

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

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

February 16, 2023

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PRINCIPAL CORNER



Some days when the paperwork is piling up, parent phone calls won't seem to stop, and there is a line of people waiting to talk to me, I reminisce of my days as a classroom teacher. As a classroom teacher, my day revolved around building solid student relationships. Since I have become a principal, which I do enjoy, I feel that sometimes as principals we get so caught up in the day to day stressors of managing our schools, that we forget what inspired us to get into this profession in the first place. Our Students! As teachers, we spent our days in a classroom full of students, guiding them, instructing them, planning engaging lessons for them, and working so hard to make sure they were successful. I know in my classroom days, I loved to sing with my students, dance with them, and some days just be silly. Being able to laugh and learn together is one thing that brought me and my students so much joy. By enjoying the small

moments with my students, I enjoyed my job and coming to school was fun! So as principals, I want to take a few minutes to encourage you to continue to find that joy. Times will arise in our leadership positions, when we all need reminders of our purpose and there is no better place to find that reminder than with our students. Leaders, spend time in your classrooms with your students; plan events where you can get involved with and can have fun with your students; greet them as they get off the bus in the morning. This isn't just about creating a positive school culture, it's about holding on to our purpose and passion, and the WHY behind choosing this career. I promise that on the days that are demanding and stressful, if you have a moment to sit at lunch or go to PE with your students and just talk to them or play games with them, it will remind you of your true purpose and your WHY!

Below are a few simple ideas to stay connected to your students and build relationships with them as the leader of your school:

- Greet students every morning as they arrive at school. Logistically, it may be hard to greet both bus and car riders, but choose the biggest group of students and make it a priority of your day to be the first face those students see when they arrive at school each morning. The conversations that I am able to have with my students in the morning are amazing! I have learned so much about them, just being present when they first arrive in the mornings.
- Plan rewards where students get time with you! One thing that I have done this year as a reward is to create prizes that are “experiences” rather than treats. For example, students get to go outside with me for a few minutes and have a popsicle or a dance party with the principal. These are simple ways that I am able to spend time with my students and build positive relationships. Honestly, I benefit from these experiences as much as the students!
- Try conducting your morning announcements through Google Meet instead of on an intercom. Teachers join our H.E.S. Teacher Google classroom through a meet each morning, and I have a slide posted with announcements for the day and music playing. After about 10 minutes, I come on the screen with a few students for the pledge and to say the expectations. Having students see my face as I speak to them and recite positive affirmations helps them feel connected and listen more attentively.

I just want to leave you with a note of encouragement. The work that you do each day as the school’s leader may be the most important work you will do in your career. You have the ability to inspire others to greatness. Many times, this inspiration can be as simple as getting to know your students and making sure they know you believe in them. So, if the complaints or requests pile up and the phone is non-stop, take some time to enjoy the special place you are working to create, and the amazing students who fill up your halls.

Heather Brooks, 2023 Elementary School Principal of the Year, Haynesville Elementary, Claiborne Parish

LDOE Corner



The Division of Well-being supports school systems in developing competencies related to well-being for both students and educators. We work towards these competencies by developing guidance, providing access to resources, and holding a monthly community of practice webinar. The webinar provides the following supports:

Build personnel capacity to support all students by supporting personnel in improving their well-being and environment, building their ability to recognize better, evaluate, and support students when they face challenges.

Prioritize positive, intentional relationships through meaningful interactions to develop sustaining, strong relationships within the classroom and throughout the school, including all stakeholders.

Attend to individual students' needs by responding with appropriate supports such as health services and structures addressing counseling, and nutrition to meet the social (how we relate to others), emotional (how we feel), behavioral (how we act), physical, and mental well-being needs of students in order to create a healthier community.

The work streams within our division cover the following:

- **Urgent Intervention Required for Discipline (UIR-D)** focuses on providing guidance and support to school systems that have been identified to have schools with out-of-school suspension rates that are two times the national average.
- **Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)** provides funding to school systems through eight consortiums for training and professional development opportunities.
- **Ochsner Telehealth** initiative provides funds for virtual therapy for school personnel from birth to twelfth grade.
- **School Social Work Expansion**, a partnership with Louisiana State University, to increase the number of school social workers in Louisiana schools by placing school social work interns in the participating school districts.
- **Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant (TRDG)** goal is to increase student well-being, adaptive student behavior, school safety, and academic performance by supporting trauma-specific treatment.
- **Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education (Project AWARE)** increases and improves access to, culturally competent and developmentally appropriate school- and community-based mental health services, particularly for children/youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or Serious Mental Illness (SMI).

