrator who earns a rating of “Ineffective” or “Effective: Emerging” shall receive a second observation.
  - COMPASS ratings of “Ineffective” or “Effective: Emerging” are consistent with receiving an overall score of 1.00 to 4.49 on CLASS® observations.
- The Department has received requests from a variety of stakeholders to explore similar considerations for in-person CLASS® observations for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Proposed Policy Revisions
Overview of Bulletin 140 Emergency Rule

The Department recommends revising Bulletin 140 to allow classrooms that have scored 4.50 or higher an exemption from a second local observation during the 2020-2021 academic year only.

CURRENT: All infant, toddler, and pre-K classrooms in a publicly funded site shall receive two CLASS® observations during a school year conducted by the community network.

REVISE TO: Exception. Required observations for the 2020-2021 school year only, due to COVID-19 pandemic.

All infant, toddler, and pre-k classrooms in a publicly-funded site shall receive one CLASS® observation during the school year conducted by the community network. Any infant, toddler, and/or pre-K classroom that is scored 4.49 or lower after third party replacement (if applicable) shall be observed a second time by the community network.

Proposed Policy Revisions
Impact of Bulletin 140 Emergency Rule

The Department will work with community network lead agencies to implement this emergency rule in a way that prioritizes ongoing support for classrooms and teachers struggling to support their children.

- This emergency rule may enable community networks to redirect efforts and funding to support low-performing classrooms.
- While classrooms scoring 4.50 or higher would be exempted from a Spring local observation, third party observations will continue in accordance with the typical requirements of Bulletin 140.
  - If a classroom is observed by both local and third party observers, the scores will be compared and third party scores will replace any local dimension scores that differ by 1+ point.
  - If a classroom is only observed by third party observers, third party scores will be used for the spring semester in making any Performance Profile calculations for this year.
- The Department is monitoring data and collaborating with stakeholders to explore options for 2020-2021 Performance Scores and Ratings.

Emergency Revisions to Bulletin 139, *Louisiana Child Care and Development Fund Programs*

Proposed Policy Revisions
Bulletin 139 SRTC Work Requirements

The Department is recommending a one-time emergency rule that will reduce the work requirement for SRTC eligibility from 6 months to 300 hours for the 2020 tax year.

- On March 16, the Governor closed schools statewide and they remained closed for in-person instruction for the rest of the semester.
  - Many early learning centers follow school closures in event of emergencies or severe weather. 70% of child care centers closed temporarily due to the pandemic, and 2% currently remain closed because of COVID-19.
  - 46% of child care providers laid off staff as a result of closures.
- The Department has received requests from a variety of stakeholders to explore a temporary adjustment to the work requirement given the broad extent of closures and layoffs.

Proposed Policy Revisions
Overview of Bulletin 139 Emergency Rule

The Department is recommending a one-time Emergency Rule, that will reduce the work requirement for SRTC eligibility from 6 months to 300 hours.

CURRENT: *§707. Credit for Early Learning Center Directors and Staff*

C. Each early learning center director and staff member will also have to verify that he/she has worked at the same early learning center for at least six months in the calendar year and for an average of at least 30 hours per week, unless otherwise approved by the LDE.

REVISE TO:

Add 1. Exception. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the 2020 calendar year only, a center director or staff member will only have to verify that he/she has worked at the same early learning center for at least 300 hours in the calendar year in order to meet the work requirement in this Subsection.

Proposed Policy Revisions
Impact of Bulletin 139 Emergency Rule

Louisiana's School Readiness Tax Credits continue to be an essential support for child care providers, directors, and staff.

- Louisiana's School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) represent a $16 million state investment in quality child care that helps Louisiana secure more than $80 million in federal funding (CCDF).
- Annually, ~8,000 directors and teachers statewide meet education and tax level enrollment requirements for SRTC, however only ~45% meet work eligibility requirements, file for SRTC, and receive the credits.
- In the 2018 tax year, 3,598 teachers and directors were able to claim $10,444,423 in tax credits (an average amount of $2,902.84).
- Child care directors and teachers indicate that they rely on the credits to supplement their payroll, make essential purchases, retain teachers and invest in quality improvement.

Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

Quarter 3 - 2020

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Early Childhood Community Networks

The Department and Community Networks have continued to support local sites to participate in the early childhood accountability system.

Beginning the 2020-2021 School Year with a Strong Start:

- Lead agencies worked with sites and observers to begin scheduling and completing fall *CLASS®* observations.
- Local observation protocols were updated to include guidance related to COVID-19 health and safety criteria for conducting observation visits as well as protocols for live-video and recorded video observations.
- The typical fall semester classroom-level observation waiver process was modified to accommodate for COVID-19 challenges as well as severe weather impacts.
- Community networks reviewed new guidance for third party protocols and prepared their local observation protocols for the year.
- Sites set up classrooms in the Teaching Strategies *GOLD®* system, with accomodations made for virtual learners, including guidance for various learning environments.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Early Childhood Community Networks

The Department and Community Networks began preparing for release of 2020 Performance Profiles.

