



ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Renewal Form

LOUISIANA



June 30, 2015

OMB Number: 1810-0581

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RENEWAL FORM

SECTION I: COVER SHEET, WAIVERS, ASSURANCES AND CONSULTATION

Each SEA must remove the Cover Sheet, Waivers, and Assurances pages from its currently approved ESEA flexibility request. It must replace those pages with the completed Cover Sheet, Waivers, and Assurances pages from this form as part of its renewal request.

COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

<p>Legal Name of Requester:</p> <p>John White, State Superintendent of Education</p>	<p>Requester's Mailing Address:</p> <p>Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 94064 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064</p>
<p>State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request</p> <p>Name: Bridget Devlin</p> <p>Position and Office: Policy Director, Office of Policy & Governmental Affairs</p> <p>Contact's Mailing Address:</p> <p>Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 94064 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064</p> <p>Telephone: 225.342.3600</p> <p>Fax: 225.342.0195</p> <p>Email address: Bridget.Devlin@la.gov</p>	
<p>Chief State School Officer (Printed Name):</p> <p>John White</p>	<p>Telephone:</p>
<p>Signature of the Chief State School Officer:</p> <p>X _____</p>	<p>Date:</p>
<p>The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of ESEA flexibility.</p>	

WAIVERS

By submitting this updated ESEA flexibility request, the SEA renews its request for flexibility through waivers of the nine ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements, as well as any optional waivers the SEA has chosen to request under ESEA flexibility, by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested.

- 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a school-wide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that

section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State’s priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

10. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

11. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA’s State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

12. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on

that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

13. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver in addition to waiver #6 so that, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #13, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request that it has a process to ensure, on an annual basis, that all of its priority and focus schools will have sufficient funding to implement their required interventions prior to distributing ESEA section 1003(a) funds to other Title I schools.

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14. The requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) that, respectively, require the SEA to apply the same academic content and academic achievement standards to all public schools and public school children in the State and to administer the same academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students. The SEA requests this waiver so that it is not required to double test a student who is not yet enrolled in high school but who takes advanced, high school level, mathematics coursework. The SEA would assess such a student with the corresponding advanced, high school level assessment in place of the mathematics assessment the SEA would otherwise administer to the student for the grade in which the student is enrolled. For Federal accountability purposes, the SEA will use the results of the advanced, high school level, mathematics assessment in the year in which the assessment is administered and will administer one or more additional advanced, high school level, mathematics assessments to such students in high school, consistent with the State’s mathematics content standards, and use the results in high school accountability determinations.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #14, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request how it will ensure that every student in the State has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school.

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ASSURANCES

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of ESEA flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) no later than the 2015–2016 school year. (Principle 1)
- 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- 7. It will annually make public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools prior to the start of the school year as well as publicly recognize its reward schools, and will update its lists of priority and focus schools at least every three years. (Principle 2)

If the SEA is not submitting with its renewal request its updated list of priority and focus schools, based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, it must also assure that:

- 8. It will provide to the Department, no later than January 31, 2016, an updated list of priority and focus schools, identified based on school year 2014–2015 data, for implementation beginning in the 2016–2017 school year.
- 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its ESEA

flexibility request.

11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. (Attachment 2)

12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice. (Attachment 3)

13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout its ESEA flexibility request, and will ensure that all such reports, data, and evidence are accurate, reliable, and complete or, if it is aware of issues related to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of its reports, data, or evidence, it will disclose those issues.

14. It will report annually on its State report card and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group, each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II), and for any combined subgroup (as applicable): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. In addition, it will annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively. It will ensure that all reporting is consistent with *State and Local Report Cards Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended Non-Regulatory Guidance* (February 8, 2013).

Principle 3 Assurances

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

Option A	Option B	Option C
<p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.</p>	<p>If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014–2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.ii. Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year.</p>	<p>If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined ESEA flexibility request as described in Section II of the ESEA flexibility renewal guidance.</p>

CONSULTATION

An SEA must provide a description of how it meaningfully solicited input on the implementation of ESEA flexibility, and the changes that it made to its currently approved ESEA flexibility request in order to seek renewal, from LEAs, teachers and their representatives, administrators, students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities, organizations representing English Learners, business organizations, institutions of higher education (IHEs) and Indian tribes.

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SECTION II: CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ESEA FLEXIBILITY PRINCIPLES

An SEA must provide a narrative response updating the SEA's currently approved ESEA flexibility request to address each of the items under Section II. Specifically, an SEA must address each of the Principles as described below through at least the end of the 2017–2018 school year (an SEA that is eligible for and requests a four-year renewal must address each of the Principles as described below through at least the end of the 2018–2019 school year).

For each of the following items, an SEA should make revisions in a redline version of its currently approved ESEA flexibility request, and indicate in the text boxes on this form the pages where relevant changes have been made. To the extent that an SEA has sufficiently addressed any requirement in its currently approved request, the SEA may reference the relevant pages and existing text in its approved request in response to that requirement.

Principle 1: College and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

In its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, each SEA must update its currently approved ESEA flexibility request to describe how it will continue to ensure all students graduate from high school ready for college and a career, through implementation of college- and career-ready standards and high-quality aligned assessments (general, alternate, and English language proficiency), including how the SEA will continue to support all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, low-achieving students, and economically disadvantaged students, and teachers of those students.

Pages 18-37

Principle 2: State-Developed Systems of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Each SEA must provide narrative responses for each of the items enumerated below. In providing these narrative responses, each SEA must describe its process for continuous improvement of its systems and processes supporting implementation of its system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and

support. In describing its process for continuous improvement, an SEA should consider how it will use systematic strategies to analyze data and revise approaches to address implementation challenges in order to ensure that it and its LEAs are meeting the needs of all students.

2.A. Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support: In its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, each SEA must demonstrate that a school may not receive the highest rating in the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system if there are significant achievement or graduation rate gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

Page 38-62

2.D. Priority Schools: In its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, each SEA must:

- a) Submit either (i) its updated list of priority schools based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, or (ii) an assurance that it will provide an updated list of priority schools based on school year 2014–2015 data no later than January 31, 2016, for implementation beginning no later than the 2016–2017 school year;
- b) Provide its timeline for implementation of interventions aligned with all of the turnaround principles in all priority schools; and
- c) Describe its process for identifying any schools that, after implementing interventions for three school years, have not made sufficient progress to exit priority status and describe how the SEA will ensure increased rigor of interventions and supports in these schools by the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

Pages 71-80

2.E. Focus Schools: In its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, each SEA must:

- a) Submit either (i) its updated list of focus schools based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, or (ii) an assurance that it will provide an updated list of focus schools based on school year 2014–2015 data no later than January 31, 2016, for implementation beginning no later than the 2016–2017 school year;
- b) Provide its process, including a timeline, for ensuring that its LEAs implement interventions targeted to a focus school’s reason for identification; and
- c) Describe its process for identifying any schools that have not made sufficient progress to exit focus status and describe how the SEA will ensure increased rigor of interventions and supports in these schools by the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

Pages 80-87

2.F. Other Title I Schools: In its renewal request, each SEA must update its plan for providing

incentives and supports to other Title I schools to include a clear and rigorous process for ensuring that LEAs provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in those schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

Pages 88-92

2.G. Build SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Outcomes: In its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, each SEA must describe its statewide strategy to support and monitor LEA implementation of the State’s system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. This description must include the SEA’s process for holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance.

Pages 92-100

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

An SEA that checked option C under assurance 15 must provide a narrative response to this item detailing:

- a) The progress made to date in ensuring that each LEA is on track to implement high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems designed to support educators and improve instruction;
- b) The proposed change(s) and the SEA’s rationale for each change; and
- c) The steps the SEA will take to ensure continuous improvement of evaluation and support systems that result in instructional improvement and increased student learning.

Pages 101-127

SECTION III: ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS (OPTIONAL)

If an SEA wishes to make any additional amendments to its currently approved ESEA flexibility request to clarify or revise how the SEA and its LEAs will close achievement gaps, improve student achievement, and increase the quality of instruction, the SEA must include those amendments in its redlined request and identify on the renewal request form the page numbers on which amendments have been made. An SEA need not make any amendments beyond those discussed in Sections I and II above in order to receive renewal of ESEA flexibility. For any additional amendments the SEA makes to its currently approved ESEA flexibility request, the SEA must provide a rationale for the proposed change(s), either in the text of the ESEA flexibility request or on the ESEA flexibility renewal form. In considering whether or not to make additional amendments to its approved ESEA flexibility request, an SEA should keep in mind that the Department will not approve any amendment that conflicts with the ESEA flexibility principles.

Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment	Page Number(s) Affected in Redlined Request	Brief Description of Requested Amendment	Rationale
Page 26-28	1.B Transition to College-and-Career-Ready Standards	The development of an alternate pathway to the Career Diploma accessible to students with the most significant disabilities.	The outcomes-based measure in Louisiana’s previous state and district accountability system failed to recognize the achievements of this student population. The creation of this pathway will incentive and reward the development of programs that provide full academic access and research-based career and workforce-readiness training for all students.
Pages 24	1.B Transition to College-and-Career-Ready Standards	Development of resources and direct support specifically for principals including an expansion of the successful TAP professional development model and the new Louisiana Principal Fellowship program	Effective resources and support should be tailored to every level of the school system. The success of the school depends on the strength of the leader.
Page 64-65	2.B Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measureable Objectives	Revisions to the high school progress points formula	After one year of full implementation of the original high school progress points formula, it became apparent that the high school progress points were not fully attainable. Through engagement with the field and data simulations, a more attainable formula was approved by BESE.

<p>Pages 18-19</p>	<p>1.B Transition to College-and-Career-Ready Standards</p>	<p>A review of state academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics to determine if any adjustments or additions are needed to maintain rigor and high expectations for teaching and learning and ensure the standards represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace.</p>	<p>In response to a directive from the Louisiana Legislature, the state academic content standards will undergo a professional review process driven by educators and content experts to provide a thorough and transparent evaluation to ensure that they continue to meet the state’s mandate of preparing Louisiana students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace.</p>
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CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State’s Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.
2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Louisiana believes that the successful implementation of innovative policies relies on the input and investment of local educators and other stakeholders. For this reason, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) sought extensive input into the development of the various initiatives included in this application and into the development of the application itself. Groups involved include educators – teachers, principals, district-level officials and Superintendents, and university and college professors and deans – and the public – business leaders, civic leaders, and parents.

Stakeholder Engagement for Application Initiatives

Each of the initiatives and policies contained in this waiver renewal request has been fully vetted by education stakeholders and the public through open meetings of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, its public stakeholder advisory councils (namely the Accountability Commission, the Superintendents’ Advisory Council, and the Special Education Advisory Panel), and the Louisiana Legislature. This includes the process of adopting, implementing, reviewing, and, as necessary, enhancing the state’s academic content standards, state and district accountability system, and educator evaluation and support system in order to meet the state’s mandate of preparing Louisiana students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace. Documentation relative to specific initiatives or policies, including meeting agendas, presentations, minutes, and policymaker votes may be found on the respective websites of the Louisiana Department of Education, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Louisiana Legislature.

On June 23, 2015, this document was posted on the website of the Louisiana Department of Education, distributed through a press release, and included in the LDOE weekly newsletter that has a readership of roughly 1,400 educators and education stakeholders. Individuals may submit comments through the email address ESEAwaiver@la.gov until June 30, 2015. The document was also shared with each member of the Louisiana Committee of Practitioners (the state Accountability Commission) for feedback. The version of the document that receives final approval from the U.S. Department of Education will also be posted on the Louisiana Department of Education website for public information.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or

its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Louisiana has been and continues to be a leader in implementing educational reforms in standards, assessment, accountability, data, and educator quality – critical areas recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The Recovery School District, Louisiana's state-led turnaround district, is a national model for the transformation of failing schools, for example. In order to support all schools in raising student achievement and avoid state takeover, Louisiana has adopted a statewide system of educator and school leader evaluation based in part on student achievement. The state has also been a leader in implementing more rigorous academic content standards and standards-based assessments. However, in order to focus school leaders and classroom teachers on these important changes and ensure effective continued implementation, state education leaders have recognized the need to increase educator capacity by removing much of what currently occupies their time and energy – red tape and bureaucracy. For this reason, Louisiana's renewal application for flexibility continues ambitious commitments to high-quality instructional support tools as well as significant changes in monitoring and compliance practices. Both components are essential to achieve higher expectations.

The USDOE has identified three foundational principles for the ESEA flexibility waiver initiative: (1) college and career-ready expectations for all students, (2) state-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, and (3) supporting effective instruction and leadership. Louisiana is well-positioned to meet each of these principles through:

- Louisiana's use of nationally recognized college- and career-ready academic content standards and aligned assessments;
- Louisiana's long-standing, rigorous state and district accountability system;
- The Compass evaluation and support system for educators; and
- Ongoing burden reduction efforts.

These initiatives become integrated through Louisiana's mission – to ensure that all students attain academic proficiency through the effective teaching of college- and career-ready standards. To support

this mission, the state will deliver targeted interventions and supports to struggling schools while motivating and rewarding districts and schools for high performance.

Louisiana recognizes that its goal to prepare all students to be proficient cannot be achieved through limited federal and state capacity using one-size-fits-all strategies. Instead, Louisiana must enhance educators' capacity through the elimination of burdens and through real reforms that enhance their work and accelerate student growth. This requires a clear articulation of the roles of critical players in Louisiana's schools:

- The USDOE, charging states with achieving proficiency for all students and supporting their work through the provision of flexible resources;
- State educational agencies, setting state-specific, rigorous goals for all students, encouraging improvement through strong incentives and consequences, and removing all other burdens;
- District and school leaders, managing and overseeing effective instruction in schools; and
- Most importantly, educators, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills and coaching all students to achieve their fullest potential.

In an effort to align these roles and responsibilities such that the state truly enhances the capacity of educators, on behalf of the more than 200,000 Louisiana children still performing below the Basic level on state assessments they serve, and in response to USDOE's calls for bold, innovative state-led reform, Louisiana presents this ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application for expeditious review and approval.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p>	<p>Option B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p>ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)</p>
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1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Louisiana continues to utilize the nationally recognized college- and career-ready academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2010. However, earlier this year, the board and the Louisiana Legislature approved a plan to review those standards to ensure that they continue to meet the state’s mandate of preparing Louisiana students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace. Beginning July 1, 2015, the board will begin a public online review process that will inform the work of a professional educator-led steering committee and content subcommittees. The committee members, nominated by various education

stakeholders and approved by the state board, will conduct a thorough review the standards and make recommendations relative to any revisions needed. Any recommended revisions to the standards must be posted on the board’s website no later than February 21, 2016 and approved by the board by March 4, 2016 in order to be implemented in the 2016-2017 school year. A complete summary of this process can be found at

[http://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9XENQJ61094F/\\$file/AGII%205.3%20Academic%20Content%20Standards%20Review%20Process.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9XENQJ61094F/$file/AGII%205.3%20Academic%20Content%20Standards%20Review%20Process.pdf)

It is important to note that state law continues to require the use of nationally recognized standards that represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace, as determined by content experts, elementary and secondary educators and school leaders, postsecondary education leaders, and business and industry leaders. In implementing state assessments to measure such standards (described in greater detail later in this document), rigorous student achievement standards must be set with reference to test scores of the same grade levels nationally.

In response to questions and concerns raised by some elected officials and their constituents regarding the use of the Common Core State Standards in Louisiana, and in accordance with the state’s policy to periodically academic content standards, in March 2015 BESE directed the State Superintendent of Education to commence a review of English language arts and mathematics standards to determine if any adjustments or additions are needed to maintain rigor and high expectations for teaching and learning and ensure the standards represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace.

The group chosen to review the standards is made up content experts, current Louisiana elementary and secondary educators and school leaders, postsecondary education leaders, business and industry leaders, and parents. The process used by BESE for selecting review committee participants, as well as the overview of the planned review process, can be viewed here:

[https://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9VERQE6D1656/\\$file/AGII%202.1%20Standards%20Review.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/9VERQE6D1656/$file/AGII%202.1%20Standards%20Review.pdf).

This exercise continues the state’s tradition of professional standards reviews, maintains the path begun more than four years ago to raise student expectations and outcomes, and respects the work done by educators and students since the implementation began in 2011.

Additionally, the department will be issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) for assessment content and administration in the summer of 2015. The department is currently drafting a proposal to obtain competitive proposals from qualified proposers that are interested in providing services to acquire and develop English language arts/literacy and mathematics items and test forms for Louisiana’s standards-based assessments to be administered in 2015-2016.

Science and Social Studies

In 2011, the LDOE convened committees of Social Studies educators who developed new Social Studies Grade-Level Expectations. The new GLEs were then reviewed by national experts identified through WestEd, who provided Likert scale ratings for each standard and its corresponding Grade-Level Expectation for rigor, relevance, clarity, determination that the content was essential, and degree to which the content would prepare students for more challenging work. The experts made specific recommendations that were incorporated regarding the alignment of historical thinking skills across grades, language complexity, the strengthening of financial literacy components in each grade level, and specific examples for educators’ use and understanding. Following public review, the new standards were adopted by BESE in June 2011.

In summer 2013, the LDOE conducted a series of meetings with science teachers around the state to discuss the extent to which current science standards are meeting the needs of Louisiana students and preparing them for college and careers. Several strengths and limitations were noted, and teachers expressed strong interest in upgrading Louisiana’s standards to improve pedagogy and incorporate recent scientific discoveries. The LDOE will continue working with science teachers and other stakeholders to determine the best options and timeframe for strengthening science standards and aligned assessments as more rigorous standards in other content areas are fully implemented.

Supporting Educators and School Leaders

As Louisiana works to support its educators and school leaders, both professional development and support materials are critical. As demonstrated in the text below, Louisiana is well positioned to provide support in both capacities.

The LDOE released intensive and aligned resources focused on providing high-quality, aligned, and integrated tools, and direct training and support at every layer of the system (teachers, principals, and central offices). In preparation for and during the 2014-2015 school year, this support includes the following:

Districts

To help focus districts as they prepare students for college-and-career standards, the LDOE provided a series of tools and resources that help districts make key decisions on an efficient timeline and build the systems needed to empower and develop teachers. Specifically this has included:

Resources:

- **District planning guide:** This guide (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=16>), housed in the district planning page for the 2015-2016 school year, <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-network-support-structure>) lays out all of the key decisions districts need to prepare for in order to effectively implement Louisiana’s standards. This guide focuses districts in a key set of areas (school and leader learning targets, assessment and curriculum, collaboration, observation and feedback, pathways to college and careers, and aligning resources). For each focus area, the guide describes what excellence looks like, outlines all key decisions, and aligns all support resources produced by the LDOE to help districts make these critical planning decisions.
- **Curricular guidance:** One of the most critical areas the LDOE has assist districts in is the development of curriculum and assessments. The selection of quality curricular tools is one of the most fundamental and critical decisions a district will make. To support quality decisions the LDOE released guidance (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/instructional-package-recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=4>) on a webpage that houses all curricular tools districts need (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2014-2015-curricular-package>). This guidance includes a full review of curricular tools available for free and for purchase. Districts in Louisiana have the autonomy to purchase and use any instructional materials of their own choosing, as curriculum is a local decision. But, to support their efforts and in response for requests

for guidance, the LDOE worked with educators to review and rate available curricula and interim assessments to support district decisions. The full reviews help districts consider how they will supplement any program that does not receive a tier 1 status (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2013-2014-math-and-english-language-arts-instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>).

- **Professional development guidance:** In addition to quality resources, districts need to offer quality professional development to support resource and standards implementation. The LDOE not only provided a substantial amount of professional development (see below), but also released guidance to support districts as they build their plans (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/2014-2015-professional-development-calendar.pdf?sfvrsn=6>).
- **Parent Support:** Parents are critical stakeholders in the implementation of rigorous standards. To support districts as they communicate with parents about the new standards, the LDOE created a parent homepage (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/parents-students>) that assists parents in supporting their children in each grade level and subject.
- **District Support Toolbox** (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox>): This central resource hub houses all of the key resources districts need in a one stop shop. The resources include all of the key tools from above, along with other tools uploaded throughout the year to support districts with key initiatives.
- **Principal Fellowship** This program supports individual principals to build their instructional leadership skills through a sixteen-month cohort collaboration training. In 2015-2016, over 100 principals across Louisiana will participate in the first cohort.

Direct support: As always, resources are never enough. To help districts make meaningful planning decisions and build the systems to support educators, the LDOE put the following direct support in place:

- **District planning calls:** These bi-monthly calls began in January 2014. All district superintendents along with their key instructional staff join each call. The first call in January helped focus districts on the district planning guide and the key decisions they would need to make through the winter and spring to prepare for full standards implementation. During each call the LDOE addresses questions, illustrates new resources released to support districts with those decisions, and shares best practices from around the state. All 2014-2015 calls can be found on the LDOE website (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-planning-2014-2015>).
- **Network support:** LDOE Network Teams support every district in the state. The network teams provide in-person support to help districts with their locally developed implementation plans, supported by the district planning guide and other LDOE resources (See more information on Network Teams in Principle 2).
- **District supervisor collaborations:** LDOE hosts quarterly meetings with district-level supervisors of various academic departments to collaborate on key instructional focus areas: curriculum, benchmark assessments systems, statewide assessments, and professional development, to help districts leverage LDOE resources from the Classroom Support Toolbox (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox>) and share best practices around the state.
- **Superintendents' collaboration:** The statewide Superintendents' collaboration event is a space for districts to collaborate, share model programs and plans, and set up ongoing opportunities to share

resources (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/statewide-collaboration>).

Educators

The LDOE believes that those closest to students, educators and parents, are best positioned to support students and thus the implementation of Louisiana’s standards. Given this belief, the LDOE has invested a significant amount of support for educators directly. This support focuses on providing educators key resources and training so that they can make local, empowered decisions to support their unique students. This strategy also connects to the work at the district and principal layer. While districts are making strong curricular choices and building strong systems for educators to improve, the LDOE direct-to-teacher strategy is building capacity around strong ELA and math content knowledge to fill those structures.

Resources:

- **Teacher toolbox (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox>):** This central resource hub houses all of the key resources teachers need in a one stop shop. This toolbox was created with the support of educators from across the state. It is built from the perspective of a teacher and the key steps they take to teach students. All resources and tools released from the LDOE are integrated and connect to help teachers take these key actions.
- **Curriculum guides (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/year-long-scope-sequence>):** As the LDOE reviewed math and ELA curricula from vendors (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2013-2014-math-and-english-language-arts-instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>) it was quickly apparent that the market was not meeting the needs of teachers as they worked to implement Louisiana’s standards. Thus, the LDOE created a robust set of instructional tools for math and ELA. The ELA guidebooks contain a full set of unit plans to build a complete curriculum for educators K-12. In math, the guidebooks are meant to be a supplement to any program. They support teachers as they work to provide students tasks and appropriately remediate.
- **Video library (<http://videolibrary.louisianabelieves.com/>):** This library houses instructional videos that illustrate quality instruction connected to Louisiana’s Compass instructional rubric and standards. This library is regularly updated and includes guides to help teachers and principals use the videos for instructional improvement.
- **Assessment tools (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/end-of-year-assessments>):** Assessment guides, sample tests, and other tools help teachers to understand how students will be assessed. These tools prepare teachers to set strong goals for student mastery of the standards and align their instruction accordingly.
- **Standards modules (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/standards>):** This page in the Teacher Support Toolbox houses a series of tools to help teachers and principals explore the standards.
- **High School Students Planning Guidebook ([http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/2014-high-school-planning-guidebook-\(web\).pdf?sfvrsn=8](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/2014-high-school-planning-guidebook-(web).pdf?sfvrsn=8)):** This guidebook is a series of short documents showing administrators, counselors, and teachers how to use key policies, programs, and resources to help both students and schools achieve their goals.

