

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



May 12, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

On Monday, a month after the state issued its stay-at-home order to curb the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards [announced the first phase of reopening the state](#) would begin on May 15. Phase One removes the stay-at-home order for Louisianans and allows additional businesses to open under strict occupancy, protection and social distancing guidelines.

Helping to guide the path forward is the [Resilient Louisiana Commission](#), a state group charged with examining Louisiana's economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic and making recommendations for more resilient business-related activities and commerce in the coming months.

The Commission includes a task force structure dedicated to specific sectors of the economy, including education. Within the Education and Workforce Development Task Force, there are subgroups focused on K-12 education and on early childhood education. The subgroup members include local superintendents, childcare center directors, advocates, and members of the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. These groups, in consultation with public health officials, will develop operational guidance and send it to the full Commission for sign-off.

The first of those education-focused guidelines will be released this week and will be related to the safe operation of summer camps, summer school, and summer extracurricular activities, as well as to the safe operation of child care services.

The guidelines, which will be made available on the Department's [COVID-19 webpage](#), will detail how to ensure health and safety by limiting group sizes, maintaining environmental cleaning and personal hygiene, properly assessing and monitoring children and staff for symptoms of illness, and other key instructions.

Next, the groups will develop guidance regarding summer athletics and school transportation, before turning its focus to school operations for the upcoming school year.

We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available. Until then, we thank the educators who have stepped up to serve on the various subgroups and task forces, and we encourage you all to engage with these groups as they continue to outline next steps. All meetings are public and streamed live online.

We look forward to your help in reopening Louisiana, while maintaining the health and safety of our children, staff and communities.

In service,

Beth Scioneaux
Acting State Superintendent

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Important Dates for School Systems

Upcoming Events

- [Student Opportunities Office Hours](#): May 13 at 3:00 p.m.
- [Strong Start 2020 Follow-up Webinar for Nonpublic Equitable Services for CARES Act Funding](#): May 14 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Office Hours](#): May 19 at 4:15 p.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(North Cohort\)](#): May 26 at 10:00 a.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(Lafayette Cohort\)](#): May 26 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents\(Baton Rouge Cohort\)](#): May 27 at 10:00 a.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(New Orleans Cohort\)](#): May 27 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Leadership Learning Series Virtual Session for Superintendents \(Make-up\)](#): May 29 at 1:00 p.m.

Important Deadlines

- [Strong Start 2020 Working Group Interest Survey](#) deadline: May 15
- [FY 19-20 High Cost Services Round 1 & 2 Add/Drop](#) deadline: May 22
- [2020-2021 TLA Application for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#) deadline: May 29
- [MOU with Partnering Teacher Preparation Provider](#) deadline: May 30
- [2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series Registration](#) deadline: June 5
- [Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities RFA](#) deadline: June 15
- [2021 ESSA MOE Verification](#) deadline: June 15
- [2021 IDEA MOE Verification \(Eligibility Review\)](#) deadline: June 15

School System Support

New: COVID-19 Guidance

On April 15, Gov. John Bel Edwards [signed a proclamation](#) to extend the closure of public school facilities to students for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, to curb the spread of COVID-19. School systems are currently engaging students in distance education.

Please reference the Department's [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#) webpage for regularly updated guidance. Review the [K-12 Frequently Asked Questions](#) document that is specific to the concerns of school systems for the most up-to-date information. Child care providers should refer to the [Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions](#) for specific guidance. For education-specific information, contact the Department at LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

Please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211 with questions about coronavirus, or text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available.

New: Every Child Counts – 2020 Census

By now, every home has received an invitation to participate in the [2020 Census](#).

The 2020 Census count impacts the federal funds that communities receive each year for programs and services that are critical for schools, students, and younger children, such as:

- Special education, Head Start, after-school programs, and classroom technology.
- Food assistance, including free and reduced-price school lunches.
- Maternal and child health programs.
- Planning, preparedness, and recovery efforts for national emergencies, including [COVID-19](#).

Self-responses, which can be completed [online](#), by phone, or by mail until October 31, **ensures federal funding to support Louisiana students**. The Department encourages school systems to explore the newly available [2020 Census Toolbox](#) to find activities specially designed to be engaging and appropriate for each grade level, from counting for kindergarteners to examining career statistics for high schoolers.

Please contact ldoecommunications@la.gov with questions.

