

# LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

A Resource to Inform and Celebrate  
Louisiana's Building-Level Leaders

January 26, 2023

## In This Issue

- [Principal Corner](#)
- [LDOE Corner](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Educator Opportunities](#)
- [Principal Newsletter Signup](#)
- [Principal Appreciation](#)
- [Dates to Consider](#)

## PRINCIPAL CORNER



Happy New Year educators! I bring you greetings from Lowery Middle School and the Ascension Parish Schools in Donaldsonville, Louisiana. As you know, the turn of the year can mean something completely different for educators than non-educators. For non-educators, the new year is often an opportunity to start over. We don't have the luxury of starting over, for we are in the middle of our year! For us, the new year is a time to reflect upon the first half of the year and refine our focus so that we can hit our targets and grow our students. At Lowery Middle School, we have reflected upon semester one of this school year, and it has led us to refine our intervention processes across the campus. Our superintendent, David Alexander, always reminds us

that we are not data driven. He says that we are purpose driven and data informed. I believe in this statement. Data is not attractive. In fact, sometimes data can be downright hideous. Moreover, data exists in the past, so dwelling upon data and being driven by our data anchors us in the past and cripples our ability to truly connect with the people behind the numbers. Being driven by our purpose reconnects us to our why and allows us to see the impact we are having on the people within our numbers.

At Lowery Middle we believe that we exist to create a safe and supportive environment where students can be empowered to achieve academic excellence. So when we looked at our numbers from semester one and noticed only half of our school was on track to reaching our goals, we knew we needed to adjust our focus. We were doing a great job of teaching and learning, but we needed to do a better job of drilling down to the individual student in order to better address unfinished learning and grow our students.

Specifically, our data showed us that we needed to address students in jeopardy of not passing to the next grade and strategically support them in mathematics. Here's how we have refined our focus to continue growing our students:

**In-Jeopardy Squad.** I believe that there are simple behaviors that will position students for success in school: focused engagement in class and complete/submit all assignments with excellence. When we noticed that there were several students in jeopardy of not passing, we began to dig a little deeper. We discovered that many students had not completed their assignments and/or didn't even attempt the assignment. This was contrary to the behaviors we wanted to see. Therefore, we have enlisted each elective teacher to support all core teachers with tracking student progress, engaging parents, and holding students accountable for completing and submitting their assignments in a timely fashion. Since our elective teachers teach and touch every student on the campus, we went to them for support and they agreed. Each elective teacher has taken a group of students to monitor. Generally, these students are already in one of their classes, so the opportunity for support was already there. These teachers are monitoring these students' grades, assignments, and attendance on a weekly basis. Moreover, they are also checking-in with these students weekly to discuss their progress and providing opportunities for the students to complete their missing assignments. The final task of our In-Jeopardy Squad is to engage parents on a weekly basis. This communication may be an email, text message, or note home. Parents are vital to student success, and often, it is the lack of communication that leads students to engage in unproductive behaviors.

**Strategic Mathematics Support.** I believe mathematics is like a language; therefore, mathematics requires daily engagement for acquisition and fluency. Our students are engaging in mathematics daily in their classes, but the unfinished learning from prior years are difficult to address while trying to engage students in content for this current year. They must have extra time outside of core instruction to do this. In order to engage our students in their mathematical knowledge and capacity we have decided upon the following:

- **Implement ZEARN daily.** Our students engage in ZEARN at the beginning of each day - during our advisory time. The math teachers on our campus assign the specific modules for the students to review, and the homeroom teachers monitor the students progress to ensure that each student is engaging in the program. On the administration side, we run weekly progress reports and share them with the teachers so that they can identify students that need added support.
- **Engage in weekly math coaching.** We support students that need additional support by engaging in coaching them once a week for support in mathematics. Using data, we are able to target specific areas in need of support. In this way, we are able to address specific skills to accelerate learning while the teachers address them in conjunction with new content. Moreover, we are employing every available individual to join in this work. I believe Maxwell when he says, "One is too small a number for greatness." Therefore, I am asking every adult to work with at least one student.

Interventions are not new to any of you. I just hope to share some ideas and practices that might help you accomplish your goals and grow your students. One is truly too small a number for greatness, so that means we are all in this together! I hope you have had a happy start to the new year.

**Michael Hilton, 2023 Middle School Principal of the Year, Lowery Middle School, Ascension Parish**

## LDOE CORNER



**All Louisiana students will have improved math outcomes through high-quality instruction designed for [accelerating learning](#) in all settings.**

Happy New Year! January is known as a month for reflection and for setting resolutions and goals for the year ahead. I think the best resolutions, whether personal or professional, are just as much about taking action as they are about releasing ourselves of the things that are slowing us down.

