



STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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D.D. Council Quarterly Report
July 2010
Division of Special Populations

1. Louisiana Department of Education's Mission, Vision and Goals

Vision: To create a world class education for all students in Louisiana

Mission:

- Improve academic performance for all students
- Eliminate achievement gaps
- Prepare students to be effective citizens in a global market

The following Louisiana Education Reform Plan goals were adopted by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary in January 2010.

1. Students enter Kindergarten ready to learn Literacy.
2. Students are literate by third grade.
3. Students will enter fourth grade on time.
4. Students perform at or above grade level in English/Language Arts by 8th grade.
5. Students perform at or above grade level in math by 8th grade STEM.
6. Students will graduate from high school on time achieving College and Career Readiness.
7. Students will enroll in postsecondary education within two years of graduation.
8. Students will complete at least one year of college successfully.
9. Achieve all 8 goals regardless of race and class.

2. Louisiana Department of Education Layoffs and Reorganization

In response to prior and projected budget reductions, on June 11 the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) announced the additional layoff of 31 staff members. Through voluntary retirement and the elimination of vacant positions, the agency had previously trimmed its workforce by 34, thus resulting in an overall reduction of 65 employees.

The total number of positions designated to the state education agency will drop from 739 in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 to 691 in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. In fact, based on the June 11 announcement, the total number of positions in LDE will have declined from 858 in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 to 691 in Fiscal Year 2010-2011, representing a 19 percent reduction in personnel over the last three years.

“An Equal Opportunity Employer”

Beginning July 1, 2010, the LDE will be reorganized (over time) in an effort to focus more strategically on LDE goals. Three of the major organizational areas will be Literacy, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and College and Career Readiness.

3. Race to the Top

On June 1, 2010, The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) submitted an application for Round Two of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top grant funding. Race to the Top is a \$4.35 billion incentive program established by the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to support innovative reforms in K-12 education. On March 29, two states - Delaware and Tennessee – were announced as the first round of winners out of 16 finalists. With more than \$3.4 billion still up for grabs after Round One awards were announced in March, thirty-five states and the District of Columbia applied for this second phase of grant funding. The winners of phase two will be announced by the end of September 2010.

4. Annual Performance Report (APR)

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs has determined that, under IDEA section 616(d), Louisiana *needs assistance* in implementing the requirements of Part B of IDEA. The Department's determination is based on the totality of the LDE's data and information including the LDE's FFY 2008 Annual Performance Report (APR) and revised State Performance Plan (SPP), other LDE-reported data, and information obtained through verification visits and other publicly available information.

The specific factor affecting OSEP's determination of needs assistance for Louisiana was that the LDE's FFY 2008 data reflect 85% compliance for Indicator 15. Indicator 15 is defined as follows: "General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects non-compliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification."

As part of this determination process, OSEP has informed the LDE of available sources of technical assistance related to Indicator 15. The LDE must report to OSEP, with its FFY 2009 APR submission, due February 1, 2011:

- 1) the technical assistance sources from which the LDE received assistance, and
- 2) the action the LDE took as a result of that technical assistance.

Also, the LDE must report to OSEP by October 1, 2010, how the technical assistance selected by the LDE is addressing the factors contributing to the ongoing noncompliance related to this indicator.

5. Positive Behavior Support

The Louisiana Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Project through LSU will end on June 30, 2010. This major initiative will continue on July 1, 2010, utilizing each of the established eight regional support structures known at present as coalitions. As of July 1, the infrastructure groups will be known as regional consortiums. Each Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Consortium will continue to receive an allocation to meet the technical assistance, staff development, and training needs of its region. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) will continue to provide supervision and support for these entities, but on a more direct support and supervisory basis. Districts and schools will continue to take advantage of the approved trainers of the state with emphasis being placed on getting all schools through the tiers as quickly and efficiently as possible. Districts will continue to demonstrate commitment to implementation through submission of Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) and School Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) evaluation data; by conducting walk-through visitation evaluations; and through results of desktop audits and monitoring by the LDE of schools' BESE Model Master Plans of Discipline and district and school PBIS action plans. In addition, the LDE will be assisting in the training of districts identified as being discrepant through the suspension and expulsion of special education students greater than ten days in a school year.

