



# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

September 5, 2015

Mr. John Schroder  
State Representative  
522 N. New Hampshire Street  
Suite 1  
Covington, LA 70433

Dear Representative Schroder,

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of Act 833 of the 2014 Regular Session. This new law offers important opportunities for thousands of Louisiana students. It also has significant implications for the work of IEP teams and local school systems. I share your commitment to ensuring that the law serves the students of our state.

The Department and BESE have focused on three major activities related to this legislation. Immediately after the law was signed into effect, the Department began working with the special education advocacy community to develop the BESE policy that would guide district implementation. Following input by the Special Education Advisory Panel and other stakeholders, BESE approved the revisions to Bulletin 1530 on August 13 at the first available meeting after the bill signing.

Since that time, the Department has shifted its focus to developing guidance for IEP teams on how to implement this bill using strong IEP goals and clear expectations for student outcomes. I have attached a timeline to this letter including the steps BESE and LDE have already taken and the expected dates for forthcoming resources and information.

The thirty-day requirement for IEP teams to establish student performance requirements is spelled out explicitly in the law and, being part of a state statute, cannot be waived by BESE or the Department. However, recognizing that this first year of implementation requires a large shift by school systems and IEP teams, the Department will not collect information related to the implementation of Act 833 until the second semester of the 2014-2015 school year. We believe this will provide IEP teams and district staff ample time to digest and carry out their new responsibilities.

While Act 833 is a voluminous law, the work to implement its provisions is well underway. My team and I are committed to supporting school districts as they carry out their new responsibilities. Thank you for your continued dedication to Louisiana's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John White  
State Superintendent of Education

**Louisiana Believes**



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CC:

Hon. Mary Landrieu

Hon. Steve Scalise

Louisiana House and Senate Education Committee members

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education members

Act 833 Leadership Steering Committee members

**Louisiana Believes**

**Act 833 of the 2014 Legislative Session**

Act 833 of the 2014 Legislative Session provides for alternate pathways for certain students with disabilities to be promoted and graduate with a diploma. The new law increases the responsibilities of IEP teams and includes additional decision points and timelines for their work.

**Act 833 Directives to the LDOE and BESE**

The law requires BESE to amend the current IEP team regulations to align with the new responsibilities. BESE must also provide guidance to IEPs teams for establishing minimum score requirements, however, IEP teams are explicitly not required to use these materials. The Act directs the LDE, to the extent possible, to track the performance of students with disabilities affected by the law and address concerns identified throughout the monitoring process.

**BESE and DOE Commitments**

Act 833 has significant implications and impacts tens of thousands of Louisiana students and cannot be implemented successfully in a short period of time. Immediately after the new law became effective, the LDOE informed school districts of the new requirements and began to draft BESE regulations, in consultation with the advocacy community, to place the new requirements and the student eligibility criteria into policy. Since the passage of the policy at the August BESE meeting, the LDOE has been developing guidance for LEAs and IEP teams on how to implement the new rules using IEPs that set students and teachers up for success. The LDOE plans to release this guidance in late September, yet discussions with LEAs about successful implementation will continue throughout the school year. The timeline listed below provides steps BESE and the LDOE have taken thus far to implement Act 833, in addition to expected dates for forthcoming resources and conversations.

**Prior to BESE adoption of policies**

June 6	LDOE webinar with special education administrators about Act 833 and other special education issues
June 23	Bill signed into law
June 24	LDOE meeting with bill drafters, school system representatives, and other special education advocates to discuss implementation.
July 1	LDOE notified districts about Act 833 in district newsletter.
July 2	Received letter from USDOE regarding Act 833.
July 7	LDOE call with bill drafters, school system representatives, and other special education advocates to discuss implementation and USDOE questions.
July 7	Jamie Wong, Special Education Policy Advisor, joins LDOE staff
July 15	Meeting of special education practitioner work group to discuss Act 833 and giving students with disabilities greater access to Jump Start.
July 17	LDOE discussion of Act 833 at Developmental Disabilities Council.
July 24	Superintendents' Advisory Council; included discussion of Act 833.
August 1	Law went into effect. LDOE facilitated phone call between USDOE officials and bill drafters, school system representatives, and advocates.
August 4	Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Panel to consider draft policy.
August 6	LDOE call with superintendents and charter leaders; included discussion of Act 833.



August 8 and August 12	LDOE webinar for special education directors around the state.
August 5-10	LDOE incorporated stakeholder feedback into final policy proposal for BESE.
August 11	LDOE staff has phone conference with Mr. Fleming to discuss which of his recommended revisions to BESE policy were included in the proposals submitted to BESE.
August 12-13	BESE meetings; Act 833 related policies approved as Notice of Intent.

**Post BESE Adoption of Policies**

August 18	LDOE released a Frequently Asked Questions document regarding the implementation of Act 833.
August 20	Meeting of special education practitioner work group.
August 20	Phone conference with all district leadership across the state where it was shared that the next monthly phone conference would have additional specific guidance for districts on Act 833.

In addition to all previous engagement, the Department intends to continue its support of districts throughout this first year of implementation. Network teams are always available to support any district with any questions they have regarding Act 833.

Sept 10	Call between Department leadership and all district superintendents with timeline for additional Act 833 guidance
Sept 18	Superintendents task force will give feedback on guidance to be issued the following week
Sept 24	Call between Department leadership and all district leadership with concrete guidance on setting goals for all students including all those impacted by Act 833.
Sept 24	Special Education Advisory Panel will discuss guidance provided to all districts.
Week of Sept 29	Webinars held for all district staff with concrete walk through of Department guidance
Week of October 13	Additional webinars for all district staff to address follow up questions from guidance.