That's why I can't think of a more fitting month to share about [Louisiana's Math Refresh](#), an initiative the Department [launched last fall](#), which strategically focuses support in two key areas:

1. Providing [funding](#) to support a **refresh of math materials** to ensure resources used during any instructional time (including tutoring, extended learning time, and summer learning) are of the same high level of quality as core instruction.
2. Releasing guidance, resources, and professional learning that support teachers and leaders with the opportunity to **refresh existing instructional practices** to align with [evidence-based approaches](#) for maximum impact in getting students on track and moving forward successfully.

We are kicking off the new year with the full launch of one notable component of the Math Refresh that I want to make sure is on your radar. Beginning now and continuing through the 2023-2024 academic year, all public schools serving grades K-8 have access to [Zearn](#) school accounts at no additional cost to school systems. Elementary and middle school principals, if you have teachers already using the freely available version of this high-quality resource, you may wonder what's so different about a school account. For starters, this provides access for you to get meaningful data insights across all classes at your school. Additionally, it provides all teachers and tutors with a high-quality resource that has proven results for improving student outcomes. The following actions will provide a strong foundation to support your success:

- ☐ Consult and consider bookmarking the [Louisiana Zearn Implementation Guidance](#), which will continue to expand.
- ☐ [Register](#) to join us for one of the in-person training events happening now through February 7 around the state. These [professional learning sessions](#) are designed specifically for Louisiana math leaders.

Please take a moment to review the resources included here and share them with your teachers and instructional team. I hope to see your face at one of the leader events happening throughout the next several weeks. Additionally, we would love to hear from you (truly!) to ensure that our team is planning and prioritizing [future support](#) aligned to what you and your teachers need most to serve our children well. Please reach out to our math team at [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with any questions or if you would like to schedule time to collaborate.

**Breigh Rhodes, Director of Math, Science, and STEM, Office of Teaching and Learning**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Principal's Webinar Series**

Each month, the LDOE hosts a monthly webinar series for current school leaders and principal supervisors on best practices in school leadership aligned to the state's priorities. January's Practicing Principal Webinar will feature [Louisiana's Math Refresh](#) and be led by the Department's Math Division.

**Webinar Date/Time:** January 30, 1-2 p.m.

**Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98516144298?pwd=VHoxSlhaNWZhFZUNrQWICS05MRHlzZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 985 1614 4298

**Passcode:** 125571

Please contact [louisianaleaders@la.gov](mailto:louisianaleaders@la.gov) with questions.

### **School Support Institutes**

School Support Institutes Session #3 is coming up at the end of this month. Session #3 marks the midpoint in SSI, and attendance is critical as we collaborate to reflect on our implementation of best practices and move forward toward greater effectiveness. LDOE looks forward to seeing all our SSI participants at their cohort location. Please see the [SSI logistics page](#) for detailed venue, parking and pre-work information. Contact [nadia.stewart@tntp.org](mailto:nadia.stewart@tntp.org) if any changes need to be made to registrations/cohort locations.

Dates	Cohort Locations
January 31	<i>Monroe Cohort:</i> The Hanger at ULM, 700 University Avenue, Monroe, LA 71209
February 1	<i>Shreveport Cohort:</i> Shreveport Convention Center, 400 Caddo Street, Shreveport, LA 71101
February 2	<i>Lafayette Cohort:</i> University of Louisiana at Lafayette Student Union, 620 McKinley Street, Lafayette, LA 70503
February 3	<i>New Orleans Cohort:</i> Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA

### **School Literacy Plans**

Schools should begin planning for the development of site-based literacy plans as required by [Bulletin 741](#), Section 2307, which states that, beginning June 1, 2023, and triennially thereafter, each school shall develop and submit a foundational literacy skills plan for students in kindergarten through third grade. Planning resources including webinars, guidance, and a literacy plan template are available in the [Literacy Goals Library](#). Schools should plan to have literacy plans, along with current literacy data, posted on their school websites this summer. Members of the Literacy Division are available to provide individualized support at the request of schools.

Please contact [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov) with questions.

## **READBowl**

PreK-8 schools are encouraged to sign up for the READBowl. [READBowl](#) is the FREE global reading competition where PreK-8 aged teams around the globe compete to read for the most minutes. The competition begins the day of the American College Football National Championship, January 9, and culminates with a live crowning of the World Champions of Reading on the morning of the National Football League's (NFL) Super Bowl Sunday, February 12.

The top Louisiana school will get a special surprise. Shout out to Rapides Parish for already signing up schools!

