

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER



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



February 25, 2021

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Principal Corner

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Following the close of schools in March and the challenges of educating students during the pandemic, my thoughts were anchored in doubt. But, I gained a wealth of knowledge about Louisiana educators. We are strong. Teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and counselors worked to find solutions and create new learning environments for students to allow education to continue.

I am intentional on maintaining relationships. During most of 2020, students were forced to social distance which created isolation. While

I knew it would be impossible to recreate the exact conditions of a physical classroom while teaching online, I was determined to continue to connect with students despite the distance between them. As Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states, adolescents need to feel a sense of belonging and connection in order to maximize their academic achievement. Our teachers worked together to plan virtual instruction, but we soon realized that we had a larger problem: Digital Equity.

Connectivity and devices were just a few of my worries. Distance learning had (and still has) a different learning curve for everyone. As long as we agreed to keep students and their needs first, we would progress. In the fall, the teachers at Good Hope Middle hosted a Saturday Seminar to train parents on virtual instruction which included how to use certain Google Chrome extensions, how to understand participation and grading expectations, and how to navigate small group learning. These technology supports were great, but the bottom line was: they were tools, not teachers.

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will never forget how you made them feel. – Dr. Maya Angelou

We maintained logs to track daily communication with parents and families. We had regular conversations concerning students' well-being. We discussed grades, attendance, as well as challenges and successes with online learning. Maintaining positive connections not only helps the students gain the most they can from instruction in a distance learning environment, but it can have a lasting impact when they do finally return to school.

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it – Marian Wright Edelman.

Even in a global crisis, Louisiana educators are committed, engaged, and resilient.

Twainna Calhoun, Principal of Good Hope Middle in Ouachita Parish

Announcements and Resources

Financial Aid Planning

As a requirement of the IGP planning process throughout high school, every senior, as a requirement for graduation, must complete a FAFSA or have a waiver in place.

The FAFSA is the form for state and federal financial aid for postsecondary endeavors. The Department is currently ranked at number 14 nationally in FAFSA completion. Waivers will be checked during the verification process and must be present for students to count in the cohort graduation rate.

Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Aspiring Principal Fellowship

In an effort to support the development of school leaders across the state, the Department will be launching a pilot cohort for aspiring principals. The Aspiring Principal Fellowship will prepare individuals that already possess their EDL1 certification with the critical knowledge and skills needed to serve in the principal role. This selective statewide fellowship is rooted in Louisiana's five priorities:

1. Ensure every student is on track to a professional career, college degree, or service.
2. Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children.
3. Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment.
4. Develop and retain a diverse, highly effective educator workforce.
5. Cultivate high-impact systems, structures, and partnerships

APF cohort participants will meet monthly (Orientation at Teacher Leader Summit, commencing monthly in October) and explore best practices with regional experts, school visits, theory, and reflection. Participants will exit this 12-day fellowship with a robust leadership portfolio, the guidance of Louisiana's most successful principals, individualized coaching, and a strong network of lifelong colleagues.

The 2021-2022 pilot cohort will be selected accordingly and represent a cross-section of aspiring leaders throughout the state.

Applicants must hold a current EDL1 certification in Louisiana. School systems need to cover the costs of the \$2500 tuition for presenters and materials, as well as travel costs. Interested candidates should complete the [Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application](#) no later than **March 31**.

For more information please attend or invite potential candidates to attend an informational webinar [Monday, March 8 at 3:30 p.m.](#)

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Accelerate

[Accelerate](#), Louisiana's pre-K-12 tutoring strategy, is designed for school systems to implement equal-access tutoring at scale in order to achieve significant results for all students.

The items below have been added to the [Accelerate page](#).

- Accelerate Kick-off [presentation](#) and [recording](#)
- Phase 2 of [ELA](#) and [math](#) resources
- ELA Resources [presentation](#) and [recording](#)
- Math Resources [presentation](#) and [recording](#)

February 26: Phase 3 release of ELA and math resources released

- ELA: Additional [knowledge pack](#) for grades 3-8
- Math: The last five sets of [lessons](#) for K-8 posted

Contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

Summer Learning Programs

School system leaders should use the [Summer Learning Program Guidance](#) to begin planning for summer learning. February - April checklist items include:

- Create applications for staff hiring .
- Create a registration process and timeline for students including the collection of accommodations and medical plans.
- Engage with partners for supports (local government, organizations, public library, universities, etc.).
- Determine school site locations.

Contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

Principal Appreciation

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

Shout Outs:

Aaron Durbin from Dodson High School in Winn Parish: "Aaron has super organization skills that ensure student learning is taking place virtually as well as face-to-face. Her love for the students, faculty, staff and community is evident daily." *Nominated by Ranae Johnson*

Karla Johnson from Capitol Elementary School in East Baton Rouge Parish: "Ms. Johnson's dedication to literacy and individual intervention support makes an impact in the academic and social well being of her students. She is visibly and proactively engaged in classroom instruction, school wide activities, Successmaker and other intervention programs, while continuously creating a positive school climate. She is a leader among her peers who values the work of helping kids at every level." *Nominated by Cesar Rico*

Celeste Lebouef from North Larose Elementary in Lafourche Parish: "I hear great things about your school and your leadership in the school. You are doing good things and have the best interest of your students at heart. We appreciate when your students come to our high school!" *Nominated by Gaye Cheramie*

Jeanne Medine from Iberville Elementary School in Iberville Parish: "Jeanne Medine models what it means to walk the walk of dedication, high expectations, and getting the job done. Even when we don't agree or can't fully understand the other's perspective, I know that she's "there" for me in every sense of the word. Knowing that another colleague is pushing and reflecting and questioning and hustling just as hard in another building across town gives me a sense of community that matters so much on the hardest days." *Nominated by Emily Martin*

Monica Morrow from Homer Elementary in Claiborne Parish: "I am a new administrator and Mrs. Morrow has offered continuous support and resources that have been extremely helpful to me in this new area of my career." *Nominated by Christy Chandler*

Kellie Rabalais from Palmetto Elementary and Brenda Lavergne from Washington Elementary in St. Landry Parish: "Both individuals serve as instructional leaders at the feeder schools to our campus. Both ladies have worked collaboratively with our site to ensure the transition of students, learning, and culture was consistent across the campuses. Both have taken time to share data, discuss mid-year review of school improvement goals, and give feedback on upcoming school activities. With this, the message across our zone is consistent, thus helping to improve the academic and behavioral barriers students previously faced. To both of you, THANK YOU!" *Nominated by Rollan Moore*

Melynda Rodrigue from Bayou Black Elementary in Terrebonne: "It's great to have someone who is just a text or call or email away that will listen to ideas and discuss questions about school leadership and student growth. Thanks for being that person!" *Nominated by Andrea Rodrigue*

Carol Smith from Prairieville Primary in Ascension Parish: “Mrs. Smith is the epitome of a leader. She has created an atmosphere of collaboration, trust, empathy and compassion. Her faculty and staff have the utmost respect for her and continue to create a culture of learning for all students. She continually promotes growth among teacher leaders and celebrates when those teachers move into leadership positions. Mrs. Smith opened this school 13 years ago and many of the faculty and staff have been with her for all those years.” *Nominated by Kimberly Ammons*

Tara Walker from Prairie Elementary in Lafayette Parish: “I truly appreciate the work that she is doing with struggling readers on campus. She saw that there was a percentage of students who were not reading on level and lacked motivation for reading. She organized various team members to host weekly book sessions with these students, supervise their Accelerated Reading tests and help hold them accountable for reading. Ms. Walker is seeing success with the students as their confidence grows with reading.” *Nominated by Cayce Booher*

Mark Weldon from East Beauregard Elementary in Beauregard Parish: “Mark Weldon truly knows how to value everyone that works in his school. He shows up each day with the greatest four "C's": Conviction, Character, Consistency, and Connectedness. He shows his love and appreciation through his artwork, positive attitude, a keen knowledge of being able to fix things that are broken without waiting for someone to do it, and his conversation is always that of a "celebration" for each day. We celebrate, we laugh, and we plan each day on how to make our tomorrows a little better. He values everyone at East Beauregard Elementary by showing his appreciation for what each faculty and staff brings to his school. It is because of our leader, Mr. Mark Weldon, who brings humanness through the doors daily, and a purpose that allows us to accomplish greatness through this pandemic and give all our best to our 'calling.' I can truly concur that Mr. Weldon's HEART is in his leadership.” *Nominated by Alanna Williams Bradford*

Principal Newsletter Signup

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

Dates to Consider for Building-Level Leaders

Office Hours	
Office Hours Title	Zoom Link
Assessment and Accountability Office Hours	March 2 at 3:45 p.m.
K-2 CLASS® Pilot Office Hours	March 9 at 12 p.m.
Education Technology Office Hours	March 11 at 9 a.m.
Educator Development Office Hours	March 16 at 12 p.m.
Upcoming Events	
Event Title	Zoom Link
AP Exam Update Webinar	March 3 at 11 a.m.
Louisiana Aspiring Principal Fellowship Informational Webinar	March 8 at 3:30 p.m.
Important Deadlines	
Jump Start Summers Application	March 5 at 5 p.m.
Spring 2021 Accelerate Math Content Developer Application	March 12 at 5 p.m.
Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application	March 31