

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER



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



March 26, 2021

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Principal Corner



Before I began my first year as a principal, I felt ready to tackle any challenge and yet I found myself surprised by the realities of this position and the hurdles that confronted me. I was named Principal of Positive Connections, an Elementary Alternative Site in Calcasieu Parish amid a global pandemic, followed by devastating hurricanes and an ice storm. Like so many principals this year, I was responsible for helping teachers guide a unique population of students through behavioral issues, restorative education plans, and connections with home schools.

My first year as a leader taught me that I cannot lead in isolation and communication was key.

Students enter Positive Connections for different reasons and on different timelines. I knew it was important to proactively connect with the students, their families and the home school teachers. I quickly learned that there are multiple ways to contact families but the problem is that we don't always *communicate and connect*. This learning brought forth a query--when we do communicate is it in ways that support engagement in student learning? Under normal circumstances, alternative school students enter with challenges. This year, it was heightened. "Communication" had to include more than routine practice and, whenever possible, be tailored to individual students. To cultivate my caring staff, we met regularly to devise strong individual plans, communicate goals and check progress regularly. Even after students leave Positive Connections, I regularly visit them at their home school to check progress, show my support, or just offer a fist bump, and a caring and familiar face--- a connection. These are times I see my students thrive through personal connections, strong support and real communication. Isn't that what we all need?

I certainly needed it as a new principal. I relied so heavily on those who have gone before me and continue to go beside me in this role.

Rather than stay in a silo, I worked to connect with my colleagues and I was able to talk to other principals, ask for guidance, run ideas by them, and if needed, offer my support. I challenge all of us, especially school leaders to share the joys of our work and why we love our jobs with our teachers, our students and our communities. If we can share positives of leading excellent schools, if we can truly

connect with one another, our students, our staff, and our families and communities as a priority, we can inspire future excellent leaders to join us!

Jeremy Doucet
Principal, Positive Connections
Calcasieu Parish

Announcements and Resources

Louisiana Aspiring Principal Fellowship

The Louisiana Department of Education is supporting school systems across the state in developing future school leaders. The Aspiring Principal Fellowship is a new initiative that will prepare educators and staff to build the leadership skills essential to the principal role. Applicants should hold a current EDL1 certification in Louisiana. 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.

- **School Systems** are asked 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**.

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit (In-person)

[Registration](#) for the in-person Teacher Leader Summit is underway. The early bird ticket window closed on March 1.

- The session schedule and app will be released to early bird ticket holders on April 7.

The regular registration window runs from March 2-April 12.

- All access codes turn off on April 13 preventing further registration.
- The session schedule and app will be released to regular ticket holders on April 9.

New this year, upon successful registration, educators have the opportunity to download graphics to share across their social media platforms to celebrate attending the 2021 Teacher Leader Summit. The graphics can be found in the “I’m Going Passes” section of the [Summit Materials page](#). Be sure to use the #LATeacherLeaders in social posts.

More information regarding the in-person Teacher Leader Summit can be found in the [Overview](#).

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series

To maximize the delivery of content and educator development, The Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will take place from June 1-11, and sessions will be accessed remotely. The format will be similar to the Virtual Series offered during spring 2020.

- There will be a max overall registration limit of 8,000.
- The Department is not allocating seats. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Paid ticket holders of the Teacher Leader Summit in-person event will receive an access code allowing them to register for and participate in the Virtual Series at no additional cost.
 - Each code will be one-time use and must be used only by the original ticket holder. Codes are not transferable.

Registration for the Teacher Leader Summit: The Virtual Series will open in April. Tickets are inclusive of all days of the event. The [Content Delivery Plan](#) outlines which content will be presented virtually in comparison to the content being delivered in-person.

Ticket Type	Purchasing Window	Ticket Price
Early Bird Registration	April 1-25	\$50.00
Regular Registration	April 26-sell out	\$65.00

The session schedule and app for the Virtual Series will be released to early bird ticket holders on May 10 and May 12 for regular registrants.

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

CIS Data and Yearend Closeout

The Department has issued a [CIS Timelines one-pager](#) to guide school systems through the evaluation process deadlines for the 2020-2021 school year. These deadlines apply to all public and charter schools within the state and are a requirement even if an alternate rubric waiver has been approved.

At this time, all sites should have completed the following tasks in [CIS](#), the system of record for professional practice evaluation data. If these tasks have not yet been completed they should now be a priority:

- updated rosters to reflect only 2020-2021 educators,
- assigned evaluators to each educator,
- and assigned SLTs to each educator.

CIS will shutdown for the 2020-2021 school year on September 1. This means that ideally by end of school year and at the latest by the end of August, the following tasks must be completed in [CIS](#). After September 1, no data for 2020-2021 school year will be able to be amended or added.

- Enter both SLTs for leaders and teachers
- Enter both professional practice scores

For the 2020-2021 school year only, the employees earning “Highly Effective” or “Effective: Proficient” on the first observation do not require a second observation, therefore the final evaluation score will be entered into CIS twice.

Example:

Ms. Smith earns a 3.85 on her first observation, which correlates to “Highly Effective.” Her 3.85 score will then be entered into CIS twice. This will ensure an average score of 3.85.