Direct support: Just as with every level, direct support ensures that teachers are able to use the quality resources and implement the standards successfully in their classroom. In Louisiana, our direct support goes directly to the teacher level. While districts and principals take on a significant amount of teacher training and support, the LDOE provides an intense amount of direct training and support.

- **Teacher Leaders (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/collaboration-teacher-leadership>):** This cadre of over 5,000 teachers represents every district and school in the state. This cadre ensures that every school has a series of experts on the standards and curricular tools. This provides principals and districts capacity. These Teacher Leaders support districts and schools as they work to train and support teachers in their districts. All training noted below is directed towards this group of educators. All materials are posted publicly so that teacher leaders and others are able to use all training materials for other teachers in their schools and districts.
- **TAP and NIET Best Practices Expansion:** The expansion helps principals build effective systems for goal setting, observation, feedback, and collaboration. Through this program, districts choose a differentiated set of TAP supports to implement throughout the district.
- **Principal Fellowship:** This program supports individual principals to build their instructional leadership skills through a sixteen-month cohort collaboration training. In 2015-2016, over 100 principals across Louisiana will participate in the first cohort.
- **Blended training:** Louisiana Teacher Leaders receive a significant amount of training throughout the year. The LDOE has learned that teachers need different types of training to support their varied needs. Thus, the LDOE provides intensive, blended training throughout the entire school year. Each layer of training provides support in a different area of need for educators.
 - o *Content training (in person):* Rich content-based training often requires deep and intense practice. Thus, in person is often the most effective forum for content-based training. To support Teacher Leaders, the LDOE hosts over 10,000 seats of training during the year. In June 2014, the entire 4,000 cadre came together for a two day ELA and math training. In June 2015, 5,000 Louisiana educators are expected to attend the Teacher Leader Summit. This event is followed by content institutes throughout the year.
 - o *Resource/curricula use (virtual):* In addition to content development, teachers need support to use the curriculum and tools. High quality, standards-aligned instructional tools are complex. Teachers require support to ensure they are prepared to use these materials. Thus, the LDOE hosts grade specific math and ELA bi-monthly webinars. These webinars break down upcoming weeks of lessons, help teachers adjust plans based on student needs, and share resources among other teachers.
 - o *Ongoing improvement (collaboration):* Finally, the LDOE hosts in-person regional collaborations led by expert and trained teacher advisors. These regional collaborations provide space throughout the year for teachers to reflect on student work, identify areas for improvement, and share resources.
- **Ed modo collaboration:** Finally, teachers need an immediate place to go to find and share resources across the state. The LDOE state-wide educator EdModo site provides this space. Thousands of teachers use this site weekly to share resources, ask teacher questions, and support others. The LDOE monitors this site and pulls high quality resources to key folders to ensure quality for others.

Principals

Resources: Developed to provide principals support with instructional decisions and the Compass improvements to be implemented in 2015-2016.

- **Louisiana Principal’s Teaching & Learning Guidebook:** Illustrates the tools the Department provides principals to build a team; choose and use curriculum, assessments, professional development, and collaboration; and set goals and provide support to teachers.
- **High School Guidebook:** Short documents showing administrators, counselors, and teachers how to use key policies, programs, and resources to help both students and schools achieve their goals.
- **Online Compass Modules:** Available to guide the work of all principals and teachers as they set goals, monitor progress, give and receive feedback and adjust instruction to improve practice.
- **Compass Educator Support and Evaluation System**

Direct Support:

- **TAP and NIET Best Practices Expansion** helps principals build effective systems for goal setting, observation, feedback, and collaboration. Through this program, districts choose a differentiated set of TAP supports to implement throughout the district.
- **Principal Fellowship** This program supports individual principals to build their instructional leadership skills through a sixteen month cohort collaboration training. In 2015-2016, over 100 principals across Louisiana will participate in the first cohort.
- **Principal Compass Trainings:** Trainings design to support new and veteran principals in their learning of new policies related to educator evaluations that were approved by BESE this spring and helping develop principals as instructional leaders.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Only fifty percent of Louisiana’s students with disabilities are scoring on Basic or above on the fourth grade assessments and fewer than half of students with disabilities entering Louisiana high schools graduate with a diploma. The resources and support provided by the LDOE described above will enable districts and educators to better serve all students, however, to achieve significant gains with this specific population we must execute meaningful college and career readiness initiatives targeted to our students with disabilities.

Recognizing the need to elevate Louisiana’s focus on the achievement of students with disabilities and increase district capacity to serve the needs of such children, the LDOE’s organizational restructuring in 2010 included the dispersing of special education professionals throughout the agency. No longer was special education housed within the federal program compliance office; special education became part of the content-centered “goal” offices that are focused on Louisiana’s achievement of goals related to literacy, STEM, and college and career readiness. As a result, the agency is delivering more effective support to districts and schools with regard to IDEA compliance and increasing academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The work has shifted to not only helping students access the new standards, but also to increasing the rate at which they make academic progress, meet IEP goals, and earn diplomas and career credentials within the regular education setting. To work specifically on these initiatives and enhance collaboration within the agency, the LDOE hired a new Special Education Policy Director who started in the summer of 2014. The special education policy office will concentrate on improving the outcomes for students with disabilities, the LDOE monitoring system with a focus on target setting, increase the prominence of

special education specific reporting, work closely with the network teams to deliver targeted support to local school districts and high-need schools, and conduct an analysis of special education data, specifically student outcome data, to frame the development of new targets and improvement activities in the State Performance Plan. To assist in meeting district needs, the LDOE also provides funding to eight regional centers to offer support and training in the area of technology for students with disabilities, students on 504 plans, and Universal Design for Learning and to 11 Families Helping Families centers across the state to provide services and training to families and educators.

One of the most significant initiatives is supporting successful high school completion for all students with disabilities. This includes the implementation of Act 833 of the 2014 Louisiana Legislative Session and the state board approved pathway to a Career Diploma for students assessed on alternate standards.

Act 833 (2014) allows students with disabilities who have had persistent academic challenges to demonstrate proficiency for promotion and for high school graduation through alternate performance criteria. The law permits IEP teams to identify students meeting eligibility criteria established in the law, and, if appropriate, identify alternate ways to demonstrate proficiency of performance targets the students must meet in order to be promoted or to graduate. Implemented thoughtfully with extensive stakeholder engagement, this law can focus educators on the best means of assessing skills and progress among students who have IEPs and are struggling with more conventional measures. To ensure this is the case, the LDOE is working with stakeholders, including our Special Education Advisory Panel and the Louisiana State University-Health Science Center, to build IEP team capacity and support the creation of strong IEP goals aligned to the state's college and career ready standards and the use of meaningful assessments for measuring achievement.

As stated in the policy approved by the state board, the state academic content standards shall apply to all public school students in the state. Instruction shall include the same knowledge and skills expected of all students and the same level of achievement expected of all students. Only diplomas earned by students who have pursued the regular academic state standards and who have earned all state-required Carnegie credits shall be considered regular diplomas in the state and district accountability system, pursuant to federal laws and regulations. The IEP team may not lower promotion or graduation requirements for a student with a disability if doing so means the student will not be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum based on Louisiana's general academic content standards.

The LDOE has committed to developing a proposal to recognize the achievements of students with significant cognitive disabilities within the state, district, and school accountability formula. Department staff worked with special education advocates and educators to review researched based best practices, define successful high school completion, and develop a pathway to a Career Diploma for students assessed on the alternate achievement standards. This pathway includes access to core academic courses, workforce readiness and career preparation, assessment of student growth and progress, and transition planning focused on post-secondary success. The state board approved the policy in April of 2015. LDOE has identified exemplar districts that have been implementing effective career preparation programs for students with significant cognitive disabilities to support with training and implementation of this new policy.

While the majority of students with disabilities will continue their education beyond high school, meaningful career education in high school provides an important opportunity for students working toward goals of successful competitive and non-competitive employment. The Jump Start Career Education program, described in detail later in this document, provides career-focused courses and workplace experiences to all high school students, allowing them to continue their education after high school and earn industry-based certifications. The LDOE convened a workgroup of educators with experience in

providing career education to students with disabilities and industry representatives with experience hiring individuals with disabilities to determine how the traditional Jump Start pathways can specifically benefit students with disabilities. The LDOE will continue to work with regional teams to define appropriate experiences and opportunities for students with disabilities within the Jump Start pathways.

The creation of Louisiana’s current accountability system revealed the achievement gap between student subgroups and their peers and continues to provide data and incentives to schools and school systems to dedicate time and resources to serving students with the highest needs. However, the small population of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities continued to be left out of the equation. While these students are included in the total population used to calculate the school performance scores (SPS) in high school, all of the allowable indicators of a successful high school experience in the outcomes based graduation index, accounting for 25 percent of the final score, required student assessment on the regular standards (see Principal 2.A for more information on the SPS formula, including the graduation index). Special education advocates and parents called on the LDOE to develop a thoughtful proposal that would provide all students the ability to earn an outcome recognized in accountability. By doing this, Louisiana would recognize the work accomplished by students with significant disabilities and their educators and protect their educational interests.

The collaboration of LDOE staff, local school systems, educators, families, and advocates resulted in the creation of a meaningful alternate pathway to Louisiana’s Career Diploma that is accessible to students meeting the state’s participation criteria for assessment on the extended standards or the Louisiana Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1). This pathway mirrors the traditional route to a Career Diploma and ensures students are exposed to a full core curriculum, career skill training, and an experience in competitive employment. High school students are eligible if they are evaluated and determined to be meet Louisiana’s objective definition for a significant cognitive disability; however, selecting this alternate pathway to a Career Diploma is not required for students meeting this criteria. All students have access to the traditional curriculum, assessments, and diploma pathways.

The graduation requirements for students on the alternate pathway to a Career Diploma fall into the four components described below. Students who are able to complete all four components of the diploma will earn a College Diploma worth 100 points in the graduation index¹.

1. Academic. This requirement ensures all students have the same access to the core academic subject areas. Students assessed on the LAA 1 will be required to complete at least 23 course credits in either applied courses or Carnegie credit courses. The 23 courses must include 12 core subject course credits: 4 ELA courses, 4 math courses, 2 social studies courses, and 2 science courses.

The LAA 1 is not a placement, but rather a means of assessing student learning. The IEP team should decide the most appropriate course schedule and the least restrictive educational setting for each student with involvement in and access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible.

2. Assessment. All students in high school must take either the LAA 1 assessment in English or math or the Algebra I and English II End-of-Course (EOC) test. Any student enrolled in a course with a corresponding EOC must participate in the assessment. Students who are eligible for participation in the LAA 1 assessment may meet the assessment diploma requirement in one of

¹ Because this pathway does not require assessment on the regular academic standards, it will not be included in the calculation of the cohort graduation rate.

two ways:

- Students may achieve the standard of proficiency on the appropriate statewide assessments; or
- Students unable to achieve the standard of proficiency on a statewide assessment in either ELA, math, or both may meet the assessment component through a portfolio of student achievement evaluated by the special education director. The portfolio must include student data demonstrating growth on the extended standards during high school and attainment of IEP goals and may not be submitted until the end of the student's fourth year of high school to ensure growth toward proficiency is the primary goal of the instruction during high school.

3. Career Preparation. Students must earn at least seven career course credits as part of a workforce-readiness and career education program developed by the LEA. The program and the student's experience must include the following research-based approaches to career education for students with disabilities:

- An assessment at the beginning of high school that measures the student's interests and ability in specific career clusters;
- Career focused courses including, but not limited to, foundational workplace skills;
- A hands-on community-based workplace experience in a competitive and integrated employment settings aligned, to the extent practicable, to the student's interests; and
- Achievement of an IEP team determined rating on a workforce readiness survey or specific career task analysis.

The Department will partner with the Louisiana Rehabilitative Services (LRS) division of the Louisiana Workforce Commission to provide LEAs assistance meeting these requirements. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, signed into law in July 2014, requires LRS to set aside at least 15 percent of its funding to provide accessibility to employment and training services for youth with disabilities and offer extensive pre-employment training services so they can successfully obtain competitive integrated employment.

4. Transition. The IEP team must complete an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) prior to the student entering a Louisiana high school (or upon entering for out-of-state transfers) that includes:

- Post-secondary career goals;
- A high school experience and course schedule that aligns with his/her post-secondary goals; and
- Access to an environment and experiences whereby the student gains the skills and competencies necessary to achieve his/her post-secondary goals.

Prior to the student exiting the school system, the IEP team must evaluate a student's postsecondary readiness and create a detailed plan of action that meets one of the following:

- Employment in integrated, inclusive work environments, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain employment without direct or continuous educational support from the school district;
- Demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that indicate that he does not require direct and continuous educational support from the school district; or
- Access to services that are not within the legal responsibility of public education or

employment or educational options for which the student has been prepared by the academic program.

Students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services that are designed to meet the child's unique needs and that prepare the child for further education, employment, and independent living. Schools across Louisiana have been working diligently to prepare students with significant disabilities for life after high school and yet their work was previously not reflected in the index of successful outcomes. This proposal honors their work and increases the protection of educational rights for students with disabilities that accountability provides.

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for students with disabilities. Louisiana recognizes that systemic changes need to be made to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities. By fourth grade, less than half of Louisiana's students with disabilities are scoring on at the Basic level, and this decreases over time, leading to low graduation rates. Louisiana is focusing on improving literacy—a foundation skill necessary for success in all subjects and grades, and life after school. The LDOE is targeting students with disabilities in grades three through five by implementing a series of coherent improvement strategies that target the root causes of low literacy proficiency. By intervening early in students' careers, Louisiana will improve proficiency rates for students with disabilities, putting them on a successful path for the rest of their school experience. The SSIP will be implemented in three phases, with a scale-up plan, and meaningful stakeholder engagement integrated throughout.

The Louisiana State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), awarded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, is enabling the LDOE to develop a system of professional development and support based on state, district, and school needs to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and create sustainable, evidence-based practices. Funding for this five-year, \$6 million grant will provide aid to high-need districts throughout the state. The project has four focus areas related to the use and effectiveness of data-based decision making, inclusive practices, family engagement, and culturally responsive practices. These areas will be addressed through the use of blended professional development, data collection and analysis, implementation measures, and collaboration with state efforts. The grant provides and links districts to professional development that connects special needs instruction to the Louisiana's ELA and math content standards; collaborative initiatives that link regular education and special education teachers; and provides training on the effective utilization of data to make informed decisions. As support is provided to participating districts, the LDOE continues to develop and disseminate materials and resources statewide and enhance LDOE initiatives based on strategies found to be most effective. Currently available resources include the Louisiana Co-Teaching Guide, ParaPros Make the Difference, Equitable Classroom Practices Checklist, and Professional Development Planning Guide for Culturally Responsive Practices. Partnerships with Louisiana State University and Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center, are supporting the achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

Louisiana is supporting the achievement of students with disabilities through rigorous formal evaluations of general and special education professionals who serve them, with such evaluations based in part on evidence of student growth. All certificated school personnel are subject to Compass, the state's new evaluation and supports system for educators and school leaders, and the LDOE worked with special education professionals to identify appropriate measures of student growth. As part of a Special Populations workgroup for non-tested grades and subjects, special education professionals representing inclusion, gifted and talented, and profound disabilities recommended the use of common assessments and other measures of student growth for the new evaluation system. Those assessments and measures included but were not limited to state standardized tests, progress in achieving goals set forth in Individualized Education Plans, the Brigance for Special Education assessment, and student work samples.

The LDOE offers a number of opportunities for communication, feedback, and assistance in collaborating on special education policy matters. Department staff regularly facilitates informational webinars for district personnel and educators to provide special education-focused updates on LDOE initiatives, in addition to information disseminated in the weekly district newsletter. The LDOE also facilitates Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) meetings. This diverse group of stakeholders is charged with providing feedback on special education initiatives and policies. The LDOE will continue to partner with special education professionals, advocates, and families to support students with disabilities in reaching their highest potential.

Supporting English Language Learners

As stated in Principle 1.B, Louisiana will commence a review of the state academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics to determine if any adjustments or additions are needed to maintain rigor and high expectations for teaching and learning and to ensure the standards represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace. The review of the state academic standards is expected to be completed by Spring 2016. At the conclusion of the standards review and approval process, Louisiana will update the English language proficiency (ELP) standards and update the related assessments. In order to achieve consistency between the foundational academic standards and the ELP standards, it is imperative to complete the review of the regular standards before beginning to update the extended standards.

The NCLB and IDEA Support Division of the LDOE has a partnership with the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma to develop and implement an outreach plan to better serve families receiving ELL services and build the ELL capacity of our schools and school systems. The first and immediate phase of the partnership focuses on distributing existing SC3 resources to classroom educators and district staff involved with Title III services and academic programs. The SC3 English Language Learner KnowledgeBases are housed on the SC3 website and breakdown ELL specific topics into an outline format with guidance at each level. The SC3 KnowledgeBases will help practitioners in the field meet compliance requirements and serve the ELL community more effectively. The KnowledgeBase has components targeted specifically to the roles of administrators, teachers, parent advocates, and educators of migrant students and includes topics such as *“Communicating with and Involving Parents”* and *“Understanding the US School System.”* The ELL portal, developed by SC3 and accessed here: <http://sc3ta.org/topics/ELL.html>, provides a central point of access for a variety of ELL-related resources, including:

- Setting Rigorous Expectations for Student Learning (including teachers’ resources for the classroom through video clips, examples of mini-lessons, and best practices to provide professional learning to teachers)
- Education on the Web (a human-indexed database of ELL-related web links organized into a series of hierarchical categories)
- Hot Topics for ELL Practitioners (quick digests of research and other resources on important topics such as motivation, creating a culture of universal achievement, personalized learning, formative assessment, and others)
- Data Sources (links to ELL data sources and demographic information)
- Related Organizations (links to ELL-related organizations and state resources)
- Event and Webinar Archive (recorded webinars and materials on previous technical assistance events focused on ELL topics including family and community involvement, the impact of culture, academic language, differentiated instruction, and gifted and talented)

The Department will use its website, weekly newsletter distributed to educators, administrators, district staff, and stakeholders, and ongoing communication with Title III coordinators to share the existing resources. Concurrently, SC3 will provide a series of professional trainings related to ELL education to build the capacity of LDOE staff members who have direct contact with LEAs and schools.

The SC3 materials will provide a useful service for Louisiana schools, however, the LDOE knows that information created by and for Louisiana educators is the most valuable resource that can be provided. The second phase of the partnership with the LDOE and the SC3 focuses on creating Louisiana-specific ELL supports and offering training opportunities for use by Title III district coordinators, administrators, ELL teachers, and regular education teachers.

Starting in March 2015, the LDE has hosted webinars and face-to-face meetings on a number of topics that support the education of ELL students. This Community of Practice includes an overview of law and policies related to the education of this student population, research-based instructional strategies, increasing parental involvement, different types of education programs, supporting students who are newcomers to the American education system, and supporting ELL students with exceptionalities. This platform not only allows the LDOE and SC3 to provide research-based strategies and information, but also a forum for educators to share successful programs and problem-solve in a constructive space.

The Teacher Leader Summit held in June 2015 included the first meeting of the ELL Coaches Academy. The Academy is designed to transform the role of ELL teachers to Language Coaches. Participants learn how to use peer coaching to support mainstream teachers working with English learners in regular classrooms. While the focus is on local education agencies, traditional districts and charter organizations, with the highest populations of ELL students, all resources from the academy will be made available statewide. In addition, coaches participating in the academy will have the opportunity for district support teams of LDE staff, accompanied by the South Central Comprehensive Center staff, to deliver support and guidance on-site in their districts/schools. This will provide an opportunity for our educators to receive job embedded professional development to enhance their coaching skills and build their capacities in providing services to their ELL students.

The LDOE will also evaluate available curricular resources for English learners for quality and alignment to the state standards. The LDOE will take advantage of work done by other states and organizations to make the best tools available for teachers of English learners.

- Starting in 2014-2015, Louisiana offers math assessments in grades 3-8 in Spanish for eligible students.
- To help families support their children in learning higher standards, the Family Support Toolbox Library (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/family-support-toolbox-library>) includes the parent guides developed by the National PTA in Spanish for all grades.
- The library also includes LDOE developed parent guides in Arabic, Spanish, and Vietnamese, Louisiana's three most spoken languages after English, for the English Language Development Assessment.

Both content teachers of English language learners and English as a Second Language (ESL), teachers are subject to Compass. Like the Special Populations workgroup convened for special education professionals and teachers in other non-tested grades and subjects, a workgroup was convened to develop possible measures of effectiveness for ESL teachers. The group recommended the use of the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), a pre-ELDA to establish baseline data, and student portfolios demonstrating language learning. Ongoing collaboration with ESL professionals around the state and the Louisiana chapter of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., will inform evaluations and supports for educators who teach English language learners.

Louisiana has also implemented changes specific to the struggles faced by children of migrant workers. These students are faced with very unique challenges, including frequent language barriers, that potentially endanger their academic success and ability to achieve the high academic standards that all children are expected to meet. The weaknesses in the old structure of the Louisiana's migrant education program were limiting availability of support services that could be provided to migrant children to help them overcome these challenges. To address the concerns, the LDOE has utilized a portion of its Title I Part C (Migrant Program) Administrative funding to establish an Identification and Recruitment (ID&R) Coordination Center that will provide centralized and coordinated efforts to achieve more effective and efficient statewide ID&R. Key players include the MEP Director/Representative, ID&R Center Coordinator, regional recruiters, Local Operating Agency recruiters, lead implementation consultant, and the Union Community Action Association (UCAA). Although UCAA will take the lead regarding this effort, there will be seven other Local Operating Agencies across the state involved.

While the South Central Comprehensive Center is working with the LDOE to build a strategy for supporting ELL students statewide, the Recovery School District (RSD) is implementing immediate targeted initiatives in New Orleans where the majority of Louisiana's ELL population is educated. New Orleans public schools have seen a 40 percent increase in the number of English language learners enrolling in schools over the last three years and an estimated 500 new non-English speaking students have enrolled in schools in 2014-2015 so far. The RSD is committed to ensuring all English language learners in the New Orleans area receive a high quality education and their families feel supported and engaged.

In order to support these students, their families, and our schools, the RSD is focusing its efforts on (1) ensuring a smooth enrollment process for students and families, (2) providing financial resources for schools as they build their programs to serve non-English speaking students, and (3) partnering with organizations around New Orleans to build support for these families.

Enrollment

All students who reside in Orleans Parish are welcome to enroll in RSD schools regardless of their prior schooling, resident status, or primary language. English language learners and recent immigrants can enroll in schools at the Family Resource Centers. The centers are staffed with Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters and a staff member who can communicate using American Sign Language. Staff members are available to assist families in their native language as they enroll in school, transfer between schools, or seek information on school availability. The RSD is also in the process of translating the enrollment website into Spanish and Vietnamese.

Financial Support for Schools

The Recovery School District recognizes that schools will have to build programs to support the influx of English language learners. In 2014, the RSD will announce a competitive grant process for schools to build these programs and share their strategies with schools around the city. Additionally, the RSD is investigating options for increasing the per pupil dollar amount schools receive for each English language learner enrolled in their school as soon as the 2015-16 school year.

Working with Partners

In addition to the efforts of the RSD, partner organizations and charter school operators are also working to build staff and school capacity to serve English language learners. This fall, the Choice Foundation, Orleans Parish School Board, and Catholic Charities will jointly host the first of a number of events to provide teacher and administrator training in ESL teaching strategies. The Louisiana Association of Public Charter

Schools (LAPCS), the Eastbank Collaborative of Charter Schools (ECCS), TNTP-Teach NOLA, and Teach for America (TFA) are also all placing specific emphasis on recruiting and hiring teachers certified in or interested in teaching ESL. Lastly, the RSD has developed a partnership with Puentes New Orleans, an advocacy group focused on building assets and creating access for and with Latinos of Greater New Orleans, to provide supports for Spanish speaking students and their families.

