

# LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER



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



June 29, 2023

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## PRINCIPAL CORNER

### Celebrating the 2024 Principal of the Year Finalists



During the opening session of the 2023 Teacher Leader Summit, the Department was proud to announce live the [2024 Teacher and Principal of the Year Finalists](#). These educators are making exceptional gains with students. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

These nine *2024 Principal of the Year Finalists*, along with all other state-level excellent educator honorees, will be honored at the 17<sup>th</sup> *Annual Excellent Educators Awards Gala* that will be held at the World War II Museum on the evening of July 22, 2023. This exciting event is co-sponsored by *Dream Teachers*.

Below you will find the abbreviated bios for each of the ***2024 Principal of the Year Finalists***.



#### **Marvin Evans, Ascension Parish**

Marvin Evans is the principal of Donaldsonville High School (grades 9-12) in Donaldsonville, LA. Evans received his Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and his Masters in Educational Administration and Supervision, both from Southern University A&M College. Evans has established a school vision focused on graduation by building on a rigorous course curriculum providing students with preparation for post-graduate pathways.

**Jose Cobian, Calcasieu Parish**

Jose Cobian is the principal of Forrest K. White Middle School (grades 6-8) in Lake Charles, LA. Cobian received his Bachelor of Arts from McNeese State University, and a Master of Education from Lamar University. Mr. Cobian has worked with the staff and community to build a school culture based on relationships, ownership, trust, and innovation. He instills into his students and staff to have a passion and desire to make a difference.

**Lindsey Fontenot, Cameron Parish**

Lindsey Fontenot is the principal of South Cameron High School (grades PreK-12), which is home to students from three years old through high school in Grand Chenier, LA. Fontenot received her Bachelor of Science and Masters of Education from McNeese State University. While building strong relationships with the whole child, school, and community in mind, Fontenot has changed the culture and transformed mindsets at South Cameron High School.

**Barry Carter, DeSoto Parish**

Barry Carter is the principal of North Desoto Middle School (grades 6-8) in Stonewall, LA. Carter received his Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Sciences from Louisiana Tech University, and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University. Carter strives to ensure all students receive opportunities for academic and social success by providing students with teachers that are inspired and supported to achieve their passion in education.

**Monya Criddle, Jefferson Parish**

Monya Criddle is the principal of Ralph J. Bunche Elementary (grades Pre-K-5). Criddle received her doctorate from Mississippi State University, Masters of Educational Administration from the University of New Orleans of Louisiana, and Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Dillard University. She believes a huge contributor to her success is her ability to build meaningful relationships with colleagues, teachers, students, and families and effectively communicate a clear school vision.

**Tia Trahan, Lafayette Parish**

Tia Mechelle Trahan is the principal of Lafayette Middle School (grades 6-8) in Lafayette, LA. She received her Undergraduate Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Louisiana Lafayette and Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Louisiana State University Shreveport. Trahan continually seeks to strengthen her knowledge as an instructional Leader to bridge gaps in academics and community relationships.

**Ragan Lorraine, Lafourche Parish**

Ragan Lorraine is principal at Galliano Elementary School (grades PreK-5) in Galliano, LA. Lorraine received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Nicholls State University, a Master's degree in Administration and Supervision with a minor in Curriculum and Instruction (plus 30) at NSU, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Southeastern University. Her heart-felt desire has always been to build a culture at GES that reflects love, caring, learning, and respect for all, creating an environment where every student and teacher could flourish.

**Gordon Ford, Lincoln Preparatory School**

Gordon Ford is Executive Director of Lincoln Preparatory School (grades K-12), a type 2 charter school, in Grambling, LA. Ford received a Bachelor of Arts degree and Master of Arts in Teaching from Grambling State University. Prior to embarking on his career in education, he served 25 years in the United States Air Force, and is a retired Lieutenant Colonel. Ford is a recognized visionary leader who challenges educators at every level to be better every day for students.

**Jason St. Pierre, Livingston Parish**

Jason St. Pierre is principal of Walker High School (grades 9-12) in Walker, LA. St. Pierre received a Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology from Southeastern University and a Masters of Education in Administration and Supervision from Southern University. St. Pierre promotes rigorous, relevant, and pertinent information that students can utilize once they graduate from high school.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **LAST CALL! Principal Coaching Support on School Environment**

The Department is looking for 125 school principals who would like to participate in coaching services to improve their school environment for the 2023-2024 school year at no cost to the school/system. This partnership is designed as a part of the state's recruitment and retention strategy to support school leaders in leading positive, inclusive schools that foster strong retention and staff morale.