Please contact [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov) with questions.

## **Teacher Leader Lagniappe Podcast**

[Teacher Leader Lagniappe](#) offers a little something extra for Louisiana educators. As educators, we are leaders - leaders of our families, classrooms, schools, teams, and systems. Host Em Cooper shares inspiring stories from leaders in Louisiana and across the country. You'll hear from innovators, change agents, and experts that will empower you to grow in your profession. Educators can subscribe to the [podcast](#) and listen to the latest episode.

Episodes of Interest:

- Louisiana is on the Rise with Superintendent Brumley
- Leading the Review with Eric Hirsch
- Effective Tutoring Practices with Dr. Carly Robinson
- [Addressing the Literacy Crisis with Dr. Kymyona Burk](#)

Share Your Stories: Educators can submit [pictures](#) of the great things happening in your school and system for our What's Making Me Smile segment.

Please contact [em.cooper@la.gov](mailto:em.cooper@la.gov) with questions.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program**

The Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program is live! This opportunity provides \$1,000 of digital vouchers to families of eligible K-5 public school students. Families use these vouchers to purchase high-quality literacy tutoring services to advance their child's literacy development. For more information on this program, access the [Steve Carter Information Overview Flyer](#).

Please contact [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov) with questions.

### **Summer Literacy Support Policy Guidance**

The [Guidance for Revisions to Bulletin 1566 Regarding Literacy Support Standard for Grades 3 & 4](#) is available on the [Literacy web page](#) under Hot Topics. Leaders and teachers are encouraged to review the guidance, as well as the revisions to Bulletin 1566, to determine implementation next steps.

Please contact [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov) with questions.

## **Foundational Skills Lessons for Grades 3-5**

The third units of Foundational Instruction for Reading Excellence (FIRE) lessons for grades 3-5 have been posted in the [Literacy Library](#). FIRE is an instructional resource designed to support teachers in providing students advanced reading foundational skills in grades 3-5. Each unit consists of 40 quick lessons and brief student activities focused on either spelling, grammar, or morphology - skills that are essential for proficient reading and writing. Lessons can be taught concurrently with any other ELA knowledge-building curriculum as part of whole-group core instruction.

[Grade 3 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#)

[Grade 3 Unit 3 - Student Activity Book](#)

[Grade 4 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#)

[Grade 4 Unit 3 - Student Activity Book](#)

[Grade 5 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#)

[Grade 5 Unit 3 - Student Activity Book](#)

Please contact [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov) with questions.

## **Grades 3-5 ELA Guidebooks (2022)**

Beginning March 2023, the anchor text in the 3rd grade ELA Guidebooks (2018) and (2022) unit, *Stories Julian Tells*, *Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron, will be published with revisions to the first chapter. The current version of the text that is used in the ELA Guidebooks (2018) and (2022) unit will not be reprinted and will only be available as long as the current stock lasts.

For successful implementation during the 2023-2024 school year, teachers should ensure that all class sets are the same version of *Stories Julian Tells*. Additionally, the Department will begin revising the unit to align with the new version of the text. The updated unit will be available through a new unit icon on the [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#). Additional information about the availability of the revised text and the updated unit will be shared in future communications.

Please contact [elaguidebooks@la.gov](mailto:elaguidebooks@la.gov) with questions.

## **Social Studies Curriculum Development**

The Department is excited to announce that we have partnered with Core Knowledge® to create Bayou Bridges: A Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum for Grades K-8. Materials for grades 4-5 will be available by Spring 2023 for piloting in Fall 2023. The complete Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum for grades K-8 will be available for implementation by June 30, 2024. More details about this partnership and future release dates will be announced in future newsletter communications.

Please contact [classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov](mailto:classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov) with questions.



## **New Tier 1 Science Program and Louisiana Guide for PhD Science Grades K-2**

To assist teachers, schools, and systems with science planning, the Department has released a [Louisiana Guide to Implementing PhD Science](#), a newly identified high-quality instructional materials science program for grades K-2. This resource provides guidance regarding how K-2 PhD Science modules correlate with the Louisiana Student Standards for Science (LSSS). All Louisiana Guides to Implementing identified high-quality science instructional materials are located on the [K-12 Science Planning](#) webpage.

Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **OpenSciEd K-5 Pilot**

As part of an effort to increase statewide access and opportunity for students to engage with [high-quality science instructional materials](#) aligned to standards, the Department is seeking elementary educators to pilot [OpenSciEd](#) science materials for grades K-5 during the development phase. Participating teachers will have the opportunity to represent Louisiana and help shape the curriculum's design by field testing and providing feedback on the units. Professional learning for teachers selected to participate in the pilot for the first round of field test units will begin in the summer of 2023. Anyone interested in nominating an individual teacher or cohort of teachers for participation in the pilot should secure the necessary approvals from school and system leadership and complete this short [form](#).