New: Strong Start 2020

The Department released the Strong Start 2020 plan to support school systems in planning for the upcoming school year. The [Strong Start 2020 Planning Guide](#) and [presentation](#) outline the priorities, funding guidance, and resources for school systems to use to complete the Strong Start 2020 application within eGMS by May 29. The webinar [recording](#), including closed captioning, is located in the YouTube Library. The resources supporting each priority are now located in the [Strong Start 2020 Library](#).

The Nonpublic Consultation for CARES Act Funding [webinar](#) is located in the [Strong Start 2020 Library](#) and provides guidance to school systems and nonpublic schools about the calculation of equitable share and consultation related to Strong Start 2020. Please contact ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Beginning this month, optional Strong Start working groups will be held in key priority areas for school system leaders to share ideas and collect feedback on implementation. School systems may complete the [Strong Start 2020 Working Group Interest Survey](#) by **this Friday, May 15** to select one school system level leader per area to participate. Participants will be notified Monday, May 18.

Please contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

New: Leadership Learning Series Update

The Leadership Learning Series will launch virtually on May 26. Registered CIR/UIR-A school participants will receive an email from SchoolKit with cohort-specific login information. This virtual delivery will include:

- Academic Strategy/LAP Overview Session
- School Support Institutes Building Blocks

Additionally, the Department will deliver School Support Institutes 2020-2021: A Guide for Superintendents and School System Leaders virtually. This is a 60-minute session and will be offered multiple times. Superintendents should plan to join based on their cohort. No registration is required for this session. Information needed to join this session is included below.

A Guide for Superintendents and School System Leaders Virtual Session					
	North	Lafayette	Baton Rouge	New Orleans	Make-up
Date and Time	May 26 at 10:00 a.m.	May 26 at 1:00 p.m.	May 27 at 10:00 a.m.	May 27 at 1:00 p.m.	May 29 at 1:00 p.m.
Webinar Link	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85399061852	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89814695771	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86096044839	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81425495316	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89160264438

These sessions are separate from the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: Virtual Series sessions. Participants are able to attend Summit sessions scheduled outside of their assigned Leadership Learning Series sessions.

Please contact delaina.larocque@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Expanded SNAP Benefits

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 enables temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Children who would receive free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Act if school facilities were currently open are eligible for benefits. This includes all students attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.

To receive these benefits, families must complete an application. Without the requested information, the Department of Children and Family Services cannot issue the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card and provide benefits.

The anticipated launch of the application is set for the week of May 18. The Department will publicize the eligibility of these benefits, and in an effort to ensure families receive these benefits during this challenging time, school systems will receive communications to share with eligible families this week.

Please contact kim.nesmith@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series

The Louisiana Department of Education is shifting the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit from its in-person format to a series of free interactive webinars for as many sessions as possible.

The 2020 Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will take place from May 28 to June 5. It will bring together a host of educators and content experts who are focused on creating meaningful growth for every student, every day. Educators will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Department recently released the [draft session list](#). It includes a variety of sessions for teachers, school and school system staff, and preparation providers. The Department will open up the Teacher Leader Summit app, Sched, on May 13 allowing registrants to build their specific schedules at that time. All registered participants will receive an email from Sched when the app opens. As with the in-person event, all sessions will be first come, first served.

Additional information about Teacher Leader Summit can be found in the [K-12 Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Assessment and Accountability

For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts

New: LEAP Connect and ELPT

- LEAP Connect and ELPT student reports will be available this week and will be accessible to district and school test coordinators in the following reporting systems:
 - LEAP Connect: DRC INSIGHT
 - ELPT: AIRWays Reporting System (AWR)

Update: Waivers for Testing

- To date, the only students who have a waiver from the assessment graduation requirements are graduating seniors who were enrolled at the time of school closing and were in the February 1 enrollment report.
- The current waiver does not apply to students who were not enrolled in school or students who are not yet eligible to graduate.
- In May, the Department will request a change in policy to waive the assessment requirement for a high school assessment-eligible course earned in 2019-2020 for students who would have been initial testers in spring 2020. Students who failed a subject test in a prior administration will not be eligible for the waiver of the assessment requirement.

Update: High School Summer Test Administration

- The high school summer test administration schedule has not changed. As listed in the assessment calendar, the administration is scheduled for June 15–19.