**School/System Leaders** are asked to complete the [interest form](#) by **July 7**. To ensure a variety of representation from across the state, the Department will review inquiries from interested stakeholders to ensure representation and notify the schools that are selected for this program by **mid-July**.

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

## **Teacher Leader Summit**

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Teacher Leader Summit a huge success this year. Session decks are located in the C-vent app. Attendance rosters and session decks can also be found in the [TL Summit Presentations folder](#). Please email [events@emergentmethod.com](mailto:events@emergentmethod.com) with questions.

## **New Research: Zearn Impacts Louisiana Students**

Zearn, in collaboration with the Department, has recently released results of ESSA-qualifying efficacy research on [Zearn's impact](#) on Louisiana students' math performance. Key findings of this Louisiana-based study of 31 systems and over 14,000 students show the following results:

- Elementary and middle school students who consistently used Zearn Math scored significantly higher on 2022 LEAP than matched peers who did not use Zearn Math. This finding was consistent across subgroups including Black and/or Latino students, economically disadvantaged students, multilingual learners, students in special education and chronically absent students.
- The impact was greatest for Louisiana students not yet meeting Mastery: these students gained 1.5 to 2.0 years of math learning in one academic year when they consistently used Zearn Math.
- 70% of students at the lowest level of math achievement who consistently used Zearn Math improved their achievement level on the 2022 LEAP, compared to just 45% of students at the same starting level who did not use Zearn.

To learn more about the details of the study, reference the [full report](#). An overview of the findings along with a preview of all Math Refresh initiatives is available through the recording of the [State of Math](#) webinar. Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **2023 Believe and Prepare End of Year Surveys**

The LDOE hopes to gather the experiences and opinions of Mentor Teachers and their principals in order to steer the future of our Teacher Leader Initiatives through two end of year surveys. Review the description of each survey and share with mentors in your schools. All surveys should be completed by **Friday, July 14**.

### **2023 Believe and Prepare: Principal Survey**

This [survey](#) is to be completed by all principals that have had teachers complete Mentor or Content Leader training in the past six years, have Mentors that served on their campus as a mentor to an undergraduate or post baccalaureate resident this school year (2022-2023) or have Content Leaders serving in the role this school year (2022-2023).

### **2023 Believe and Prepare: Mentor Survey**

This [survey](#) is to be completed by all Mentors that have completed training in the past six years or served as a mentor to an undergraduate or post baccalaureate resident this school year (2022-2023). Please share the [survey link](#) with the mentors on your campus.

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

## RESOURCES

### **Louisiana Special Education Playbook**

The Department is excited to launch a [Special Education Playbook](#) that includes three best instructional practices aimed at accelerating learning and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. This guidance is intended to promote the widespread adoption of these best practices and is focused on teaching and learning strategies for students with disabilities; leadership of cross-departmental teams are required to implement these best practices. Please contact [diverselearnersupport@la.gov](mailto:diverselearnersupport@la.gov) with questions.

### **Family Summer Support Toolkit**

The [Family Summer Support Toolkit](#) provides handouts for parents and sample social media posts for school systems to use in engaging families during the summer in math and literacy. The posts will include links to activities to send home and are designed to encourage families to continue learning throughout the summer in a fun and engaging way. The toolkit also highlights digital resources for families of students with disabilities and English Learners. Please contact [literacy@la.gov](mailto:literacy@la.gov) with questions.

### **Social Studies Course Frameworks Additional Units Added**

The Department is developing Social Studies Course Frameworks aligned to the [2022 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies \(LSSSS\)](#) for Kindergarten through Grade 8, high school Civics, and high school U.S. History. These resources are designed to support teachers in implementing the 2022 LSSSS by scoping and sequencing content standards over the course of the year.

Additional completed units have been added and can be accessed on the [K-12 Social Studies Resources page](#). Please contact [classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov](mailto:classroomsupporttoolbox@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, 2024. Please see the [Bayou Bridges FAQ document](#) for more details about curriculum development and release dates. Please contact [classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov](mailto:classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov) with questions.



