

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PREPARATION PROVIDER MONTHLY EMAIL

Dear Believe and Prepare Community,

Legislation and policy are important levers in leading change across Louisiana's schools. There are several bills that passed during the 2023 Legislative Session that are important for faculty of educator preparation programs to be aware of as we continue to improve our education system. During this month's webinar, we will share more about these key pieces of legislation.

- **HCR 17:** Continues the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force
- **HB 1:** Allocates teacher and staff stipends and \$25M for differentiated compensation; provides more than \$87M for early childhood care and education
- **HB 12:** Prohibits promotion to 4th grade for students with reading deficiencies
- **Act 99:** Creates the Associate Educator Program
- **Act 266:** Requires administration of certain dyslexia screeners
- **Act 347:** Requires instruction on foundational numeracy skills standards for candidates seeking certification
- **Act 392:** Revises certification law including adding back flexibilities for entrance into preparation programs and the alignment of literacy requirements to allow for traditionally prepared educators and alternately prepared educators to have the same options to meet literacy requirements, affecting both initial preparation and add-on requirements; requires a criminal history check for certification for initial applicants beginning January 1, 2025

As you all begin the school year, I encourage you to have any new faculty members sign up for our monthly email and attend our monthly webinars the last Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., so that they can stay connected to the vision and strategy in birth-grade 12 education and receive communication about important information and reminders. Email believeandprepare@la.gov for details on signing up for the newsletter or monthly calls.

Em Cooper, Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Educator Development

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 22: Mentor and Resident funding overview [webinar](#)

August 30: Preparation Provider monthly [webinar](#)

NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Preparation Provider Monthly Webinar

Please join the first monthly webinar of the 2023-2024 school year on Wednesday, August 30.

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Webinar Details:

- Webinar Date and Time: Wednesday, August 30 from 10-11 a.m.
- Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/440246097>
- Webinar Phone Number: 646-876-9923
- Meeting ID#: 440 246 097

Please contact nicole.bono@la.gov with questions.

Mentor and Resident Funding Overview Call

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the data collection for the mentor compensation will take place using a similar process to what was used in 2022-2023. Join the Fall 2023 Mentor and Resident Funding call to review the funding eligibility and process.

Date/Time: Tuesday, August 22

Zoom: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/3455048179>

Phone: +14703812552,,3455048179#

Meeting ID: 345 504 8179

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

New Teacher of the Year Announced

The Louisiana Department of Education is proud to announce the 2024 New Teacher of the Year.

Phoenix Morel LeBlanc is currently teaching 7th grade science at Albany Middle School in Albany, Louisiana. LeBlanc received a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Education from Southeastern Louisiana University. LeBlanc strives to engage students in the practice of science through utilizing meaningful real-world phenomena that students investigate both inside and outside the classroom. LeBlanc is also the head cheerleading coach at Albany Middle School and a sponsor of the Albany Middle School science club. The Albany Middle School science club focuses on exploring various fields of science and improving their community. LeBlanc is a passionate teacher who strives to provide an exceptional educational experience and to show her students and athletes they have a profound impact on the world around them.

Phoenix LeBlanc, along with the other eight New Teacher of the Year finalists will serve as New Teacher Advisors for the New Teacher Experience.

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

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Geaux Teach Scholarship Program

Act 463 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature established the Geaux Teach Program, which provides scholarships to students who are enrolled in teacher preparation programs at the state's postsecondary institutions that are approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Funding is also available to students attending certified alternative teacher preparation programs approved by BESE.

Students may receive up to \$5,000 annually to cover the cost of tuition fees, textbooks, and instructional materials required for enrollment. Providers will receive their 2023-2024 Geaux Teach allocations from LOSFA in August.

Additional information about the Geaux Teach Program, including eligibility requirements, the [Geaux Teach Application](#), and answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) may be accessed on the [LOSEA website](#).

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with any questions.

