

LOUISIANA PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

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

November 16, 2023

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Principal Corner



According to John Hattie, “there is no influence with the greatest impact on student achievement than having a collection of teachers with the same belief in their ability to positively affect students.” Our nation is currently experiencing a crisis in education due largely to a shortage of teachers. This is one of many reasons why it is important to invest in and grow the capacity of the teachers in our buildings. By investing in the development and growth of teachers, our school has achieved historic academic achievement due primarily to high quality teaching leading to student learning. This investment in human capital has paid huge dividends for students, families, and the community.

The following are some tips that I have used to develop, grow, and support teachers:

Provide professional learning that is relevant and aligned to teacher needs.

Professional learning for teachers cannot be reserved as a beginning-of-the-year or once-a-month event if the goal is student achievement. We provide our teachers with professional learning that is research-based, centered on equipping teachers with instructional strategies that meet the needs of our diverse student population. The majority of these strategies are focused on improving our students’ literacy in the areas of reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy. Our teachers develop confidence and leave their weekly sessions with a toolbox of resources. These resources allow teachers to provide opportunities for their students to think critically and problem solve while engaging with mastery level curriculum. Our teacher collaboration is led by certified, highly-qualified master and mentor teachers who have a track record of growing students academically in their respective content areas of expertise.

Provide teachers with opportunities and time to collaborate with peers.

The term professional learning communities or PLCs is not a new trend in education, but the ability for teachers to engage in a PLC cycle and produce positive outcomes for students remains a challenge for some. During this time, teachers analyze student work and assessment data in order to identify unfinished learning. Upon identification of the various student needs, strategic next steps are developed

to plan for accelerated instruction to their students. Our PLCs are also used to provide teachers with the time to reflect on their practices and monitor student progress.

Invest in the well-being of teachers.

One of my non-negotiables as a principal is to provide differentiated support for our teachers. Our leadership team, master teachers, and mentor teachers spend most of the instructional day in classrooms providing support. The mantra I communicate via words as well as actions, *“Take care of my teachers, so they can take care of my students.”* Each teacher on the campus is assigned an area school leader, master teacher, and mentor teacher. The ability to have three teacher leaders responsible for one classroom teacher is multi-layered to ensure the growth and success of our human capital. This initiative is made possible due to our school’s participation in the NIET/TAP partnership. In addition to human support, providing teachers with various enrichment activities throughout the school year to address the emotional stressors encountered in today’s classroom is a benefit. Some of the activities include: yoga, meditation, celebration of short-term wins, luncheons, quarterly energy treat bags with motivational notes, team building activities/competition, and listening sessions.

In closing, our academic excellence would not be possible without high quality instruction. The investment in teacher development and support has paid huge dividends. Our continued goal for our school is to be a beacon of light and support for teachers and a pathway for students to become lifelong learners.

**Marvin M. Evans, 2024 Louisiana High School Principal of the Year
Donaldsonville High School, Ascension Parish**

LDOE Corner



It has been said that recognition is the greatest motivator. It can be a powerful catalyst for sure.

Research shows that when employees are recognized for their work, productivity, engagement, morale, and enthusiasm often increase. Culture improves, turnover and absenteeism decrease, and recruitment and retention also often increase. The same is true for education stakeholders.

As a veteran educator, and having led awards initiatives across the agency for many years, I’ve had the awesome opportunity of having met some of the state’s most exemplary education stakeholders. And in doing so, I’ve seen firsthand the impact of educator recognition.

In reflecting on the career paths of previous educator honorees, some of them are now serving as deans and professors of colleges, writing books, trademarking content, serving as motivational speakers, and leading state-wide and national efforts, to name a few. Many honorees have remained in their teaching and/or leadership roles and are also having a powerful impact on the lives of students and the education profession. In speaking with honorees through the years, the consensus continues to be that being validated for their work, and named as a state-level honoree, often gave them more confidence in their work, made them feel more empowered, and further ignited their passion and mission, which ultimately led them to strive for and achieve greater heights.

Recognition is critical to success.