While the majority of Louisiana's English Language Learners are concentrated in New Orleans, the remainder of the southeastern region of the state has also experienced an influx of Spanish speaking students and LDOE is working closely with the school system most affected to assist in offering support to the educators and families. An inventory was taken to assess the financial impact on districts and the LDOE is working with districts with the greatest costs to allocate their resources in the most beneficial way for students, including the identification of federal support and funding.

Since New Orleans and the surrounding area serve an overwhelming majority of the English Language Learners, the development of an outreach strategy, support structure, and LDOE technical assistance have been focused there. As resources and best practices are established in the southeast during the 2014-2015 school year, Louisiana will determine, as part of the phase 2 strategy described above, how the work there can most effectively be applied to the smaller ELL populations across the state.

Louisiana's State Assessments to Ensure College and Career Readiness

Louisiana administers state assessments for all four core content areas – ELA, math, science and social studies - in third grade through high school. Each test is aligned to Louisiana's rigorous state standards. In 2015-2016, students in grades 3 to 8 will take state-created science and social studies exams, as well as ELA and math exams that may include up to 49.9 percent of questions from a federally funded testing consortium. High school students will participate in the same assessments as they did in 2014-2015. Specifically, high school students will take state-created end-of-course exams (EOCs) in English II, English III, Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology and U.S. History. They will also participate in the ACT series – EXPLORE (8th and 9th), PLAN (10th), and ACT (11th).

Middle school students in Louisiana have the opportunity to earn Carnegie credit before entering high school, with the most common credit being Algebra 1. Previously, to meet ESEA requirements, middle school students enrolled in Algebra I were required to participate in the Algebra I EOC and the grade level statewide math assessment (e.g., 8th grade LEAP). Starting with the 2015-2016 school year, students will only be required to participate in the state assessment that aligns with the math course in which they are enrolled. For purposes of high school accountability and ESEA requirements, these students are required to participate in the Geometry EOC by the end of their third year of high school.

Grade	Current/Transitional Assessment (current through 2013-2014)	Permanent Assessment (2014-2015 and 2015-2016)
Incoming K	Developing Skills Checklist	Developing Skills Checklist
K-3	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
3, 5, 6, 7	Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP)	LEAP EOCs EXPLORE PLAN ACT
4	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP)	
8	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP)	
9-12	End-of-Course Tests PLAN (10 th grade students)	

Table 1.A. Louisiana’s Statewide Assessments

Alternate Assessments

Louisiana also administers an alternative assessment for students with the significant cognitive disabilities – the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1).

Louisiana joined the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC), a project led by five centers and 19 states to build an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. In addition to the development of an alternate assessment, NCSC is developing curriculum, instruction, and professional development support for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The project also involves identifying effective communication strategies for students, the development of material at varying levels of complexity to meet students’ unique learning needs, and accommodation policies appropriate for this population. Louisiana has established a Community of Practice comprised of teachers and district and school administrators who work with this population of students. The group reviews materials and provides feedback as they are developed. The goal of the NCSC project is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options.

As stated in Principle 1.B, Louisiana will commence a review of the state academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics to determine if any adjustments or additions are needed to maintain rigor and high expectations for teaching and learning and to ensure the standards represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace. The review of the state academic standards is expected to be completed by Spring 2016. At the conclusion of the standards review and approval process, Louisiana will finalize the extended standards and update the related assessments. In order to achieve consistency between the standards assessed and the instruction provided in the least restrictive environment determined by the IEP team, it is imperative to complete the review of the regular standards before beginning to update the extended standards.

How has Louisiana transitioned students with disabilities previously taking an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards to Louisiana’s new, high-quality assessments?

As reiterated in the ESEA Flexibility guidance (FAQ C-15), the USDOE will no longer allow modified assessments. Therefore, Louisiana phased out its LAA 2 assessment by the 2014-2015 school year. During this process, the LDOE committed to deep engagement with district leaders, teachers, parents, special education advocates, policymakers, and students in order to ensure adequate supports for

students and educators. The implementation of the new special education law (Act 833) will impact the promotion and graduation requirements of students with disabilities, specifically the student population that previously participated in the LAA 2 assessment. The LDOE will be working closely with local superintendents, special education directors, and advocates to ensure the implementation of these new laws does not diminish the expectations of students with disabilities and that they continue to be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum.

Specifics of Louisiana’s Transition Timeline:

- At the high school level, students who were previously eligible for the LAA 2 assessment participated in the first statewide administration of the ACT beginning in Spring 2013.
- Students in 3-8 transitioned to general assessments by the 2014-2015 school year.

Preparing Students for Post-Secondary Work

Louisiana strives to provide all students with early access to post-secondary education courses and courses that will enhance their preparation for rigorous post-secondary work. The TOPS Tech Early Start fund provides tuition assistance to eligible 11th and 12th grade students that enroll in eligible postsecondary courses leading to an Industry Based Certification in top demand occupations. Some local school districts also have agreements with their local post-secondary institutions for dual enrollment courses and/or have attained approval of their own educators to teach college-level courses for which post-secondary credit can be given. Total dual enrollment courses have grown steadily over the past six academic years as demonstrated by the chart below.

Academic Year	Non-Duplicated Dual Enrollment (Number of Students)	Duplicated Dual Enrollment (Number of Courses Taken)
2007-2008	6,403	12,320
2008-2009	10,578	14,859
2009-2010	14,648	20,007
2010-2011	17,572	25,856
2011-2012	17,033	27,645
2012-2013	20,610	33,476
2013-2014	21,044	34,705

Table 1B. Dual Enrollment

Going forward, Louisiana will integrate all dual enrollment efforts into a single strategy whereby education funds allocated through the state’s funding formula for K-12 education will be used to support students’ enrollment in courses that provide both secondary and post-secondary education credit. In fact, beginning with the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the state’s funding formula for K-12 education includes additional funding to support students who elect to take courses, including many dual enrollment courses, offered by state-approved course providers. These providers include the state’s public postsecondary education institutions. This cohesive strategy and consolidated funding stream, combined with dual enrollment incentives in the state’s accountability formula (discussed in Principle 2) will maintain a strong emphasis on dual enrollment and allow state education leaders and policymakers to more effectively measure its effectiveness.

Louisiana has also taken steps to increase student access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses through state education policy. 6.2 percent of Louisiana students passed at least one Advanced Placement exam in the 2014 graduating cohort, putting the state ahead of only Mississippi. LDOE has set a goal to reach the

national average —21.6 percent — by 2017. Beginning in 2012-2013, each LEA was required to offer students access to at least one Advanced Placement course. The LDOE worked with local school districts and external course providers greatly expand Advanced Placement course offerings over the next two years. AP course enrollments surged for the 2014-2015 school year. Louisiana students enrolled in 33,231 AP courses, an 18.6 percentage point increase from 28,009 enrollments in 2013-2014. Over the last four years the number of AP course enrollments has nearly doubled, increasing 89.5 percent from 17,540 in 2011-2012. Increased participation is leading to increased numbers of students scoring high enough to earn college credit. College Board data shows the number of Louisiana students scoring 3 or higher on AP exams, earning college credit, has increased 24.6 percent, the highest growth in the nation, from 5,144 students in 2013 to 6,407 students in 2014. Additionally, Louisiana's rate of increase in the percentage of junior and seniors scoring a 3 or higher ranked 8th in the country from 2013 to 2014, increasing 0.8 percent from 3.3 percent in 2013 to 4.1 percent in 2014.

The rising number of students participating in AP includes dramatic increases for African-American students, who have realized increases of 30.7 percent in tests scoring 3 or higher from 541 students in 2013 to 707 students in 2014, and 89 percent over the last two years from 374 students in 2012 to 707 students in 2014. Likewise, the number of African-American high school students simply taking AP tests increased 36 percent, from 2,645 students in 2013 to 3,598 students in 2014, and 137 percent over the last two years from 1,516 students in 2012. The increases in scores are the result of a surge in AP participation in Louisiana. The state is now ranked 38th for the percentage of high school junior and seniors taking an AP test. Just two years ago, in 2012, Louisiana was last in the nation. From 2013 to 2014, the percentage of Louisiana's high school juniors and seniors taking AP tests increased by 4 percentage points, to 13.6 percent, and more than doubled from 6.6 percent since 2012.

Louisiana continues to implement a multi-faceted, comprehensive strategy to support teachers and students.

- Linking AP results to school accountability by recognizing a passing AP score (3 to 5) as the highest level of achievement earned by a cohort graduate, earning the maximum 150 points in the graduation index.
- Paying for test fees for all students taking AP exams who meet the criteria for low-income students and for students taking exams new to their school, because every child should have the opportunity to succeed.
- Providing increased access to AP courses through the state-funded Supplemental Course Academy.
- Providing funding for teachers and administrators taking part in summer AP training, with more than 500 educators across the state participating in 2015.
- Creating incentives for students to take more rigorous AP courses by giving courses approved by the state additional weight in the calculation of the GPA qualifying students for the Louisiana TOPS college scholarships.
- Providing more than 12,000 letters to the parents or guardians of students demonstrating a high likelihood of AP success based on results from the 2014 ACT PLAN Assessment taken during the sophomore year.

In fall 2013, Louisiana announced Jump Start, the state's new program for school districts, colleges, and businesses and industry to collaborate in providing career-focused courses and workplace experiences to high school students, allowing them to continue their education after high school and earn industry-based certifications in fields most likely to lead to high-wage jobs. One hundred percent of Louisiana school districts are participating in this new program, preparing to offer these new experiences to their high school students. More information on the Jump Start career education program can be accessed here:

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/jump-start-career-education>.

While in high school, participating students will be provided more time in the school day and school year to achieve industry certificates or college credentials in addition to their high school diplomas. These credentials will qualify graduates to continue their studies after high school or to launch a career upon graduating. Jump Start credentials will be state-approved and valued by Louisiana employers.

To support this goal, Jump Start includes several key shifts in state policy. Jump Start ends the longstanding practice of labeling students entering high school as “career” or “college.” All students – from those with perfect ACTs to those with significant cognitive disabilities – can pursue a career pathway under Jump Start. These pathways, designed by teams of experts in every region of the state, involve courses taught in high schools, community colleges, and workplaces. They culminate in credentials that will allow graduates to continue their professional training after high school, either in community colleges or within workforce training programs.

To ensure the students have access to industry-certified instructors and state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, Jump Start’s collaboration of business and industry, higher education and school systems facilitate public-private partnerships rather than asking cash-strapped high schools to go it alone. In an effort to increase our instructional capacity in the state, we train career educators statewide at summer academies to receive the professional they need to help students achieve their industry certifications. Additionally, the state has implemented teacher certification policies to facilitate industry professionals’ entry into teaching positions, giving greater credit to workplace experience and expertise while providing these workplace experts with essential training on instructional strategies.

Jump Start will also recognize achievements in career education through significant accountability rewards for schools and school districts (see Principle 2 for more information). In 2014, the Legislature and BESE created a Career Development Fund to finance the expansion of technical courses in the high schools and a Course Access Allocation to finance course providers outside of high schools, including those offered by technical and community colleges. The Legislature also aligned the eligibility requirements for the state’s merit-based scholarship program to the requirements for the state high school diploma in order to enable more students to earn financial aid to pursue post-secondary education.

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Attach the State’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p>Option B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Provide the SEA’s plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.</p>	<p>Option C</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)</p>
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PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

- 2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA’s plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

For over a decade, Louisiana has been a national leader in school and district accountability. State leaders formulated a rigorous, motivating system to drive improvement in schools across Louisiana. This nationally-recognized accountability system unquestionably contributed to the unprecedented gains made over the last ten years, particularly the progress Louisiana made in closing the achievement gaps between races and socio-economic classes. However, when No Child Left Behind was passed, instead of complementing Louisiana’s state-developed system, it added another layer of bureaucracy. This resulted in more reporting requirements, more red tape, inadequate interventions, and confusion among Louisiana educators and parents. Additionally, to successfully implement higher standards and rigorous educator evaluations, Louisiana’s system must constantly work to reflect, expect, and support higher standards for students and educators (See Principles 1 and 3 for more information).

Through this flexibility waiver, Louisiana is proposing the elimination of those federal barriers so that Louisiana’s model – which has proven to be the more effective driver of increased student achievement – may serve as the single statewide school accountability system moving forward. As this shift occurs, Louisiana is committed to refining and further enhancing its own system in order to more effectively reward progress against nationally-normed standards, incentivize gap closures, support teacher effectiveness through clear and rigorous expectations, and report data in easily understandable terms that are focused on Louisiana’s primary goal – ensuring that all Louisiana students graduate college- and career-ready.

History and Context

In 1997, the Louisiana Legislature passed a framework to guide the creation of a statewide school and district accountability system and charged the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) with the responsibility of fully developing and implementing a strong statewide system of accountability for public education. The Louisiana School and District Accountability System that resulted was based on the concept of continuous growth. It aimed to encourage and support schools’ improvement by:

- (1) clearly establishing the state’s goals for schools and students;
- (2) easily communicating school performance to schools and the public;
- (3) recognizing schools growth in student achievement; and

(4) focusing attention and resources on schools in need of improvement.

The accountability system initially launched in 1999 focused specifically on improving student achievement, attendance, and dropout rates, as depicted in the chart below. Each year, schools earned a School Performance Score and were required to meet growth targets. Growth targets represented the amount of progress a school would have to make every year in order to reach the state’s SPS goal of 120, or 100% proficiency, by the year 2014. As required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the state, as well as each district and school, were required to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in student outcomes in English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for ESEA-created subgroups of students, including racial/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students who were eligible for free or reduced price meals (additional information on the LDOE’s State and District Accountability System can be found on LDOE’s website, <http://www.doe.state.la.us/>).

School Grade Level	Achievement	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index
K-5	90%	10%	--
K-8, 7-8	90%	5%	5% (Dropout only)
9-12	70%	--	30%

Table 2.A. Pre-Waiver Accountability Formula Structure

In the first year of the state-led accountability system, schools that received School Performance Scores lower than 30 were deemed to be Academically Unacceptable. In 2003, Louisiana increased the minimum standard to 45, and it was raised once again to 60 in 2005. In 2011, schools that had a School Performance Score below 65 earned the Academically Unacceptable School label, and in the 2011-12 school year, the bar was raised so that schools were required to earn a 75 or above to be considered Academically Acceptable. The historic strengthening of minimum standards in Louisiana reveals the state’s commitment to improving the quality of schools, while also maintaining the capacity of the LDOE and local districts to support failing schools.

Schools that receive an Academically Unacceptable School label face a variety of interventions and supports, depending upon the number of years that the school has been labeled Academically Unacceptable. Each consecutive year a school is labeled as an Academically Unacceptable School (AUS), it moves to a higher level, ranging from AUS 1 to AUS 6+, and for each additional year that the school remains in an Academically Unacceptable Schools category, it is required to implement additional strategies aimed at improving academic achievement. Although federal NCLB regulations required reporting, limited public school choice, and Supplemental Education Services (SES), Louisiana’s system has been far more aggressive in that it includes the complete takeover of persistently failing schools and their placement in a state-run Recovery School District.

What is the Recovery School District?

In 2003, Louisiana was the first state in the nation to create a separate statewide entity dedicated solely to taking over and turning around schools that consistently performed at unacceptable levels. The Recovery School District (RSD) was created by the Louisiana Legislature in 2003 with the passage of Revised Statute 17:1990 (See <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=211794>) and R.S. 17:10.5 (See

<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=206926>). These statutes give the state, through the RSD, power to remove from local control any school that has remained in an Academically Unacceptable School status for four consecutive years and has not been corrected during that period by local authorities.

The RSD uses a unique governance model designed to support autonomy, flexibility, and innovation. When the state brings a school into the RSD, it removes full governance authority over the school from the district and assumes full per-pupil funding levels for the school as well. This direct authority has enabled the LDOE to intervene in more than 5 percent of the state's public schools, including more than 90 percent of the schools in New Orleans.

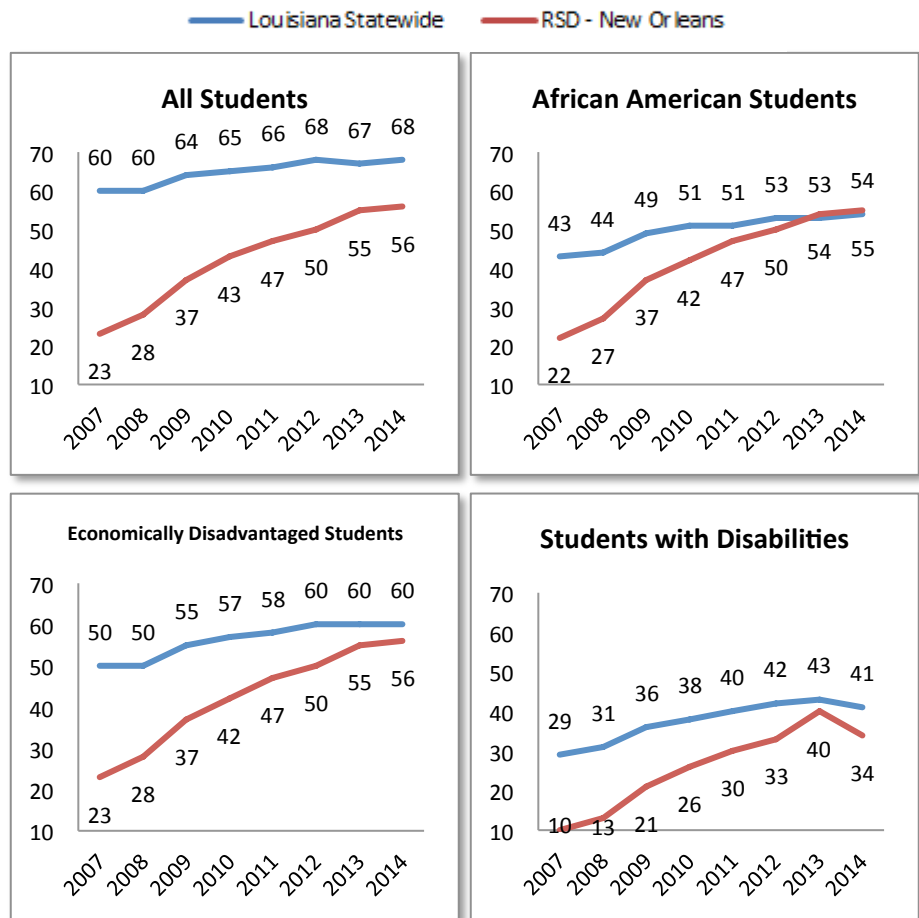
Once in the RSD, the state retains jurisdiction over the school for at least five years, at which point it may make a recommendation to return the school to the LEA with stipulations and conditions, continue operations under the RSD, or close the school and reassign students to higher-performing schools. Schools may choose to return to their former LEA by meeting certain performance criteria, including demonstrating that the school will be able to maintain and improve student success once out of the Recovery School District. BESE must approve the decision to return any school to its former LEA. Since the decision about the funding and return of the school to the LEA rests completely in the state's hands, the state gains enormous leverage to intervene in LEAs by demanding that they change in ways that make them suitable to sustain growth after schools have been turned around. If LEAs are unwilling to make such changes, the state is fully empowered to retain the school in the Recovery School District, as well as its per-pupil revenues. Finally, the Recovery School District's presence incentivizes LEAs with low-performing schools to pursue aggressive intervention strategies to prevent state takeover.

Louisiana's exercise of its takeover authority began in 2004, when RSD assumed control of five schools in Orleans Parish (New Orleans). After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, an additional 107 schools were transferred to the RSD. This aggressive injection of bold action and innovation led to the creation of an environment in New Orleans that provides the greatest amount of choice of any urban district in America, where families may choose from 57 RSD charter schools. All schools in the RSD retain, promote, and dismiss staff based on performance, implement longer school days and/or a longer school year, and use data-driven instructional models that provide real-time feedback on student learning.

In 2008, the RSD expanded outside of New Orleans through the takeover of five schools in the Baton Rouge area. In 2009, the RSD added an additional four schools in Baton Rouge and two schools in Shreveport. For the 14-15 school year, the RSD oversaw six RSD charter schools in Baton Rouge and one RSD school in Shreveport. The RSD, in collaboration with the LDOE, has also worked with several – mostly rural – LEAs pursuant to detailed agreements that allow the LEAs to continue to operate the schools upon the condition that such districts work collaboratively with the RSD regarding critical aspects of school accountability and/or school operations.

As an example of the power of this turnaround mechanism, from 2007 to 2014, schools in the RSD in New Orleans demonstrated academic growth rates four times greater than the state's average academic growth rate during the same period. (See chart below for more detailed performance growth information)

As the chart on the right demonstrates, over the past seven years, the RSD has increased student proficiency (students scoring “Basic” or above) on all state standardized tests by 33 percentage points, while the state has increased eight percentage points.



The RSD schools in New Orleans have also shown significant growth for special student populations at a far greater rate than the state’s average growth. In fact, in 2014, the RSD in New Orleans actually surpassed the state’s average for achievement for African American students.

Figure 2.A Percent of Students Scoring “Basic” or Above on All State Standardized Tests
(Combining Scores on All Subjects of LEAP, GEE/EOC, and iLEAP for All Grades)

From 2007 to 2014, the RSD in New Orleans more than doubled the percentage of all tests passed by its students—from 23 percent to 56 percent, a total of 33 points— while the state grew eight points over the same period of time.

Statewide Performance Under the Pre-Waiver System

Louisiana’s accountability system and the presence of the RSD have undoubtedly been the primary motivator of steady school improvement for both subgroups and entire student populations, as evidenced by the average state School Performance Score increasing 23 points over 12 years of statewide school and district accountability, representing an increase in proficiency rates from 50 percent to 68 percent in ELA and from 40 percent to 60 percent in Mathematics (See graphs below).

