



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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D.D. Council Quarterly Report
January 2010
Division of Special Populations

1. Autism Video

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has produced the DVD “*Autism: A Call to Action*” regarding our state autism initiatives and the need for full local district participation. This DVD provides information on what these initiatives are and what local school system superintendents can do to enhance services and outcomes for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in their districts. Via the video, superintendents are asked to join the LDOE in creating Louisiana’s “pieces of the autism puzzle map.” This map, to be prominently displayed in the Claiborne Building in Baton Rouge, will reflect our state’s commitment to supporting a quality education for all students with ASD. Each district will be aligned with a piece of the puzzle. Deputy Superintendent Ollie Tyler sent each local superintendent an electronic request to confirm his or her personal commitment to building the capacity of the district’s school system to effectively serve the needs of all students with ASD. As superintendents sign on board, their districts’ puzzle pieces on the map will be highlighted.

This video can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1051.html>. The video can also be accessed on the Significant Disabilities Access Guide website (<http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov>) on the left hand navigational tool bar (click on the word “Autism”).

2. Autism Conference Calls to Local School Districts

The LDOE is conducting monthly conference calls for local school district leaders in the area of autism. These calls serve as a form of technical assistance to districts. Topics include evidence-based procedures related to serving students with autism.

3. Mentoring

As part of the effort to support and retain personnel, the LDOE is working with the New Teacher Center (NTC) to establish a system of electronic-based mentoring for special education teachers in their 1-3 years of teaching. The NTC is a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. The NTC has provided mentoring in the areas of math and science, and Louisiana will participate in a pilot this year to provide mentoring for special educators. Approximately 15 highly skilled Louisiana special educators will be trained as

mentors, and approximately 75 teachers will be asked to join as mentees. Refer to the attached flyer for additional information about the Louisiana initiative. For further information on the New Teacher Center, refer to <http://www.newteachercenter.org/eMSS/menu.php?p=home>

4. National Board Certification

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) is seeking to expand the number of teachers in Louisiana who attain National Board Certification (NBC) in the Exceptional Needs Specialist area with a focus in one of the following specialty areas: Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments, Severe and Multiple Disabilities, Mild/Moderate Disabilities, and Early Childhood. NBC offers an excellent pathway to develop leadership capacity and support retention of highly skilled professionals.

The state subsidy pays \$2,000 of the \$2,565 cost of the certification process for eligible candidates. The LDE will host information meetings in February and March, and attendance at one of those meetings is a requirement to be eligible to apply for the subsidy. Refer to the attached flyer, as well as the contacts listed below, for details.

For further information on NBC:

- www.nbpts.org
- Customer Service at 1-800-22-TEACH

For further information on the state subsidy program:

- ★ **Link:** <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/pd/626.html>
- ★ **Contact:** Andrea Farmer at the LDE at (225) 342-3605 or via email at andrea.farmer@la.gov

5. Transition Summit

The Annual State Transition Conference is for all people working with and supporting youth with disabilities as they transition from high school to adult life. The featured keynote speaker is Dr. Paul Wehman, professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and renowned speaker on transition and significant disabilities. Breakout sessions topics will include: using multiple assessments for transition planning, transition compliance for Indicator 13, improving data collection under the new Indicator 14 guidelines, developing student specific post secondary goals, and much more. The event will be held on February 3, 2010 in Baton Rouge. Registration is via Coursewhere at <https://www.solutionwhere.com/l DOE/cw/main.asp>

6. Louisiana Virtual Charter School

The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is in the process of examining the possibility of having a virtual (on-line) charter school for the state of Louisiana. Input has been solicited from both professionals

and family members regarding issues that must be addressed relative to students with disabilities in a virtual school. The work and recommendations related to this effort are not complete. For further information, contact Dr. Allen Grant, State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, at (225) 342-8751 or Allen.Grant@la.gov.

7. Reorganization

As of 12/14/09, the Division of Special Populations has moved under the Office of School and Community Support under the leadership of Donna Nola-Ganey.

8. Race To the Top

The Louisiana Department of Education is planning to submit an application for the Race to the Top grant funding. Teams are currently working on the application which is due January 17, 2010.

9. Risk Pool Task Force

A Risk Pool Task Force was convened in December 2009 to make recommendations to the Louisiana Department of Education on policies and procedures regarding the use of set-aside IDEA funds to cover expenses related to high cost students. Both professional and family members are serving on this task force. An out-of-state consultant is facilitating the work of this group. The groups' recommendations should be complete by early spring 2010.

10. LaSIG Updates

In 2007, the Louisiana Department of Education received funding for a five year State Personnel Development Grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. This grant is an extension and expansion of the previously funded Louisiana State Improvement Grant (LaSIG), which had many successes in participating districts and schools over the five-year period of the project. Recent activities related to LaSIG include the following:

- St. Helena school system has been added as a LaSIG site.
- LaSIG has Family Facilitators in all participating districts. These individuals provide support for family engagement (including professional development for families) and active participation of families on school improvement teams. LaSIG funds are used by districts to hire the Family Facilitators on at least a half time basis, or in some cases, on a full time basis.
- The LaSIG project developed the *Indicators of Family Engagement* survey to gauge the level of meaningful engagement that families have in their children's schools. All LaSIG schools participated in this survey, and the results were positive for the majority of schools. The surveys are available on the LaSIG website (<http://www.lasig2.org>), and a toolkit with guidelines for administration of the survey will be available soon.

