

Louisiana Department of Education Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council - October 2022

Back-to-School Guide for Parents

The Department released our [Back-to-School Guide for Parents of Students with Disabilities](#). The Guide is intended to assist parents with transitioning back to school and includes tips for preparing for IEP meetings, questions and conversation starters for parents.

SPED Fellow Academy Cohort 3 and Expansion

The Department is expanding support for both current special education system level directors and individuals who aspire to lead special education in their school systems. Cohort 3 of the [SPED Fellow Academy](#) began in September and includes 17 current directors or supervisors. These individuals will participate in a year-long sequence of learning, receive mentoring, and complete an executive learning project intended to help solve a system level challenge in their LEA.

To expand this support and recruit the next generation of special education system-level leaders, the Department also initiated a cohort of 21 individuals who are aspiring to be special education leaders. This group will receive a mix of virtual and in-person support on topics such as special education compliance, data analysis and high quality instructional practices for students with disabilities among others.

Pupil Appraisal Evaluation Summit

The Department participated in a two-day Pupil Appraisal Evaluation Summit in Baton Rouge in August alongside our partners, the Louisiana Association of Special Education Administrators. Over two hundred appraisal and special education staff convened to collaborate and build capacity to facilitate appropriate evaluations.

Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council

The Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council held its first [meeting](#) on September 19. This diverse group of 22 educators from every BESE region in the State of Louisiana will convene quarterly to discuss pertinent issues and help move our state forward with improved student outcomes. These teachers are eager to be heard and we are grateful to listen and act.

Literacy Professional Development Series Aimed at Paraprofessionals and Special Educators

There are two literacy support series underway to provide customized support for teachers and teacher support personnel in providing instruction and interventions to struggling readers. Schedules of live sessions are posted below, but recordings of the sessions will also be posted in the [Literacy Library](#) in the Professional Growth pillar section.

[Paraprofessional and Support Staff Literacy Support Series](#)

[Grades 3-12 Foundational Skills and Content Literacy Support Series](#)

High Cost Services

The Department has established a High Cost Services (HCS) grant to support school systems and schools that serve students with the most challenging needs. This grant provides additional funding for high-cost special education services for students with disabilities and is funded through the state's IDEA allocation and Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) formula. School systems will begin submitting applications for these funds later this month.

Alternate Assessment

Each year, school systems that exceed 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment must take certain actions. These actions outlined in the alternate assessment participation review incorporate requirements of Bulletin 111 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All school systems must review participation data. Additionally, school systems exceeding 1.0 percent participation must also participate in student level file reviews, complete the alternate assessment justification document, describe how the school system will address any disproportionality in participation rates, provide evidence IEP teams followed the State's guidelines for participation, and provide assurance IEP teams received training on participation guidelines.

Under the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Louisiana must limit the number of students who are assessed statewide on alternate assessments to 1.0 percent of the total number of students who are required to participate in statewide assessments. The Department intends to seek a [waiver extension](#) for the 2022-2023 school year of this federal requirement that would limit the number of students in the state who participate in alternate assessments. LDOE welcomes your comments regarding the intent to apply for an extension of the waiver of the federal requirement limiting alternate assessment participation at 1.0 percent. Comments may be submitted via email at specialeducation@la.gov by October 31, 2022. If you wish to provide comment, please include your full name, organization (if applicable), and contact information. All comments are subject to public records requests.

Related Services Advisory Commission

[SCR 31](#) established the 14 member Related Services Advisory Commission to study the level of support statewide for students with special needs and exceptionalities through an examination of the ratio of service providers to students and the impact on service implementation. Membership includes expertise in the areas of social work, occupational therapy, school psychology, autism, speech pathology, family support, behavior analysis, special education administration, and a representative from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. The initial, organizational meeting will be held on September 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the North Dakota Room. At the initial meeting, the commission will align on the purpose outlined in legislation, consider an overview of current Louisiana regulations, discuss goals and timelines of the work, and elect a chair and vice chair.