Dr. Bryon Hurst, Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Well-Being, Office of College and Career Readiness

Announcements

Teacher Leader Summit Registration and Presenter Applications

[Teacher Leader Summit](#) registration opened **February 3** and is available on a first come, first served basis. The Teacher Leader Summit is an annual professional development conference which brings together Louisiana birth to grade 12 educators and content experts. Educators participating in the event will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2023-2024 school year. This year's Teacher Leader Summit will focus on our ability to accelerate for success, every single day.

The Teacher Leader Summit will take place from **May 30 - June 1** at the **New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC)**. Presenter [applications](#) are open and are due **March 3**.

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

Aspiring Principal Fellowship 2023-2024 Application Open

The Louisiana Department of Education is expanding the Aspiring Principal Fellowship for the 2023-2024

school year. APF cohort participants will meet throughout the year to explore best practices with regional experts, participate in school visits, and reflect on leadership practices. Participants will exit this fellowship with a robust leadership portfolio, the guidance of Louisiana's most successful principals, and a strong network of lifelong colleagues.

Applicants must hold a current EDL1 certification in Louisiana. School systems need to cover the cost of the \$1,000 tuition for presenters and materials, as well as travel costs. Interested candidates should complete the [Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application](#) no later than **March 10**.

Additional information about the Aspiring Principal Fellowship can be found on the [APF overview document](#).

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Principal's Webinar Series

February's principal webinar will feature best practices in human capital strategies and will be facilitated by our professional learning partner, the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. Participants will engage in learning around the critical role that principals play in attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining talent aligned with student needs and instructional priorities at their schools.

Webinar Date/Time: February 27, 1-2 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98516144298?pwd=VHoxSlhaNWhFZUNrQWICS05MRHlzZz09>

Meeting ID: 985 1614 4298

Passcode: 125571

Please contact louisianaleaders@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.

The guidance provides

- assessment information;
- sample structure of a literacy block;
- and resources to support the instructional planning.

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 with questions.

Bulletin 130 Update - Evaluation Reminder

For the 2022-2023 school year, teachers and leaders receiving a "Highly Effective" or "Effective: Proficient" (2.5 or higher) on the first [observation](#) will not require a second observation. A second observation may be completed upon request. Teachers and leaders scoring "Ineffective" or "Effective: Emerging" will still require a second observation.

Please contact compass@la.gov with questions.

Workforce Reporting Snapshot Update

The annual Educator Workforce report highlights the progress of Louisiana's comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy. This past year saw the following improvement:

- percentage of teachers of color increased by two percentage points;
- percentage of certified teachers increased by two percentage points;
- average teacher salary increased over \$1200;
- teacher retention rate increased by two percentage points; and
- first-year teacher retention rate increased by five percentage points.

The 2021-2022 State and Regional Workforce Snapshot reports are available in the [Workforce Attributes library](#) and linked below.

- [State Workforce Snapshot](#)
- [Southwest Regional Workforce Snapshot](#)
- [Southeast Regional Workforce Snapshot](#)
- [Northern Regional Workforce Snapshot](#)
- [Central Regional Workforce Snapshot](#)

Please contact donna.baudoin@la.gov with questions.

Level Up: School Improvement Best Practices at Teacher Leader Summit 2023

[Level Up: School Improvement Best Practices](#), required for all CIR schools for 2023-2024, will be delivered at Teacher Leader Summit 2023 in place of the virtual trainings delivered during the summer. LDOE is providing funding through Super App to systems to cover all costs associated with sending three Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) members from each CIR school to Teacher Leader Summit 2023 to attend this session. These *Level Up* sessions will extend and build on the foundational training that occurred virtually last summer. A pre-paid registration link to Teacher Leader 2023 will be sent to principals of CIR schools to register themselves and two members of their ILT. The registration is valid for the entire TL Summit, with the requirement to attend one of the full day *Level Up* sessions on May 30th or May 31st.

Please contact SchoolImprovementDivision@la.gov for more information.

RESOURCES

Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program

The [registration portal](#) for the [Steve Carter Literacy Tutoring Program](#) is now open. The Department will share additional information regarding this program with the public through social media, television, and radio advertisements. 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 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](#).