11. Follow-up from Federal On-Site Visit

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted an on-site visit to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) in October, 2009. The LDE is anticipating a written response from OSES related to the outcomes of this visit no later than February 1, 2010.

12. High School Redesign

The focus of the redesign effort has been on increasing the rate at which Louisiana students graduate with a high school diploma. The High School Redesign Commission met in December 2009 to receive a presentation by the College and Career Readiness Policy. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has begun the implementation of LA Core 4 Curriculum, the Graduation Index, the LA ePortal, and the Drop Out Early Warning System (DEWS). Actions to address the policy include building a longitudinal data warehouse, replacing the GEE with End of Course EOC assessments, increasing use of the ACT and WorkKeys as assessment tools, and revising the *LA Comprehensive Curriculum*. There are also numerous supports and interventions for middle and high schools from the LDE and Regional Education Service Center staff to reach the 80% graduation rate target for 2014. For further information, contact Dr. Keita Rone at 225-342-3661 or at Kieta.rone@la.gov.



Application
available online at
<http://tinyurl.com/yjxutkh>

Program Contacts

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Invitation for Experienced Special Education Teachers to Apply

Online Special Education Mentoring Program eMSS Mentor Applications Being Accepted

Deadline to Apply: November 16–December 4, 2009

eMSS empowers the next generation of special education teachers by providing content-focused mentoring through a national, online technology network. Through eMSS, new and veteran teachers—as well as university special education educators—collaborate in an interactive community to facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences in order to advance high-quality special education instruction for all students.

eMSS is expanding its reach by developing a network for special education teachers. The eMSS Special Education pilot program is building a new professional community of practice to support beginning special education teachers. In 2010, eMSS Special Education will be available nationwide.

The Opportunity

If you are passionate about special education and would like to be a special education mentor in your content area, we would like to hear from you! The benefits of being an eMSS Mentor, include:

- Online mentor professional development
- eMSS program stipend from \$800 to \$1000

- Access to a nationwide network of other mentor teachers, special education educators, and new special education teachers
- Potential to earn e-mentor certification

Applications are currently being accepted from experienced special education teachers with five or more years of experience who have demonstrated evidence of high quality teaching. For more information go to <http://www.newteachercenter.org/emss>

Expectations

Expectations for eMSS Mentors include:

- Complete a three week online mentoring institute offered by the eMSS National Team before January 29, 2010
- Participate daily in the eMSS online collaborative learning environment (3–4 hours per week)
- Support two or three mentees and guide them through the curriculum in the eMSS online collaborative learning environment
- Participate in online mentor professional development

*eMSS-Special Education is a program of the
New Teacher Center*

Attention Special Education Teachers

National Board Certification: Exceptional Needs Specialist

What is National Board Certification: Exceptional Needs Specialist?

The National Board Certification process offers experienced teachers the professional development opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and practices against high and rigorous standards. Candidates pursue certification by completing two major assessment components: a portfolio of classroom teaching practice and an assessment of content knowledge administered at a computer-based testing center. Candidates applying for certification in the Exceptional Needs Specialist certificate area must select one of the following specialty areas when applying:

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (birth to 21+ years)**
- Early Childhood (birth to 8 years)**
- Mild/Moderate Disabilities (5 to 21+ years)**
- Severe and Multiple Disabilities (5 to 21+ years)**
- Visual Impairments (birth to 21+ years)**

What opportunities are available to Special Education teachers?

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes the need to create teacher leaders and encourages participation in the National Board Certification process. In an effort to establish a consortium of teacher leaders in the field of special education, the Louisiana Department of Education is excited to offer special education teachers an opportunity to pursue this prestigious certification.

- Professional Development: job-embedded, practical, student-centered focus on classroom practice**
- Fee Assistance: the state subsidy pays \$2000 of the \$2565 cost of the certification process**
- Candidate Support: the state assigns each candidate to a candidate support provider (NBCT) who supports and guides them through the certification process.**
- Networking: candidates have the opportunity to work in collegial professional learning communities with other educators**

What are the benefits of becoming a National Board Certification: Exceptional Needs Specialist?

Benefits of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) include the following:

- Recognition: only about 2% of teachers nationwide hold this respected certification**
- Financial Incentive: NBCTs teaching in Louisiana public schools are paid \$5,000 per year for the life of the certificate (must renew every ten years)**
- Professional Growth: most teachers who have completed this certification deem the process as the best professional development they have ever done**

How do I start the process of National Board Certification?

The Louisiana Department of Education will host Informational meetings in February and March. Attendance at one of those meetings is a requirement to be eligible to apply for the subsidy.

For further information on National Board Certification:

www.nbpts.org

or contact Customer Service at

1-800-22-TEACH

For further information on the state subsidy program:

<http://www.louisianaschools.net/ide/pd/626.html>

Or contact Andrea Farmer, NBCT at

225-342-3605 or via email at

Andrea.farmer@La.gov



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