We know that recognition of exceptional education stakeholders is critical to student success. With that, the Department is committed to acknowledging, honoring, and spotlighting exceptional education stakeholders, those who exemplify Louisiana's education profession, through various awards programs. To share information about the awards programs and opportunities at the Department, the [Award Initiatives Overview document](#) was created. This document provides valuable information about the various awards initiatives across the agency which allow us to shine the spotlight on exemplary students, educators, schools, school systems, and staff who are invaluable to our communities and state. Bringing attention to these education superstars is a very easy way to say "We see you. We value you. We thank you for all that you do!"

November is National Gratitude Month!

During the month of November, it is often a time when we think about gratitude. It's a time when many think about all we are thankful for and all we have. It's also a great time to show gratitude! During this month of gratitude, I encourage us all to think about the exemplary students, teachers, leaders, schools, school systems, and staff members we know who are going above and beyond, positively impacting the education profession, and say, "Thank You!"

Department's Awards Initiatives

Please take a moment to review the Department's [Award Initiatives Overview document](#). It's organized by award categories: Students, Staff/Educators, and Schools and/or School Systems. As November comes to a close, I encourage us all to think about the education rock stars we know and consider recommending them for one of the Department's award programs. I also challenge us to publicly thank an education stakeholder this week. It's an easy gesture and yet can have a powerful impact. To learn more about awards initiatives at the Louisiana Department of Education, visit the [Awards page](#) and the [Awards library](#) on the Department's website. For questions and/or if you would like to schedule time to collaborate, please reach out to our team at excellenteducators@la.gov.

Joni Marionneaux Lacy, Talent Project Director, Office of School Systems Relations

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Principal's Webinar Series

The LDOE hosts a monthly webinar series for current school leaders and principal supervisors on best practices in school leadership aligned to the state's priorities. Each month, the webinar features national and Louisiana experts sharing strategies and tools on a specific topic necessary for being effective in the school leader role. The webinar in November will feature Louisiana's 2024 Principal of the Year honorees. Information on various awards initiatives across the agency which allow us to shine the spotlight on exemplary students, educators, schools, school systems, and staff who are invaluable to our communities and state will be shared.

Webinar Date and Time: November 27, 1 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97054177103?pwd=Vm9DYmZpNXhKSGQrVnJwSjVMb25aZz09>

Webinar Phone Number: 346-248-7799

Meeting ID#: 970 5417 7103

Passcode: 310386

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Teacher and Principal of the Year Application Online Portals Now Open

The online portals for coordinators and state-level applicants for Teacher and Principal of the Year are now open. All application materials and links to the online portals are available in the [Awards Library](#) and on the [Award Programs Awards](#) page.

All school systems are encouraged to select up to three teachers and three principals, one per division (elementary, middle, and high), as their local-level honorees and submit these selections to the state process. School systems without a formal selection process in place may elect to send their candidates directly to the state-level process.

State-level applications are due by January 11, 2024, and must be submitted via the online application portal.

The dates and times of future webinars are listed in the [Informational Webinars for Candidates and Stakeholders document](#).

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions.

New Teacher of the Year Application Process Open

The New Teacher of the Year application process for the 2023-2024 school year is now open. The application materials and timelines are available in the [Library](#) on the [Awards](#) page.

All school systems are encouraged to select up to three *new* teachers (with less than one year of teaching experience), one per division (elementary, middle, and high) as their local-level honorees, and submit these selections to the state process.

State-level applications must be submitted via an [online application portal](#) by January 26. [The New Teacher of the Year Timeline document](#) includes all important dates and upcoming informational webinars for new teachers advancing to the state-level process.

Please contact laurie.carlton@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit: Leading the Next Level

The 12th annual Teacher Leader Summit will be held **May 28-30, 2024**, in New Orleans at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. This year, the Summit will focus on supporting educators in “Leading the Next Level”. Educator preparation program faculty are encouraged to attend.

