



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Louisiana Department of Education (LDE)
April 2012 Quarterly Report to the DD Council

Update/Progress on LDE's Initiatives

1. Louisiana Connect

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is pleased to announce the launch of Louisiana Connect, a comprehensive college & career planning web portal available to all 8th-12th grade students in the State of Louisiana. Louisiana Connect provides tools and resources to help students plan for life after high school, and launch rewarding careers. Importantly, Louisiana Connect provides guidance counselors, parents, teachers and advisors with a full suite of tracking dashboards, reporting capabilities, and communication tools to help students navigate the process. There will be interest surveys the students can complete to assist them in their career planning. IGP's are mandated for all students as they enter 9th grade. The Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) which is attached to the IEP Transition Plan will be created in this website. For many of our students, the IGP will be created in the 8th grade before they move onto a high school campus. This website replaces the current LA ePortal for creating IGP's. For further information, contact Nancy Hicks at nancy.hicks@la.gov or (225) 219-0345.

2. Transition/Secondary Level Grants

The LDE was awarded two grants from federal technical assistance centers. The first grant is from the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD). The LDE will collaborate with NDPC-SD to work with select districts to develop or strengthen existing dropout prevention initiatives. Districts will have to complete an application process to participate which will be released this month. The second grant is from the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC). This grant will work closely with the LDE on improving transition services for youth with disabilities. Both federal technical assistance centers have agreed to collaborate with each other while providing assistance to the LDE and LEAs as both centers aim to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. For further information, contact Dr. Keita Rone of the LDE at Keita.rone@la.gov or (225) 219-0345.

3. State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

The proposed LEAs for the new grant award are as follows: Avoyelles, Caddo, Concordia, East Baton Rouge, Lafourche, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, RSD-Algiers Charter Schools, RSD-Choice Foundation, RSD-First Line Schools, RSD-Knowledge is Power Program, RSD-ReNew Schools, Richland,

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Sabine, St. Helena, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge and West Carroll. The first LEA allocation will be effective for school year 2012-2013. This is a 5-year U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) grant for professional development supporting students with disabilities. The professional development focus for the project includes data-based decision making, family engagement, inclusive practices, and culturally responsive practices. This project will continue to collaborate with Pyramid CPRC and People First of Louisiana. For further information, contact Robin Clark of the LDE at robin.clark@la.gov or 225.342.3640.

4. **Preschool**

The Preschool Special Education section at the LDE has a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Special Quest to work with Lafayette Parish schools on Inclusion of children ages 3-5 in regular early childhood programs. Special Quest had a fact finding visit with Lafayette in the fall and then a Retreat to go over the findings in February. Next steps are for the school district to look at the classes that they have now and decide how they can be more inclusive next year. Special Quest will continue to work with the school district this year and then work with them next year on Professional Development and Technical Assistance for the regular education and special education teachers as they work together to serve the children in the inclusive settings. The LDOE plans to use this project and school district as a model for other districts in the state.

Another task that has come from the Special Quest project is the development of an Inclusion brochure that will be for parents, teachers, principals, directors, etc. The brochure is still in the working stages but should be available by this summer. Additionally, it has been decided to do a brochure for teachers on what to do with children who are included in your regular early childhood classroom.

A letter from U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs was released in February 2012 on the application of Least Restrictive Environment for preschool children ages 3-5. A copy of this letter can be obtained at the following link:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/index.html>

For further information regarding preschool issues, contact Dr. Mary Louise Jones of the LDE at marylouise.jones@la.gov.

5. **Low Incidence Disabilities Literacy Institute**

The LDE, in partnership with the University of New Orleans, will host the Low Incidence Disabilities Literacy Institute on June 5-7, 2012, in New Orleans. Registration is now available via Coursewhere <http://tinyurl.com/6s8tqyg> for one of the three, three-day strands (Significant Disabilities, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, or Blind/Visually Impaired). A limited number of no-cost private dormitory rooms are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. For further

information, click [here](#) for a copy of the institute flyer or contact Nanette Olivier at nanette.olivier@la.gov or 225-342-0576.