Collaboration Between Lead Agencies and Sites:

- Lead agencies and sites worked together to complete data certification and confirm accuracy of informational metrics. Only classrooms that had not previously received the highest possible informational metric ratings were included in the process - consistent with the "hold harmless" approach taken following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparing for 2020 Performance Profiles:

- Lead agencies attended the fall supervisor collaboratives and weekly office hours.
- The Department conducted an opt-in process for sites with higher 2019-2020 Performance Scores, consistent with the "hold harmless" approach taken following the COVID-19 pandemic
- The Department is currently conducting conference calls with lead agencies to discuss Performance Profiles and additional network activities and initiatives, including the use of Community Level Grant funding and participation in Ready Start Network activities
- 2020 Performance Profiles were released on the School and Center Finder on September 29, 2020.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Ready Start Networks

Ready Start Networks continue to work to achieve the Four Pillars in the Ready Start model: blueprint, coalition, governance, and fundraising.

- The newest cohort of RSNs has begun expanding their **coalition** to include a diverse set of community stakeholders and establishing a **governance** structure to allow for collaborative decision-making.
- Ready Start Networks (RSNs) continue to strengthen the four pillars in the RSN model, including several who have begun to secure additional **funding**:
  - Iberville received a grant from Union-Pacific to support six new birth-to-two seats in the network
  - Baptist Community Ministries awarded Jefferson Ready Start Network a grant to support their marketing campaign and another 3-year grant

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Ready Start Networks

The first three cohorts of Ready Start Networks represent 26 Louisiana communities that reflect the state's diversity and over half of its economically disadvantaged children birth-to-five, and include both large urban areas and small rural communities.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

EC Guides

EC Guides will help expand access to high-quality early childhood education by reducing the barriers families face when applying for child care assistance.

EC Guides are placed in communities recruit and assist families with completing CCAP applications, and connect with resources that support child development. The EC Guide Pilot strives to reduce the barriers economically disadvantaged families face when applying for CCAP.

EC Guides has five participating networks: Calcasieu, EBR, Jefferson, Lafayette, and Rapides.

- 115 Total Certified applications
- 73 Certified applications in October alone
- 125 children aged B-3
- 174 children of color
- 212 children total
- Weekly trainings by LDOE staff and office hours for continued development of Guides

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Preschool Development Grant Seats

Thirteen Ready Start Networks participating in this pilot have enrolled children whose families meet the 200% FPL and CCAP aligned work requirements, with a total of 359 children served thus far.

PDG Pilot seats increase access for children aged birth to 3 in participating lead agencies.

- These seats are funded through the PDG Birth-5 funds. Lead agencies applied for seats, placed these seats in eligible centers, and pay those centers based upon enrollment of children.
- The Department hopes to use this PDG seats pilot to refine a contracted seats model that it may be able to scale in the future with other funding sources.
- All participating lead agencies must place seats in centers that enroll infants and are rated as high-quality.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Family Child Care Pilot

The Department is in its second year of implementing a pilot to learn from family child care providers in the field, and using the information collected to inform statewide strategy.

The Family Child Care Pilot has expanded to include 53 family child care providers across three regions of the state.

Pilot participants are provided with one-on-one coaching, Family Child Care Network meetings and trainings, professional development and support from Tulane University Mental Health Consultants, quarterly stipend pay, and funding to increase the health and quality of their FCC environments.

Goals of the Family Child Care Pilot:

The pilot seeks to learn more about the unique challenges and needs of the FCC providers in Louisiana, identify supports and strategies for improving children's experiences in FCC settings, and define how best to measure the quality of care and education children experience while in FCC settings.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Supporting Teachers to be Successful

Early Childhood Site Improvement Planning:

- In August 2020, 57 low-performing sites were notified regarding their mandated or recommended participation in Early Childhood Site Improvement Planning based on their highest CLASS scores over the last two years. 43 sites have opted into the process.
- These sites were assigned a regional Department field support consultant and assisted to create an improvement plan based on individualized site needs and self-assessment results.
- These sites receive prioritized resources that are included as part of improvement plans (e.g., Resource & Referral, curriculum support, mental health consultation).

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Louisiana Early Leadership Academy

The Department is entering its second year of the pilot fellowship program for child care directors to develop instructional leadership skills.

Fifty five early childhood educators have been selected to participate in the second cohort of the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy with directors coming from 20 parishes across the state.

The program has shifted to a virtual platform, with participants developing a learning plan based on an intensive needs assessment.