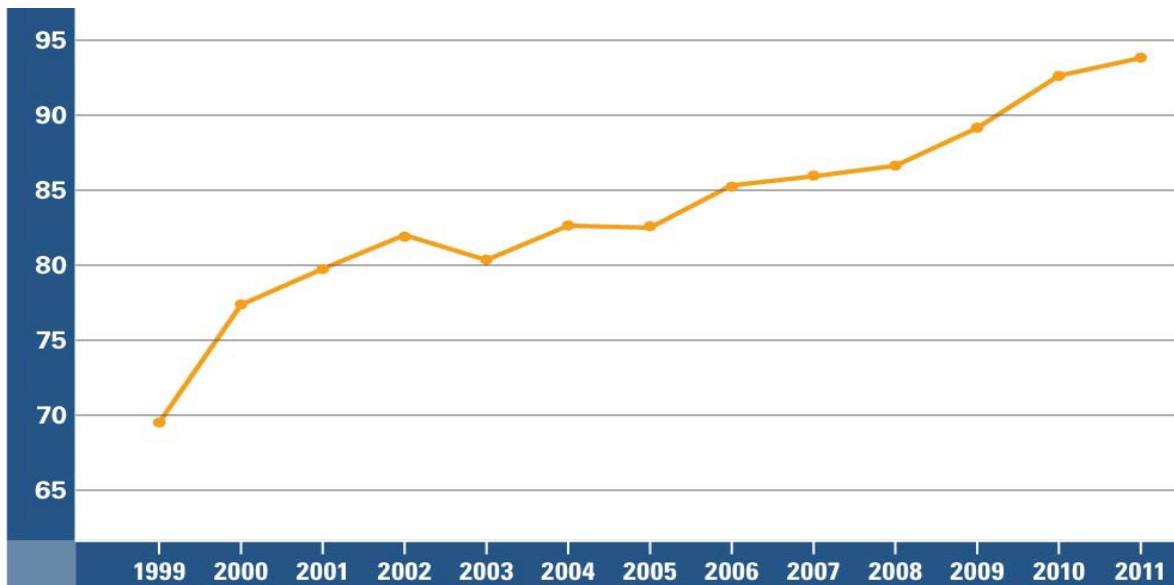


Figure 2.B. Statewide Performance Scores (1999 – 2011)

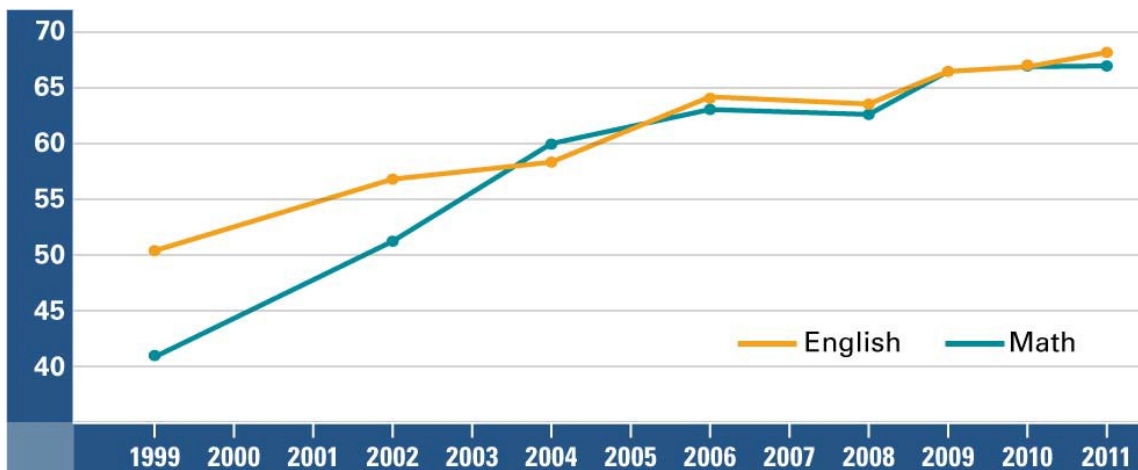


Figure 2.C. Percent of Students Proficient Statewide (1999 – 2011)

Still, as mentioned in Principle 1, more than 200,000 Louisiana children remained below proficient levels. This realization necessitated further improvements to achieve faster, more dramatic results for those children and generations to come.

Theory of Action

As the state reflected on its progress and continued driving toward college-and career-readiness for all Louisiana students, it was important to re-evaluate the next phase of Louisiana’s accountability system, including supports and interventions for struggling schools and incentives for growth. Louisiana’s current system provided a strong starting point for school accountability but the time for additional enhancements and refinements had arrived.

Despite Louisiana’s initial focus on proficiency and strong accountability, the state’s education community

has continually developed and refined the current system to reflect various priorities and to award maximum School Performance Score points to LEAs and schools. These efforts represented a genuine commitment to drive good behavior – focusing schools and educators on graduation, rigorous diploma pathways, and student achievement in college-preparatory work. However, the inclusion of multiple measures became a strategy on which Louisiana over-relied. As a result, the reported School Performance Score became less clear for parents, community members, and other stakeholders. The calculations became confusing and navigating the system became a critical skill that consumed significant time from Louisiana’s LEAs. This led to much frustration by those outside the education community, as well as some distrust of the complex formulas that were used in School Performance Score calculations. This complicated system needed to be addressed to ensure Louisiana’s accountability system remains effective in improving student achievement and relied upon as a key strategy for reform.

A strong, effective accountability system must be easy to understand, emphasize the outcomes most important for student success (i.e., proficiency and graduation), and stimulate performance. Therefore, if Louisiana simplifies and strengthens the accountability formula, reports on other important measures of school performance, and implements stronger, choice-centered interventions, then the accountability system will better reflect student outcomes, have greater clarity for educators, parents, and communities, and continue to drive student achievement statewide. The LDOE is achieving these aims by: (1) maintaining rigorous school and district letter grades, (2) focusing the state accountability system on rigorous student work indicative of college and career readiness, (3) simplifying the calculation of School and District Performance Scores, and (4) enhancing the public reporting of essential metrics, such as subgroup performance, to drive schools’ plans to improve overall and to address the needs of their most struggling students.

While Louisiana is strengthening its nationally-acclaimed accountability system, it must also enable LEAs to focus more attention and resources on improving their struggling schools. State leaders must get rid of both federal- and state-created red tape for Louisiana educators. As explained in Section 2F, the LDOE is fully committed to this end.

As Louisiana continues its efforts to peel away the ineffective elements and unleash the most effective components of the state-developed system, it is important to note that Louisiana’s philosophy for distinguishing effective and ineffective components of accountability is rooted in its beliefs about the roles of different levels of government, with the U.S. Department of Education, Louisiana Department of Education and State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, local school governing authorities playing very different, but critical roles. The U.S. Department of Education, as directed by Congress, sets rigorous expectations that states will offer equitable, high-quality educational opportunities for all students. State education officials, in response to federal and state law, set expectations for schools, motivate high performance, publicly report on school performance, and hold schools accountable for student outcomes. Local school governing authorities ultimately carry the responsibility for achieving student growth through personnel, curriculum, and targeted interventions. These clearly-defined roles will directly inform the performance measures used, as well as the supports and interventions provided.

Creating Rigorous School and District Letter Grades

In an attempt to clarify the meaning of School Performance Scores and to more effectively communicate with stakeholders, the Louisiana Legislature enacted a letter grade policy that was implemented for the first time at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year. Schools are now assigned letter grades based on their School Performance Scores.

Letter Grade*	Baseline SPS Range
A	120.0-200.0
B	105.0-119.9
C	90.0-104.9
D	65.0-89.9 (in 2011) 75.0-89.9 (in 2012 and beyond)
F	0-64.9 (in 2011) 0-74.9 (in 2012 and beyond)

Table 2.B. Pre-Waiver Letter Grade Scale

The implementation of the letter grade system assures clarity for various stakeholders and creates a sense of urgency in addressing schools that are failing. In the 2010-2011 school year, 44% of Louisiana schools scored D's and F's – an alarming and informative fact that further served to create a sense of urgency in the education community.

After Letter Grades, What Was the Next Critical Step?

Though school and district letter grades added clarity to a somewhat confusing system, thereby enhancing the system's power to motivate change, they were only a first step. As Louisiana seeks to strengthen the most effective components of its accountability system, two primary, additional improvements were needed. First, Louisiana needed to address the diversity of indicators that detract attention from proficiency and result in more complex school and district performance score calculations. Second, Louisiana needed to return to a focus on proficiency for all students in all schools and districts, with strong school- and district-wide supports, interventions, and incentives that have been shown to be effective in rapidly raising student achievement – particularly for subgroups. Louisiana implemented the refined system (described below) starting in the 2012-2013 school year.

Simplifying School and District Performance Scores

Louisiana's pre-waiver accountability system represented a strong set of expectations for schools and districts that used a number of mechanisms to promote student achievement. In order to make Louisiana's accountability system even stronger, the LDOE sought to focus and to simplify the current accountability system by removing all but the core measures from the formula – assessment performance and graduation indicators. This shift in the formula prompts schools and districts to operate with a laser-like focus on college- and career-readiness, strategizing on how to prepare each student to graduate having demonstrated proficiency in all core subjects. Additionally, this simplification allows the underpinnings and results of the accountability system to be more clearly communicated using the state's rigorous letter grade system, as stakeholders have a more clear understanding of the calculations through which the letter grades are assigned. Although some supplemental metrics are not included in the calculation of School and District Performance Scores, the state proposed to publicly report other metrics that provide an indication of school and district performance (See Reporting Important Metrics for more information).

Standardized Assessments

(1) Content Assessments

Louisiana will continue to employ a testing system to assess student content knowledge across the four

core content areas – ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

Assessment	Grade	Subjects
iLEAP	3, 5, 6, 7	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
LEAP	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
End-of-Course Tests	9, 10, 11, 12	English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and American History
LAA 1	3, 5, 6, 7, 10	ELA, Mathematics
	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Science
	11	Science
LAA 2	5, 6, 7, 10	ELA, Mathematics
	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
	11	Social Studies, Science

Table 2.C. Content Assessments Prior to 14-15

Beginning in third grade, students participate in the Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP) which has increased in rigor and quality with the adoption of new state academic content standards. In high school, End-of-Course Tests are offered in English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and US History, and students are required to pass at least three End-of-Course Tests – in English, Math, and Biology or US History – in order to graduate. Additionally, alternate assessments are offered in a variety of grades and subjects for students meeting specific, rigorous eligibility criteria. The Louisiana Alternate Assessment, Level 2 (LAA 2) was last administered in grades 4-8 in 2013-2014 and may not be administered to any high school student who enters a cohort after 2013-2014.

(2) Nationally-based Assessments

In 2009-2010, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted a statewide College- and Career-Readiness Policy within which it committed the state to administer the ACT to all 11th graders in Louisiana. According to BESE’s plan, statewide adoption of the ACT provides “students, teachers, parents, and the education community a picture of overall student achievement in two areas – competency over subject matter presented and readiness for college and career.” (See Appendix 2.B) Additionally, BESE supported the continuance of the PLAN and the EXPLORE – two ACT-created assessments that serve as indicators of college- and career-readiness prior to the ACT.

Louisiana began administering a statewide ACT assessment for Louisiana’s 11th grade students in 2012-2013. The ACT is substantially aligned with Louisiana’s rigorous standards to measure the college-and-career readiness of Louisiana’s students and is the test most commonly used by Louisiana’s institutions of high education.

With statewide implementation of the ACT starting in 2012-2013, assessment results were used to inform School Performance Scores immediately (See Refining the High School Accountability Formula (i.e., schools with grade 12) for additional information. Additionally, the LDOE funds the EXPLORE assessment in 8th and 9th grade and the PLAN assessment in 10th grade. This additional EXPLORE assessment provides a critical indicator to high school educational leaders.

Simplifying Louisiana’s Accountability Scale

Initially, the Louisiana system was set against a scale of 200 with a score of 120 roughly equating with

100 percent proficiency for students. As stated frequently by stakeholders, this scale was not intuitive to parents or educators and complicated the accountability system. Far too many parents incorrectly assumed throughout the years that their child’s school was performing satisfactorily based on a 100-point scale, not realizing that the school’s performance score was in fact based on a 200-point scale.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved policy revisions in June 2012 to re-scale the accountability formulas so that a score of 100 approximates 100 percent proficiency for all students and a score of 150 represents all students demonstrating advance performance (See Appendix 2.B). A School Performance Score of 100 serves as the lowest score for an “A,” thereby reinforcing Louisiana’s commitment to statewide proficiency through communication that parents and educators can easily understand – a change welcomed by stakeholders throughout the comment period.

Louisiana extended the scale past 100 percent proficiency (i.e., 100 points) in order to incentivize and recognize higher levels of achievement (i.e., Above Proficient scores). For schools and districts outperforming expectations, it is critical that Louisiana incentivize, recognize, and reward above-par performance. As demonstrated in the formula proposals below, proficiency aligns with a score of 100, and performance above proficiency yields incentive points (i.e., 101-150) for schools, and ultimately, districts.

Pre-Waiver System

Letter Grade*	Baseline SPS Range
A	120.0-200.0
B	105.0-119.9
C	90.0-104.9
D	65.0-89.9 (in 2011) 75.0-89.9 (in 2012 and beyond)
F	0-64.9 (in 2011) 0-74.9 (in 2012 and beyond)

Table 2.D. Initial Letter Grade Scale

Current System

Letter Grade	Baseline SPS Range
A	100 – 150
B	85 – 99.9
C	70 – 84.9
D	50 – 69.9
F	0 – 49.9

Table 2.E. Current Letter Grade Scale

NOTE: In order to incentivize whole school turnaround efforts across the state, the State Board of Education approved a policy to allow the awarding of a “T” letter grade only when a turnaround operator takes over an entire school that was labeled “F” in the previous school year, including all previous grade levels and all former students of the “F” school. In such an instance, the school’s grade shall be reported as “T” for the first two years of operation under the new governance model. However, all metrics of the

School Performance Report (e.g., SPS, subgroup performance) will still be reported for use by parents, districts, and the LDOE in its efforts to support low performing schools.

Refining the K-8 Accountability Formula

For the status-based measurements, the LDOE proposed an elementary and middle school accountability formula that relies primarily on the proficiency of students as measured by the iLEAP and LEAP as approved by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in June 2012 (see Appendix 2.B). Whereas previously assessment results were used for 90 percent of School Performance Scores, with as much as 10 percent devoted to student attendance, the new system bases scores on student performance and dropout/credit accumulation rates.

For every child scoring proficient or higher on each subject-specific assessment, schools earn School Performance Score points. The average of these points at the school level across all tested grade levels and all subjects determines the School’s Performance Score and letter grade. For schools with an 8th grade, five percent of the calculation is based on the dropout/credit accumulation rate indicator – as was repeatedly requested throughout the comment period.

Initial System

School Grade Level	Achievement	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index	Bonus
K-5	90%	10%	--	--
K-8, 7-8	90%	5%	5% (Dropout Index)	--

Table 2.F. Pre-Waiver K-8 Formula

Current System

School Grade Level	Achievement (as measured by iLEAP and LEAP)	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index	Progress Points
K-5	100%	--	--	Yes
K-8, 7-8	95%	--	5% (Dropout/Credit Accumulation Index)	Yes

Table 2.G. Current K-8 Formula

NOTE: In the old and the new system, 100% participation is required; schools receive a zero for non-participants. Also, because ELA and Mathematics are core competencies, student performance in these subjects will receive double the weight given to Social Studies and Science performance.

Is Test Participation Considered Separately from the Index Score? Might This Lead to Unintended Consequences, Such as Schools Not Testing Certain Students?

Because it is critically important that all students participate in testing for accountability, the Louisiana accountability system will continue two policies that have assured high participation rates in previous years. First, the participation rate test for subgroups will continue to be calculated and reported as it has been. For any school to make AYP, each subgroup within the school meeting the minimum “n” requirement must have the 95% required participation rate and meet the annual measurable objective, or “safe harbor.” Second, a zero is assigned to the assessment index of a school for every test and subject for students who do not test. The zeros are included in the calculation of the school performance score and directly, negatively affect the school’s letter grade.

Since the inception of Louisiana’s accountability system, it has been possible for schools and districts to earn points for students performing below proficiency. While initially intended to motivate very low-performing schools to improve as the state’s accountability system was being phased in, this was misaligned with Louisiana’s state goals and sent a mixed message to students, parents, communities, and educators. **Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, Louisiana no longer awards points for performance below proficiency.** Schools earn 100 points for every student scoring proficient and, to incentivize progression above and beyond proficiency, schools earn additional points for students scoring in the “Above Proficient” category (i.e., 125 for Mastery and 150 for Advanced).

Performance Level	Points Awarded
Advanced	150
Mastery	125
Basic (Proficient)	100
Approaching Basic	0
Unsatisfactory	0

Table 2.H. LEAP and iLEAP Performance Scale

For additional information regarding the inclusion of growth-based metrics, please refer to the section on Subgroup calculations.

Why Use “Basic” Rather Than “Mastery” as Demonstration of Student Proficiency?

The state has definitions that are consistent with basic, proficient, and advanced for assessments. The Louisiana labels differ slightly from those detailed in NCLB, although the definitions are similar. Current achievement levels are: Advanced, Mastery (Exceeding the Standard), Basic (Meeting the Standard), Approaching Basic (Approaching the Standard), and Unsatisfactory. These standards have been shown to be high; for example, equipercentile equating of the standards has shown that Louisiana’s “Basic” is somewhat more rigorous than NAEP’s “Basic.” In addition, representatives from Louisiana’s business community and higher education have validated the use of “Basic” as the state’s proficiency goal.

NOTE: As Louisiana transitions to higher standards and better assessments, Louisiana will raise the expectation from “Basic” to “Mastery” gradually so that, in order to earn an “A” letter grade in 2025, the average student performance needs to be “Mastery” or higher. For more information on Louisiana’s transition policies, see <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards/louisiana's-transition-to-higher-expectations>.

Refining the High School Accountability Formula (i.e., schools with grade 12)

The high school formula was dramatically simplified in order to focus schools and school leaders on measures that matter most – assessments of college- and career-readiness and high school graduation. Specifically, School Performance Score calculations for high schools consist of the schools cohort graduation rate, performance on End-of-Course Tests, performance on the ACT, and a simplified, more rigorous Graduation Index. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the revisions to the high school accountability formula described below in June 2012 (see Appendix 2.B).

The formula no longer includes illogically-weighted indices that disguise the measures with which Louisiana is most concerned. Instead, the formula is a simple combination of the measures mentioned earlier. Cohort graduation rate is critical to the formula because it reflects an honest assessment of how many students are graduating and on what timeline. As suggested by stakeholders, the simplified graduation index complements the cohort graduation rate by assessing the rigor of diplomas awarded and outcomes achieved. Similarly, the ACT composite score serves as a nationally- normed assessment of the rigor behind a student’s diploma. Finally, as requested by stakeholders, including the End-of-Course tests maintains content assessment (as compared to skills assessment, measured by ACT) in Louisiana’s accountability system and ensures alignment with student graduation requirements (See Appendix 2.C) and Compass (See Principle 3 for more information on Compass).

Pre-Waiver System

School Grade Level	Achievement	Graduation/Dropout Index	Cohort Graduation Rate	Progress Points
9-12	70%	30% (Graduation Index)*	--	--

Table 2.I. Pre-Waiver High School Formula

* The graduation index is a calculation based on the progress of students over four years in high school. Points are assigned based on the type of outcome earned by students and averaged across the graduating class. The current index includes academic endorsements, technical endorsements, state-funded college scholarships, IBCs, dual enrollment, articulated credit, diplomas, the high school equivalency tests, skills certificates, certificates of achievement, attendees, and dropouts.

School Grade Level	Achievement	Graduation/Dropout Index	Cohort Graduation Rate	Progress Points
9-12	25% - EOC 25% - ACT	25%	25%	Yes

Table 2.J. Current High School Formula

High School Formula Component #1 – EOCs (25%)

As mentioned previously, End-of-Course Tests (EOCs) are offered in English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and US History. EOC performance informs both educator evaluation (See Principle 3) and student graduation requirements (See Appendix 2.C). As noted in Principle 1, the EOCs were aligned fully with the new state standards in 2013-2014 and will be similar in format and content in 2015-2016. Moving forward, Louisiana will engage stakeholders in the process of improving our high school assessments with goals of reducing testing, ensure the measurement of our standards and college-and-career readiness, and a single, user-friendly platform for delivery that supports teacher intervention through the delivery of diagnostics and formative tools, as well as easy to understand reports.

In order to support higher standards for educators and students, Louisiana raised the performance bar on these important assessments. Unless a student scores “Good” (i.e., proficient) on the EOCs, no SPS points will be awarded. This is a significant improvement over the current system, which awarded points for below proficient scores.

Proficiency (EOC)	SPS Points
Excellent	150
Good	100
Needs Improvement, Fair	0

Table 2.K. EOC Performance Scale

High School Formula Component #2 – ACT (25%)

Research shows that many students who otherwise had not planned to take the ACT, especially those from low-income backgrounds, score unexpectedly well when given access to the test. To support this impact in Louisiana, the Board of Regents set standards for admission to tiered higher education institutions, including ACT composite score requirements for admission into institutions at each tier.

Institution Tier	Required ACT Composite
Flagship	25
Statewide	23
Regional	20
Standards for entry into university non-remedial coursework (English)	18

Table 2.L. Institution Tier Standards for Admission (ACT)

Since Louisiana began requiring all public high school students to take the ACT series in 2013, the state has seen a dramatic increase in the number of seniors earning qualifying scores for TOPS Tech (17+), TOPS Opportunity (20+), and TOPS Honors (27+), boosting both students on the TOPS University pathway and the Jump Start TOPS Tech pathway. The number of seniors earning a TOPS-qualifying score (based on their best score) of at least 17 increased by 1,732 since 2013 and by 6,339 since 2012.

Opportunity	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Increase from 2012 to 2014
TOPS Tech (17+)	20,466	25,073	26,805	6,339
TOPS Opportunity & Regional University (20+)	14,129	16,027	16,935	2,806
TOPS Performance & Stateside University (23+)	7,429	8,433	8,834	1,405
Flagship University (25+)	4,296	5,006	5,301	1,005
TOPS Honors (27+)	2,435	2,938	3,116	681

Table 2.M. Students Earning “College-Level” Score

Therefore, when developing the proposed ACT SPS points scale (see below), Louisiana targeted a score of 18 as the lowest level of proficiency – based on the Louisiana Board of Regents standard for entry into university non-remedial coursework in English, the standard of entry for some Louisiana technical colleges, and the nationally-normed ACT College Readiness Benchmark for English Composition (See <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarks.pdf> for more information). Using that benchmark, a composite ACT score of 18 equates to an SPS score of 100. From 100 to 150, the ACT scale is spread proportionally. For each ACT point increase, there is an SPS point increase of 2.8 points (18 = 100, 19 = 102.8, etc).

ACT Composite Range	Accountability Formula Points Awarded
0-17	0
18	100
19	102.8
20	105.6
21	108.4
22	111.2
23	114
24	116.8
25	119.6
26	122.4
27	125.2
28	128
29	130.8
30	133.6
31	136.4
32	139.2
33	142
34	144.8
35	147.6
36	150.4

Table 2.N. ACT Performance Scale

Why Should “18” Serve as the ACT Benchmark?

As mentioned above, the Board of Regents – the overseer of higher education in Louisiana – guides postsecondary educational policy. In 2003, the Statewide Council of Chief Academic Officers recommended that the Board of Regents adopt an ACT score of 18 as the non-remedial entry criteria for higher education institutions statewide. This recommendation was built off of ACT’s national research which demonstrated that a score of 18 on the English component of the ACT ensures that students have a 50% chance of earning a B or better and a 75% chance of earning a C or better in related entry-level college courses.

As a follow up to the initial policy, starting in 2014, no student shall be admitted to an institution of higher education in Louisiana without an “18.” Remediation will no longer be offered at four-year institutions. Therefore, it is as critical as ever that students are prepared to meet this benchmark so that they are

meeting the entry requirements for various technical and community colleges throughout the state. Thus, the LDOE set a score of 18 as the minimal benchmark for awarding points within the K-12 accountability system.

While the state-funded administration of the ACT will occur in the 11th grade to maximize usefulness for students, we will count the highest score a student earns through the 12th grade to maximize the opportunity for growth and provide the most accurate representation of a school’s impact on a student’s achievement. Starting in the 2015-16 school year, student performance on the WorkKeys assessment will be included within the ACT index, when a student takes both assessments but achieves a higher score on the WorkKeys than on the ACT. The state will produce a concordance table comparing ACT scores with WorkKeys scores at the conclusion of the 2014-15 school year and the table shall be used to award points in the 2015-16 school performance score results.

High School Formula Component #3 – Cohort Graduation Rate (25%)

The cohort graduation rate provides a clear indication of the students graduating from a high school within four years. Therefore, the cohort graduation rate – calculated in a manner consistent with federal requirements – will serve as a strong indicator of overall school performance.

In 2009, Louisiana set a state goal of 80% graduation by the end of the 2013-2014 school year through Act 257 of the 2009 Legislative Session. The points awarded are centered around the state goal of 80%.