The objectives for the Teacher Leader Summit are

- to improve the everyday practice of educators in Louisiana by building their knowledge and skill in key areas related to their role.
- to provide opportunities for educators to collaborate and share best practices.
- to introduce high-quality strategies, resources, and professional development aligned to the state priorities that can be adopted and scaled in schools and school systems across Louisiana.
- to foster a culture that celebrates and engages educators and empowers and inspires them to take on an even greater leadership role within their classrooms, schools, and school systems.

Registration is first-come, first-served, with early bird registration opening Friday, January 5, 2024 and closing on Friday, February 2, 2024. Regular registration will open on Saturday, February 3, 2024 and will

close on March 15, 2024, or at sellout.

LDOE is looking for talented leaders to apply to present sessions at this year's Summit. Presenter applications will open Friday, January 5, 2024 and will close Wednesday, January 31, 2024.

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

RESOURCES

ACADEMICS

Computer Science Week - December 4-10

Computer Science Education Week (CSEd Week) is December 4-10. [CSEd Week](#) will be an opportunity for students in grades K-12 to experience a variety of learning activities with their teachers or community partners that focus on introducing students to computer science, showing that anyone can learn the basics of coding, and increasing awareness of career opportunities in the computing industry. A bank of free resources on the [STEM web page](#) is available to support schools and systems in identifying possible activities to implement during CSEd Week.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

High School Science Resources for Learning Recovery

The LDOE is supplying resources aimed at supporting learning loss recovery in high school biology, chemistry, and physics to all public high schools. To support the implementation of these materials, teachers of any of the three courses will have access to regional, in-person training at no cost to systems. The deadline to complete the [Science Learning Recovery Interest form](#) to receive future communication regarding materials delivery and professional learning registration has been extended to **November 17**. Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

ELA

ELA Guidebooks 6-8 (2024) Materials Review

The LDOE is releasing new ELA Guidebook units for grades 6-8 in the spring of 2024. One unit per grade level is currently available on the [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#). The ELA content team is seeking teachers and teacher leaders of grades 6-8 ELA to conduct a review of the released units and materials in order to receive feedback prior to the official release of all units in the spring.

Teachers and instructional leaders interested in participating in this feedback cycle should complete the [interest form](#) by **December 1**.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks Open Access Version on Imagine Learning

Beginning June 2024, Imagine Learning (formerly LearnZillion) will no longer host the open access version of ELA Guidebooks 2.0 and 3.0 for grades 3-12. ELA Guidebooks 3.0 for grades 3-8 and the most current version of ELA Guidebooks for grades 3-12 remains openly available on [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

MATH

Zearn Mid-Year Checkpoint

As the end of the first semester approaches, take time to check on key indicators of success for Zearn Implementation. During reflection, consider the following:

- Are students engaging with three grade-level lessons per week in Zearn?
- Is the engagement productive?
- Are K-5 students gaining the appropriate fluencies for the grade at this time of year?
- Are teachers keeping parents informed of students' Zearn engagement and fluency attainment?

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum Updates

All grade 5 Bayou Bridges units are now available. Please visit the [Bayou Bridges Resource page](#) to access. Units are aligned to meet the [2022 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies](#). All grade 3 units will be published by **December 8**. Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

SCIENCE

Save the date: High School Science Professional Learning

The LDOE is supplying resources aimed at supporting learning loss recovery in high school biology, chemistry, and physics to all public high schools. To support the implementation of these materials, teachers of any of the three courses will have access to regional, in-person training at no cost to systems.

Training opportunities will take place on one or more of the following dates:

- January 4 - 5
- January 9 - 10
- January 11 - 12

The LDOE will provide additional communications regarding registration and access to learning recovery resources to system-level science or curriculum supervisors.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

DIGITAL LEARNING

Kami for All

Welcome to the "Kam-i-ly"! Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, every K-12 school system teacher and student will enjoy free access to Kami's premium version, offering over 40 valuable tools and features. Kami supports teachers across all grade levels and curricula, enabling students to annotate, comment, and collaborate on various document types. This will also allow teachers to assign and collect work from students with just one click to any learning management system (LMS).

