



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
POST OFFICE BOX 94064, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9064
Toll Free #: 1-877-453-2721
<http://www.louisianaschools.net>

Louisiana Department of Education (LDE)
October 2012 Quarterly Report to the DD Council

UPDATE/PROGRESS ON AGENCY INITIATIVES

1. Louisiana Believe and Include RFP

The Louisiana Department of Education released the [Believe and Include](#) Request for Proposals in August 2012. This \$4 million competitive grant program will provide funding to schools to develop innovative programs that help students with disabilities achieve proficiency of the more rigorous Common Core State Standards. Existing federal funding for projects within the bureaucracy was repurposed to spur innovation in schools that will directly impact student achievement. The program is part of [Louisiana Believes](#), the state's comprehensive plan to empower educators closest to students to make decisions about instruction in the classroom.

Believe and Include will provide funding to support policies and programs that ensure students with special needs receive a high quality education that prepares them for success as the state implements Common Core State Standards. The grant program is seeking replicable, scalable solutions in staffing, planning, scheduling, technology or other tools, which allow students with disabilities to learn and perform in the least restrictive environment. The Department is funding *Believe and Include* by redirecting federal funding provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) from centralized programs to school districts and local school leaders. By consolidating staffing and resources within the state agency, ending contracts to manage websites, eliminating unnecessary professional development workshops and eliminating other low-impact projects, the Department identified funding for the project.

[Applications](#) for *Believe and Include* were due in late September, and grant recipients will be announced in October. The Department anticipates minimum grant awards to be \$50,000 per partner school for a total of \$150,000 per grant. For more on the application process, please click [here](#). For further information, contact Bernell.cook@la.gov

2. Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative (LATI) Centers

The LATI Regional Centers have changed their name and geographic area, but still provide the same services. If your district or school has been moved into a new region, please contact the center to be added to their distribution list. The LATI Regional Centers provide training and consultation on assistive technology, UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and AIM (Accessible Instructional Materials). In addition to the new names, some of the centers have revised their website. A state map of the new regions and their centers is attached to this report. Take a look by clicking on the stars on the map.

“An Equal Opportunity Employer”

3. Louisiana State Personnel Development Grant (LaSPDG)

LaSPDG is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. It is aligned with the Louisiana State Performance Plan, Louisiana Department of Education initiatives and Louisiana Believes. This grant supports increasing achievement of students with disabilities through sustained, research-based professional development targeting 4 focus areas (Data-based Decision Making, Family Engagement, Inclusive Practices and Culturally Responsive Practices).

Currently, 11 districts (Caddo, EBR, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Pointe Coupee, Sabine, St. Helena, Union, West Baton Rouge and FirstLine Schools) and 4 mentor districts (Calcasieu, East Carroll, Livingston and Vermilion) are participating in the grant. Each participating local education agency has received an allocation via this grant to address identified challenges for students with disabilities based on data, grant guidance, and the four focus areas.

There is a part-time Family Facilitator in each district who works as a Goodwill Ambassador by linking the needs of the families in the district and by supporting families through professional development. Most recently, LDE personnel had a face-to-face meeting with the Family Facilitators to empower them with planning tools, surveys and strategies for implementing Family Educational Sessions, sharing knowledge about People First Language and a wide array of research-based resources (i.e., IDEA law, TA on PBIS, The Access Guide). Attached to this report is a description of Family Facilitator engagement activities for Fall 2012.

State, regional and local meetings have been held with districts to support the coordination and delivery system of services through this district model. The work with the districts is supported through partnerships with the SPDG staff with LSU, People First of Louisiana, Pyramid CPRC and topical consultants. We are currently communicating with districts to provide support through additional face-to-face meetings, webinars, professional learning communities, and consultant training opportunities.

4. Preschool Inclusion Project

The Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE) Special Education Preschool staff is working with Lafayette Parish on an inclusion project. The LDE has contracted with SpeciaQuest to administer the project. This is the 2nd year of the project and SpecialQuest will be providing technical assistance in the inclusion classrooms as well as professional development. There will be mentoring and coaching with the regular and special education preschool teachers. Lafayette Parish will serve as a model to other districts in terms of implementing inclusion in regular preschool classrooms.

5. Autism

AAA (Advanced Autism Acknowledgement) will continue through September of 2013. The purpose of this acknowledgement is to recognize those individuals who have demonstrated increased capacity in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders. This AAA should be used by school districts, administrators, and parents to identify leaders within the profession. Criteria must be met, and portfolios must be submitted by applicants interested in receiving AAA. Approval of portfolios will be granted to recipients who have met all portfolio requirements within the established criteria for AAA. Currently, the LDE has recognized 3 recipients for AAA. If you need more information regarding AAA, please email Robyn Hargrave at: Robyn.Hargrave@la.gov

6. IDEIA Special Education Parent Survey

The annual IDEIA Special Education Parent Survey for School Year 2011-12 is being mailed to families in September. Families in 21 LEAs will have three weeks to answer and return the NCSEAM-developed, 25-question survey pertaining to the efforts of schools to partner with parents. This is the seventh year that the survey has been conducted. District-level results will be reported in local Special Education Performance Profiles and statewide results will be reported in the LDE's Annual Performance Report for SY2011-12. The following LEAs comprise the Parent Survey sample for SY2011-12: Bossier, City of Baker Schools, City of Monroe Schools, Concordia, DeSoto, Evangeline, Jefferson Davis, Lafourche, La Salle, Livingston, Morehouse, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, Tensas, West Baton Rouge, V.B. Glencoe Charter, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, and Louisiana Special Education Center.