Update: ACT

- ACT materials updates are due **no later than tomorrow, May 13** in PANext for participating school systems. School systems that do not plan to participate in the June 2 administration of ACT should notify the Department at assessment@la.gov.
- ACT announced new flexibilities for summer testing and new test-at-home options that will become available in the fall and winter. Information about at-home testing with remote proctoring will be shared as it becomes available.
- ACT National Test Date
 - Although students are only able to register for June 13 and July 18 for national test administrations in the summer, testing sites can request a one-week delay in administration (June 20 and July 25)
- ACT State Administration
 - June 2 standard paper
 - June 2–4 online
 - June 2–8 accommodated window
 - October 6 and October 20 paper-based administration only for students who were juniors in 2019-2020 and were unable to test

Update Cohort Graduation Data Certification

- Cohort graduation data certification will remain open until June 5. Accountability contacts will be notified prior to the official opening date.

Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours

The next **Assessment and Accountability Office Hours** will be on **May 19 at 4:15 p.m.** Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 19 at 4:15 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164

High School Pathways

Reminder: Board of Regents Dual Enrollment Policy Update

Please share with high school principals and counselors.

In response to COVID-19, the Board of Regents provided an [updated policy](#) regarding students currently enrolled in Dual Enrollment classes and an updated policy for the minimum entry requirements for students enrolling in Dual Enrollment classes for the 2020-2021 school year. The [webinar slides](#) are available along with a [FAQ](#) regarding the updated policy.

Please contact meredith.mcgovern@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Advanced Placement Exam Updates

Please share with AP Coordinators, high school counselors, and AP teachers.

The College Board has released an [updated AP Exam Day testing guide](#). This guide should be distributed to AP teachers and made available for students. It provides details for how to access exams, specific browser requirements for exam day, and other important details.

The College Board has also released an [AP Exam Day Student Checklist](#) for students to reference during the AP Exams.

Please contact meredith.mcgovern@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities

Please share with CTE supervisors and teachers of CTE coursework.

In lieu of face-to-face training opportunities, trainings are being transitioned to a digital training model. The dynamic [2020 Jump Start Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities](#) guide provides a list of professional development and training opportunities. This list is not comprehensive and will continue to be updated as additional training options are confirmed.

The Super Summer Institute registration costs for the summer 2020 sessions are paid directly to the provider and not to the Department. Carl Perkins and Career Development Funds are eligible funding sources for registration.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Student Opportunities Office Hours

Please share with school system supervisors, administrators, and counselors.

The Office of Student Opportunities is holding office hours weekly through May 31 to answer questions about student planning and promotion.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Every Wednesday from 3:00–4:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/411290309>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 411 290 309
- **Meeting Password:** 031058

Please contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

Educator Preparation

New: Department Names 2021 Teacher and Principal of the Year Semi-finalists

The Department is proud to announce the [2021 Teacher and Principal of the Year Semi-finalists](#). These educators are making exceptional gains with students. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

Congratulations to these outstanding educators!

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov for more information.

New: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Partnering Teacher Preparation Provider

As part of Super App, all CIR and UIR-A schools were required to identify teacher workforce needs in advance and establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a teacher preparation provider that matches this need. As a next step, school systems should submit a copy of their MOU with partnering preparation providers by emailing the MOU to believeandprepare@la.gov no later than **May 30**.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

New: Remote Praxis Exams

ETS is launching a solution that will allow educators to take a Praxis exam at home while test centers are closed due to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Tests will be proctored remotely by a trained specialist
- The 30 most frequently used tests will launch on May 18
 1. Tests in the first wave include Praxis Core and most content tests
 2. Registration for these exams will open May 15
- PLTs and school leadership assessments are expected to launch June 1

Visit the [ETS Testing Updates webpage](#) for additional updates.

Special Education

New: Teacher Leader Advisor for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Applications

The Department is seeking excellent English language arts, math, and special education teachers to become Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs) for the 2020-2021 school year. TLAs will build resources for students with significant cognitive disabilities in both math and English language arts, grades K-12. TLAs will either pilot the design and implementation of lessons from the ELA Guidebook Companion Resources (grades 3-8) or will develop additional supports aligned to the mathematics and ELA Connector standards (grades K-12).

The [application](#) for TLAs for students with significant cognitive disabilities is open until **May 29**. Please share this opportunity broadly with ELA, mathematics, and special education teachers.

Please contact kelly.mcclure@la.gov with questions.

New: 2018-2019 Draft LEA Determination Packages

Please share with data managers.

Each year, the Department is required to issue LEA Determinations to assess the performance of school systems on the provision of special education and related services. Please note that LEA Determinations are made at the school system level required by IDEA, while plans to improve struggling schools identified as UIR for students with disabilities is a separate process required by ESSA.

The draft 2018-2019 LEA Determination packages will be available for review May 18 on the FTP site with the name "LEA Code_LEA Name_2018-2019 Draft LEA Determination." Special education leaders should obtain results from their FTP site and review for accuracy. If school systems have questions about the results or wish to seek additional clarification, they must do so by June 1. The Department will issue final results to school systems in mid-June.