6. **Change of term from "Mental Disability" to "Intellectual Disability"**

Until Rosa's Law was signed into law by President Obama in October 2010, IDEA used the term "mental retardation" instead of "intellectual disability." Rosa's Law changed the term to be used in future to "intellectual disability." Accordingly, the LDE's Special Education Reporting System (SER) will begin using the term "intellectual disability" on IEP forms and SER data collection and reports beginning Thursday, April 5, 2012. On all previous IEP documents in SER, the term "mental disability" will be converted to "intellectual disability".
7. **LDE Newsletters**

The various Offices/Divisions of the LDE no longer issue their own newsletters. Superintendent John White sends out a bi-weekly e-newsletter to Louisiana school superintendents that contains comprehensive information pertaining to Louisiana schools. In addition, *Ed·Connect*, a bi-weekly newsletter designed to provide clear information to Louisiana's teachers, is now issued by the LDE. To sign-up for this publication, visit this link: http://www.louisianaschools.net/resources/mailling_list.aspx
8. **Restraint and Seclusion**

Act 328 required BESE to adopt rules and guidelines for the use of physical restraint and seclusion of students with exceptionalities. BESE adopted new guidelines and approved a notice of intent regarding new rules at the October 2011 meeting. These were subsequently approved by BESE at the March 2012 meeting. For further information, contact Bernell Cook at Bernell.cook@la.gov
9. **Hospital/Homebound Taskforce**

The LDE will establish a Hospital/Homebound Taskforce which will focus on concerns that all LEAs and charter school are having in regards to policy and procedures for hospital/homebound services for general and special education students. For further information, contact Jennifer Spears at Jennifer.spears@la.gov
10. **Deaf/Hard of Hearing**

In an effort to work with districts to maximize capacity to best serve children who are deaf and hard of hearing, the LDE is offering the following opportunities this spring:

 - Two Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) Video Teleconferences provided by Boys Town National Research Hospital. The Teleconferences provide valuable information to help interpreters prepare for the EIPA, which is required for certification. The Teleconferences are also great for teachers who sign. LDE is providing viewing access at three locations across the state: Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, and Shreveport. Dates and topics are:

- March 24, 2012 – Classroom Classifiers: What's the Best Classifier to Represent a Concept?
- April 14, 2012 – Preparing to take the EIPA Written Test

The LDE is offering a follow-up Curriculum Based Measures (CBM) training with Dr. Sue Rose from the University of Minnesota. CBM has a component that is excellent for progress monitoring for students in grades k-12 in reading and writing. CBM is also the state required alternate assessment for DIBELS for students with profound hearing loss. This training is offered as follows:

- April 23, 2012 – Louisiana School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge
- April 24, 2012 – Professional Development Center in Alexandria

Visual Phonics training will be offered in the Spring/Summer, and the dates and times will be soon be announced. Periodic training/meetings for Educational Audiologists are being held at the Department of Education.

For information related to these professional development events or any issues regarding students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, contact Melodie Sparks at melodie.sparks@la.gov

11. **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** *Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) Roll Out 2011-2012*

The PRT pilot has been rolled out in 23 districts throughout all eight regions of the state. Restorative Justice, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Classroom Management training (as required by Act 136 of 2010), Administrative Overview training, FBA/BIP trainings incorporating the processes and forms of PTR, and data-based decision making training are all being held within the consortiums.

Tertiary interventions are much more challenging in nature due to the complex behaviors children display and the complexities involved in conducting the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) needed to assess these behaviors. PTR is a time intensive process but very necessary and rewarding for all involved. Training in this process has brought about many positive experiences to the districts themselves.

Due to the intensive nature of the process, positive relationships have developed between the teachers and PTR team members. The teachers are reporting that they feel much more supported in their efforts for behavioral change in the classroom than in the past. Some additional positives noted include improved teacher buy in, streamlining of data collection/analysis, and a more supportive environment to foster positive behavior change, all of which have been directly linked to improved teacher fidelity and student behavior change. Direct observation by school psychologists/behavior specialists, an often cumbersome and limited process, are no longer necessary. Simplified forms (Behavior Rating System) for teacher driven data collection have helped

to capture pertinent, usable data and to clarify for those without behavioral expertise (i.e., teachers, team members, etc.) the reasons why a functional behavioral analysis is necessary to drive the intervention process. Overall, working with coaches and teachers in the districts to roll out the PTR process has proven a positive one.