Target Range	Relation to State Target	Formula for Index Points
If grad rate is between 81 and 100	Exceeds state target	(Grad Rate * 2) - 50
If grad rate is between 61 and 80	Meets or within range of target of 80%	(Grad Rate * 2) – 50
If grad rate is between 0 and 60	Below state target	(Grad Rate * 1.166667)

2.O. Cohort Graduation

Louisiana’s four-year high school graduation rate achieved a record high in 2014, increasing for the fourth straight year to reach 74.6 percent, a 1.1 percentage point increase from 2013 and a 3.2 percentage point increase since 2011. The 2014 graduation rate of 74.6 percent marks a nearly 10 percentage point increase in less than a decade. In the class of 2014, nearly 1,600 more students graduated than did in the class of 2013, and nearly 3,440 more students than in 2011.

Of the nearly 1,600 additional students graduating in 2014, more than 1,200 are of a minority racial group and more than 1,230 are from low-income backgrounds. Graduation rates for students of color improved by 2 percentage points, nearly doubling the state’s overall improvement. From 2013 to 2014, the graduation rate for students with disabilities also significantly improved, seeing a 6.1 point increase.

High School Formula Component #4 – Graduation Index (25%)

Louisiana’s refined graduation index offers a comprehensible, rigorous assessment of ultimate student outcomes or the quality of the diploma received. The maximum points will only be awarded for validated outcomes that demonstrate a strong readiness for college or career. At the same time, the graduation index ensures that schools are incentivized to support all students with multiple, rigorous educational experiences aimed to preparing them for success beyond high school.

For the 2012-2013 school year only, Louisiana awarded 135 points for academic endorsements and 120 points for TOPS Opportunity (state funded scholarship) recipients. The students captured within the 2012-2013 graduation index were the seniors that graduated in the Spring of 2012. Louisiana schools worked diligently to achieve the high bar previously set and it was important to honor that performance.

To recognize the expansion of high-quality career pathways through the Jump Start Career Diploma, the Department will gradually incorporate career measures into the graduation index. The Jump Start policy implementation timeline can be seen here (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/blueprint---appendix-6.pdf?sfvrsn=2>), which includes the integration of career credentials into graduation index. The revised graduation index rewards schools for graduates exiting high school with progress toward their postsecondary secondary goals - regardless of whether the goal is college or career focused. A standard high school diploma will earn 100 points; however, passage of an AP or IB course (with test participation) or achievement of a basic statewide approved industry based credential earns 110 points. A high school diploma plus college credit or an advanced statewide industry based credential earns 150 points.

Student Result	SPS Points
Diploma plus: (a) AP score of 3 or higher, IB Score of 4 or higher, or CLEP score of 50 or higher OR (b) Advanced statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 160 points.	150
Diploma plus: (a) At least one passing course grade of the following type: AP**, college credit, dual enrollment, or IB** OR (b) Basic statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 115 points, if the passing course grade for (a) is earned in a TOPS core curriculum course. **Students must take the AP/IB exam and pass the course to earn 110 points.	110
Diploma (Four year graduate)	100
Diploma (Five year graduate) *Five-year graduates who earn an AP score of 3 or higher, an IB score of 4 or higher, or a CLEP score of 50 or higher will generate 140 points.	75
Diploma (Six year graduate)	50
HiSet	25
Dropout	0

Table 2.P. 2014-2015 Graduation Index Approved in 2014

In Addition to the Graduation Index and the Cohort Graduation Rate Calculation, How Will Louisiana Hold Schools and LEAs Accountable for Improving Graduation Rates of ESEA Subgroups?

The policy approved in the *Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook* for holding schools and LEAs accountable for improving the graduation rates of ESEA subgroups will remain in effect as outlined below.

Using a Graduation Rate in the Subgroup Component

A. As required by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Louisiana shall calculate a graduation rate based on a cohort of students beginning in 2007.

B. The definition of a cohort for this calculation is the same as that used in §603.

C. The additional academic indicator (AAI) calculation shall comply with High School Graduation Rate: *Non-Regulatory Guidance* (December 22, 2008) published by the U. S. Department of Education.

1. For subgroup accountability purposes, Louisiana high schools shall use an increasing target for the additional academic indicator.

2. For subgroup accountability purposes, Louisiana's high school annual targets shall increase annually as shown in the following table.

Louisiana Annual Graduation Rate Targets						
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
63.0%	64.3%	65.6%	66.9%	68.2%	69.5%	70.8%
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
72.2%	73.5%	74.8%	76.1%	77.4%	78.7%	80.0%

Table 2.Q. 2014-2015 Louisiana Annual Graduation Rate Targets

3. For subgroup accountability purposes, each Louisiana school that enrolls students in ninth grade or higher and offers at least a regular diploma shall have annual targets calculated by the LDOE that begin with the school's 2007 graduation rate and increase by equal increments (rounded to 1 decimal place) to reach 80.0 percent in 2022.

4. The increment each school must improve each year to maintain its progress toward the 2022 goal is the "annual improvement step."

D. Confidence intervals shall not be applied to any graduation rate considerations beginning with the 2010 accountability decisions.

E. Determining if a school or subgroup within a school has made AYP as it relates specifically to graduation rate is accomplished by answering a series of Yes/No questions. When an answer is "yes," a school or subgroup has made AYP (related to graduation rate) and no further answers are required for the specific school or subgroup.

1. Does the cohort have fewer than 40 members?

2. Has the cohort met or exceeded an 80.0 percent graduation rate?

3. Has the cohort met or exceeded the state annual target?

4. Has the cohort met or exceeded the school annual target?

5. Has the cohort met or exceeded 110 percent of the annual improvement step (defined in Paragraph C.4).

F. If at the end of the series of 5 questions a "yes" is not provided, the cohort has failed AYP.

G. A school (or subgroup) that exceeds the state's target with its 2009 graduation rate shall use the state targets as school targets. New schools shall have targets based on their second year graduation rates and the number of years remaining until 2022.

H. In 2010 and 2011, the "whole school" graduation rate shall be evaluated using the steps

delineated in this Section.

J. In 2010 and 2011, any school or subgroup in the school that must use the safe harbor provisions and grad rate as an AAI will use the steps delineated in this Subsection.

K. In 2012 and future years, all subgroups and the whole school shall be evaluated using the steps delineated in this Subsection regardless of safe harbor considerations.

Calculating a Final Letter Grade

All of the revised and refined measures described above are rolled up in to the composite School Performance Scores and school and district Letter Grades, as described earlier in this section. Together, these measures reinforce the importance of college- and career-readiness for all students – as measured by rigorous measures of student achievement.

Again, the revised letter grade scale is:

Letter Grade	Baseline SPS Range
A	100 – 150
B	85 – 99.9
C	70 – 84.9
D	50 – 69.9
F	0 – 49.9

Table 2.R. Current Letter Grade Scale

In the first letter grade publication, the letter grades were accompanied by “+” and “-” symbols for many schools. The “+” indicated that the school achieved its growth target (i.e., movement toward the state AMO; usually 10 points of SPS growth) and the “-” indicated that the school had declined. While well-intentioned, in practice, these symbols resulted in confusion and numerous complaints from stakeholders. For example, a “B” school scoring 106 (or bottom of the previous “B” range) could achieve its growth target and be labeled a B+ while a “B” school scoring 119 (or top of the previous “B” range) could decline .1 points overall and receive a B-. For reporting purposes, the higher performing school would appear lower than the lower performing school because the symbols were not used in the traditional way.

To alleviate this problem, Louisiana changed these symbols to descriptors. Schools achieving growth AMOs (as described in Section 2.B) will receive a label of “Top Gains.” Schools that decline will receive a label of “Declining.” These descriptors will continue to provide this critical assessment of progress year-to-year without confusing or misleading parents or educators.

Reporting Important Metrics

In order to effectively communicate schools’ performance to administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, the LDOE released a School Performance Report for each school during the 2010-2011 academic year. This report included information about the school’s letter grade, students’ proficiency, the school’s performance trajectory, and demographic information about the school (see

Figure 2.D).

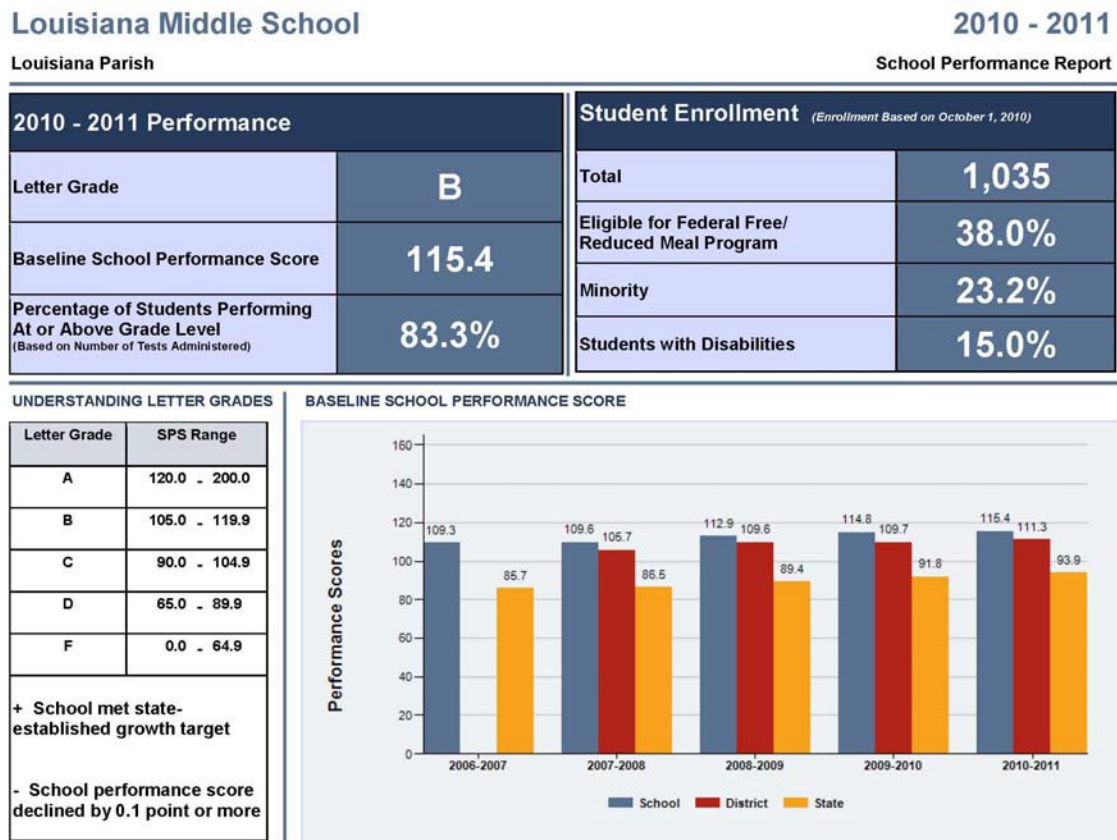


Figure 2.D. 2010-2011 School Performance Report

This school reporting method was well-received, and the LDOE continued the distribution of School Performance Reports. However, as suggested by the Louisiana chapter of the NAACP Louisiana State Conference, the Committee of Practitioners, and other stakeholders, adjustments were made to further enhance this valuable tool for the benefit of parents and communities.

Metrics given priority reporting include overall student proficiency (students performing at Basic or above), subgroup performance, the cohort graduation rate, and college- and career-readiness (participation and performance on ACT assessments, and AP participation and performance).

The purpose of including these additional metrics in School Report Cards is twofold. First, the inclusion of additional supplemental metrics, such as individual subgroup performance and college- and career-readiness provides important facets of school performance that are not included in the calculation of School Performance Scores. The inclusion of these metrics on a public report card ensures that the accountability system continues to drive improvements in performance and to motivate schools to address metrics beyond those included in the calculation of School Performance Scores. Second, the inclusion of additional metrics on the school report card provides schools, the public, and the LDOE with comprehensive data to inform more focused interventions and rewards. For example, schools that have high participation in AP courses but low performance know to shift their focus from enrolling students in AP courses to improving the quality of their AP instruction. This provides a more focused goal for intervention than a general intervention model. Report cards have continued to be improved over time based on feedback and can be accessed here

(<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/>).

To ensure stability of results during Louisiana’s transition to higher standards and better assessments, school and district letter grades will be aligned to the 2012-2013 distribution or better to ensure simplicity, consistency, and fairness in 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. For example, if 10 percent of schools earned an "A" in 2012-2013, the top 10 percent of schools would earn an "A" in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015. While schools may improve on their own, this guarantees that there cannot be fewer A-rated schools or fewer A + B-rated schools in 2014, for example, than in 2013. Of the 1,335 schools statewide, only 21 (1.6 percent) had letter grades adjusted as a result of this policy for 2013-2014.

More information about all of Louisiana’s transition policies can be found here:

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards/louisiana's-transition-to-higher-expectations>

Closing Achievement Gaps – Subgroup Analyses and Interventions

Louisiana remains committed to the success of all students and a system that holds schools and school systems accountable for every child’s performance. Of the ESEA-defined subgroup categories, Louisiana has a high proportion of public school students in each. In 2010-2011, approximately 52 percent of Louisiana students were racial/ethnic minorities, and 10.6 percent of students in Louisiana were reported as having a disability. The percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is 66.2 percent, making Louisiana the state with the sixth-highest level of poverty in the country. Given the relatively high number of students in Louisiana who belong to different subgroups, the state is firmly committed to closing the achievement gaps between students who are subgroup members and students who are not.

Population	Percentage of Population
White	47.8%
African-American	45.3%
Hispanic	3.7%
Asian	1.4%
American Indian/Alaskan	0.8%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
Multiracial	1.0%
ELL	1.9%
Free and Reduced Lunch	66.2%
Students with Disabilities	10.6%

Table 2.S. Subgroup Breakdown of Public School Students (2010 – 2011)

Louisiana’s accountability system has been an important driver for analyzing and addressing subgroup performance. Since the state implemented its accountability system in 1999, the performance gap between African-American and White students on state assessments has narrowed by 11.6 percentage points in ELA and 11.2 percentage points in mathematics. At the same time, from 1999 to 2011, the gap between economically disadvantaged students and their peers also narrowed by 4.4 percentage points in ELA and 5.5 percentage points in mathematics.

Louisiana's Achievement Gaps

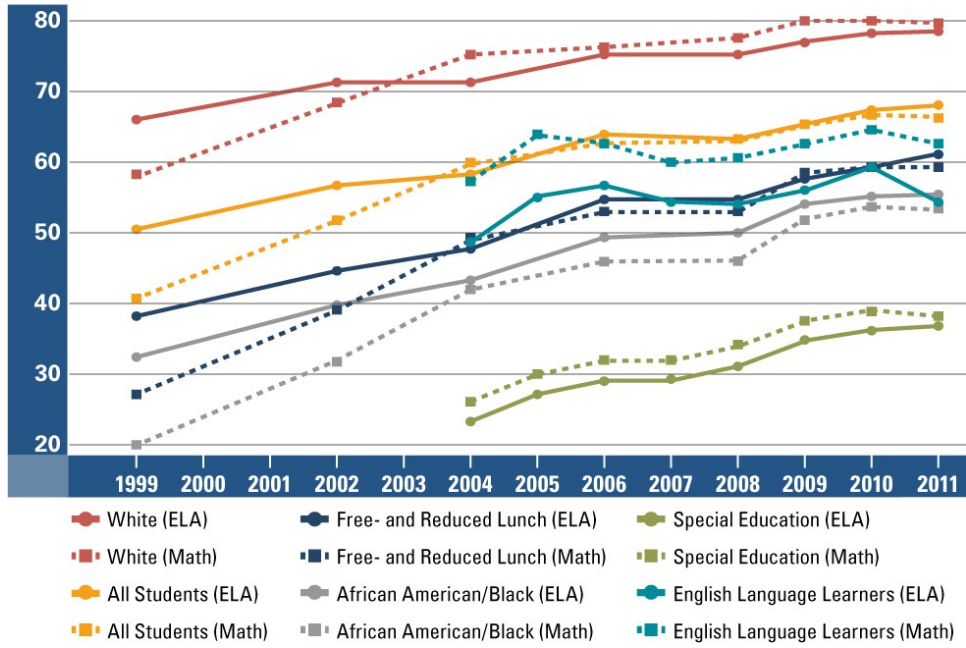


Figure 2.F. Louisiana's Achievement Gaps (1999 – 2011)

Moving Forward

In 2012, approximately one-third of Louisiana public school students were Below Proficient in ELA and Mathematics – an unacceptable figure. Therefore, Louisiana committed to aggressively pursuing closure of this critical gap through the creation of a new super subgroup to focus specifically on these non-proficient students. Though discussed in greater detail in the AMO section (See Section 2.B), the super subgroup focuses on the one-third of below proficient students and achievement of the AMO relates directly to receipt of Reward School status, including SPS progress points, public recognition, and possible monetary rewards.

Closing this achievement gap is particularly critical because, of these 200,000+ students, approximately one-third are also in traditional ESEA subgroups, with extremely high representation of specific non-traditional subgroups (i.e., African-American, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency). By creating the additional super subgroup as a compliment to the traditional subgroup performance assessments and reporting, Louisiana more effectively incentivizes achievement for its non-proficient students within those traditional subgroups. The chart below provides additional information on the overlap of these critical populations.

Subgroup	Subject	Number of Non-proficient	Total Tested	Percent of traditional subgroup represented in non-proficient subgroup
American Indian	ELA	769	2658	28.9
American Indian	MTH	757	2656	28.5
Asian	ELA	819	4928	16.6
Asian	MTH	640	4924	13.0
Black	ELA	66400	152934	43.4
Black	MTH	71733	152979	46.9
Hispanic	ELA	3996	11790	33.9
Hispanic	MTH	3614	11796	30.6
White	ELA	35259	165795	21.3
White	MTH	33533	165811	20.2
Pacific Islander	ELA	4	14	28.6
Pacific Islander	MTH	3	14	21.4
Two or More Races	ELA	704	2875	24.5
Two or More Races	MTH	714	2877	24.8
Free/Reduced Lunch	ELA	89030	228253	39.0
Free/Reduced Lunch	MTH	92031	228286	40.3
Limited English Prof	ELA	3336	5757	57.9
Limited English Prof	MTH	2775	5756	48.2
Students W Disabilities	ELA	23809	37637	63.3
Students W Disabilities	MTH	23159	37660	61.5
ALL	ELA	107952	340995	31.7
ALL	MTH	110995	341058	32.5

Table 2.T. Traditional Subgroups and Proposed Non-proficient Super Subgroup Overlap (2011-2012)

Again, higher performance for students within traditional ESEA subgroups continues to be emphasized, assessed, reported, and used to inform supports and interventions. However, the new super subgroup measure allows the LDOE to assess over 95% of its schools through the traditional subgroup performance, but also performance of schools' non-proficient students. This additional measure ensures greater accountability, recognition, and support for Louisiana's statewide effort to close achievement gaps for all subgroups of students, including traditional subgroups (e.g., ELL, students with disabilities) and Louisiana's expansive subgroup of non-proficient youngsters.

How Does Louisiana's Value-Added Model Support Traditional Subgroups and Non-Proficient Students?

Maintaining Louisiana's growth model² is critical as Louisiana works to protect the rights and opportunities of its underserved children. The model – focused on past student achievement – is used to ensure teachers continuously improve their effectiveness with all students, but particularly non-proficient students and subgroups statewide.

Key Facts about Louisiana's Value-Added Growth Model:

(1) Louisiana's Accountability Formula Remains Focused on Student Performance Status

The growth measure is not part of Louisiana's core accountability formula. Instead, the state's primary question remains – what is the status of student performance, equally considered among all students?

(2) The Growth Model Protects Kids' Interests as Louisiana Continues to Raise the Bar

As described throughout Principle 2, Louisiana's accountability proposal removes points for performance below proficiency (i.e., Approaching Basic on LEAP 2025, Fair on EOCs). This was a dramatic, but critical shift for the state. The LDOE is committed to continuously raising the bar in order to support college- and career-readiness for all students.

However, because Louisiana is removing points for performance below proficiency, the state is left with the question: How will Louisiana protect the needs of kids who are below proficient right now? To protect low-performing students who need more attention, not less, Louisiana's accountability system must incentivize teachers and school leaders to provide additional supports and interventions. Louisiana's answer: a growth-based progress point system. Louisiana ensures that schools and educators maintain and increase supports for all low performing kids – including struggling students with disabilities or underperforming English language learners – by meaningfully rewarding schools and districts that dramatically exceed student achievement expectations. Louisiana's reward system calls out students with high levels of need and protects their interests by demanding that only those schools with more than 50% of non-proficient students exceeding expectations in grades 3-12 receive rewards and recognition.

Timeline for Implementing the New System

The proposed changes to Louisiana's already rigorous accountability system ensure that the system will be easily understood by all stakeholders, that it will retain the support, trust and confidence of Louisiana families and taxpayers, and that it will focus on student outcomes. Though the core of the simplified formula is already in place, the timeline for implementation actions is outlined below. All accountability policies described in this section have been approved by the state board.

² The value-added model used for accountability purposes will not include student background characteristics.

Task	Date Completed
Board approval of revised accountability concepts and policies	Spring/Summer 2012
Board final approval of revised accountability policies	June 2012
Full implementation of formula, interventions, and rewards for all relevant schools (ie., priority, focus, reward)	2012-2013 academic year

Table 2.U. Implementation Timeline

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.</p>	<p>Option B</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:</p> <p>a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and</p> <p>b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.</p>
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Subject	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
ELA	58.3	61.3	63.9	62.3	63.5	66.8	67.4	68.3	68.5	71	69.5
Math	59.8	60.6	63.1	61.7	62.7	67.0	67.6	67.4	67.4	66.8	68.2
Science	54.5	56.6	53.9	56.5	55.6	60.0	61.0	61.9	63	64.4	65.1
Social Studies	57.8	57.6	59.6	60.7	59.6	63.5	65.3	64.6	64.1	65.7	66.2

Table 2.V. “All Students” Subgroup Proficiency on State Assessment Administration

The chart above depicts a roll-up of assessment performance on LEAP, iLEAP, the Graduation Exit Examination (administered prior to the phase-in of End-of-Course Tests), End-of-Course tests (after phase out of GEE), and state alternate assessments LAA 1 and LAA 2.

As Louisiana moves forward with the enhanced accountability system, it will ensure college- and career- readiness for all students through its extensive scope of assessments (See Section 2.A for greater detail). Louisiana continued LEAP and iLEAP assessments for grades 3 – 8 in all subjects (i.e., ELA, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) through 2013-2014 in ELA and math, and will continue the administration of the assessment beyond 2013-2014 in science and social studies. The state also continues administration of End-of-Course Tests for key high school subjects, including English II and III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and US History and alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Additionally, Louisiana instituted the nationally-normed ACT assessment series statewide, including EXPLORE in 8th and 9th grade, PLAN in 10th grade, and ACT in 11th grade in the 2012-2013 school year. All of these assessments offer valuable information about student performance and college- or career-readiness.

To further support improvement among these assessments, Louisiana simplified how various subjects are incorporated into the formula. Rather than continuing to use half weights, single weights, and double weights across various subjects and grades, Louisiana uses an easily comprehensible and calculable system that reflects and reinforces the importance of higher standards (See Principle 1 for more information). Mathematics and ELA assessments are weighted double for every grade level; science and social studies receive a single weight.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p>Option B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p>Option C</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> <p>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)</p>
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Overview

Under Louisiana’s enhanced state accountability system, three AMOs are measured, reported and used to inform supports, interventions, and rewards in various ways. AMOs relate to the following:

- (1) Growth Among Non-Proficient Students;
- (2) Overall School Performance Improvement; and
- (3) Overall Proficiency by 2014.

