

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

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

August 24, 2022

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PRINCIPAL CORNER

This Year Will Be GREAT – But Not Perfect – So Be Ready For Every Opportunity!

2023 OVERALL
PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



Dr. David Schexnaydre, Jr.
St. Charles Parish
Twitter: [@DrDSchex](#)

Welcome back, Louisiana Principals - It's going to be a great year! I can feel it in the air – Can you?

My school's first day back for teachers was a few weeks ago. I spent all summer making sure every detail was perfect, and I left the building on Sunday evening feeling great about Monday morning.

So what could possibly go wrong?

When I walked in early Monday morning, it hit me like a wall of hot air. Our air conditioner had gone out overnight. The building was hot and miserable, and we had over 100 faculty and staff showing up soon.

Initially, I wanted to be aggravated, but then I thought about how I expect my staff and students to react in the face of a challenge: we take a mindful moment, and then find a way to fix it and make it work. The principal is the leader in the building and sets the example. I expect our students and teachers to handle obstacles in a positive, productive manner, so I needed to do the same.

After examining the campus, I found one room that was run on a different unit that still had air. We called an audible and moved all of our setup and plans to that room and packed everyone in there. It wasn't perfect, but we made it work and had a productive day.

My message that morning to our staff is the same one I share with you today: We are going to do our best every day, and this year will be great, but there will be obstacles. It's in those moments that we choose to lead by example, and find a way to lead everyone to success.

Here are a few quick tips on how to see the opportunity in every challenge:

- Model being a solution-oriented, problem-solver – Especially during challenging times.
- Be open to feedback from others – If we want others to take feedback productively, we must set the example.
- Don't make decisions around convenience or comfort, but rather around progress and effectiveness.
- Strive to be student-centered and employee-friendly – Build structures to elevate student and teacher voice.
- Work collaboratively – Empower students and teachers to be the change they envision.

We are ready to move beyond the past few years of COVID and devastating weather. Our focus is on the road ahead and not the images in our rearview. It's going to be great, but there will be challenges. Be ready for them and use them as opportunities to exhibit real leadership and display your greatness! Geaux be great!

Dr. David Schexnydre, Principal, Harry Hurst Middle School, St. Charles Parish Schools

LDOE CORNER

Happy New Year! As leaders, we have a core set of beliefs that shapes the vision and mission of our schools. Those statements paint the picture of what we strive for and hope to become. Two years ago, with your input, we developed belief statements, a vision, and a mission that signal what we believe about education in Louisiana and where we are heading.

Louisiana believes:

- Children are our highest priority.
- Families are our partners.
- Educators are valued professionals.
- Graduates must be ready.
- Equity matters.
- Choice expands opportunities.
- Schools are invaluable to communities.
- Our future is bright.



LDOE Vision

It is our vision that every child can reach their potential, no matter where they're from, how much money their family makes, or where they live.

LDOE Mission

Our mission is to give all children the opportunities and tools they deserve, so they are prepared to graduate high school ready for success in a career, college, or service.

It is imperative that the goals, priorities, and strategic plan that guide decision making directly support those statements. Our six critical goals follow a child's educational journey: students enter kindergarten ready; students achieve mastery on third and eighth grade content; and students graduate high school on time, with a credential, eligible for TOPS.

As a state, and like your school system, we have a strategic plan and budget that is aligned to five priorities that will help us reach those goals, and ultimately make our vision a reality.

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

It is working. Recently, our state assessment results were released, and, as expected, Louisiana is on the rise. The LEAP 2025 results indicate signs of academic recovery after a challenging couple of years.

- The rate of students scoring Mastery and above improved among all subjects in grades 3-12.
- 80% of traditional school systems improved.
- For students in grades 3-8, **both ELA & Math Mastery rates improved by 3 percentage points.**
- For student groups most impacted by the pandemic, **the rate of students scoring Mastery and above improved for many student groups** including students who are economically disadvantaged, Black or African American students, and students with disabilities.

This was expected because our educators have continued to go above and beyond to ensure the success of all students every day. These results are one indication that we are on track to achieving our critical goals. Yes, it is time to celebrate, and it is also a time to stay committed to our goals and priorities. With a new school year comes new faces, opportunities, and challenges, yet our beliefs, vision, and mission remain steady. We must continue to focus on implementing strong, coherent plans that lead to improvements for our educators and kids.

We believe in you and your schools. We have the best of the best here in Louisiana, and I would put our school leaders up against any others in the country. Your expertise, commitment, and leadership is unmatched. Here's to another year of growth!

Em Cooper, Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Educator Development

DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Principal Webinar Series

The LDOE will hold a monthly webinar series for current school leaders. The August webinar will highlight our 2023 State Principal of the Year, David Schexnaydre, and Division Level Honorees Heather Brooks, Michael Hilton, and Tamela Phillips. These celebrated principals will take part in a panel discussion focusing on strong back to school practices.