- [Grade 3 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#) and [Student Activity Book](#)
- [Grade 4 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#) and [Student Activity Book](#)
- [Grade 5 Unit 3 - Teacher's Guide](#) and [Student Activity Book](#)

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 short lessons and brief student activities focused on either spelling, grammar, or morphology - skills that are essential for proficient reading and writing. Lessons are taught concurrently with any ELA knowledge-building curriculum as part of whole-group core instruction.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

Early Childhood Literacy Grab & Go Family Activities

A new set of Grab & Go activities have been released in the [Families Literacy Library](#). The activities are designed to build language and literacy skills for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Early childhood educators and providers can share these activities with families to support literacy development.

Please contact 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 with questions.

Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum

The Department is developing Bayou Bridges, a new Louisiana K-8 social studies curriculum, to align with the student expectations of the [2022 K-8 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies](#) and to meet criteria similar to the quality indicators of the [instructional materials review rubric](#). Curriculum materials will include

- unit plans and daily lessons,
- student and teacher-facing materials,
- engaging primary sources, and
- formative and summative assessments.

Bayou Bridges will be available for piloting in grades 4-5 next school year. The complete curriculum for grades K-8 will be available for implementation by **June 30**. Please see the [Bayou Bridges FAQ document](#) for more details about curriculum development and release dates.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

Coming Soon: Additional Professional Learning to Support Implementation of Free Zearn Access!

As part of the [Louisiana Math Refresh](#), the Department is partnering with [Zearn](#) to provide school accounts to all public schools serving K-8 students. Registration will open soon for additional sessions to support teachers and leaders in successful implementation. Details are posted to the flyers linked below.

- [Launching Zearn Math](#) participants will explore the interventions integrated through Zearn's digital lessons that provide students with just-in-time foundational support on the grade-level content. Participants will deepen their understanding of how to interpret student productivity, progress, and misconception data captured in Zearn Class Reports to maximize growth through intentional decision making. Finally, the session will conclude as participants apply learnings to their own classrooms, schools, and systems and leave with a data-driven action plan to ensure every student gets the celebration and support needed. Registration will open soon for this free two-hour virtual professional learning for K-8 Louisiana public school teachers whose role includes core math instruction or supporting students with math learning.
- In [Professional Learning for Leaders: Accelerating Impact with Zearn](#), leaders will build on their familiarity with Zearn and refine how they will support school sites as they prepare to implement and monitor progress. In this four-hour session, participants will explore Zearn's flexible instructional materials, features of the educator and administrator accounts, and how to utilize the embedded reports that capture real-time data to accelerate math learning for all students. Leaders will walk away with materials to turn-key and leverage at their school sites as they launch Zearn. Additional dates for in person and virtual sessions are coming soon.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Educator Opportunities

Developing Strong Literacy Skills in Grades 4-8 Online Learning Series

The Department has partnered with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to offer five free progressive reading modules. Grounded in the science of reading, Developing Strong Literacy Skills in Grades 4-8 is a comprehensive, online professional learning series for developing successful adolescent readers. The series specifically addresses the most current research on adolescent literacy and how to meet the unique needs of intermediate and middle school students to accelerate literacy growth.

[Registration](#) is open and the first module will be released this month. Year-long access will be provided to participants and the modules should be completed by January 2024. Please [submit](#) any questions you have about the series and a response will be provided within two business days.

Please contact diverselearnersupport@la.gov with questions.

Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Training

Louisiana Accessible Education Materials (LA-AEM) is hosting the “CVI Assessments: The CVI Range” training by Cindy Guillot Champagne for educators who service students with a CVI. The training will be held on Tuesday, February 21 from 8:30-3:30 pm. [Registration](#) is now open.

Please contact diverselearnersupport@la.gov with any questions.

Spring into AAC

Louisiana Accessible Education Materials (LA-AEM) is hosting a full day of free professional development focused on Augmentative and Alternative Communication. [Registration](#) information is now available for the training on Friday, March 31.

Please contact diverselearnersupport@la.gov with questions.

Medal of Honor Character Development Program

The National World War II Museum and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society (CMOHS) are hosting a secondary educator training program on Saturday, **March 4**, at the World War II Museum in New Orleans. This full-day training will provide secondary teachers with all the tools needed to bring the Medal of Honor Character Development Program into the classroom. The flexible, cross-curricular resource, which uses the oral histories of Medal of Honor Recipients and citizen heroes, focuses on how students can use these examples of courage, commitment, sacrifice, integrity, citizenship and patriotism to influence change in their own communities. Middle and high school teachers from all subject areas along with counselors, coaches, and administrators are invited to attend this free training.

