



## Action Alert #2

### BESE to Discuss Recent Special Education Audit

January 3, 2025

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's (BESE) Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee will meet Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. The committee plans to consider the [legislative audit](#) released last month regarding seclusion, restraint, and abuse/mistreatment of children with disabilities in public schools. This is the third audit in a series of audits evaluating the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDOE) oversight of students with disabilities who receive special education services in Louisiana. ([Agenda](#))

- Do you feel LDOE should provide more oversight and monitoring to schools and districts when it comes to seclusion and restraints?
- Do you feel the use of seclusion and restraint in the classrooms is underreported?
- Do you feel more consequences are needed for school teachers and staff who mistreat students and/or improperly use seclusion and restraint?
- Do you feel LDOE needs to provide better oversight and guidance to school districts regarding policies on the use and installation of cameras in classrooms?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, now is the time to take action! More information about this issue can be found in the additional information section below.

### How to Take Action

**Email** the Chair of the Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee before the committee meets on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Conrad Appel – Chair [Conrad.Appel@la.gov](mailto:Conrad.Appel@la.gov)

**Email or call** your BESE member and the at-large members before the committee meets on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

- [Click here](#) for BESE members' contact information. This [map](#) will help you determine your BESE member.
- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address and the issue you are addressing. Don't forget to thank members for supporting the needs and interests of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

**Attend** Yellow Shirt Day and share your thoughts about the audit with the committee!

- **WHEN:** Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM
- **WHERE:** Claiborne Building – Louisiana Purchase Room 1-100  
1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

If you need help with this alert or attending Yellow Shirt Day, contact your [LaCAN Leader](#). The meetings will be live streamed on BESE's [website](#) and their [YouTube Channel](#) if you are unable to attend in person.

## **Additional Information**

On December 11, 2024, the Legislative Auditor Report released an [audit](#) evaluating LDOE's oversight of the use of seclusion and restraint for students with disabilities, as well as an evaluation of Louisiana's laws and regulations related to abuse and neglect of students with disabilities. The report highlighted many concerns advocates have shared with LDOE and BESE over the years and clearly shows how the lack of monitoring and oversight of special education services has left students with disabilities vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

The Legislative Auditor was thorough in its review and evaluation. They:

- Interviewed and/or surveyed LDOE staff, Special Education Directors and Teachers, parents of students receiving special education services and education advocates;
- Conducted site visits of local school systems;
- Researched applicable state and federal laws and regulations and policies related to Special Education;
- Reviewed other Southern Regional Education Board states' processes, laws and regulations;
- Researched and reviewed U. S Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights data as it relates to restraint, seclusion, compliance reviews and guidance provided to state and local education agencies;
- Reviewed seclusion and restraint incident data from LDOE's Special Education Reporting (eSER) database; and
- Reviewed mandatory reporting policies available on local school systems' websites.

The audit cites multiple recommendations for LDOE, including:

- Development of a process to monitor school systems' use of seclusion and restraint;
- Working with the legislature to obtain resources needed to effectively monitor seclusion and restraint (i.e. funding and additional staff);
- Improving processes to verify accuracy of the number of seclusion and restraint incidents;
- Developing a review process to ensure school systems' seclusion and restraint policy align with state law;
- Ensuring all school systems' are aware of mandated reporter laws and abuse/neglect by non-caregivers should be reported to law enforcement;
- Disclosing why teachers' certifications were sanctioned on LDOE's website;
- Looking at maintaining a registry of school employees who are not certified by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), but have abused students; and
- Reviewing schools systems' camera policies to ensure state law is being followed.

You can also view the presentation that will be given to the committee which summarizes the findings and LDOE's responses [here](#).

## **Confirm Your Action**

- Email your [LaCAN Leader](#) after you take action
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

## Tips & Tools for Advocacy

Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council's [Advocacy 101](#) page. You can also find tips for:

- [Writing/emailing your legislators](#)
- [Calling your legislators](#)
- [Writing your story](#)

## 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](mailto:info@laddc.org)

website: [www.lacanadvocates.org](http://www.lacanadvocates.org)

facebook: [www.facebook.com/LaDDCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/LaDDCouncil)

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