Supports, Interventions, and Rewards

AMO performance is used in multiple capacities. First, a school’s AMO achievement is assessed and publicly reported using the School Performance Report. As discussed extensively in Section 2.A, this report provides easy-to-understand, easily comparable data for use by parents and educational leaders. Second, a school’s AMO achievement is used to inform network supports for all schools and, in particular, Louisiana’s Focus and Priority Schools. For example, LDOE network staff, superintendents, and school leaders analyze AMO performance, within the context of broader school and district outcome reviews, during needs assessment processes and use the analysis to directly inform targeted supports. Third, achievement of certain AMOs results in a school receiving the coveted Top Gains label, as well as the meaningful monetary rewards available to all such schools, when available.

For those schools failing to achieve AMOs and meaningfully progress across the accountability metrics, multiple consequences or interventions are used. These include: (a) state takeover through the Recovery School District (See Section 2.A for more information); (b) school choice; and (c) network support.

Specific AMOs

(1) Newly-Created Super Subgroup-Focused AMOs

Louisiana is focusing its schools and districts on overall substantial progress, but also on progress specifically with non-proficient students (i.e., students performing below Basic). (See earlier “Subgroup” section in Principle 2 for additional information.)

As requested by stakeholders, Louisiana’s nationally-acclaimed Value-Added Model, used for several years to measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and now used to inform new educator evaluations, projects the expected academic growth for all super-subgroup non-proficient students in both ELA and mathematics for students in grades 3 to 8.³ In high school, student growth is determined using the ACT predictive model on the ACT series of assessments (EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT) which are taken by all students, with the exception of those with significant cognitive disabilities.

The AMO for each school and district will be “Previously non-proficient super subgroup students will exceed expected growth in the current year.”

Because the specific amount of growth targeted by each AMO is directly tied to the students within a certain super-subgroup, each school and district works against unique AMOs specific to their individual students.

Calculation

For schools without a graduation cohort (e.g., grades 3 to 8), student value-added academic measures are

³ The value-added model used for accountability purposes will not include student background characteristics.

summed for groups with at least ten members in the ELA or mathematics non-proficient groups. If more than 50% of students in the English language arts and/or the mathematics super subgroups exceed expected growth on LEAP and iLEAP assessments, then the school will achieve its super subgroup AMO. Points will be awarded based on the higher of percent or number of students exceeding expectations within the super subgroup (.05 points for every number or percent of the super subgroup exceeding expectations, .1 points for all students in the supersubgroup who scored at the lowest performance levels during the prior year (i.e. Unsatisfactory for LEAP/iLEAP) but who exceed expectations in the current year) and the schools overall performance score (i.e., SPS) will be updated to reflect the progress. After the super subgroup methodology is applied and relevant School Performance Points are awarded, the School Letter Grade will be calculated.

For schools with a graduation cohort (e.g., grades 9 to 12) and as requested by numerous superintendents, Louisiana utilizes the ACT series (EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT) to recognize progress with previously non-proficient students in the high school grades. For 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, if at least 30% of previously non-proficient students (as determined by the most recent ELA or math tests within the prior two years of state testing) exceed expectations on the ACT series (i.e. score at the top of the range or higher from one test to the next (EXPLORE to PLAN or PLAN to ACT), then schools will earn .1 point for every number or percent of students exceeding expectations and .2 point for all students who scored at the lowest performance levels during the prior two years (i.e. Unsatisfactory on LEAP or Needs Improvement on EOC). For 2014-2015 and moving forward, if at least 50 percent of previously non-proficient students (as determined by the most recent ELA or math tests within the prior two years of state testing) exceed expectations on the ACT series (i.e., score above the middle score in the predicted ACT series score range (EXPLORE to PLAN or PLAN to ACT), then schools will earn 0.05 point for every number or percent of students exceeding expectations and 0.1 point for all students who scored at the lowest performance levels during the prior two years (i.e., Unsatisfactory on LEAP or Needs Improvement on EOC).

Impact

Schools and districts are impacted by super subgroup AMO achievement in two ways. First, outcomes for traditional subgroups as well as the newly-created super subgroup are reported publicly at the school, district, and state levels. Since the inception of NCLB, Louisiana has reported on these metrics in order to inform parents, communities and educators about progress and areas for improvement. This valuable practice must continue.

However, the LDOE must also do more to draw the attention of schools and districts to students most in need of assistance. Therefore, Louisiana offers rewards to all schools and districts making meaningful progress with their super subgroup through School Performance Score progress points. This recommendation – initially proposed by local school superintendents – has received widespread support by principals, educators, local school district accountability directors, and stakeholder organizations.

Given Louisiana's newly re-aligned rewards and consequences structure (See Sections 2.C – 2.G for more information about rewards, supports, and interventions), the addition of School Performance Score points for successful progress with super-subgroup performance is a strong incentive. All schools will work harder to achieve School Performance Score progress points, especially those nearing the next highest school letter grade. For "F" schools approaching a school letter grade of "D," earning the super- subgroup incentive points could increase their Letter Grade and could potentially allow them to avoid facing the strongest sanction in Louisiana and the nation, the Recovery School District, by boosting their scores out of the "F" category. This will serve as an extremely powerful motivator to help all struggling students achieve proficiency.

Scope

The new super subgroup challenges Louisiana’s schools and educators to focus supports and interventions on the 101,325 ELA students and 102,538 math students who are non-proficient or below Basic.⁴ At the same time, Louisiana is continuing to calculate and analyze traditional ESEA subgroups in order to guide supports and interventions (e.g., loss of Reward Status for Subgroup AYP failure, network strategy development in supporting districts in eliminating achievement gaps). In 2011-2012, traditional ESEA subgroups were calculable for 1,284 schools in Louisiana. Of those 1,284 schools, Louisiana was able to calculate a non-proficient super subgroup result for 998 of those same schools thereby providing a more expansive, inclusive data set for use in interventions, supports, and rewards.

(2) Overall School Performance Score Growth AMO

In addition to assessing overall school proficiency, the LDOE assesses a school’s overall growth on an annual basis.

Calculation

The overall growth score AMO will be:

- **For “A” schools: Improve five SPS points or reach 150 (for schools within five points of 150).**
- **For all other schools: Improve ten points on the SPS scale.**

Impact

If a school achieves the AMO articulated above, it will qualify as a Reward or Top Gains school. Reward status makes the school eligible for significant monetary rewards, as well as public recognition of its achievement.

NOTE: A school’s progress points awarded for progress with the super subgroup shall apply to the composite SPS growth of a school in a given year. For example, if a school improved its SPS five points prior to the progress points, but also earned five progress points, then the school would meet the SPS Growth AMO and would be eligible for monetary rewards, as available.

(3) Retaining Louisiana’s Long-term Aspirational Goal of 100% Proficiency

Louisiana’s dedication to excellence and equity are central to its accountability system. For this reason, Louisiana remains committed to the AMOs established several years ago, which set yearly growth targets aimed towards 100 percent of children in the state attaining proficiency by 2014. A goal of 100 percent proficiency ensures that there is no variation across the end-points for districts, schools, and subgroups. Because all districts, schools, and subgroups must end at the same point, this AMO requires that districts, schools, and subgroups that are further behind must make progress more quickly.

Louisiana students have demonstrated sustained growth on the statewide assessment amid the transition to more rigorous standards; however, the original goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014 has not been met. Educational leaders believe firmly that Louisiana must not falter from its high expectations for all schools and districts and, therefore, Louisiana will continue to work towards this goal with the intent of resetting the yearly benchmarks after analyzing data from the first year of the new ELA and Math assessments in spring 2016.

⁴ Numbers from 2010-2011 Student Data

School Year	English Language Arts AMO (Percent Proficient)	Mathematics AMO (Percent Proficient)
2002-2003	36.9%	30.1%
2003-2004	36.9%	30.1%
2004-2005	47.4%	41.8%
2005-2006	47.4%	41.8%
2006-2007	47.4%	41.8%
2007-2008	57.9%	53.5%
2008-2009	57.9%	53.5%
2009-2010	57.9%	53.5%
2010-2011	68.4%	65.2%
2011-2012	78.9%	76.9%
2012-2013	89.4%	88.6%
2013-2014	100.0%	100.0%
2014-2015	100.0%	100.0%
2015-2016	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2.W. Current ELA and Mathematics AMO

Calculation

Louisiana reports the percentage of students who earn a proficient score in English and mathematics for all students in grades 3 through 8 and high school for all schools that meet the minimum *N* for full academic year students. Proficient is defined as Basic, Mastery, or Advanced on the iLEAP at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, and the LEAP at grades 4 and 8. High school proficiency is determined by the achievement levels Excellent and Good on the Algebra I and English II End-of-Course Tests. Proficient scores on the alternate assessments, LAA 1 and LAA 2, are included at the appropriate grade levels. Percentages are calculated at the elementary, middle, and high school level as the number of proficient scores from all tests divided by the total number of tests.

How Does Louisiana Calculate Full Academic Year?

Full academic year is defined for an LEA as enrolled on October 1 and for testing. A student is considered full academic year at the school in the LEA where they are enrolled on February 1.

Impact

Performance against these AMOs is reported publicly. These performance measures are also used to inform supports for Priority and Focus schools (See Sections 2.D and 2.F for more information). The overall performance of students, as well as the performance of specific, traditional subgroups provide useful, informative indications of strong or weak areas within a given school or district. Thus, this data will be critical to solving the specific struggles of a Focus or Priority school.

Will Louisiana Provide AMOs for the State, LEAs, and Schools That Are Ambitious, But Achievable, Set Separately for ELA and Mathematics, and Applied to Each Subgroup?

To further clarify the language included in Section 2.B of Louisiana’s ESEA Flexibility Request, the LDOE will provide AMOs for the state as a whole, each LEA, and all schools. These AMOs are ambitious, achievable, set separately for ELA and mathematics, and apply to each traditional ESEA subgroup.

Specifically, for the state, each LEA, each school and each subgroup within those entities, the LDOE will

set, measure, report on and respond to the following AMOs:

- (1) Non-proficient students will exceed expected growth at the state-, district- and school-level;
- (2) Growth AMO
 - a. “A” schools and districts will (a) improve five SPS/DPS points or reach 150 (for schools/districts within five points of 150 possible points)
 - b. All other schools and districts, as well as the state, will improve ten points on the SPS/DPS scale.
- (3) The state, districts, and schools – including ESEA subgroups – will continue to be measured against the 100% proficiency goal.

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Louisiana’s letter grade system is an effective tool for communicating school and district performance. However, the newly-created progress point measure is also highly informative about a given school’s performance and growth over time. Thus, the combination of performance as determined by Letter Grades and progress point growth produces information that the state can use to drive interventions and rewards. The LDOE intends to capitalize on this information in order to identify Reward Schools and districts.

Specifically, Reward Schools shall be:

- (1) High Performing Schools – “A” schools demonstrating continued meaningful growth on the Letter Grade Scale (i.e., increased 5 points on the SPS scale); and
- (2) High Progress Schools – Schools that achieve their Super Subgroup AMO or non-A schools demonstrating meaningful overall growth on the Letter Grade Scale (i.e., 10 points).

Table 2.X provides an overview of Reward Schools, as well as their relation to Focus and Priority Schools (described in greater detail in later sections).

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher standards and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher

Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.X. System Overview – Reward Schools

How Does Louisiana’s Definition of Reward Schools Align with the USDOE’s Requirements for Reward Schools?

Highest- performing schools:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the highest overall student performance in the state as measured by the school performance score and attain a letter grade of A Earn at least five points of growth on the school performance score in one year 		
USED Criteria	LA Definition	2013-2014 LA Results
Highest-performing schools must have the highest absolute performance in the state for all students.	Schools that are highest performers earn a School Performance Score (SPS) of 100 or greater and are identified as A schools.	There are 241 schools (18% of total schools) with an SPS of 100 or greater and letter grade of A.
Highest- performing schools must also continue to demonstrate yearly achievement gains with all students.	Highest performing schools must demonstrate five points or more of growth in one year.	There were 80 highest-performing schools with letter grade A and five points of growth.
Highest performing schools must not be in school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring.	Louisiana continues to use the definition for meeting SPS and Subgroup AYP for 2013-2014 that was approved prior to the waiver application.	Schools in this category cannot be in school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring.
High-progress schools:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that at least 50.01% of the students in the K-8 non-proficient super subgroup exceed expected growth in English/language arts and/or mathematics. For high schools, at least 30% of students must exceed expected growth. In 2015-2016, the expectation for high schools will increase to more than 50 percent. 		
USED Criteria	LA Definition	2013-14 LA Result

<p>High progress schools are recognized for making the most improvement in the performance of students in the non-proficient super subgroup.</p>	<p>A K-8 school meets the definition of high progress if at least 50.01 percent of the non-proficient students in the super subgroup for English/language arts and/or mathematics exceed their expected growth. For high schools, at least 30% of students must exceed their expected growth. The expectation for high schools will increase to more than 50 percent in 2015-2016. Students are assigned to the super subgroup if they score at a level on the state tests that is defined as non-proficient. If a school has at least 10 students in the super subgroup, then the school will receive a determination of subgroup growth.</p>	<p>There are 839 schools (83 percent are Title I schools) that had at least 50.01 percent (K-8) or 30 percent (high school) of the students in their non-proficient super subgroup meet or exceed value-added growth in English/language arts and/or mathematics.</p>
<p>High progress schools are recognized for making the most improvement in the performance of all students.</p>	<p>High progress schools are expected to earn 10 points or more of growth on the school performance score in one year if they receive letter grade B, C, D, or F.</p>	<p>There are 102 schools with letter grade B through F that grew 10 or more points on the school performance score. The group average growth is 16.2 points, as compared to the statewide average growth of 0.7 points.</p>

Demonstrate That High-Progress Schools are Making Significant Academic Progress:

In 2013-2014, Louisiana's high progress reward schools included 839 schools (83% are Title 1 schools) that had at least 50.01% (K-8) and 30% (high school) of their non-proficient students outperform value-added growth modeling predictions in English/language arts and/or mathematics. These schools are dramatically surpassing state average performance around increasing proficiency rates.

Louisiana's high progress reward schools also included 102 schools that increased their SPS 10 or more points. The average growth of these reward schools was 16.2 points (i.e., 15.5 points above the state average growth).

How Will Louisiana's Proposed Accountability System – Particularly Reward Criteria – Ensure Sufficient Accountability for Traditional Subgroups?

Louisiana continues to report traditional ESEA subgroup AYP and provide determinations based on established AMOs. Any school that fails to meet AYP in the same subject or in the Additional Academic Indicator for two consecutive years will not be eligible for Reward school status.

Louisiana's school and district accountability system ensures that no schools earn an "A" letter grade designation with significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing.

- The achievement gap between white and black students is less than one-third as large in "A" schools, as compared to the rest of the state (22.6 (ELA) and 22.9 (math) gap in all schools; only a 6.6 (ELA) and 7.5 (math) in "A" schools).
- The achievement gap between free/reduced lunch students and paid lunch students is less than

half as large in "A" schools, as compared to the rest of the state (22.2 (ELA) and 21.9 (math) in all schools; only 11 (ELA) and 10.3 (math) in "A" schools).

- When comparing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities, the achievement gap in "A" schools is approximately the same size (31 to 38 percent in all cases - "A" or all schools for ELA and math); however, the proficiency rates of students with disabilities in "A" schools is nearly 20% points higher in "A" schools as compared to the rest of the state (51.5% v. 37.3% in ELA and 57.4% v. 40.4% in math).

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

The 2013-2014 list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for use in the 2015-2016 school year can be viewed at this link: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/accountability/2013-2014-focus-reward-priority-list.xlsx?sfvrsn=10> The list of schools using data from the 2014-2015 data for use in the 2016-2017 school year will be released prior to January 31, 2016.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

Achieving the criteria enumerated above is a truly commendable feat. To this end, Louisiana intends to provide Reward Schools with the following:

- (1) **Financial Rewards** – Reward schools that achieve substantial SPS growth (10+ points for B, C, D, F schools; 5+ points for A schools) should receive financial rewards for their success, as available. In addition, if the LDOE receives an increased Title I allocation, it is committed to using the Title I Rewards funds to support high performing and high progress schools.
- (2) **Public Recognition** – All Reward schools receive public recognition through press releases, statewide celebrations, and public reporting that clearly illustrates their accomplishments and "Top Gains" status.
- (3) **SPS Points** – High progress rewards schools receive progress points for achieving the LDOE's aggressive annual goals for previously non-proficient students.

Various Louisiana stakeholder groups, such as the Committee of Practitioners and LEA leaders (e.g., school superintendents) have suggested that financial rewards for good performance and flexibility with funds would be important motivators for improved performance.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

The LDOE intends to capitalize on its existing letter grade system in order to identify Priority schools, which are persistently failing schools transferred to the Recovery School District (RSD) (NOTE: For an overview of the RSD, please refer back to Section 2.A)

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher standards and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher standards and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice

* Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.Y. System Overview – Priority Schools

How Does a School Become Eligible for the Recovery School District?

According to state law and State Board policy, a school is eligible for the RSD after four consecutive years of unacceptable (F) performance. When a school reaches this level of continued failure, the State Superintendent may recommend to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that the school be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Recovery School District.

When the Board approves a school’s transfer to the RSD, the State Superintendent of Education may then choose the best method of bringing the school to an acceptable level of performance. In addition to proposing performance objectives that the failed school must meet, the State Superintendent also recommends an operating structure for the school. The failed school may be operated:

- (1) as a direct-run RSD school;
- (2) as a charter school;
- (3) as a university partnership; or
- (4) through a management agreement with a service provider.

As of the 2014-2015 school year, the RSD operated 5.81 percent of the Title I schools statewide (i.e., 58 out of 999) thereby meeting the USDOE’s size requirement (i.e., 5% of Title I schools).

How Does Louisiana’s Definition of Priority Schools Align With the USDOE’s Requirements for Priority Schools?

Priority schools are among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the “all students” group in terms of proficiency on statewide assessments that are part of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability and support system, combined and has demonstrated a lack of progress on the assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group. Can also include schools with graduation rates less than 60% and Tier I or Tier II schools.

Louisiana is required to have 50 Priority Schools: 999 Title I schools * 5%= 49.95 . It exceeded that number with 65 Priority Schools.

USED Criterion	LA Definition	2013-2014 LA Result
<p>A priority school is among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the “all students” group in terms of proficiency on statewide assessments that are part of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability and support system, combined and has demonstrated a lack of progress on the assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group.</p>	<p>Priority schools are schools that are assigned to the Recovery School District when they have demonstrated a lack of progress on assessments over a number of years.</p> <p>The Recovery School District serves as the Local Education Agency (LEA) for a group of schools across the state operated by direct-run, charter, university partnership, or management agreement.</p>	<p>There were 65 priority schools. Of this total, 27 schools had letter grades of D or F, and 13 are in some form of AYP school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring.</p> <p>The 30 high schools with graduation rates less than 60% that were not assigned to the RSD were identified as Focus schools.</p> <p>Some of these schools improved their performance while in the Recovery School District.</p>

2.D.ii Provide the SEA’s list of priority schools in Table 2.

The 2013-2014 list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for use in the 2015-2016 school year can be viewed at this link: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/accountability/2013-2014-focus-reward-priority-list.xlsx?sfvrsn=10> The list of schools using data from the 2014-2015 data for use in the 2016-2017 school year will be released prior to January 31, 2016.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Overall, the RSD’s turnaround philosophy closely mirrors and aligns with the turnaround principles emphasized by the USDOE. During the 2013-14 school year, the RSD managed direct-run schools on a day-to-day basis. However, beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the RSD no longer directly manage any schools. All RSD schools will be charter schools (Type 5 charter schools). The relationship between the RSD and charter schools is governed by accountability through the charter school contract, providing system-wide supports to support equity, and broad oversight rather than direct management. The system wide supports (e.g., enrollment, expulsion policy, etc.) described below demonstrate how the unique components of a state-run school district allow for an organizational structure and reactive interventions that motivate student success.

(1) Providing Strong Leadership

The RSD provides operational flexibility to each of its charter schools by giving each school leader the authority to make all scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget decisions at the school level, with the oversight and guidance of their charter boards. School leadership plays a fundamental role in the success of school but is particularly crucial in a turnaround school model. The Louisiana charter school application evaluates the strategic thinking of the school leader, including school staff and partners to whom the school leader will delegate responsibilities in the operation of the school. New operators and

experienced operators that have not yet operated two schools for at least three years each must identify a school leader in their application.

(2) Ensuring Effective Teachers

RSD principals have autonomy to make personnel decisions directly, based solely on teacher performance, need and effectiveness. RSD charters may choose individually whether or not to participate in a collective bargaining agreement. Further, RSD schools are not bound by teacher tenure laws.

(3) Redesigning Learning Time

RSD charter school leaders have autonomy to set their school calendars, as long as they meet the compulsory attendance requirements in law. RSD charter schools provide additional instructional time by having an extended learning day, Saturday school programs, utilizing a year-round calendar, providing for shortened holiday and summer breaks to provide intensive remediation, requiring mandatory after-school tutoring, and additional instructional days in order to allow opportunities for off-campus internships and career preparation programs during the school day.

(4) Strengthening Instructional Programming

The Recovery School District is committed to preparing all students to be successful in post-secondary education and beyond. RSD charter schools are held to high accountability standards for student performance results, in conjunction with increased freedom for school leaders to develop or choose curriculum that best meets the particular needs of their students. Similarly, RSD charter school leaders may select or develop school-specific curriculum that aligns to the state academic content standards and all charter schools are evaluated for extension and renewal based on student growth and performance on exams aligned to the standards.

(5) Establishing Positive, Safe, and Supportive Schools

All schools within the Recovery School District are actively participating in school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is an approach to creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments in schools. Designed to improve behavior and academic performance by teaching and reinforcing positive behavior, it uses data as a basis for determining the reasons for problem behavior and providing appropriate levels of support to address those behaviors.

In New Orleans and Baton Rouge, the RSD requires a uniform student expulsion policy and process to ensure that expulsion is reserved for only the most severe infractions, and that students and families are given the same opportunities for due process, review, and appeal, regardless of which school they attend. The RSD provides a central disciplinary hearing officer to ensure that all disciplinary hearings are conducted in accordance with state and federal law.

Each of the three RSD New Orleans Family Resource Centers, which are responsible for assisting in student enrollment year round, has staff that receive training in student homelessness, and are equipped to direct students and parents to appropriate resources to meet their needs. In addition, many RSD charter and direct-run schools develop partnerships with organizations to provide mentoring and conflict resolution, including Restorative Justice programs, mentoring provided by City Year volunteers, and Saturday school parent and student programs as an alternative to expulsion.

In addition, the RSD operates a Youth Opportunity Center in collaboration with the Orleans Parish School

Board to support all students in New Orleans who are chronically absent, truant, or court-involved to transition back into schools. In the 2014-2015 school year, the Youth Opportunity Center staffed intake of all students in the city found truant during the day by the New Orleans Police Department, conducted all truancy outreach for the city, served as liaisons on behalf of families for students referred to Municipal or Juvenile Court, and launched a pilot program to partner case management services to truant students referred to the Youth Opportunity Center by ten pilot schools, as well as partnering with ten schools to pilot case management services for students and families struggling with truancy issues. For the 2015-2016 school year, the Youth Opportunity Center will expand to provide case management services to all public schools in New Orleans, and will work to develop into a “one stop shop” community-based model that will create a framework for schools to respond to chronic absenteeism and will provide coordinated resources for effective intervention. The center staff includes case managers, attendance coaches, court liaisons and School Resource Officers. In order to connect students and families with the resources they need, the Youth Opportunity Center also partners with various groups and organizations such as behavioral health providers, social service agencies, etc.