6. HB 216

If HB 216 passes, there will be a pilot of a school choice program for certain students with exceptionalities. The pilot, which will begin in school year 2011, will offer financial aid to families of students with parishes with a census of 190,000 plus.

7. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds

Local school agencies maintain the authority to spend AARA funds through September 20, 2011.

8. LRS Interagency Agreements

The LDE has just reentered into an interagency agreement with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services through 2013. The purpose of the interagency agreement is to increase the collaboration between LEAs and vocational rehabilitation services. The LDE is also partnering with LRS on a pilot project that could potentially increase the availability of vocational rehabilitation counselors who are solely dedicated to transition aged students (serving students while they are still enrolled in school). There will be approximately 10 districts selected to pilot the proposed program.

9. National Disability Employment Awareness month (NDEAM)

This October is National Disability Employment Awareness month (NDEAM). Our state will be hosting regional job fairs in Baton Rouge, Slidell, Monroe, Alexandria, New Orleans, Shreveport, Lafayette, and Lake Charles. The Job Fairs are designed to give persons with disabilities who are job ready full access to employers in one location. The Job Fairs put talented individuals in direct contact with potential employers, and give the employer an opportunity to meet face to face with a potential employee. The job fairs will be coordinated by The Louisiana Workforce Commission's Disability Program Navigator Initiative and sponsored by the Medicaid Purchase Plan for workers with disabilities through its federal Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. Each local event is being conducted by many agencies, organizations, groups and businesses, to include the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, and local Chambers of Commerce to name a few. For more information please contact Kisha C. Thomas kthomas1@lwc.la.gov

10. Families Helping Families

Contracts for the 10 FHF Centers have been approved for 2010-2011. In addition to providing the centers' usual support to families of students who receive services through IDEA, the contracts have expanded the number of regional, weekend conferences offered to parents from 3 to 6. Also, new in the Jefferson FHF contract only, Jefferson will be providing 8 regional trainings on the new Louisiana Surrogate Parent Guide which has been created by that center. The training in the surrogate guide will be available also as a self-guided, web-based training for any interested LEAs.

11. Status of Monitoring (as of June 2010)

The Louisiana Department of Education's IDEA Program Review Section has closed-out the 2009-2010 monitoring season. All 31 monitoring visits are complete. The staff is currently negotiating corrective actions with those districts found non-compliant. In addition, planning for the new comprehensive monitoring process that would allow staff to review key areas that more directly relate to student performance is still underway. Training for new team members will be held this summer. We are also in the process of choosing districts that will be monitored during the 2010-2011 school year and those districts should be announced in late August 2010.

12. Preschool

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has issued the new settings for Preschool children with disabilities to be reported in Indicator 6 (FAPE in the LRE) of the APR/SPP. The new settings are as follows:

- A. Children attending a regular early childhood program at least 10 hrs per week:
 - (A.1.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program
 - (A.2.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of Special education and related services in some other location
- B. Children attending a regular early childhood program less than 10 hrs per week:
 - (B.1.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program
 - (B.2.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in some other location
- C. Children attending a special education program (not in any regular early childhood program):
 - (C.1.) ...specifically, a separate special education class
 - (C.2.) ...specifically, a separate school
 - (C.3.) ...specifically, a residential facility
- D. Children attending neither a regular early childhood program nor a special education program
 - (D.1.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services at home
 - (D.2.) ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services at the service provider location or some other location not in any other category

13. Assistive Technology

All AT Regional Center RFPs were approved by BESE in May and are funded for the 2010-11 term. The AT Summer Institute will be held in Hammond on the Southeastern University campus from July 28th – 30th. Details on this and other summer training on AT can be found in Coursewhere at <https://www.solutionwhere.com/ldoe/cw/main.asp>.