Please contact compass@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:

Hiram Bailey from East Iberville Elementary and High School in Iberville Parish: “Mr. Bailey has stretched himself to keep growing by taking on a PreK-12 campus. He sees big, big things for his kids and his campus. He is adding meaningful pathways and courses for his high school students while tending to the foundational needs of his emerging readers. He brings energy and hopefulness to each district meeting that he attends. I look forward to learning more from him as we continue to work together. He’s a great asset to our district community. *Nominated by Emily Martin*”

Cassy Brou from Cohn Elementary in West Baton Rouge Parish: “Mrs. Brou goes above and beyond to ensure the learning of ALL students. She also makes sure that her teachers have what they need to be successful.” *Nominated by Valerie Salter*

Brandon Burbach from North DeSoto Upper Elementary in Desoto Parish: “Mr. Burbach has responded to the 20-21 school year with steadfast commitment to our school mission. Under his leadership our students, teachers, and school maintained our data driven culture of academic excellence while continuing to develop our young leaders, and grow the capacity of our teachers.” *Nominated by Casey Hamon*

Alyshia Coulson from Bellaire Elementary in Bossier Parish: “Mrs. Coulson is a dedicated, compassionate, true service leader. She manages the school in a way that fully supports students, staff, and community. She always leads by example.” *Nominated by Shelly Bihm*

Susan Cryer from Brusly Elementary School in West Baton Rouge: “Never met a more considerate, caring, and understanding administrator! She’s a true joy to work for and to know.” *Nominated by Kimmy Tucker*

Nicole Gagnard from Marksville Elementary in Avoyelles Parish: “Nicole is the definition of a servant leader. She is willing to do whatever it takes to ensure her staff and students feel supported and encouraged. Her KEY initiative encourages students to be leaders both inside and outside the classroom.” *Nominated by Courtney Dumas*

Cassady Hickingbottom from DeRidder High School in Beauregard Parish: “Cassady is an innovative thinker with grit and determination. Our school community is her top priority.” *Nominated by Harry Hooker*

Candice Hickman from Madisonville Elementary in St. Tammany Parish: “Mrs. Hickman is a dedicated and passionate school leader who selflessly serves her school campus and her community. Candice is generous with her support of other administrators and a strong asset to our district’s leadership team.” *Nominated by Tom Heier*

“Mrs. Hickman runs one of the largest elementary schools in our state. We are lucky to have someone as tough, kind, and thoughtful as her to lead us teaching every child, every day.” *Nominated by Laura Prisco*

James Jackson from Port Allen High in West Baton Rouge Parish: “Mr. Jackson is an amazing leader; he is passionate about everyone affiliated with the school, and empowers them to be the best they can be. He is everything a leader should be, and he always looks for ways to showcase the many talents of students and teachers at PAHS.” *Nominated by Angie Roger*

Cindy Lewing from Zwolle Elementary School in Sabine Parish: “Here is a super loud shout out to this lady who sets high expectations but also carries her title with compassion and grace!” *Nominated by Liz Chatelain*

Dr. Kyle Machen from Benton Middle School in Bossier Parish: “‘It’s all about the boys and girls’, the mantra at BMS, comes straight from the top. The level of forward thinking coupled with being treated like the professionals we are is the mark of a true leader you want to follow. *Nominated by Lovie Howell*

Jessica Major from Port Allen Middle in West Baton Rouge Parish: “Jessica has empowered me to be a leader in my classroom and treats me as though she trusts me to do my job well.” *Nominated by: Pam Lewandowski*

Nanette McCann from Baton Rouge Magnet High School in East Baton Rouge Parish: “Nanette is an outstanding principal who continues to lead Baton Rouge Magnet High School on a path to excellence. Her vision and formula for success is Focus+Change+Willingness to Work=Miracles.” *Nominated by Betty Brackins*

David Pool from Sulphur High in Calcasieu Parish: “David leads with his heart and always believes in doing what's best for students. He understands the value of collective efficacy, and, especially in a school year like this one, he continues to work diligently to ensure both staff and student culture are positive.” *Nominated by Courtney Dumas*

Chantelle Smith from Mandeville Elementary in St. Tammany Parish: “Mrs. Smith is an innovative leader who passionately advocates for her students and their families. Chantelle is a selfless administrator and continually goes over and above to serve her teachers, her students and her learning community.” *Nominated by Tom Heier*

Shaquana Thibodeaux from Ray D. Molo Middle School in Calcasieu Parish: “Shaquana works diligently to bring the school vision to life by motivating students to believe in themselves and teachers to believe in the students despite any circumstances. She continuously leads with an intentional focus of increasing academic achievement of all students and leads by the following motto: ALL children can learn regardless of the students' soci-economic background and disability.” *Nominated by Shonna Anderson*

Jan Watts from Caneview in West Baton Rouge: “Jan goes above and beyond for students and her coworkers! She is willing to wear many hats and change them as often as needed.” *Nominated by Missy Latino*

Janice Williams from Meadowview Elementary in Bossier Parish: “Dr. Williams works tirelessly to provide energy and resources to assist our students' engagement by providing a Saturday Study Hall. We meet bi-monthly from 10:00-noon!!” *Nominated by Brenda Ware*

Jaime Williamson from Winnsboro Elementary in Franklin Parish: “Ms. Williamson is an amazing assistant principal who works tirelessly to help students and teachers. Her support and ideas have helped change the culture of WES into a great place for students to learn and grow.” *Nominated by Scott McHand*

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
Career and College Readiness Office Hours	March 25 at 3 p.m.
Assessment and Accountability Office Hours	March 30 at 3:45 p.m.
K-2 CLASS® Pilot Office Hours	April 6 at 12 p.m.
Education Technology Office Hours	April 8 at 9 a.m.
Teacher Leader Summit Office Hours	April 13 at 3 p.m.
Educator Development Office Hours	April 20 at 12 p.m.
Upcoming Events	
Event Title	Zoom Link
Believe! Launch	March 30 at 3 p.m.
Achieve! Launch	March 30 at 3:45 p.m.
Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar	March 31 at 9 a.m.
Staffing and Scheduling Best Practices Webinar	March 31 at 1 p.m.
Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar	April 7 at 9 a.m.
Important Deadlines	
Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application	March 31
Jump Start Construction Scholars Program Applications	April 12