(6) Providing Mechanisms for Engagement of Families and Communities

The RSD operates three parent-family resource centers throughout New Orleans where parents can obtain language translation services, student enrollment information, transcript and records requests, conflict resolution services, up-to-date information on all RSD schools, parenting skills literature, and community resource literature. The RSD also holds frequent community discussions in locations throughout New Orleans on topics and issues that are most important to parents and community members. The RSD also utilizes various community engagement processes for any major change or initiative the RSD undertakes, including building new schools, moving school locations, and school closures.

In 2014, in effort to increase community input in school facility assignment decisions, and to ensure that remaining school facilities would be assigned to the highest quality school programs, the RSD implemented a “Request for Applications” process to select school organizations to operate schools at four separate school facilities. Public school organizations and entities in New Orleans were invited to submit applications detailing a proposed plan for school programs at one or more of the school facilities. All applicants were required to provide assurances that if selected, their school would provide equitable access to a high-quality school for all students in New Orleans, through open-enrollment policies, participation in OneApp, and providing access to free school transportation. A review committee, whose members represented varied community organizations and parents: 1) scored each application; 2) participated in interviews with the applicant; 3) visited the applicant’s school sites; and 4) made facility assignment recommendations to the RSD Superintendent.

As more schools outside of New Orleans are transferred to the RSD, community engagement activities are being implemented across the state. These activities include regular meetings at RSD schools for parents and community members, and the creation of special task forces and advisory boards for any school that is being transferred into the RSD.

In addition, the Recovery School District hosts quarterly meetings in New Orleans for the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, where the agenda is dedicated solely to RSD matters and gathering feedback and input from the public.

(7) Differentiated Charter School Support and Interventions

As state previously, the RSD has garnered national recognition for its implementation of the charter school turnaround model. The schools in the RSD, Louisiana’s priority schools, are exclusively charter schools and served by the LDE’s charter accountability team’s support and oversight services. The

charter school model provides for a built-in method of increasing rigor, support, and sanctions for schools that do not made enough significant progress to exit the priority status after four years.

In response to feedback from stakeholders and charter school educators, Louisiana has developed a process for more meaningful interactions between the state and charter school educators focused on identifying and addressing specific areas of concern, with increased differentiation and frequency for schools that have been persistently underperforming. The new process was developed with three key priorities:

- 1) Develop and efficiently communicate rigorous and transparent expectations for academic, financial, and organizational performance of BESE-authorized charter schools
- 2) Provide timely feedback to schools based on clearly communicated standards to give schools the opportunity to explore options, make course corrections, and employ strategies to improve specific programming, curriculum, and methods of instruction to increase student achievement
- 3) Differentiate oversight to ensure that significant areas of concern are identified and addressed and schools that are meeting expectations are provided with the autonomy with which to thrive.

The level of support each school receives is based on their academic, financial, and organization performance. Schools that have consistently underperformed will be identified for the most intensive level of intervention. Schools in this category will participate in data analysis, problem solving, and goal setting in six performance domains: Teacher Quality, Curriculum, Special Populations, Resource Allocation, School Climate, and Community/Family Engagement.

(8) Transparent and Rigorous Expectations for Academic Performance

In Louisiana, RSD charter school contracts are initially approved for four years. Each charter school is reviewed by its chartering authority and evaluated using the charter school performance compact after the completion of the third year of operation. If the school is achieving is stated goals and objectives, then the charter is extended for a maximum initial terms of five years.

Student performance is the primary measure of school quality and the state's assessment and accountability programs are used as objective and verifiable measures of student achievement and school performance in all annual evaluations and contract extensions and renewal decisions. After three years of operations, a charter school must meet one of the student performance standards below in order for the contract to receive an extension. If the standard is not met, the charter operator will cease to operate the school.

- Turnaround schools, schools qualified to receive a letter grade of “T” (see page 60), must earn a letter grade of “D” or higher based on performance data from the school’s third year of operation or average 5 or more points of growth per year of the charter contract.
- Charter schools with a letter grade of “F” must earn a letter grade of “D” or higher based on performance data from the school’s third year of operation.
- Alternative charter schools, schools approved by the department to use an alternative charter school extension and renewal framework, must met the standards for extension from the alternative charter school extension and renewal framework.

Statewide Engagement

Community partnerships are the cornerstone of RSD’s transformation efforts throughout the state, not just those in New Orleans. As an example, in April 2012, the RSD launched the Baton Rouge Achievement

Zone (BRAZ) - an innovative reform model to address the needs of children currently attending low-performing schools in the North Baton Rouge area by working collaboratively with parents and engaging community and business partners. The BRAZ, which will impact a minimum of seven local schools, will have a significant impact on turning around student learning and achievement.

The Baton Rouge Achievement Zone is focused on addressing the needs of students in North Baton Rouge to ensure their overall success and to guarantee that every child will be college and/or career ready upon graduation. The BRAZ will focus on three core principles – **engaging partnerships to anchor strategic school reform** in Greater Baton Rouge, building the demand from parents, community, and government for higher school accountability and better school choices; **accelerating the launch of excellent new schools** through smart philanthropy and collaboration with government to meet transformation and innovation needs; and **creating a reform marketplace** that fosters competition, builds entrepreneurial capacity, and provides high quality options for school support organizations and services.

In 2013-2014, BRAZ brought together community members, parents, and stakeholders together to help inform the RSD’s selections of high-quality charter operators for the RSD schools in Baton Rouge. The RSD, informed by the work of members of the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, and supported by partners such as New Schools for Baton Rouge, successfully launched five new charter schools in Baton Rouge for the 2014-2015 school year, with an additional charter school opening in Fall 2015.

In addition to schools in the Baton Rouge area, the RSD is responsible for the transformation of schools throughout rural parts of the state. Although these schools are not part of the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, similar principles of partnership and community engagement are being integrated into their transformation strategy. In addition to shared principles of partnership and community, rural districts present their own, unique challenges that must be taken into account. Geographic isolation leads to challenges recruiting and retaining teachers, providing and receiving professional development, and accessing the most modern and current technology in the classroom. Transformation strategies for rural districts must leverage lessons learned from New Orleans and other urban parts of the state within the context and realities of a rural environment. The RSD is creating and executing transformation solutions that address unique rural challenges such as geographic isolation, lack of competition, and lack of opportunity.

As with the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, in rural areas with Priority Schools, the RSD will work to build awareness of and support for more and better educational options among the media, legislators, local public officials and parents. The RSD will facilitate conversations among the community on quality educational options and bring community voice and input back into decision-making about the future of schools. The RSD will also engage local business not only on how to operate schools, but also on how they can be a part of goods and services provided. The RSD experiences in New Orleans provided critical information on what works and what doesn’t in creating a high quality education system. These lessons allow for best practices to be shared statewide.

Building awareness of and support for more and better educational options among the media, legislators, local public officials and parents is important. The RSD will facilitate conversations among the community on quality educational options and bring community voice and input back into decision-making about the future of schools. The RSD will also engage local business not only on how to operate schools but also on how they can be a part of goods and services provided. The RSD experiences in New Orleans provided critical information on what works and what doesn’t in creating a high quality education system. These lessons allow for best practices to be shared statewide.

How Will the RSD Help Schools Address the Needs of ELL Students and Students With Exceptionalities?

RSD English Language Learning Program

Like ELL students nationwide, RSD students who are limited English proficient move through the 5 levels of English listening proficiency from phonemic awareness to understanding short utterances and simple directions to understanding standard speech (both in social and academic settings) to understanding the main ideas and relevant details of extended discussions or presentations. The RSD supports this development spectrum through a number of interventions and supports with the following goal – ELL students will develop the necessary English listening skills to fully access the general education curriculum and achieve at the same academic levels as their native English-speaking peers.

Resources

The RSD employs a team of ELL experts – both instructors and interpreters – who are responsible for a cadre of Priority or RSD schools. In order to influence meaningful growth and increased proficiency, RSD staff follow a centrally-created, highly-effective protocol which focuses on:

- Identification
- Screenings (i.e., ELDA and other supportive data)
- Development of Individual Student Success Plans Based on Student-Specific Data
- Monitoring

The RSD expert ELL staff monitors quarterly all students that have exited the ELL program and visit all schools – regardless of whether ELL students are identified – to ensure that all students needing services receive such services in a timely manner. Additionally, the RSD ELL staff conducts progress monitoring meetings to review growth and performance of exited ELL students and to make recommendations as indicated regarding revision of the instructional programs, at least quarterly. Finally, RSD ELL staff offer additional support services, including face-to-face professional development conducted annually or as needed for school site personnel for the purposes of apprising them of ELL Program, service protocols, and referral procedures.

RSD Supports for Students with Exceptionalities

At the outset of the RSD, schools were structurally and academically in shambles – including lack of adequate records. Thus, the RSD rebuilt special education programming, supports and interventions from scratch. Within a short period of time students had IEPs, and an RtI/Appraisal system was in place (the first 2 yrs. (2006-07-08) were contractual and then the process was internalized) to identify students with disabilities, as well as students who were gifted and/or talented (Visual Arts, Music, Theater).

Since that time, the RSD's emphasis has been on building a system that embraces all students. Pre-Katrina, the Orleans Parish school system was under a corrective action plan for serving students with disabilities in more segregated settings.

Citywide Support for Students with Special Needs

The RSD's New Orleans Office of Student enrollment has a full-time staff member dedicated to supporting families of students with disabilities. This staff member supports parents of students with disabilities by: providing one-on-one counseling to families to provide information on the enrollment process, as well as programming at various schools in order to help families determine the best school choice for their children; investigating parent complaints and allegations of enrollment and special education policy violations by school staff and officials; and participating in all expulsion hearings for students with disabilities to ensure that all proceedings and decisions are conducted in accordance with the student's IEP and state and federal special education law.

For a number of years, the Recovery School District has implemented a differentiated funding formula in New

Orleans to ensure that funding is distributed equitably among all RSD direct-run and charter schools in order to ensure schools have the funds necessary to support students with special needs. Differentiated funding allocates money based on student needs – to ensure the right amount of money follows each student.

The RSD applies a differentiated funding formula based on individual student needs and services to the total amount of MFP funding received by all RSD schools in New Orleans. This funding formula adjusts the amount of per pupil MFP funds received by schools up or down based on the needs of each individual student. The differentiated funding formula is equitable, transparent, and efficient – it rewards schools for serving the neediest students. During the Spring of 2014, the RSD worked with school leaders and special education experts to further refine this formula from a three-tiered approach based solely on exceptionality type to a five-tier model based on exceptionality type and total weekly service minutes. This new model is part of the RSD’s commitment to ensuring the success of the neediest students in Orleans Parish and supports the RSD’s core values of excellence and equity by providing for a more fair and accurate distribution of funding.

In addition, the RSD is working collaboratively with the Orleans Parish School Board to provide a number of citywide supports for students with the most severe needs.

There are approximately 4,700 students in New Orleans with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Charter schools are helping to meet these needs in a number of ways, such as general education programming, and specialized school based programs for intensive cognitive and therapeutic needs (classrooms with a special focus on social or life skills). However, a small percentage of students need a level of therapeutic support during the school day beyond what the traditional school environment can provide. RSD and the school board are working together to launch a citywide medically informed therapeutic day setting to help better serve these students in summer 2015. RSD and the school board will work with a local medical partner Tulane University Medical School to administer the program where teachers, therapists, social workers, and health professionals will provide instruction, therapy, counseling, and necessary medical supports. After the program, the student, family, and school participate in a step-down transition process in order to ensure that the student is fully supported and successful in a traditional classroom setting.

Beginning in 2014-2015, the RSD and the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) administer a citywide Exceptional Needs Fund for Students with Disabilities to ensure that all public schools in New Orleans have access to sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with serving students with significant disabilities. The Exceptional Needs Fund is a special purpose fund administered by OPSB and funded through local revenues to help ensure that all public schools in New Orleans meet the needs of their students with disabilities. Any public school in New Orleans may apply to the Exceptional Needs Fund to cover student-specific costs for students with disabilities, such as individual paraprofessionals and special equipment, and a committee of practitioners reviews applications and recommends allocations. In the 2014-2015 school year, the RSD and OPSB distributed \$1.3 million in additional funds to over forty New Orleans public schools to support specific needs of students with disabilities.

- 2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.

As mentioned previously, the RSD has been in existence since 2003. It will continue to operate in alignment with the enumerated turnaround principles in future years. Therefore, Louisiana already meets the obligated 2014-2015 deadline for implementation.

- 2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Bulletin 129, Section 505 (See Appendix 2.D) explains the current criteria for transfer out of the RSD and consequently out of Priority school status. The policy accomplishes the following:

- (1) Ensuring that a school’s autonomy and flexibility are retained in order to support continued substantial improvement and high standards of accountability;
- (2) Ensuring that recipient governing authorities are well-prepared to receive and support the school moving forward;
- (3) Ensuring that schools do not leave the RSD unless the school demonstrated meaningful, multi-year success before exiting.

All schools transferred to the RSD must remain in the RSD for a minimum of five years. After five years, a school may be eligible to choose to return to its former LEA or remain with the RSD. Schools are eligible to choose when they have demonstrated the ability to operate as a stable, non-failing school by earning a School Performance Score of 54.0 or above for the past two consecutive years. For reference, all schools statewide are recognized as academically acceptable by earning a score of 50.0 or higher. By earning an SPS at least 4 points above the minimum score of 50.0 for two consecutive years, a school demonstrates that it will be able to maintain its academic performance in the future and is not in danger of becoming a failing school, and therefore no longer needs to be considered a Priority school. Allowing schools to choose whether to exit or remain in the RSD allows parents and local communities, through their charter governing boards, to determine which setting will most adequately provide the conditions necessary for success and student achievement.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

In Louisiana, Focus schools are defined as any Pre-RSD “F” school meaning schools earning an “F” Letter Grade that are not already overseen by the RSD. Additionally, any high school with a cohort graduation rate below 60 percent that is not already overseen by the RSD will be classified as a Focus school. Finally, any school that was an “F” remains a Focus school until they are no longer an “F” for two consecutive years.

Using letter grades (i.e., F’s) to drive the identification of Focus schools allows Louisiana to easily identify those schools that are demonstrating a serious lack of achievement or gap closure progress over a number of years, particularly with all or certain subgroups. (NOTE: A school’s progress toward the super subgroup AMO also provides critical information regarding gap closures in a given school.) Using letter grades to identify Focus schools also facilitate communication to the public about Focus schools’ status.

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice

D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher standards and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing higher standards and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice

* Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.Z. System Overview – Focus Schools

How Does Louisiana’s Definition of Focus Schools Align with the USDOE’s Requirements for Focus Schools?

Focus schools:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the lowest overall student performance in the state based on school performance scores • Have the lowest cohort graduation rates in the state • Have not yet been assigned to the Recovery School District (RSD) 		
USED Criteria	LA Definition	2013-2014 LA Result
Focus schools have the lowest overall student achievement.	Schools are identified as having the lowest overall achievement based on a school performance score that is less than 50 with letter grade F, and the schools are not assigned to the Recovery School District (RSD).	There were 94 schools not assigned to the RSD that had an SPS of less than 50 and letter grade F or a graduation rate below 60%.
Focus schools have the lowest cohort graduation rates.	Louisiana included all schools with cohort graduation rates less than 60% as focus schools regardless of letter grade or school performance score unless they were assigned to the RSD.	There were 8 schools not assigned to the RSD with school performance scores greater than 50 (letter grade D) and cohort graduation rates less than 60%.

For additional information about the alignment of Louisiana’s Focus Schools and the USDOE requirements, please refer to Additional Appendix #4.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 2.

The 2013-2014 list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for use in the 2015-2016 school year can be viewed at this link: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/accountability/2013-2014-focus-reward-priority-list.xlsx?sfvrsn=10> The list of schools using data from the 2014-2015 data for use in the 2016-2017 school year will be released prior to January 31, 2016.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Because Louisiana's Focus schools are determined using the statewide accountability system, the list of Focus Schools will be released on annual basis concurrent with the release of accountability scores.

Process for Focus School Supports

(a) Identification and Provision of Data

When Focus schools are identified, the LDOE will immediately notify the impacted LEAs (i.e., prior to public release). The LDOE will provide the LEA with extensive data, including student subgroup performance, student subgroup graduation rates, and educator effectiveness data, so that the LEA can immediately implement measures to correct the specific failures of the school (e.g., failure to adequately support academic growth for students with disabilities). Starting with the 2014 release, all principals received a detailed principal report card to assist in analyzing the details of the accountability results – student performance and educator performance – for their school, as compared to the prior year, their district, the state, and schools with the same letter grade. An example of the principal report card for a high school can be seen here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/principalreportcard_hs.pdf?sfvrsn=2. Principals also receive reports for each statewide assessment with reports of how students performed by subgroup.

Louisiana's accountability system and state policies strongly incentivize targeted support for nonproficient students at the educator, school, and district level.

Educators. Through the Compass system, every educator sets goals for their students. Because of accountability incentives, teachers are particularly focused on the attainment of previously low-achieving students. Additionally, the value-added model (VAM) data provides educators with information on the performance of their students as compared to similarly situated peers across the state. Beginning 2015-2016, the educator evaluation system will require principals to set goals that based in School Performance Scores (SPS) with one student learning target (goal) based on overall SPS and an additional goal aligned to a component of SPS. (Bulletin 130 – revised March 2015: <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v147/28v147.doc>)

Schools. Louisiana raised the bar on behalf of low-achieving students by demanding a higher level of performance (Basic) for schools to earn points as a part of their school performance score (SPS). Previously, below-grade-level achievement (e.g., Approaching Basic) earned schools points. This shift emphasizes the need to help Louisiana's struggling students improve at a faster pace. Additionally, progress points are awarded to only those schools making exceptional academic growth with nonproficient student population on statewide assessments. Inclusion of the progress point metric ensures that all schools are focused on their lowest achievers and recognized when schools achieve

growth.

Districts. As part of Louisiana’s systemic plan for school turnaround and student choice, the Louisiana Legislature and Governor Bobby Jindal enacted a package of true school choice legislation in 2012 which impacted statewide educational change for years to come. Act 2 – signed into law in April 2012 – dramatically increased student choice with key provisions such as the proliferation of highly-effective charters statewide, course choice for all kids, and parent voice through parent triggers. Students in focus schools have access to course- and school-level choice that must be funded by the district thereby incentivizing rapid improvement by the district and opportunities for students.

In 2014, the Louisiana legislature enacted Act 853, which expands public school choice for all children enrolled in a school with a letter grade of D or F. For many years, Louisiana has required public school choice to students attending F letter grade schools, per NCLB and Louisiana's ESEA Waiver. The LDOE continues to work with superintendents and districts across the state to craft guidance related to these choice initiatives.

These dramatic statewide reforms influence the reform efforts of every school in Louisiana – in particular, Louisiana’s Focus and Priority Schools (i.e., “F” schools). Because of these bold reforms, schools are incentivized to improve at record-breaking rates and to demonstrate growth and performance in order to influence the greatest intervention – student and parent choice.

(b) Needs Assessments

After the LDOE notifies the LEA of their scores and interventions required by state law and BESE policy and provides the relevant data, the LDOE, through the District Network team structure described later in this section, supports the LEA in its ongoing turnaround efforts by providing and analyzing extensive data and supplying tools, such as the principal’s report card and the results of the Compass evaluation system, to complete a thorough needs assessment of the districts’ student and educator needs. The needs assessment helps the LEA and the LDOE to understand what resources and supports the school students and teachers require from the LEA. Focus schools, by nature of their definition, have significant academic deficiencies. Therefore, the needs assessment emphasizes the performance of the super subgroup and the gaps between the school, district, and state average performance. Networks use this information to help the LEA develop targeted strategies and plans for improvement.

(c) Coordinated LDOE Supports

Once the needs assessment is completed, the LEA and the LDOE will communicate to discuss how the LDOE can best support the LEA as it works to address the specific needs and challenges of the Focus school. Like most state education agencies, the LDOE’s capacity to provide the intensive services required of each Focus school is extremely limited. Therefore, in order to turnaround and maintain the gains of all of the low-performing schools in the state, the LDOE must help build district capacity to take on these efforts themselves and ensure their success. Principals in Focus school must spend significant time with Network staff observing teachers in the classroom, reviewing the school’s academic program (i.e. curriculum, interim assessments, collaboration structures), and developing strategies with a deep focus on increasing student achievement of struggling students.

District Network Teams

As referenced above, part of the Focus school strategy depends on the District Network teams. In

order to maximize the support capacity, the LDOE has clustered school districts into several network teams (see map of district networks here: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/final-network-structure-map.pdf?sfvrsn=4>). Districts are grouped according to similarities in needs and challenges by school level. Each network team is led by a top former superintendent or principal from Louisiana who supervises and coordinates the work of one deputy leaders, and 5-6 district coaches. Deputies and coaches support specific districts across the state through personalized supports, including school-level coaching at struggling schools where needed (e.g., Focus schools).

In the spring of 2015 the network teams evolved to better support districts. Networks will now focus on supporting districts on the front end to understand the purpose and participate in the collaboration structures to ensure decision-makers for the theme or topic to be discussed are present and resources are received. After all centrally run collaborations and trainings, networks will differentiate work with districts to provide support as district implement key initiatives that improve teaching and student learning.

As described throughout Louisiana’s ESEA waiver request, Louisiana will use the Network strategy to target supports and interventions focused on the state’s focus areas in order to drive a system of continuous improvement for students. These priority areas stem from the LDE’s belief that the state academic content standards and the Compass system will serves as guides for student performance expectations and instructional expectations. Also captured in these focus areas is the belief that educating students starts at birth and should provide opportunities for students throughout high school to prepare students for post-secondary success.

The priorities include:

1. Establishing a Planning Process
2. Preparing Children for Kindergarten
3. Developing High Quality Instruction in Every Classroom
4. Creating a Path to Prosperity for Every Student
5. Aligning Financial Resources

See the District Planning Guide (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=18>) for more information.

To support this process, the Network teams will work collaboratively with districts to (a) analyze student performance data, summarized and broken out into specific sub-group performance (particularly those subgroups for which significant achievement gaps exist) and educator effectiveness data, (b) support cross-district planning, and (c) strategically support capacity-building in schools and classrooms focused on specific focus areas. All of these actions will be done in concert with district leadership teams to ensure districts take the role in driving district and school level change efforts.

Obviously – by the very definition of a Focus school – such schools will be high priority for the LDOE. Effectively overseeing implementation of the state focus areas, as well as any additional school-specific, data-determined interventions is of the highest priority to the LDOE.

Network Teams Adaptation to District Needs

District Network Teams support local decision making, provide resources, training and clear information, and help districts understand and respond to accountability.

Through the district network teams, the LDOE is able to ensure:

- policy supports local decision making;
- effective accountability mechanisms are in place;
- resources reflect quality practices and align to the state standards for learning;
- training is available on how to use the resources to improve student learning;
- communication reaches the multiple layers of the education system; and
- data are available that are understandable and easily accessed.

The district network team structure is built to adapt to the changing needs of the Louisiana’s educators, schools and districts. The focus of the network teams is reevaluated and altered at the end of every school year based on feedback from the district staff and reflections by the district team members.

For the next three years, networks will focus on the following priority areas.

Teacher Leader Focus:

- Communicate: Share key information and resources across the state.
- Support: Deeply train with quality content support to help districts build and implement content based training.

Principal Focus:

- Statewide (all principals): Understand Compass policies and set meaningful, SPS aligned goals.
- Principal support: Provide outcomes focused experiences and resources centered around instructional leadership and district planning to help principals support teachers with instructional shifts.