2023-2024 Mentor Waiver Application is Open

At the April BESE meeting, the Board approved a waiver for the Mentor policy for the 2023-2024 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. The waiver will be issued by the LDOE for educators highly recommended by the mentor's principal and who possess one or more of the following qualifications:

1. Two years of Highly Effective Compass ratings;
2. National Board Certification;
3. Statewide or national distinction for excellence in teaching;
4. Experience as a TAP mentor, master teacher, executive master teacher, or certified TAP evaluator;
5. Content leader experience, as evidenced by participation in Content Leader training or redelivery of professional development; or
6. Master's or doctorate in education and exemplary experience hosting student teachers.

The 2023-2024 Mentor Waiver [application](#) is currently open.

[Mentor Waiver Applications](#) should be created by the **system leader** responsible for resident placement and/or Mentor recruitment and support. Preparation provider partners should be copied on the application, so that you will receive updates as the application progresses through the process. The [Mentor Credential Waiver Application guide](#) provides step by step directions on the application process.

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Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

Updated Elementary Multiple Subjects Praxis Exam

In 2022, the state legislature passed [Act No. 448](#), which requires kindergarten through third-grade teachers seeking initial licensure to pass an examination of the teaching of reading that is scientifically researched and evidence-based. This assessment will replace the existing Reading Language Arts exam, which will be a part of the Louisiana Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects Praxis® exam.

New Updates: The newly designed Louisiana Elementary Multiple Subjects exam will not be adopted and ready for use in 2023 as previously anticipated. Currently enrolled and prospective teacher candidates may continue to take the Elementary Multiple Subjects Exam (5001) for certification until December 31, 2023.

Policy will be updated to include the following statement: *Beginning January 1, 2024, as required per R.S. 17:7.1(A)(1), an applicant applying for initial certification to teach kindergarten through third grade shall pass the BESE-approved Teaching of Reading: Elementary or Teaching of Reading: Elementary Subtest exam in accordance with §303 of this part. Candidates already enrolled in the year-long residency and holding either the PL or R prior to January 1, 2025 are not subject to this provision.*

Additional updates will be provided in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact believeandprepare@la.gov.

Certification Updates

Policy Updates

Policy for most of the legislative updates will be proposed at August BESE. Even though the GPA flexibility law is effective now, BESE policy must be promulgated to align with it. Candidates could be provisionally enrolled until BESE policy is in place. In addition to the policy updates to align with legislation, other certification policy recommendations will also be made, including the adoption of new exams for special education certification. ETS is revamping the current special education exam structure and phasing out and replacing existing exams. These exams will have the standard one-year overlap where current or new exams will be accepted.

Literacy

In alignment with 2021 legislation, last year, literacy policy updates were approved regarding the science of reading competencies. Those competencies are required for all literacy coursework. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, program **completers** are required to have the updated literacy foundations/science of reading-aligned coursework. The changes for both initial and add-on literacy coursework include the requirement for 9 semester hours of literacy coursework for special education areas.

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While initially the policy around add-on requirements became effective in January of this year, a proposal to update literacy policy specifically around the Special Education: Mild/Moderate certification was **approved at June BESE**.

- The policy has a **future effective date** for the add-on policy to align with program requirements (2024-2025).
- Any applications **denied** specifically for literacy issues were **re-reviewed and processed** in alignment with the newly adopted policy.
- Additional policy updates to align with law will be proposed in August.

Initial applications

The Certification Office has recently seen an influx in the number of initial applications being submitted for candidates **not** meeting certification requirements. The office is aware that some programs received a BESE extension during the Believe and Prepare transition that allowed those with an approved extension to have additional time for “old” program completion. Additionally, in recent years there have been COVID and hurricane waivers that allowed LDOE to issue certification if a candidate did not meet current program completion requirements. However, all of those waivers **have long expired**. Completers included in the approved BESE extension have until **August 31, 2023** to complete all program requirements. Please ensure all students are following your BESE-approved teacher preparation program. To receive initial certification, program [requirements](#) should include:

- Year-long residency
- Holding a pre-service certificate
 - Traditional (undergrad) - Resident (R) certificate
 - Alt-Cert (post-baccalaureate)
 - MAT - R or PL
 - Cert-Only - R or PL
 - Practitioner Teacher Program - PL
- Mentoring by a certified mentor teacher
- Literacy hours- literacy hours were already required, any updates for alignment to science of reading have a future effective date
- GPA- both program entrance (2.2) GPA (which we should catch at the issuance of a pre-service certificate), and program GPA at the time of graduation/completion (2.5) or mastery of competencies if GPA is not awarded.
- All other requirements of the approved program according to policy.

