



Action Alert #1 - Updated Alert - BESE on October 11th & 12th

October 6, 2016

Updated Information Included in Red

The **Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)** will meet Wednesday, October 5th and the **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE)** will meet October 11th & 12th to consider some major issues related to students with disabilities:

- **Parental involvement in the special education monitoring process**
- **Teacher preparation (Believe & Prepare)**

How to Take Action

If any of these issues are important to you:

- Contact your [BESE Member and the At-Large BESE Members](#) before October 11th to let them know how you feel about these issues.
- Attend the BESE meetings:
WHEN: **Tuesday, October 11th and 12th, 2016**
9:00 a.m.

WHERE: **Claiborne Building**
Louisiana Purchase Room (1-100)
1201 N. Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

[Click here](#) to see the BESE agendas for October 11th and 12th, 2016.

See the section below for additional information on agenda items of particular interest.

Confirm Your Action

Don't forget to let us know that you took action! Reply to this email or notify your [LaCAN Leader](#) (formerly known as LaTEACH) to confirm your action.

Why confirm your action? This helps the Council to know how important these issues are to you and allows us to better work together in advocating for educational policies and practices that improve services and outcomes of students with disabilities.

Additional Information

Parental involvement in the special education monitoring process

Monitoring of local school systems is the only way the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) can assure students with disabilities are receiving an appropriate education. Parents of children with disabilities disagreed with changes to special education monitoring procedures proposed by the LDOE and passed by BESE in June. On September 29th, in response to a [letter](#)

[sent by the La. Developmental Disabilities Council expressing parent concerns about these proposed changes](#), BESE held a public hearing to receive feedback from stakeholders.

The main issue parents had with the changes were of parent involvement in the monitoring process. These concerns were both at the front end, when decisions were being made about what issues should trigger more intensive monitoring of a school system and, on the back end, when school systems are having on-site monitoring visits.

In response to the parental input at the public hearing [LDOE is recommending BESE consider changes to the monitoring policy](#) (Bulletin 1922). There is not a recommendation by LDOE to improve involvement of parents of children of disabilities on the front end of decisions regarding monitoring. Numerous parents expressed concern over the lack of information to adequately understand how school systems are selected for more intensive, on-site monitoring. While the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) included some recommendations during their retreat for improved communication with parent stakeholders, the request by parents to improve stakeholder input regarding special education monitoring remains unaddressed by LDOE and BESE.

Specifically, the La. DD Council requested that the monitoring policy (Bulletin 1922) maintain language regarding the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) Steering Committee and require SEAP to fully endorse the recommendations from the CIMP Steering Committee prior to their adoption by LDOE. SEAP does not endorse the recommendations, they merely 'receive the report,' from the CIMP Steering Committee. Parents also expressed a need for more transparency of information so the Special Education Advisory Panel and other stakeholders can fully understand and weigh in on the indicators used for selecting school districts to receive intensive, on-site monitoring.

Parents also indicated they want parents involved in the monitoring teams. Parents requested the state invest in training and utilizing a small core group of parents who can serve on monitoring teams. In one parent's words, "As a parent of a child with a developmental disability the comfort level of speaking with a fellow parent about my concerns is much higher than to an "official of the state or district, simply due to the ability to relate to someone who has walked in similar shoes."

Again, no changes are being proposed to address these requests by parents.

- [Click here](#) to read the previous action alert when BESE first considered changes in Special Education monitoring.
- BESE will consider changes to Bulletin 1922: Compliance Monitoring Procedures under Item 8.1 of the Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee, on Tuesday, October 11th beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Teacher preparation (Believe & Prepare)

LDOE is recommending changes to policies regarding teacher preparation and state certification regulations (Bulletins 746 & 996). In general, the LDOE recommended revisions to the competencies required to meet the qualifications for certification of teachers seem to fit with best practices. LDOE's recommendations for teacher training to require a full year of on-the-job training with a mentor teacher is not only in policy but backed up with funding by LDOE.

Parents have long advocated for improved training of teachers. The recommended changes to policy and resources committed by LDOE appear to be a positive step in offering improved expectations, training opportunities and outcomes for teacher candidates throughout the state.

- BESE will consider changes to Bulletins 113, 746, and 996 related to teacher certification, competencies and standards under Item 6.1 of the Educator Effectiveness Committee, on Tuesday, October 11th beginning at 12:00 p.m.

At the meeting yesterday (10/5/16) SEAP voted to recommend delay of implementation of the teacher preparation and certification requirements due to lack of adequate stakeholder involvement in the process of developing the policies and practices. Specifically, professors from Louisiana's universities responsible for training teachers in special education had not been involved in developing this model and had questions and concerns over some of the requirements for mentor teachers, aspiring teachers and teacher preparation programs. Similarly, administrators from local school districts shared how teacher shortages, particularly in the area of special education, could get worse with the state placing additional roadblocks in the process toward certification.

Also, LDOE released the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) draft framework

- [Click here](#) to read the draft framework for Louisiana's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- [Click here](#) for more information on ESSA.

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108
email: info@laddc.org
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