Suggestions/Comments/Recommendations: According to several consultants' comments, the following are still concerns to be addressed for the PTR process to be effectively embedded at the district/school level: district backing/support, better understanding of and improved implementation of Tiers I and II at the school level, a systematic process for screening and identifying students with academic/behavioral challenges, and a process for integration of PTR in the existing school-based teams.

For further information about the PTR initiative or PBIS issues, contact Robert Schaff at roertb.schaff@lal.gov

12. **Annual Parent Surveys**

In accordance with federal reporting requirements under the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, the LDE annually administers the *School's Efforts to Partner with Parents Scale* (SEPPS) Survey to roughly 25% of parents of students with disabilities in the state. For each district or charter school in the sample, all parents of students with disabilities are mailed a survey with an addressed postage-paid envelope.

Results of the LDE's SEPPS survey for school year (SY) 2010-11, the sixth year that the survey has been conducted, included valid responses from 1,732 parents across 13 districts and 46 charter schools in Louisiana. Approximately 32%, or about a third, of parents of Special Education students responding agreed that the schools their students attended had facilitated their involvement as partners in their child's education. The survey item that received the highest mean score for very strong agreement was item number 11: "Teachers are available to speak with me." The survey item with the lowest mean score was item number 2: "I was offered special assistance (such as child care) so that I could participate in the individualized educational program (IEP) meeting." In the survey conducted for SY2009-10, 39% of responding parents (n=3,595) agreed that schools facilitated their involvement as partners in their child's education. The SY2010-11 survey included all of the LEAs/LEA charter schools not included in the previous three years of surveys and included many of the parishes declared as federal disaster areas due to 2005 and 2008 hurricanes.

The IDEA SEPPS survey for SY2011-12 will include a representative sample of 21 different districts across the state, again with all parents of students with disabilities in the sampled districts receiving a survey. These districts include: City of Baker, Bossier Parish, Concordia Parish, De Soto Parish, Evangeline Parish, Jefferson Parish, Lafourche Parish, LaSalle Parish, Livingston Parish,

Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, Louisiana Special Education Center, City of Monroe, Morehouse Parish, Sabine Parish, St. Helena Parish, St. Landry Parish, St. Mary Parish, Tangipahoa Parish, Tensas Parish, V. B. Glencoe Charter School, and West Baton Rouge Parish.

13. Special Education Advisory Council

The LDE is seeking members for the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) who are willing to serve a three-year term. Members of SEAP represent public and private sectors that by virtue of their position, interest, or training can contribute information in regard to the education of students with disabilities. Fifty-one percent of the members must be parents of a child with a disability (ages birth through 26) or individuals with disabilities.

The Special Education Advisory Panel advises and assists the Louisiana Department of Education with the provision of free and appropriate public education for individuals with disabilities. The deadline to submit an application is May 8, 2008. A copy of the SEAP application form is included as an attachment to this report.

Update on Activities Related to Council Plan

Objective 7.4 Students will be protected from discipline practices that cause harm and/or violate their rights.

Activity 7.4.1 Educate legislators, policy makers and the general public about harmful practices (e.g., restraint and seclusion, corporal punishment, unnecessary use of law enforcement, etc.) and alternative positive evidence based options (e.g., positive behavior practices, etc.) and advocate for policies and practices that promote the safe and effective practices in collaboration with the Advocacy Center.

• **UPDATE: Restraint and Seclusion**

Act 328 required BESE to adopt rules and guidelines for the use of physical restraint and seclusion of students with exceptionalities. BESE adopted new guidelines and approved a notice of intent regarding new rules at the October 2011 meeting. These were subsequently approved by BESE at the March 2012 meeting. For further information, contact Bernell Cook at Bernell.cook@la.gov

Objective 9.1 Louisiana will develop and implement an Employment First plan.