The 10-month, executive-level program for directors of highly rated, publicly funded early learning centers will help expand access to quality early childhood care and education by strengthening leaders in the field. Through training, coaching, and cohort meetings, fellows strengthen daily practices in striving for high quality early learning.

Key Activities in Quarter 3
The Early Care and Education Commission

In the 2020 Legislative Session, the Legislature reauthorized the Commission for a third year to pursue proposals to establish sustainable, dedicated funding for B-to-3 seats at the local, regional, and/or state level.

The key tasks of the Commission in Year 3:

- Gather and analyze data relative to early childhood access, quality, and affordability and use this data to drive recommendations.
- Determine the amount of funding needed to achieve affordable access to quality care and education for all children from birth through age four and recommend policies that prioritize the allocation of future funding.
- Gather and analyze data, laws, and policy in Louisiana and other states where children are in the care of family child care providers and consider and make recommendations relative to the incorporation of such providers into the early childhood care and education network.
- Establish and appoint members to a task force to identify and recommend alternative state and local funding strategies for quality early childhood care and education.

Key Activities in Quarter 3
The Early Care and Education Commission

Legislation requires the Commission to establish and appoint members to a task force, and to incorporate the task force's findings and recommendations into the report that the commission produces.

In Year 3, the Commission is charged with establishing and appointing members to a task force that will:

- Identify and recommend **alternative state and local funding strategies for quality early childhood care and education.**

The task force will examine approaches to strengthening and sustaining investment by studying:

- Approaches to funding, including utilization of the Louisiana Early Childhood Trust Fund and enabling local funding options to empower Ready Start Networks
- Strengthening the statewide early childhood system through Family Child Care and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Key Activities in Quarter 3

The Early Care and Education Commission

A current list of Commission members and meeting dates can be found online.

Date	Time	Who
Thursday, November 12, 2020	12pm-2pm	Task Force
Monday, December 14, 2020	12pm-2pm	Task Force
Thursday, January 21, 2021	11am-2pm	Full Commission
TBD February/March 2021	11am-2pm	Full Commission

Key Activities in Quarter 3
Child Care Assistance Program

The Department has supported child care providers and families in many ways in relation to CCAP.

The Department:

- Paid all authorized children on enrollment rather than attendance;
- Paid CCAP at the maximum daily rate;
- Waived CCAP copayments for families;
- Extended family redeterminations for three months;
- Extended reporting deadlines for eligibility determinations;
- Moved all CCAP authorizations that were part-time to full-time; and
- Issued a third round of LaCAP Relief grants totalling approximately $11M.

In addition, the Department began the Market Rate Survey again in order to discuss potential CCAP rate increase in December 2020.

Key Activities in Quarter 3
Division of Licensing

The Department has supported child care centers in a number of ways regarding health and safety requirements and certification.

The Department:

- Absorbed fees for license renewals, change requests and CCCBC fees;
- Streamlined change requests (age ranges, hours of operation) to allow quick turn around;
- Obtained BESE waiver to allow 16 and 17 year olds to be included in the child-to-staff ratio if the person works under the direct supervision of an adult staff member; and
- Streamlined registration and certification of family home and in-home providers.

Key Activities in Quarter 3

Licensed Early Learning Centers

The 2020 Star Ratings are based on the 2019-2020 Performance Profile ratings.

Licensing/Registration Type

	Type I	Type II	Type III	FCC	In-home
July 2020	243	187	1,034	208	11
August 2020	240	185	1,033	226	11
September 2020	240	187	1,030	231	11

2020 Star Ratings:

	0 Star	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
2020	8	19	197	604	582	110

2019-2020 Performance Profile Results

Louisiana Early Childhood Vision
The 2019-2020 Performance Profiles & COVID-19

The Department has taken steps to mitigate the effects of disruptions in CLASS® observations as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Governor's Stay at Home Order that went into effect on March 22.

- Like previous years, Performance Profiles will include a **Performance Score and Rating** (based on CLASS® observations as well as **Informational Metrics** (such as curriculum quality, child/teacher ratios, and teacher credentials).
- Due to COVID-19, the Department implemented a "hold harmless" approach for 2019-2020 Performance Profiles that honors improvement made by sites in 2019-2020 and allows sites to access much-needed tax credits and bonus payments:
    - Sites with a higher 2019-2020 Performance Score were given the opportunity to opt-in to receiving an updated Performance Profile based on 2019-2020 results.
    - For all other sites, the Department is not releasing an updated 2019-2020 Performance Profile, and will publish their 2018-2019 Performance results for an additional year.
- The Fall 2019 Observation period was carried out without any of the disruptions associated with COVID and provides useful data for progress monitoring.