## **New Resources: Louisiana Student Standards for Science Crosswalk Documents**

To support systems, schools, and teachers in implementing the [Louisiana Student Standards for Science](#), the Department has released a series of crosswalk documents. The crosswalk documents provide guidance to assist with determining alignment to Louisiana Student Standards for Science for resources designed for the Next Generation Science Standards. Crosswalks for [Kindergarten](#) and [Grade 1](#) and have now been added to the suite of documents for grades K-8, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, Physical Science, and Physics. All crosswalk documents can be found on the [K-12 Science Resources webpage](#). Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Summer Computer Science Training for K-12 Teachers**

The Department has partnered with Code.org to offer [professional learning opportunities](#) designed to support Louisiana educators to teach, engage, and empower students to explore computer science (CS). Interested educators should [register](#) to secure a place in the training designed to support their grade band. Seating is limited and will be available on a first- come, first- served basis. Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

### **The New Teacher Experience: Summer Kick Off**

The Louisiana Department of Education will host a Summer Kick-off for the New Teacher Experience on July 26 from 8 am - 4 pm in Baton Rouge, LA for 500 first year teachers. The goals of the event are to:

- Welcome new teachers to the profession.
- Understand the components of Louisiana's New Teacher Experience.
- Engage in professional learning around topics relevant to new teachers.
- Provide statewide networking opportunities for new teachers.

[Registration](#) for this event will be first come, first served. The registration will close on **July 7** or once capacity is reached, whichever comes first.

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

### **The New Teacher Experience: Professional Learning Modules**

The Department, in partnership with A+PEL, has developed [Professional Learning Modules](#) on topics that are critical for new teacher success. **Registration for these modules is open now.** These modules include online asynchronous content followed by an in person learning lab where participants practice and apply these concepts. These five modules are designed to build learning throughout the year. Teachers are expected to complete the entire series of Professional Learning Modules.

- Module 1: Classroom Management/Classroom Environment
- Module 2: Standards and Curriculum
- Module 3: Data Literacy
- Module 4: Literacy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners
- Module 5: Parent and Community Engagement

[Registration](#) is open to the first 1,000 teachers. Please contact [laurie.carlton@la.gov](mailto:laurie.carlton@la.gov) with any questions.

## **Save the Date: 2023 LATM/LSTA Joint Conference**

The Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics (LATM) and the Louisiana Science Teachers Association (LSTA) Joint Conference will be held on November 2-3 at the Raising Cane's River Center in Baton Rouge. Registration details will be shared on the [LSTA website](#) and in future newsletters. Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **Math Refresh Summer Webinar Series**

The Department's math team will host a summer webinar series for current principals on the [Louisiana Math Refresh](#). Each webinar will focus on a specific topic designed to help school leaders impact math instruction. Session descriptions and registration information can be found in the [Math Refresh Summer Webinar Series flyer](#). Math teachers, coaches, content supervisors, and administrators should register using school or system email addresses. Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **School Support Institutes**

The Division of School Improvement is excited to announce that the [School Support Institutes 2023- 2024](#) is fast approaching! We truly look forward to seeing those who have registered. Over the course of the year, School Support Institutes aim to equip your leadership team with the knowledge, strategies, and resources needed to drive positive change within your schools. Get ready for an enriching experience where you'll dive into real world application of evidence-based practices and the opportunity to collaborate with fellow school leaders to meet the diverse needs of all students. Please contact [schoolimprovementdivision@la.gov](mailto:schoolimprovementdivision@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**

If you have an extraordinary building-level leader you would like to recommend to be highlighted in future newsletters, please submit information about the outstanding leader using this [form](#). You can also use the form to share with us some topics you would like to see highlighted for 2023-2024 (e.g. recruitment and retention, accelerating learning, instructional leadership teams, etc.).

## **DATES TO CONSIDER FOR BUILDING-LEVEL LEADERS**

Important Dates	
<a href="#">Louisiana Library Association (LLA) Conference</a>	July 6 - 8
<a href="#">New Teacher Experience Summer Kick Off Registration Ends</a>	July 7
<a href="#">New Teacher Experience Kick Off Event</a>	July 26
<a href="#">Math Refresh Webinar: Build Fluency with New Math Fluency Resources</a>	July 20 at 11 am