The Department will host an informational webinar to outline the expansion of the freely available [OpenSciEd science curriculum](#) to grades K-12. School and system leaders will receive details regarding participation in the upcoming K-5 pilot and hear success stories of implementation in grades 6-12. For additional information, please complete this short [form](#).

- **Webinar Date and Time:** February 1 at 9:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91862304359>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799 US
- **Meeting ID #:** 918 6230 4359
- **Passcode:** 348496

Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **Figma for Education**

[Figma](#) is a whiteboard and design application that is available to all students and educators for free. Features of Figma include FigJam whiteboard and Figma design. FigJam whiteboard is an online whiteboard space for meetings, activities, and brainstorming. Figma design is a design tool for UX design, graphic design, and digital illustration. Figma also has the ability to create virtual classroom spaces which can be managed and utilized to facilitate classroom discussions.

Please contact [digitallearning@la.gov](mailto:digitallearning@la.gov) with questions.

## **EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Doodle for Google**

The submission portal for Google's annual [Doodle for Google](#) is now open. Winners are chosen from each state with the opportunity to be recognized on Google's home page, Google hardware, and a college scholarship.

Please contact [digitallearning@la.gov](mailto:digitallearning@la.gov) with questions.

## **Cyber.org Technology Grant Program**

[Cyber.org](#)'s technology grant program is designed to support teachers and qualified extracurricular programs to provide cyber education to K-12 students across the United States. While [grant applications](#) can be submitted continuously throughout the year, the Spring application period deadline is March 15, and awards will be given in April.

Please contact [digitallearning@la.gov](mailto:digitallearning@la.gov) with questions.

## **Heggerty Training Opportunity**

The Department is excited to provide the opportunity for all teachers in grades PreK-1 to be trained in Heggerty, a program that supports essential learning in phonemic awareness skills. Phonemic awareness is one of the best early predictors for reading success and an essential part of a child's ability to become fluent readers. School systems that are already using Heggerty are seeing significant gains on their phonemic awareness screeners. Therefore, the Department has dedicated funding to provide the training and materials to implement these 8-12 minute lessons. This program is meant to complement your current high-quality instructional materials. School systems can choose their training dates through August 15.

Schools interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should email [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov).

## **Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy ELA Teacher Survey**

The Department is partnering with the Johns Hopkins' Institute for Education Policy to analyze the experiences with instructional materials and practices of ELA teachers in grades 3-8 across districts statewide. This national survey is designed to explore the experiences and opinions that ELA teachers have with instructional materials. The results will provide LDOE leadership with a stronger understanding of the knowledge taught through the curricula, as well as how ELA teachers in grades 3-8 understand and use the curricula. All responses are confidential and will only be reported in the aggregate.

All current ELA classroom teachers in grades 3-8 are encouraged to participate in the [Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy ELA Teacher Survey](#) by February 17.

## **PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER SIGNUP**

Do you have a colleague who would benefit from receiving this newsletter? Forward this copy along with [this link](#) and they will receive our next monthly newsletter.

## **PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION**

Take a minute to send a shout-out of appreciation to a colleague who is a building-level leader using this [survey link](#). This note of appreciation will be included in our next monthly newsletter.

### **Alanna Bradford, East Beauregard Elementary School in Beauregard Parish**

"Alanna Bradford is an amazing assistant principal that has devoted 41 years to being a champion of children. She tirelessly works to build rapport with students and genuinely cares about their progress."  
*submitted by Mark Weldon*



**Shaneika Merrill, Abney Elementary in St. Tammany Parish**

“An awesome leader is one who seeks to improve oneself in order to better others, and each day Merrill allows herself to be vulnerable and ask things such as: ‘What can I do better, how can I improve, tell me what I am missing, and what do my students need?’ Merrill is open to constructive criticism and that not only promotes personal growth, but is helping Abney to grow!” *submitted by Zaheerah Clark*

## DATES TO CONSIDER FOR BUILDING-LEVEL LEADERS

Important Dates	
<a href="#">Practicing Principal Webinar: Math Refresh</a>	January 30 at 1 p.m.
<a href="#">School Support Institutes Session 3</a>	January 31 - February 3
<a href="#">Zearn Professional Development for Leaders: Accelerating Impact</a>	February 7
<a href="#">Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy ELA Teacher Survey</a>	February 17
<a href="#">READBowl</a>	Now - February 12