

**Louisiana Department of Education**  
**Quarterly Report to the DD Council - April 2021**

**COVID-19 Updates**

- Louisiana schools rank seventh for in-person instruction according to the National Return to Learn Tracker developed by the American Enterprise Institute.
- LDOE is encouraging school systems to approach summer learning in a new way, and released [guidance](#) that will help systems develop offerings that mirror summer camp. Along with core content tutoring in small groups, the sample structure includes field trips, library visits, recess, and well-being supports.
- The Department has released resources related to spending pandemic relief funds, available in the [Pandemic Relief Guidance and Resources library](#).

**IDEA Budget Application**

The Department is currently in the public comment period of the draft of our [IDEA budget application](#) for FFY21. The grant application requires states to outline how state-level set aside funds will be spent in 15 different categories. The American Rescue Package (ARP) was signed into law by President Biden on March 11. As part of this package, significant additional funds are being made available through IDEA Section 611, Section 619, and IDEA Part C grants. To date, the final allocations each state will receive has not yet been released. OSEP has advised states to prepare the application using allocations from the FFY 20 application, and upon receipt of the allocation tables, to insert the most updated information with the application and repost during the public participation timeline. The dollar amounts shown in the Description of Activities may change based on the total allocation received from the federal government. The Department will update this document, along with other application documents, when allocations are received.

**SER Enhancements**

Louisiana has a statewide Special Education Records system where the records of each student are stored securely online. This platform has existed for over 15 years and is due for some major updates and overhauls. While we work to update the architecture of the system, we are also leveraging the system to drive best practice. One of the first initiatives is to streamline the reevaluation process, which will require school systems to collect and/or enter certain information at least every three years, at the triennial reevaluation deadline. This Triennial Data Review process will align to the current waiver process. This process and its accompanying tab in SER has been piloted with school systems around the state in the 2020-2021 school year, and will be released to all school systems around the state this summer for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

**SPED Fellow**

SPED Fellow Academy is a year-long, comprehensive development program for novice special education leaders across the state. The fellowship provides in-person training, coaching and a community of practice that will instill the knowledge and skills that the next generation of leaders need to lead and sustain change to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The second cohort will run in

2021-2022. Applications for the upcoming school year will open on April 12, 2021 and close on May 14, 2021.

#### **SEAP Vacancies**

SEAP Panel members each serve 3 year terms, and appointments are staggered so that  $\frac{1}{3}$  of membership rotates off at the end of each year. Members serve no more than 2 consecutive terms and must reapply at the end of their term. Applications for vacant positions will be posted on the Department website three months before term ends, and will be accepted for thirty days. Vacancies will be advertised in April 2021, with interviews in May 2021 and appointments in June 2021.

#### **Fast Forward**

Eight school systems will receive \$50,000 Fast Forward regional planning grants. The Fast Forward initiative is designed to increase the number of high school graduates who earn an associates degree or participate in a high-demand apprenticeship program before graduation. The Fast Forward regional planning grant recipients are Assumption Parish Schools, DeSoto Parish Schools, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools, Jefferson Parish Schools, Rapides Parish Schools, Richland Parish Schools, St. Landry Parish Schools, and Vernon Parish Schools.