Certification Monthly Call

The Certification Office has a monthly call devoted solely to certification. Participants for this call should include individuals responsible for the implementation of certification policy in teacher preparation programs and school systems. Topics include legislative and policy updates, certification processing updates, and frequently asked questions. It will generally fall on the third **Monday** of each month at **10:30 a.m.** Any changes due to BESE meetings or holidays will be included on the [school system support calendar](#).

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Certification Monthly Call details:

Webinar link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97801045748?pwd=N1JobWlDU1gvNnNYQk40Wjl3YmpxUT09>

Meeting ID: 978 0104 5748

Passcode: 959091

The next call is **Monday, August 28.**

If you have any questions, please contact Christy.Bellue@la.gov.

TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM APPROVAL

2023-2024 Program Approval Applications in Round I Evaluations

[New program applications](#) are now in the Round I Evaluation Stage. Applications will be reviewed to ensure applicants meet all policy requirements to obtain approval. Round I pending decisions will be sent to applicants by September 1. Applicants who receive a pending denial will be given seven calendar days to resubmit their application for Round II evaluations.

Cycle	Application Window Opens	Notice of Intent Due	Full Application Due	Round 1 Evaluation Period Begins	Notification of Pending Decisions	Round 2 Evaluation and Notification (as needed)	BESE Consideration
Spring	September 1	October 1	December 10	December 11	February 15	TBD	April TBD
Fall	May 1	June 1	July 10	July 11	August 26	TBD	October TBD

If you have any questions, please contact believeandprepare@la.gov.

New Resource: Teacher Preparation Program Approval

There are two new program application cycles every year. The next cycle will open on **October 1** for applications going to April 2024 BESE. In order to support applicants, a new resource has been added to the [Preparation Library](#). The [Teacher Preparation Approval Resource](#) will aid providers in the program approval process by defining commonly used terms, offering an overview of the application process, and listing annual deadlines for the application stages.

If you have any questions, please contact believeandprepare@la.gov.

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Updated Program Approval Assurances

In 2021-2022, several policy changes were approved that impact teacher preparation providers (TPPs). [Act 108](#), approved in 2021, requires training specific to the teaching of reading and literacy. [Act 244](#), approved in 2022, requires that teacher preparation programs require no more than 120 credit hours unless approved by the Board of Regents or for dual certification. Lastly, [Act 607](#), approved in 2022, requires that teacher preparation programs require 3 credit hours, or 45 contact hours, of coursework engaged in coursework specific to teaching students with dyslexia.

Signed assurances were submitted by **June 30** and will be received at BESE this month. These assurances indicate that providers have acknowledged that they will ensure policy and law will be met in their programs.

If you have any questions, please contact believeandprepare@la.gov.

TEACHER PREPARATION QUALITY RATING SYSTEM

Teacher Preparation Quality Rating System Performance Profile Release

2021-2022 TPQRS Performance Profiles will be released in August, and LDOE will hold its annual Performance Profile Debriefing meetings with providers. These debrief sessions are individualized to each provider and will offer insight into 2021-2022 Quality Rating Scores as well as offer support for programs. Debriefing sessions will be held between **August 14 - September 22**. Providers should [sign up](#) for a session by **August 1**. While the LDOE is in transition to a new hosting site, the TPQRS Performance Profiles will be released publicly to the Louisiana Believes [Preparation Library](#). This release will be on September 1.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Preparation Onsite Review Update

The Teacher Preparation Quality Rating System (TPQRS) includes Preparation Program Experience as one of the domains. An onsite review by a third party is conducted to understand the [quality of the programs](#) once at least every four years. The LDOE will be providing more details about the next cycle of onsite reviews soon.

There will be no onsite reviews this fall. LDOE will work with each provider to determine their onsite review windows during debrief meetings.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with questions.