

## LDOE Risk-Based Monitoring Performance Audit

May 22, 2024

On May 20, 2024, the Legislative Auditor released the second audit in a series of reports evaluating the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDOE) oversight of students with disabilities who receive special education services in Louisiana. These audits are being conducted in response to legislative interest, and while the first audit focused on LDOE's process to address complaints, this audit focuses on Special Education Monitoring.

Overall, the audit found that LDOE needs to improve its monitoring process to ensure all students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and all school systems follow the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and state law.

Below is a brief summary of the findings:

- LDOE did not conduct a desk or on-site review for 43 (43.0%) of 100 school systems for at least seven years (academic years 2015-16 through 2021-22). Instead, LDOE required all but two of these school systems to complete a self-assessment.
- LDOE decreased the number of employees dedicated to special education from fiscal years 2012 through 2019 due to budget cuts, and in 2015 LDOE entered into a Consent Judgment (settlement agreement) in Orleans Parish. Both actions may have contributed to LDOE's inability to conduct onsite and desk reviews in a timely manner and provide support to school systems.
- LDOE's process to select students during a desk or on-site review does not ensure it monitors all applicable federal and state law requirements listed in its monitoring protocol.
- LDOE does not track and has not developed policies and procedures or guidance for school systems to follow regarding "informal removals," including how to document informal removals.
- LDOE is not following federal regulations when calculating significant disproportionality relating to discipline which could lead to being unable to identify school systems that disproportionately discipline minority students who receive special education services.

To review the audit in its entirety and see the list of recommendations provided by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, click [here](#). Page seven of the audit provides a brief summary of the findings and recommendations.

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