Teachers and leaders can prepare by:

- **Attending Kick-off Sessions at Teacher Leader Summit 2024:** Get a head start on this initiative by attending the kick-off sessions.
- **Creating a Professional Learning Plan:** Teacher leaders can create a tailored professional learning plan for their school or school system.
- **Participating in summer professional learning:** Take advantage of open summer professional learning opportunities.

School system technology leaders will be contacted for license distribution. The onboarding process will run from November to May.

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

Jamboard

[Google](#) has announced that its whiteboarding app [Jamboard](#) will wind down toward the end of 2024. The app will go into read-only mode on October 1, 2024, and will no longer be available after December 31, 2024.

Google released information about alternatives, [Figma](#) and [Miro](#). Figma is a design and collaboration tool that allows users to create and edit design files collaboratively in real-time. Miro, on the other hand, is a digital whiteboarding platform that facilitates collaboration, brainstorming, and visual thinking. [Kami](#) and [Canva](#) are also tools with whiteboarding and collaborative capabilities.

The LDOE will provide guidance and information in future communications regarding alternative collaboration tools to ensure educators have the necessary resources for seamless instruction as Jamboard phases out.

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

LITERACY

Professional Growth Videos Available in the Literacy Library

New professional growth videos for teachers and leaders have been added to the [professional growth section](#) of the Literacy Library. Utilize these free resources to learn more about the science of reading, using data to inform literacy instruction, and implementing high-quality instructional materials effectively.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Assessment Literacy Initiative

The LDOE, in partnership with the Center for Assessment, will continue the Assessment Literacy Initiative. The [Effective Assessment Practices Webinar Series for Teachers and Leaders](#) is a series of monthly, one-hour webinars that provide opportunities for Louisiana educators to learn about and discuss the most important and practical topics related to assessment in school systems and classrooms.

The next webinar will be Formative Assessment Strategies (Part II): What Do Teachers and Leaders Need to Know and Do and a 30-minute question and answer session will be held at 4:30 p.m., immediately following the webinar.

Webinar Date and Time: December 7 at 3:30 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89463788844>

Webinar Phone Number: 305-224-1968

Meeting ID#: 894 6378 8844

Meeting Passcode: 356706

Please refer to the Effective Assessment Practices Webinar Series for Teachers and Leaders [document](#) for more information regarding the full series of dates, topics, and Zoom links.

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

Green Ribbon Schools Application Now Open

The LDOE is excited to announce that the [application](#) to be recognized as a [Green Ribbon School](#) for the 2023-2024 school year is now open. Eligibility requirements include that schools, systems, and early learning centers show progress in

- reducing environmental impacts and costs;
- improving health and wellness; and
- providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

Additional information is available on the [Environmental Education](#) web page.

Please contact environmentaleducation@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Advisor Applications - Opening Soon

[Teacher Leader Advisors](#) (TLAs) are highly motivated educators who work alongside the LDOE team to support the mission and vision of the Louisiana Department of Education. TLAs serve an essential role in supporting key priorities by creating resources for teachers, engaging in work that allows them to develop their understanding of curricula, and providing training for teachers. Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs) are paid for the work completed, and the experience allows educators to expand their positive impact beyond the classroom by influencing over 750,000 students and over 50,000 Louisiana educators. Learn more about [Teacher Leader Advisors](#) today! Applications for the 2024-2025 Teacher Leader Advisor cohort open **November 27**. Educators do not need to be school-site teacher leaders to apply.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Do you have a colleague who would benefit from receiving this newsletter? Forward this copy and encourage them to [subscribe](#) to 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 the [LDOE Principal's Newsletter Leader Spotlight Nomination Form](#). This note of appreciation will be included in our next monthly newsletter.

DATES TO CONSIDER FOR BUILDING-LEVEL LEADERS

Important Dates	
Monthly Principal Webinar: Principal of the Year honorees and Educator Support	November 27 at 1 p.m.
ELA Guidebooks 6-8 (2024) Materials Review interest form due	December 1
Effective Literacy Assessment Practices Webinar	December 7 at 3:30 p.m.