Webinar Date/Time: August 31, 1-2 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98516144298?pwd=VHoxSlhaNWZhFZUNrQWICS05MRHIzZz09>

Meeting ID: 985 1614 4298

Passcode: 125571

Please reach out to louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Educator Evaluation Survey

We would love educators to share their opinions and ideas on the current evaluation system. Please encourage your teachers and leaders to complete the [leader survey](#) and [teacher survey](#) by **September 30**.

Please email compass@la.gov with questions.

Podcast Episode Released: “Leading the Review with Eric Hirsch”

[Teacher Leader Lagniappe](#) is the podcast that offers a little something extra for Louisiana educators. In [Season 2, Episode 3](#), Founding Executive of EdReports, Eric Hirsch, discusses the instructional review process, the curriculum landscape across our country, and why educators should implement high-quality materials into their teachings. Concordia Parish is highlighted for their summer learning program activities.

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

Please contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

Mentor Updates

During the most recent legislative session, funding for Mentor teachers was approved as part of the MFP budget. Mentors will now receive \$2,000. Year-long undergraduate residents will receive \$3,300. Mentors of both yearlong undergraduate residents and post-baccalaureate residents (first year PLs) will receive funding this year.

At the April BESE meeting, the Board approved a waiver for the Mentor policy for the 2022-2023 school year. Mentor teacher waivers will be granted on a case-by-case basis through the application process established by the LDOE and at no fee to the applicant, school system, or teacher preparation provider. **Principals**, you will receive an email asking you to electronically complete the principal attestation for any of your Mentors needing a waiver prior to **October 1**.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

RESOURCES

Below you will find quick links to a variety of resources developed by the Louisiana Department of Education.

- Teacher Leader Summit Resources can be accessed on the [2022 Teacher Leader Summit Materials Webpage](#).
- Pre-Educator Pathway Guidance can be accessed on the [Pre-Educator Pathway Resource Library](#).
- New Teacher Experience materials can be accessed on the [New Teacher Experience webpage](#).
- Literacy resources can be accessed in the [Literacy Library](#).
- Foundational Instruction for Reading Excellence (FIRE) Lessons for grades 3-5 can be found below and accessed in the [Literacy Library](#).
 - [Grade 3 Unit 1 - Teacher's Guide](#)
 - [Grade 3 Unit 1 - Student Activity Book](#)
 - [Grade 4 Unit 1 - Teacher's Guide](#)
 - [Grade 4 Unit 1 - Student Activity Book](#)
 - [Grade 5 Unit 1 - Teacher's Guide](#)
 - [Grade 5 Unit 1 - Student Activity Book](#)
- Social Studies New Standards information can be accessed below.
 - [2022 K-12 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies](#)
 - [K-12 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies FAQ](#)
- Accelerating Learning in Mathematics resources can be accessed below.
 - The [Accelerate Math](#) resources provide proactive support to upcoming classroom content to ensure students' readiness for grade level mathematics
 - Teachers and leaders who want to learn more about accelerating math learning should view the [Acceleration in Math Self-Paced Learning Modules](#).
- Grade 7 Louisiana Guide to Implementing Amplify Science can be accessed below.
 - The [Louisiana Guide to Implementing Amplify Grade 7](#) provides guidance regarding how high quality Amplify Science Louisiana Grade 7 units correlate with the [Louisiana Student Standards for Science](#) (LSSS).
- The EdTech team released the [Google Sheets Updates to Save Time](#) document that includes information on three Google Sheets features, along with additional tutorials that can save teachers and leaders precious time with organization and data analysis.

ACADEMIC CONTENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELA Guidebooks: Grade 8

The grade 8 ELA Guidebooks unit, The Tell-Tale Heart, will no longer include the independent read novel *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers. This text will be removed from all ELA Guidebooks and Imagine Learning (formerly LearnZillion) materials by the end of August. The text is no longer available for purchase through American Reading Company, and it will no longer be included in future student handout purchases from XanEdu.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022)

In Spring 2022, the Department offered systems the opportunity to participate in an implementation pilot and a materials review of three ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022) units; Because of Winn-Dixie, The Whipping Boy, and The Birchbark House. The systems who participated in the pilot and materials review were surveyed and the results from the pilot and materials review can be found in the [ELA Guidebooks 3-5 \(2022\) Feedback report](#). Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the Department will be in the process of applying the feedback to revisions of ELA Guidebooks 3-5 (2022).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Resources for School Librarians

LASL (Louisiana Association of School Librarians) would like to congratulate Kelsye Baudoin of Lafayette Parish on being named the 2022 Louisiana School Librarian of the Year.

The [Back to School Newsletter](#) is now available. Please join the [LASL mailing list](#) to receive resources and information on additional professional development opportunities and to celebrate with Louisiana school librarians. Information is also located on the [LASL Website](#), on [Facebook](#), and on [Twitter](#).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Science Teacher Leader Advisor Application Re-opening

The Department is seeking high school science teachers to join the 2022-2023 [Teacher Leader Advisor](#) cohort. Teachers of all high school science courses are needed to develop resources for use by Louisiana educators. Additional information and an updated application can be found on the Department's [Teacher Leader page](#). Applications will close on **September 16**.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education: Judges in the Classroom

Teachers have the opportunity to have a judge visit their classroom to speak on a selected topic. Interested teachers should return their completed request [form](#) and the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education will make the arrangements.