7. Web-based Support for SRCL Grant Site/Significant Disabilities

The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant is a federal grant aimed at improving the reading and writing skills of students. Louisiana is one of only six states selected to benefit from the federal grant. These flow-through funds are supporting local education agencies in their literacy efforts to benefit at risk children (including students with disabilities) from birth through twelfth grade. A web-based resource has been developed to help support literacy efforts for students with significant disabilities in Louisiana SRCL schools. This resource (<http://tincy.cc/lasrcl>) may be useful to non-SRCL schools across the state in the provision of literacy opportunities for students with significant disabilities.

8. Access Guide Overhaul

The LDE's Access Guide (Significant Disabilities) has been redesigned and the "new look" will be launched in October, 2012. The revision was an effort to make the site more user-friendly and to provide easier access to content related to literacy and communication information pertaining to students with significant disabilities. The site can be found at: <http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov>

STATUS OF AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES/PARTICIPATION ON DDC PLAN INITIATIVES AND IMPACT

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

Positive Behavior Support

The Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative's emphasis continues to include an assurance by each of the eight regional consortiums that they are allocating an appropriate amount of its allocation for tertiary trainings. Each region has a pre-determined "scope of work" provided by the LDE. These tertiary trainings include the development of Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs).

Specific news includes that, for the 5th year in a row, the state average Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) self-assessment by each school for the state has risen. In April-June, districts reported results for the 2011-2012 school year. The state school average increased from 84.1 during 2010-2011 to 86.39 for the 2011-2012 school year. Moreover, the state's average was 69.29 during the 2007-2008 school year. In addition, the external assessment average increased as well. The School Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) also increased slightly 2011-2012.

For further information about the PBIS initiative, contact Robert Schaff at Robert.schaff@la.gov

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

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

Transition Services

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will be conducting a federal monitoring visit with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) in October. The purpose of the visit is to review the provision of transition services and employment outcomes achieved by youth with disabilities in Louisiana. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has been working with LRS to collect and analyze data related to transition services and post school outcomes and has been able to identify best practices as well as barriers to interagency collaboration between local education agencies and LRS. The results of the visit will be reported to both the LDE and LRS.

For further information related to transition issues for students with disabilities, contact Dr. Keita Rone at Keita.rone@la.gov or (225) 219-0345.

Customized Employment

Louisiana School for the Deaf agreed to support a Customized Employment project through their Outreach Program. They have hired Cassondra Holly Glausier, formerly from Mississippi, to be the project coordinator. As a reminder, Customized Employment is a process to assist school districts in matching student skills with employers. Customized Employment targets individuals with significant disabilities who want to work but are difficult to place on job sites due to their disability. Ms. Glausier will share the process with districts and then work individually with schools or districts in helping them implement this process. The goal is to have an exit document called State Approved Customized Employment Skills Certificate. For further information, contact Nancy Hicks at nancy.hicks@la.gov



SPDG's Family Engagement_Fall 2012

SPDG has begun supporting districts in their efforts to enhance family engagement by supporting the Family Facilitators that work within each SPDG district and through upcoming professional development opportunities.

Outreach to Local and Regional Agencies

Since the beginning of the year, SPDG's Family Facilitators have been working to establish contact and build relationships with local community agencies and regional resources (i.e. Families Helping Families) that also work to support families. Some Family Facilitators have collaborated with personnel to provide families resources and trainings relevant to their needs (www.laspedg.org under Family Facilitators then Louisiana Family Resources tab for resources document).

Assessing, Planning and Evaluating Family Training Sessions

In an effort to support the Family Facilitators efforts with families, SPDG staff has created and conducted training to support their work. In early August, Family Facilitators were trained on assessing the needs of all families, planning and executing family trainings, and evaluating the effectiveness of family trainings.

People First Language: Spread the Word

Also, SPDG staff has trained Family Facilitators on the importance of using People First Language, especially when referring to individuals with disabilities. Many Family Facilitators have taken the message by into their districts using SPDG's turn-around training module (www.laspedg.org under Inclusive Practices tab for self-guided webinar tutorial and under Family Engagement tab for supplemental handouts and video clips).

Fall - Family Engagement Professional Development

To support districts and school staff, SPDG has created a professional development module for helping establish the framework for effective family engagement practices. In October and November, districts will have access to professional development, which will expand knowledge and expose participants to research based promising practices for family engagement. Webinar workshops will cover the following topics:

- Framework for Effective Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Programs (October)
- Establishing Expectations and Building Trust (November)
- Effective FACE in PK-Elementary Grades (November)
- Effective FACE in Middle School Grades and High Schools (November)

On-Line Networking, Sharing and Support

In an effort to share professional development opportunities, event announcements and resources from SPDG partners (i.e. Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center, People First of Louisiana, Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center,...) SPDG's website is used to help family facilitators, and district personnel remain current on research and best practices related to family engagement (www.lasped.org under Family Engagement).