2019-2020 Performance Results

Improvement in Performance Ratings since 2016-2017

This year, nearly 92% of sites will receive a rating of Proficient or higher in the state's unified quality rating system.*

*** These results reflect the Department's 'hold harmless' approach, which allowed sites to opt into the higher score across the past two years.**

2019-2020 Performance Results
Improvement by Domain

Across the state, the average overall score as well as the average score on each CLASS® domain has increased incrementally and steadily in observations between 2016-2017 and Fall 2019.

*** Because the Governor's Stay at Home order prevented all CLASS observations from being conducted in Spring 2020, the domain level averages from Fall 2019 are used to show year-to-year comparisons.**

2019-2020 Performance Results
Improvement by Program Type

The statewide average score for each program type has improved steadily and incrementally each year, indicating more sites are providing quality care and education for children.

*** Because the Governor's Stay at Home order prevented all CLASS observations from being conducted in Spring 2020, the program type averages from Fall 2019 are used to show year-to-year comparisons.**

2019-2020 Performance Results
Informational Metrics

Sites vary in their implementation of classroom best practices that promote high-quality experiences for children, but across programs, the large majority of sites have attained a quality curriculum and assessment.

2019-2020 Performance Results
Network Improvement and Performance

As a result of the disruptions in CLASS® observations due to COVID-19, the Department will not be updating Community Network Profiles and will extend 2018-2019 Community Network Profiles.

- As a result of the number of sites that experienced a change of 25% or more in attendance and/or were not operational for 18 or more consecutive days, the Department has designated all Community Networks as "Severe Impact Networks"
- Bulletin 140 provides flexibility in how Community Network Performance Profiles are issued to severe impact networks.
  - Consistent with policy, the Department will not update Network Profiles with 2019-2020 data.
  - The Department will extend 2018-2019 Community Network Profiles for all Community Networks.

Supporting Improvement
2019-2020 Site Improvement Planning

Early Childhood Site Improvement Planning connects low performing sites to available resources and monitors the success of intervention efforts.

- In August 2020, 58 low-performing sites were notified regarding their mandated or recommended participation in Early Childhood Site Improvement Planning based on 2019-2020 preliminary performance scores.
  - 12 sites mandated
  - 46 sites recommended
- These sites were assigned a regional Department field support consultant and assisted to create an improvement plan based on individualized site needs and self-assessment results.
- These sites receive prioritized resources that are included as part of improvement plans (e.g., Resource & Referral, curriculum support, mental health consultation).

Infant CLASS Learning Year Results

Infant CLASS Learning Year Results
Implementation Timeline

Teachers in infant classrooms need high-quality feedback and support to grow. To increase the quality of infant care and provide a pathway to improvement, Louisiana is adding Infant CLASS® to the state's quality rating and improvement system over three years.

2018-2019 Infant CLASS® Pilot	2019-2020 Infant CLASS® Learning Year	2020-2021 Full Implementation
• Lead agencies identified all infant classrooms and set up those classrooms in the portal • Sites participated in year two of the Infant CLASS® Pilot • Revisions to Bulletin 140 to include Infant CLASS® will be submitted to BESE	• All infant classrooms will be observed for a learning year • Performance Profile ratings released in fall 2020 will not be impacted by Infant CLASS® results	• Infant CLASS® is fully incorporated into the unified quality rating system • Performance Profile ratings released in fall 2021 will reflect Infant CLASS® observations

Infant CLASS Learning Year Results

Infant Dimension Results, Fall 2019

Results from CLASS observations conducted in infant classrooms in the fall of 2019 show relatively high results on Relational Climate and Teacher Sensitivity, with lower results on Facilitated Exploration and Early Language Support.

Infant CLASS Learning Year Results
Impact on Overall Scores, Fall 2019

The Fall 2019 results of Infant CLASS observations suggest that of the nearly 600 sites with infant classrooms as well as pre-K and/or toddler classrooms, the vast majority (nearly 70%) are positively impacted by the inclusion of Infant CLASS scores in the overall score.

Impact on Score	Percent of Sites	Average Change in Score
Score Improved with Infant	68.9%	0.22
No Change	2.5%	0.00
Score Declined with Infant	28.6%	-0.13

Early Childhood Access

Early Childhood Access
Statewide Access to Quality

While sites across the state continue to make impressive gains in CLASS scores, there are still too few economically disadvantaged children who can access publicly-funded, high-quality early childhood programs.

Early Childhood Access

Geographic Disparities in Access, B-2 Year Olds

There are still far too few communities that provide economically disadvantaged families with children under three opportunities to enroll their children in publicly-funded, quality care.

Early Childhood Access

Geographic Disparities in Access, 3 Year Olds

While most communities are now serving more than 30% of their economically disadvantaged 3 year olds, there are still many communities where a small fraction of 3 year olds are served.