Please contact Peggy Cotogno at 504-566-1600 ext. 34 or peggy.cotogno@lsba.org with questions.

Foundational Literacy Modules for Grades 4-8 Educators Registration Open

The Department has partnered with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to offer five free asynchronous science of reading modules for grades 4 - 8 educators. The Professional Development Modules are focused on content that is teacher-friendly and provides the knowledge and skills necessary for intermediate and middle school classroom instruction by applying age-appropriate science of reading strategies. Modules will be available throughout the 2022 - 2023 school year. [Registration](#) is open and module release will be announced in future editions of the Teacher Leader Newsletter.

Quality Science and Math (QSM) Grant Program

The [Quality Science and Math Grant Program](#) awards grants of up to \$2,000 to Louisiana Pre-K-12 public school teachers for the purchase of non-consumable materials and equipment to be used in science, math, and STEM courses. The [application portal](#) is now open and will close on **September 11**. [Grant writing resources](#) and full program details are available on the [QSM website](#).

Please contact qsminfo@lsu.edu with questions.

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

2022 Presidential Awards for Mathematics and Science Teaching Finalists Announced

The [Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching](#) is the highest and most prestigious honor bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teaching. The Department is pleased to announce the finalists representing Louisiana for this award. These teachers are recognized not only for their deep content knowledge in the subjects they teach, but also for their ability to motivate and enable students to be successful.

Louisiana finalists in math are

- Krissy Allen, East Ouachita Middle School, Ouachita Parish;
- Mandy Fourrier, LSU Laboratory School; and
- Caroline Landon, University Elementary School, Caddo Parish.

Louisiana finalists in science are

- Regena Landry, Copper Mill Elementary, Zachary Community Schools; and
- Rebecca Svensson, LSU Laboratory School.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Searching for Louisiana's Next State Teacher, New Teacher, and Principal of the Year

The Department recognizes great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the Department honors some of the state's most successful educators through the Louisiana Teacher and Principal of the Year programs, as well as the New Teacher of the Year program. (Candidates for the New Teacher of the Year program must have less than one year teaching experience.)

Part of the selection process for naming the district and state-level winners includes recommendations from teachers, principals, district employees, parents, colleagues, and community members. To assist with the process, a nominations portal was created.

The nominations portal is open now and will close on September 30. Multiple nominations are accepted, as well as self-nominations. Upon portal close, the nomination information will be shared with school systems for their consideration.

Please share this [nomination portal link](#) with stakeholders and encourage everyone to nominate outstanding teachers and leaders.

For questions regarding Teacher/Principal of the Year contact excellenteducators@la.gov. For New Teacher of the Year contact Laurie.Carlton@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 AND SHOUT-OUTS

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.

Whitney Futch at Lenwil Elementary School in Ouachita Parish: "Mrs. Futch is the epitome of walking the walk with her teachers and staff. Her patience and understanding with our students and their families is unmatched and certainly admirable." *Submitted by Meredith Brown*

Abbi Macmurdo at Northshore High School in St. Tammany Parish: "In her first year as AP, Abbi maintained a positive attitude, a calm and steady demeanor, and an open ear for all of her teachers. Her patient, methodical approach to finding solutions that put students first while still meeting her teacher's needs was greatly appreciated." *Submitted by Lisa Salles*

Dr. Gregory Thompson at McKinley High School in East Baton Rouge Parish: "Thank you Dr. Thompson for your vision, dedication and commitment to excellence at McKinley High School. Your experience and leadership will take the school to new heights!." *Submitted anonymously*

Sonya Webber at ENCORE Academy in Orleans Parish: "Sonya is the person who demonstrates consistency, community, kindness, and creativity at our school. She is the "go-to" person outside of the principal. She works hard, makes sure the logistics of the school runs smoothly, while also making sure all staff have everything they need to be successful." *Submitted by Jessica Medlock*

Erikka Wishom at Port Allen Elementary School in West Baton Rouge Parish: "She has flipped the culture at PAES in one year as principal. From community runs, parades, fundraisers, playground equipment- she has mobilized the PAES community. She focuses on recognizing students for doing the right things; reading scores made significant gains in just one year as their area of focus." *Submitted by Julie Mayeux*

DATES TO CONSIDER FOR BUILDING-LEVEL LEADERS

Important Dates	
Practicing Principal Webinar	August 31 at 1 p.m.
Quality Science and Math Grant Program Applications Deadline	September 11
Science Teacher Leader Advisor Application Deadline	September 16
Educator Evaluation Leader Survey Deadline	September 30
Educator Evaluation Teacher Survey Deadline	September 30
Principal, Teacher, and New Teacher of the Year Nominations Due	September 30