To submit clarifications or for more information, please contact specialeducation@la.gov.

Reminder: Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities RFA

The Department recently released a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for Transition Support Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities. The Department is seeking to partner with an organization that can provide families of children and youth with disabilities access to a suite of high-quality, web-based, multimedia resources regarding key topics in early childhood and post-secondary transitions. Applications are due on June 15.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Special Education Professional Development and Support for Direct Services RFA

Last week, the Department released a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for Special Education Professional Development and Support for Direct Services. The Department is seeking to partner with local and national organizations to provide:

1. Professional development in areas of specialized support
2. Direct services, through one or both of the following:
 - a. Certified providers of direct services
 - b. Professional development to support delivery of direct services

Vendors selected through this RFA will be added to the Department's [Partnerships for Success Guide](#). Applications are due on July 2.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Finance

Reminder: Proposed FY2020-2021 Minimum Foundation Program

School systems at this time of year are looking to create budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. As a reminder, the proposed MFP documents for FY2020-2021 are available in the Department's [Minimum Foundation Program Library](#). The document titled "50% of 2.75% Increase for Pay Raise" contains both a summary of the projected BESE adopted allocation for FY2020-2021 and the projected Continuation/Standstill MFP allocation.

Please contact LDOEMFPHelpDesk@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Fiscal Requirements

Please share with business managers and financial officials.

Meeting yearly Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements are part of the business process to confirm compliance and determine eligibility of federal grant funds for ESSA and IDEA grants. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires an annual review that determines if each school system: 1) has not decreased spending of general fund dollars, and 2) is budgeting expenditures to meet the MOE standards.

Now Available:

1. 2021 ESSA MOE Verification – Deadline for submission is **June 15**
2. 2021 IDEA MOE Verification (Eligibility Review) – Deadline for submission is **June 15**

Previously Available:

3. 2019 IDEA MOE Confirmation (Compliance review) – Deadline for submission was *April 30*

Helpful documents for completing MOE requirements are listed below.

- The [MOE Quick Reference Guide](#) is available to assist with submitting all three MOE applications.
- Description of [Allowable Exceptions](#) to IDEA MOE
- Calculator - [Local Only Revenue Spreadsheet](#)

Please contact nakia.jason@la.gov with questions about the MOE review process and jason.berard@la.gov for technical inquiries or support.

Federal Programs

New: Education Excellence Funds (EEF)

The 2019-2020 EEF payments are scheduled to be paid on May 14 to approved recipients. Inquiries may be sent to ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov.

Please review the [Education Excellence Fund FAQ May 2020](#) for additional EEF information.

New: Strong Start 2020 Follow-up Webinar for Nonpublic Equitable Services for CARES Act Funding

A Strong Start 2020 Equitable Services Webinar will be held this **Thursday, May 14 at 1:00 p.m.** The webinar will provide information regarding the implementation of the CARES Act as it relates to providing equitable services to nonpublic schools with the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. LEA federal program directors and key personnel and Nonpublic school officials should participate in this webinar. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** May 14 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92833120484>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 928 3312 0484
- **Password:** 564496

Please contact ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: High Cost Services Round 1 & 2 Add/Drop

The deadline for LEAs to add/drop students in the FY19-20 High Costs Services Round 1 and Round 2 application is **May 22**.

Please contact ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools

New: Attendance Awards

The Department, in collaboration with the local school systems, is pleased to recognize students with exemplary attendance during the current school year. Each school system establishes criteria for the attendance awards and may use the [Meritorious Attendance Award](#), the [Perfect Attendance Award](#), or the [Excellence in Attendance Award](#) to recognize their students.

Please contact janice.zube@la.gov with questions.

New: School-based Medicaid

Effective for dates of service on or after March 20, 2019, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has approved Louisiana's State Plan Amendment, which amended the provisions governing school-based medical services covered in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program, and school-based behavioral health services.

The expansion will allow for payment for services that are provided to Medicaid eligible students pursuant to an Individual Health Plan (IHP), an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), a Section 504 plan, or services that are otherwise medically necessary. Payment for services provided pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will continue to be provided under the expanded program.

The expansion also amended the reimbursement methodology to expand allowable billing providers for direct/therapy and nursing services and added applied behavioral analysis and personal care services.

The Department is in the process of modifying the school-based Medicaid handbook to address these changes.

Please contact janice.zube@la.gov with questions.