

## **Louisiana Department of Education Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council - January 2023**

### Teacher Leader Summit Extensions

To extend some of the major learning from Teacher Leader Summit, the Department launched [Summit Extensions](#) in November that focus on supporting system leaders in implementing effective professional learning structures. A key component of overall school system strategic planning is the implementation of a comprehensive professional learning plan. The [Professional Learning Roadmap](#) intends to guide and support school system and school leaders in their implementation of essential professional learning structures: school system instructional leadership team, school instructional leadership team, and teacher collaboration.

The January sessions will be half-day meetings in three regions of the state. The focus of the January Extension is to support leveraging literacy and math best practices in a school system level leadership team by experiencing a model of a system level ILT. The Extensions will be held from 9:30-12:30, and registration is open and is on a first come, first served basis.

### SPED Leader Collaborative

The Department's sped team hosted the first in-person special education director/supervisor collaboration December 6. It was a full day of professional development, networking and building connections for special education leaders and throughout the day they discussed instructional best practices, they engaged in problem of practice discussions and walked away with actionable steps to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in their school system. The Department will host another collaborative in the spring with the goal of eventually hosting them quarterly.

### Steve Carter tutoring grant

The Department has committed to providing \$40 million of ESSER set-aside funds to families via \$1,000 digital vouchers for students in order to:

- support literacy for Louisiana's kindergarten through fifth grade learners who are below grade-level in reading.
- develop strong relationships with families to support learning.
- align to and complement school systems' existing work with high-quality curricula.

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade who are below grade level in reading can receive tutoring that aligns to and complements their school's high-quality instructional materials. Read more in our [press release](#) and visit [louisianatutoringinitiative.com](http://louisianatutoringinitiative.com).

### Foundational Literacy Modules for Educators, Special Educators and Support Staff (grades 4-8)

The Department has launched access to five free reading professional development modules to all educators, but specifically targeting special educators, interventionists and support staff. [Developing Strong Literacy Skills in Grades 4-8](#) is a comprehensive, online professional learning series grounded in the science of reading for developing successful adolescent readers. The series specifically addresses the most current research on adolescent literacy and how to meet the unique needs of intermediate and middle school students to accelerate literacy growth. The first module will be released this month.

Annual access will be provided to complete the modules by January 2024 at a pace individual to the educator.

#### Zearn statewide access

The Department has partnered with Zearn to provide access to Zearn school accounts for all public elementary and middle schools (K-8) at no additional cost to systems. Schools will have full access to Zearn materials beginning in January and continuing through the end of the 2023-2024 school year. The Zearn resources can be used as core materials or alongside other high-quality materials as acceleration support during extra learning time (such as during tutoring and within Summer Learning Programs).

#### Bookshare statewide access

**Benetech**, a global nonprofit focused on education equity, eliminating barriers to knowledge and providing opportunity for all learners, today announced a five-year award from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), to expand and improve access to books for students who read and learn differently due to dyslexia, blindness, low vision, or a physical disability. This five-year award was granted for Benetech's DREAM (Delivering Revolutionary Equitable and Accessible Materials) Center program which will focus on accessible educational materials including STEM content, as well as professional development opportunities for educators and community outreach to underserved groups.

The continued support from the US Department of Education to enable more equity in education through the DREAM Center is the exciting evolution of Benetech's successful OSEP-funded Centers over the past 15 years. It includes Benetech's **Bookshare** platform, the world's leading online service for accessible ebooks and materials, along with outreach, training, and support. These services will remain free for all U.S. school districts, schools, educators, and their qualified students.

#### Jump Start Convention, February 8, 2023

The 2023 Jump Start Convention will be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at Raising Cane's River Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The 2023 Jump Start Convention will bring together career and technical education (CTE) and school system administrators, child welfare and attendance personnel and stakeholders for a one day conference that will provide professional development opportunities around career and technical education, child welfare and attendance and student well-being.

#### Teacher Leader Summit, May 2023

The 2023 Teacher Leader Summit will be held May 30 - June 1, 2023 at the Ernest N. Memorial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA. The 2023 Teacher Leader Summit is an annual professional development conference which brings together Louisiana birth to grade 12 educators and content experts who inspire, innovate, and impact meaningful growth for every student. Educators participating in the event will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2023-2024 school year.