Activity 9.1.1 Advocate for

- policies that incentivize services for individualized integrated, competitive employment and dis-incentivize segregated, sheltered day habilitation services,

- sheltered workshops to transition people into individualized, competitive, paid employment and discontinue admissions into segregated day programs,
- collaborative policy making and practices across state agencies that promote students being supported in and transitioning into competitive paid employment,
- implementation of ongoing multiagency employment data collection, management and analysis.

Objective 9.3 The Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program's federal draw down will increase.

Activity 9.3.1 Advocate for Louisiana to draw down the entire VR grant award and serve individuals with the most severe disabilities.

- **UPDATE**

On February 29, Derek White facilitated a meeting with staff from LRS and LDE. LDE staff members agreed to send out an announcement through the LDE newsletter asking for interested districts and others to apply for our new project with LRS. The project will establish a system of school to work transition services for students with disabilities in high schools with a focus on starting LRS services to students in their second to last year in school. We will follow-up with a webinar to discuss the specifics of the project. For further information, contact Nancy Hicks at nancy.hicks@la.gov

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Louisiana Department of Education is seeking members for the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) who are willing to serve a three-year term. Members of SEAP represent public and private sectors that by virtue of their position, interest, or training can contribute information in regard to the education of students with disabilities. Fifty-one percent of the members must be parents of a child with a disability (ages birth through 26) or individuals with disabilities.

The Special Education Advisory Panel advises and assists the Louisiana Department of Education with the provision of free and appropriate public education for individuals with disabilities. It exists by authority of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA2004)* to provide guidance on special education programs and services.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* requires the following categories of representation on state advisory panels:

- » Parent (as defined in IDEA SEC. 602. Definition 23) of a child with a disability (ages birth through 26)
- » Individual with a disability
- » Teacher
- » Representative of an institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel
- » State or local education official, including a Local Education Agency Special Education Supervisor or an official who carries out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)
- » Administrator of a program for children with disabilities
- » Representative of another State agency involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities
- » Representative of a private school
- » Representative of a public charter school
- » Representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities
- » Representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care
- » Representative of the State juvenile or adult corrections agency

The SEAP will meet as a group approximately four times a year in Baton Rouge. Members may be entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the Louisiana Commissioner of Administration in the Louisiana Travel Guide. Additional committee work time may be necessary. The membership appointment will commence July 1 of the first year and end June 30 of the third year.

Prospective members should consider their ability to fulfill the time commitment necessary to attend all meetings. Failure to attend two Panel meetings in a year may result in a contact and review by the state educational agency for possible recommendation for termination.

Deadline for submitting application is May 18, 2012. If you have further questions, please contact:

Donna Nola-Ganey ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Louisiana Department of Education

P. O. Box 94064 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064

225.342.3900 | Email: donna.ganey@la.gov

Contact Information		
Name:		Date:
Address:	Home Phone:	
	Cell:	Work:
	Email:	
The best time to contact me is:		

General Information	
Parish of Residence:	
Gender (Optional):	Race/Ethnicity (Optional):
<i>Note: General information items will only be used by the membership committee for the purpose of ensuring that the SEAP is representative of the state's demographic and regional diversity. The membership committee's selection process will take place in accordance with the State's non-discrimination policy.</i>	

Eligibility and Qualifications
Indicate all categories of representation for which you are eligible by checking the box:
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent (as defined in IDEA SEC. 602. Definition 23) of a child with a disability (ages birth through 26)
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual with a disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of an institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel
<input type="checkbox"/> State or local education official, including a Local Education Agency Special Education Supervisor or an official who carries out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)
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<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a private school
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<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of the State juvenile or adult corrections agency

If you are applying as the representative or designee of a state or local agency, provide the following information:
Agency Name:
Your Title:

Signature of Agency Head (or attach other proof of authorization)
Printed Name:
Signature:
Title:

Comment briefly on why you are interested in membership on the SEAP, and relate information regarding your position, training or experience that can contribute to the education of students with disabilities:

List any additional information you would like the membership committee to consider:

Please indicate any reasonable accommodations necessary for your participation:

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Please include the names of two personal references and their phone numbers:

Name	Date

Send Application to: Donna Nola-Ganey
Louisiana Department of Education
P. O. Box 94064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
or email to donna.ganey@la.gov