[Registration](#) for the event is now open.

Please contact ebillmayer@cmohs.org with questions.

Classroom Resources on the Vietnam War

The History & Legacy Branch (H&L) of The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) provides educators and librarians with [education resources](#) at no cost. Resources include classroom posters and a [Teachers' Toolkit](#) with resources, Vietnam War websites, lesson suggestions, media sources, and more.

Please contact the [Vietnam War Commemoration](#) with questions.

Science Summer Professional Learning for Teachers and Leaders

The Department is planning summer professional learning (PL) opportunities for science with two areas of focus:

- For K-12 science educators: in-person PL including foundational training grounded in high-quality instructional materials, opportunities to deepen understanding of the shifts called for by the Louisiana Student Standards for Science and build pedagogical strategies that support students' acceleration toward mastery of grade level content.
- For school and system science leaders: in-person and virtual meetings will support system and school leaders in leveraging high-quality instructional materials to promote instructional shifts in science that result in improved outcomes for all students. Leaders in this cohort will meet throughout the fall semester for PL and to debrief challenges and successes from implementation of strategies.

Spaces for each pathway will be limited, but opportunities will be offered equitably to interested schools and systems. Additional details will be provided in this newsletter when available and communicated directly to those who have completed the [interest form](#) by **March 1**.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Cyber.org Travel Grants for Cyber.org EdCon23

Cyber.org has opened the [application](#) for a limited number of \$500 travel grants available for eligible classroom teachers attending Cyber.org EdCon 23. Recipients of travel grants may use the funds to seek reimbursement for up to \$500 of registration, airfare, and/or hotel costs for CYBER.ORG EdCon 23 at the Mesa Convention Center in Arizona, June 20-22. Application responses will be sent within 14 days with an award decision.

Please contact 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 to becoming a fluent reader. School systems that are already using Heggerty are seeing significant gains on phonemic awareness screeners. The Department has dedicated funding to provide 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.

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.

Andrea Mathis, CSAL Elementary in Community School for Apprenticeship Learning, Inc.

"Ms. Mathis is an innovative leader and makes certain that her students have the best that she has to offer. She has been instrumental in implementing new programs and her morning meetings continue to motivate staff and students." *submitted by Alisa Welsh*

Gina Bianchi Johnson, Campus Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans in Orleans Parish

"Gina is an incredible leader. She motivates others to work hard and do the best for students. She is always problem solving and increasing communication between staff and families." *submitted by Faith Moses*

Darmecia Crane, Dubach School in Lincoln Parish

"The expertise and professionalism that Ms. Crane brings to our school is unmatched. Everything that she does and the ideas that she brings to the school do not go unnoticed. Keep shining!" *submitted by Tiffany Curry*

Dee Dee McCullough, Northshore Charter School in Bogalusa City Schools

"Our fearless Leader, Dee Dee McCullough is constantly striving to provide the children of our school with the best opportunities to enhance their learning capabilities. This will give them a firm foundation of learning to help build their future." *submitted by Alicia D. Rhoades*

Edwin Mason, Crawford Elementary School in Bienville Parish

"Edwin Mason has improved Crawford Elementary School greatly. Under his leadership, teachers thrive, students engage with core content, and school administrative functions run smoothly." *submitted by Dr. Mary Riley*

Trikell Otkins Pierre A. Capdau in InspireNOLA Charter Schools - New Orleans

“Ms. Otkins is an innovative leader, an active and responsive listener, and very proactive. She is caring with our scholars and our staff. She serves as a mentor to other school leadership, and always keeps students first!” *submitted by Erika A. Murray*

Lauren Darden, Gardere Community Christian School

“Lauren Darden ensures that each team member knows their value and how they impact the lives of children. She leads by example and exemplifies our core values, especially going above and beyond for the children and their families in the Gardere community.” *submitted by Kayla Lamons*

Dates to Consider for Building-Level Leaders

Important Dates	
Practicing Principal Webinar: Effective Human Capital Practices	February 27 at 1 p.m.
School Support Institutes Session 4 (Virtual)	February 28 - March 3
Accelerating Impact with Zearn (Virtual)	March 6 at 8:00 a.m.
Accelerating Impact with Zearn (Virtual)	March 9 at 12:30 p.m.
Launching Zearn Math (Virtual)	March 14 or March 15 at 3:30 p.m.