Districts Build Standards-Aligned Academic Plans:

- Curriculum: Continue to implement aligned math and ELA curriculum with a focus on:
 - Early childhood through second grade improvements
 - ELA aligned tools
- Assessment:
 - Communicate clarity and implement 2015-2016 assessments
 - Choose and use aligned benchmark assessments with the focus on quantity, quality, and use
- Professional development:
 - Implement a system of standards-aligned teacher training

Early Childhood Focus:

- All Community Networks effectively implement two observations of every classroom in a publicly-funded site in network and share the results with program leaders to guide professional development.
- Community networks of early childhood care and education providers will develop and implemented a coordinate enrollment structure for infant, toddler, and prekindergarten children in the network whose families want to enroll them in a publicly-funded program.

High Schools:

- Plan with and schedule students appropriately for University and Career Diplomas
 - Enroll students in a tightly planned Jump Start pathway
 - Build transitional 9th grade programs for struggling students

Why use the Network process to determine specific intervention?

This process, which focuses at every level of the education system (district, school, principal, and teacher), enables alignment and focus across educators. Targets for student improvements will be defined through work with district staff, principal staff, and teachers using the data and tools available. This will create a set of common expectations for students and educators in each district. The network approach is necessary as it enables tailored support for each district based on district capacity and needs. The Network structure allows the LDOE to build relationships with educators and administrators that enable the trust needed to honestly analyze current practices and plan for student success. By dividing districts into teams, the LDOE is able to provide the support and facetime that would not be possible using a one-size-fits-all statewide support model.

In addition to implementing the district network team strategy, the SEA also provides supports for Focus schools in the following areas:

- **Believe and Succeed grant:** The LDOE leveraged its 1003a funds to develop a competitive grant program to provide funding for districts to turn around Focus schools. Districts with Focus schools may apply for Believe and Succeed grants to:
 - Develop new schools leaders to turn around Focus schools; or,
 - Recruit and set up a district or school turnaround organization that would institutionalize positive leadership behaviors both at the school and the district level.

All focus schools are eligible to apply and compete for Believe and Succeed 1003(a) grant funding. This competitive grant process ensures that focus schools have sufficient 1003a funding before distributing to other title 1 schools. For the 2014-2015 school year, 1003(a) funding was only allocated to focus schools.

More about the Believe and Succeed initiative can be found here:

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/schools/louisiana's-call-to-action/district-believe-and-succeed-initiatives>.

- **Leverage existence of RSD:** The LDOE coordinates its services to Focus schools with the RSD to ensure there are consistent, well-planned supports for all schools. The LDOE also highlights successful turnaround strategies used by the RSD to help other schools and districts avoid state takeover through bold reforms.
- **Tiered supports and thoughtful resource allocation:** Because the LDOE lacks the capacity to provide intensive support to all qualifying schools and districts, the LDOE provides different levels of service to districts with low-performing schools in an effort to strategically deploy scarce resources to impact the most students possible. Both LDOE programs and additional discretionary funding (e.g., Race to the Top-like funding competitions) are awarded to districts and schools based upon a thoughtful assessment of both their will and skill to make the bold changes required to turn around Focus schools.
- **Increase common resources:** The LDOE continues to develop toolkits, webinars, and other resources for all districts to utilize in their school turnaround strategies. The development of these resources is tied to the results of the Focus schools' needs assessments and network support conversations statewide.
- **Thoughtful use of external providers:** In areas where districts and/or the LDOE have low capacity, the LDOE will create a robust and comprehensive approach to attract, evaluate, and match external providers in a number of key areas of turnaround. This may include charter

management organizations that will assume the operations of entire schools, private providers that offer a targeted set of services, and community-based partners that help to extend learning time, engage students through creative activities, and increase family engagement. The LDOE will provide information and assure quality regarding external providers for LEAs and Focus schools to be able to select the external providers that best target the Focus schools' needs.

- **Additional supports:** The SEA will improve supports in a number of different other areas that emphasize capacity building, including data tracking and management, policy development, and budget planning.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Schools should only exit Focus school status after improving on accountability dimensions and maintaining those improvements over a period of time. As leading indicators demonstrate that a school is improving, the resources for that school can be adjusted. However, the Focus schools should continue to be monitored as a Focus school until gains are sustained over a period of at least two years. The gains must be sufficient enough to increase the Focus schools' letter grade by at least one letter grade (i.e., an SPS of 50+) thereby demonstrating increased proficiency for all students, including traditional subgroups.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, schools that, after implementing interventions, have not demonstrated enough progress to exit Priority school status will receive increased support and targeted guidance from their network staff. Per Louisiana state law, schools that are Focus schools based on their "F" letter grade for four consecutive years are eligible for state takeover and placement in the Recovery School District, thereby becoming Priority schools.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

The 2013-2014 list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for use in the 2015-2016 school year can be viewed at this link: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/accountability/2013-2014-focus-reward-priority-list.xlsx?sfvrsn=10> The list of schools using data from the 2014-2015 data for use in the 2016-2017 school year will be released prior to January 31, 2016.

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

- 2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Over the 12+ years of Louisiana’s accountability system and particularly throughout the course of RSD oversight and implementation, the LDOE has continually refined and enhanced its district and school support models. Moving forward, the LDOE will continue to actively create and refine incentives and supports to improve student achievement in schools and districts. Many of these ideas are highlighted and described below.

(1) Supporting Families and Schools and Incentivizing Improvement Through the Accountability System

As discussed at length in earlier sections, Louisiana annually publishes School and District Performance Reports. Starting in 2012, the School Performance Report included school and district progress on a number of key metrics (See Section 2.A for more information), additions which incentivize higher performance while also providing helpful, specific information on areas for improvement.

Because the reports are easily understandable and include only the most relevant information, parents can use the information to determine how to support their child’s school, advocate for improvements in performance, and learn about other educational options. School leaders can use the information to identify areas of strength and weakness, target professional development, identify high school curriculum needs, make personnel decisions, and develop improvement strategies. Report cards have continued to be improved over time based on feedback and can be accessed here (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/>).

The school and district letter grades provide additional incentives for continuous improvement, in addition to public awareness. As mentioned in the Focus school section above, letter grades in Louisiana are tied some of the most significant education reform policies and laws in nation. Students in C, D, and F schools have access to school-level and course-level choice, funded by the district. Public school choice is required for any student attending a D or F school. Lastly, charter applicants wishing to open schools in districts with a D or F letter grade may bypass the local application process and apply directly to the state board.

(2) Supporting Schools and Districts through a Burden Reduction Initiative and Structural Changes

Louisiana recognizes the importance of building local capacity to improve student performance. In particular, the state acknowledges that it should be more diligent in removing bureaucratic burdens placed upon districts. To that end, the LDOE is committed to eliminating unnecessary paperwork burdens and streamlining processes for LEAs so that the full extent of their attention may be placed on improving student performance. The LDOE designed and executed a Burden Reduction Initiative, an agency-wide effort to reduce administrative burdens placed upon local districts and to enable districts to access money more easily, and use it more effectively, and efficiently. This enhanced autonomy served to free up additional district resources to concentrate on student performance, rather than compliance measures.

The goals of the Burden Reduction Initiative were as follows:

- Streamline federal and state application, monitoring, and reporting requirements for school districts as much as legally permissible.
- Develop templates for plans and budgets that guide school districts through the process of using multiple funding sources to support proven education initiatives.
- Develop tools using existing federal and state flexibilities to assist school districts in utilizing funds for maximum effectiveness through the coordination of multiple funding sources to support single initiatives.

In order to streamline communication, the LDOE also made structural changes. As referenced above, Network Teams were created; the team consists of LDOE staff that function as a liaison between districts and the LDOE. The Network Teams serve every region of the state by providing resources, support and expertise on the ground. In addition to adding Network Teams, the LDOE assigned Points of Contact (POC) to each team. The POCs serve as a single point of contact who can provide technical assistance on federal grant programs. All POCs have a deep knowledge about how to best use federal dollars to serve the school and district strategic plans. This allows districts to know the name of one person whom they can call for support, rather than calling a different person for every grant program. Finally, efforts to increase collaboration within the agency were enhanced to better streamline communication to districts.

Communication

Organizing the LDOE in a more cohesive way facilitated better communication with districts. All communication to districts goes through the Network Teams or the weekly Department Newsletter. No longer are individuals communicating on a single topic to school leaders. Instead, announcements, policy changes, resources and information are provided through one of the two methods mentioned above and through an organized, coordinated rollout.

Data Reporting

To better streamline data reporting, the LDOE implemented a year-long Red Tape Reduction Initiative. This project required a heavy internal lift by every office in the building; constant communication and collaboration were essential to the success of the project. Results from this initiative produced the following: reduction of duplicative collections of data elements, a single district-facing calendar listing all data reporting deadlines, regular technical assistance webinars and in-person trainings for data collection systems, and a greater reliance on existing data systems to generate reports protecting districts from unnecessarily reporting duplicative information.

Monitoring

Prior to 2013, the LDOE monitored each federal grant program at least once-a-year and at various times throughout the year. This process was administratively burdensome and resulted in the LDOE interrupting schools multiple times a year taking time away from school leaders performing their most important job. After a year of planning and consolidating, the LDOE now monitors districts one time per year for all federal grant programs. Furthermore, the LDOE has developed a risk-based monitoring approach that identifies districts most at-risk. This project resulted in a Coordinated Monitoring Calendar that is produced once a year and lists all LEAs in the state, their expected monitoring date and programs that will be monitored. This new process has enabled school leaders to focus on educating Louisiana's children, rather than preparing to demonstrate grant compliance numerous times a year.

(3) Supporting Schools and Districts through Planning and Budgeting Tools

In order to effectively build local capacity to improve student performance, the LDOE must offer guidance and tools to LEAs so that the full extent of their attention may be placed on improving student performance. The combination of several funding sources so they work together to achieve one objective or implement one strategy/program can be a challenge. The LDOE has been focused on serving LEAs in this manner since 2010 with the development of templates and tools for program planning and budgets that guide school districts through the process of using multiple funding sources to support proven education initiatives. The District Planning Guide catalogs the most recent tools and resources, along with an outline of all the major decisions districts must annually make. The 2014-2015 guide can be accessed here: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

The first set of planning tools developed, *Tools for Integrating Education Funds*, commonly referred to as the “Fiscal Model,” was the first of its kind in the nation. This toolset offered LEAs straightforward guidance on the integration of federal dollars to support research-based initiatives, including those targeting students in traditional subgroups. A team of leaders from each LEA across the state, including both fiscal and program staff, was trained on the use of these tools. The training centered not only on the use of the tools but the creation of a cohesive team so that budgeting and planning tasks were addressed from a comprehensive approach. The LDOE continues to provide more one-on-one technical assistance to LEAs as they implement this theory of action.

Are Louisiana’s AMOs, Along with Other Measures, Used to Identify Other Title 1 Schools that are Not Making Progress or Closing Achievement Gaps and to Provide Incentives and Supports for Those Schools?

As discussed extensively in the AMO section and throughout Principle 2, there are three primary measures of student performance that are aligned to Louisiana’s accountability formula and system of incentives.

- First, schools must improve their overall performance by increasing their school performance score by at least ten points if their letter grade is B through F.
- Second, Louisiana’s use of a non-proficient subgroup will identify those schools that have less than 50 percent of the non-proficient students exceeding expected growth, and these schools will not be eligible for any reward status. Coveted progress points are added to a school’s SPS for growth achieved by nonproficient students on statewide assessments.
- Finally, the use of traditional ESEA subgroup public reporting will provide to the public, schools, districts, and the state the data necessary to 1) identify the gaps in academic achievement and/or lack of progress, and 2) craft targeted interventions, supports, and technical assistance that will positively impact the performance of the students in specific subgroups through the Network support structure.

Also, as described earlier overview of Act 2, the overall Letter Grade performance is used to inform and support Louisiana’s statewide system of choice, as well the LDOE’s Network support for LEAs and schools. The existence of the RSD to provide support for Priority schools uniquely allows the District Network teams to spend significant time and resources on improvement in Focus schools and other Title 1 schools with large gaps in student growth and achievement.

What Instructional Practices Will Be Employed to Address the Needs of ELL Students and Students With Exceptionalities in Other Title 1 Schools?

As noted during Louisiana’s peer review feedback conference, network leaders look at data with district and school leaders in order to determine needs and gaps both school-wide and in specific subgroups. Then, they use the LDOE-created planning tools to target supports as needed. Overall, the LDOE network leaders differentiate supports based on specific needs of districts and schools.

Additionally, as described previously, targeted supports and interventions maintain focus on the areas which drive a system of continuous improvement for students through the network structure. These priorities stem from Louisiana’s belief that the state academic content standards and the Compass evaluation system serve as guides for student performance expectations and instructional expectations. Also captured in these focus areas is the belief that educating students starts at birth and should provide opportunities for students throughout high school to prepare them for post-secondary success.

The priorities include:

1. Establishing a Planning Process
2. Preparing Children for Kindergarten
3. Developing High Quality Instruction in Every Classroom
4. Creating a Path to Prosperity for Every Student
5. Aligning Financial Resources

The cyclical process these elements seek directly lines up the relationship between student performance and instructional practices driving towards a clear vision of higher expectations. As these core elements are mastered at the school level, this process will lead directly to improvements for students. Inherently, this process represents a continuous improvement cycle which defines improvement in terms of student skill acquisition. To support this process, the LDOE Network teams will work collaboratively with districts to set goals using student performance data summarized for all students and broken out into specific subgroup performance; support cross-district planning; and strategically support capacity-building in schools and classrooms focused on specific core elements.

Students with Disabilities and English Language Learner Supports

Decisions regarding instructional needs of students with disabilities, ELL, or any other special population should be determined through concrete understanding of student performance against specific objectives. The core elements not only help schools focus on the routines for ensuring continuous improvement, but also align with ensuring teachers and schools adequately plan and prepare to meet the needs of diverse learners. Each network team includes unique specialists with backgrounds in serving special populations of students. A key element to improving instructional practices with these students includes not only effective planning but tailored feedback on instructional practices with collaborative teaming to identify specific improvements in classroom practice. Collaborating with school and district leaders to ensure effective implementation of these elements will lead to improvements for all students. The value in having a Network Team Member with a background in serving special populations will be demonstrated through their support of effective feedback and collaborative teaming sessions.

As referenced above, the LDOE has entered into a partnership with SC3 to establish professional learning opportunities for LEAs to support in establishing a reliable process to identify and refer those students who show characteristics of specific exceptionalities, while at the same time, are in the process of learning English as their second language. These professional learning opportunities include webinars, face-to-face workshops, and access to the SC3 expert in English Language Learner (ELL) issues for specific questions and needs of local education agencies (LEAs) and schools. The LDOE and SC3 established the English as a Second Language (ESL) Coaches Academy to build the capacity of SEA, LEA, and school

leadership in understanding the unique needs of ELLs. This academy plans to train 70 ESL educators interested in becoming ESL Language Coaches.

How Will Louisiana Ensure Consistent Diagnostics and Improvement Planning Based on the Needs of All Students and All Subgroups and Focused on Closing Achievement Gaps?

As mentioned previously, through a distinct set of priorities the Network teams are engaging districts around core initiatives. Implementation of these core initiatives in every school will lead to dramatic improvements for all of our students. These core initiatives represent the key systems and routines schools need to engage in to achieve the necessary higher expectations for students and the corresponding required systematic changes in instructional practice. Achieving this shift in every school requires a collaborative, strategic partnership with LEAs focused on diagnostics and improvement planning.

The two delivery models will be the Teacher Leader and Supervisor Collaboration, which will still hold the important tenants of:

- **Consistency** – Consistency will be achieved through routine frequency and process for every district around diagnostics and planning; routine data points and analyses on goals, subgroup performance/gaps, and SPS; consistency in key behaviors the LDOE seeks to drive effective implementation of in schools (core elements); and consistency in supports received from the LDOE, both with regard to specific contacts at the agency and specific engagement activities.
- **Differentiation** – Discriminating points between districts should be represented in how they approach achieving solid implementation of the core elements, setting of unique goals determined by areas of weaknesses in their student population, and any relevant decision making at the LEA level that achieves ownership and empowerment to motivate change.

Starting with the 2013-2014 school year, each school leader receives a principal’s report card with information on how their school performed on the metrics that lead to student achievement and postsecondary success, as well as educator effectiveness. The report card compares a school to the district and state and allows school leaders and superintendents, in consultation with the District Network staff, to identify areas with the largest gaps and develop and prioritize strategies that will lead to significant impacts on student achievement.

By setting specific frequencies for goal setting/data review and planning, the LDOE not only embeds a routine structure for having the necessary conversations regarding challenges to continuous improvement but also a natural cycle for plan, do, review, and adapt will begin to take place at every level of the educational system. These are the key steps necessary for making the behavioral shifts required for continuous improvement. In such, as districts plan to tackle key achievement gaps in their districts through targeting based on understanding their data, implementing their plans, reporting to their peers on progress and problem solving barriers, the districts will receive extensive support in understanding their leading and lagging indicators through routine goal review.

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

- 2.G Describe the SEA’s process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the

largest achievement gaps, including through:

- i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
- ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
- iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

Increasing LEA Capacity

Louisiana has developed a strong reform plan and made significant progress toward implementation; however to continuing moving this work forward, the LDOE recognizes the importance and critical need for increased LEA capacity. To advance the capacity of LEAs, Louisiana has identified four components of capacity that drive improved performance in districts and schools:

1. Governance and Leadership

The LDOE recognizes the need to inform and empower parents and the general public to actively participate in the governance of their local schools. This is why the LDOE has developed clear, transparent School Performance Reports containing a wealth of easily understood information about school performance and has implemented a number of student assessments to inform parents whether their child is on track academically. The use of the charter school model as turnaround and choice strategies has also increased parental and community engagement and shared decision-making, giving local stakeholders greater input into the direction of their schools and holding local school governing boards more accountable for performance. The LDOE has also begun to proactively reach out to existing and newly elected local school board members and charter governing board members to develop relationships, familiarize them with the state's key education reforms, and offer support as they strive to increase student achievement in their communities.

Likewise, Louisiana must empower and support local school leaders in effectively managing their schools so that student growth can be achieved. The Louisiana Legislature, through passage of legislation, has taken bold steps to empower local school superintendents and CEOs to effectively manage their school districts without inappropriate interference from governing board members in daily school management decisions. In support of this autonomy, the LDOE regularly communicates with local school district superintendents and charter school leaders to communicate expectations for growth and to offer supports for them and their staff in achieving those expectations. This is done through one-on-one meetings with local school district leaders, but also through regular conference calls with LDOE's executive team and bi-weekly, streamlined emails from the State Superintendent of Education that contain all information to be communicated to local school districts by the LDOE staff. These streamlined communications were in direct response to local superintendents' requests for more coordinated communication between the LDOE and local school districts, eliminating the hundreds of emails, letters, and notices regularly sent by LDOE to local school leaders statewide. An annual superintendents' meeting is also hosted to facilitate the sharing of best practices, identify common challenges and available

supports, and to solicit feedback on key statewide education initiatives.

2. Mission, Vision, and Strategy

The vision of the LDOE is to create a world-class education for all Louisiana students. Its mission is to ensure higher academic achievement for all students, eliminate all achievement gaps, and prepare students to be effective citizens in a global market. In 2010, the LDOE and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted nine critical goals to focus its efforts on improving student achievement. The state's critical goals are:

- i. Students enter Kindergarten ready to learn.
- ii. Students are literate by third grade.
- iii. Students will enter the fourth grade on time.
- iv. Students perform at or above Basic in ELA by 8th grade.
- v. Students perform at or above Basic in Mathematics by 8th grade.
- vi. Students graduate from high school on time.
- vii. Students will enroll in post-secondary education within two years of graduation.
- viii. Students will complete at least one year of college successfully.
- ix. Students will achieve all eight goals, regardless of race or class.

Each goal has accompanying targets with ultimate and immediate goals, measured by a percentage of students achieving that goal by a given year. The LDOE regularly examines state and district progress in achieving the goals, evaluates state-led initiatives through research and student achievement data to determine if they are indeed helping districts to meet the goals, and makes district and state progress reports available to school leaders, policymakers, and the general public. Districts have been able to use the LDOE's critical goals as a model for the creation of district-level critical goals. This data, combined with the new School Performance Reports, will provide valuable information to all stakeholders so that districts and schools can assess their overall progress and implement proven strategies and interventions.

3. Strategic Relationships

The LDOE recognizes that local investment is essential to the success of its key initiatives and the achievement of the state's critical education goals. Thus, the LDOE has developed all of its current initiatives with input from local educators and the general public through many regional educator meetings, community presentations and workshops, webinars, printed materials, and stakeholder gatherings. In addition, as described earlier in this section, the LDOE has sought to establish strategic relationships with district school leaders that ensure streamlined communication and frequent feedback. The District Network teams are one example of the development of strategic relationships (See below). Furthermore, the State Superintendent of Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education have disseminated information and statewide education data to state policymakers in order to advance and garner support for the state's critical goals and the key reforms needed to achieve them.

Specific examples of the ways in which LDOE is enhancing district capacity are described below.

Resources and Direct Support

As discussed in Principles 1 and 3 of this request, Louisiana is providing intensive supports to schools and districts in a number of key areas, including school turnaround, serving students with special needs, and transitioning to more rigorous standards and evaluations. Going forward, the LDOE will work to more

effectively target these supports, improve coordination and alignment to maximize their impact, and clearly communicate how these supports will lead educators and students to be successful in teaching and learning the state's academic content standards. Existing supports have been enhanced with the addition of specific trainings, professional development, resources, and transition activities related to the new standards and evaluations, including:

- Crosswalks and content comparison documents clearly outlining the changes from current Grade-Level Expectations to the new state academic content standards;
- Multiple trainings and professional development opportunities for district and school leaders;
- A new state-developed curriculum guide aligned with the state approved content standards ~~CCSS~~ that includes a full set of ELA units plans to build a complete curriculum and a robust set of instructional tools for math;
- Curriculum and assessment resources for regular education students, limited English proficient students, and students with disabilities aligned to the state approved content standards (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>);
- Professional development on the use of research-based performance tasks in ELA and Mathematics aligned with the state approved content standards;
- Model personnel evaluation frameworks for LEA use;
- Intensive, comprehensive, ongoing professional development on setting student learning targets and using evaluations to inform supports to educators in need of improvement; and
- A geographically-diverse pilot of COMPASS;
- Targeted support for a cadre of over 5,000 teachers representing every district and school in the state to ensure that every school has a series of experts on the standards and curricular tools (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/collaboration-teacher-leadership>);
- A one-stop-shop Teacher Support Toolbox with resources for setting goals, planning, teaching, and evaluating student results through the year (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox>);
- Network support for district personnel including planning guidance and month planning calls (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-network-support-structure>);
- Regular communication, technical assistance, and trainings to support technology enhancements necessary for online assessments; and
- A library of instructional videos that illustrate quality instruction connected to Louisiana's Compass instructional rubric and the state approved content standards.

Chartering

The state's charter authorizing process consists of a rigorous independent review that is conducted in accordance with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) *Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of their proposed educational, financial, and organizational plans, in-person interviews with governing board and principal candidates, and their track record of performance. Less than half of all applicants are approved annually. Those who are authorized to operate a charter school are monitored annually for academic, financial, and operational performance and must demonstrate meaningful growth in student achievement in order to receive a renewal contract. In addition, even before a charter school is eligible for renewal, the state may revoke its contract for failure to meet expectations. The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has not hesitated to close charter schools that fail to meet standards, evidenced by

nearly 20 state-authorized charter schools closing since 1996, most facing non-renewal or revocation.

This strong system of charter authorizing has earned Louisiana the reputation of having one of the highest-performing charter systems in the nation. Louisiana has led the nation in utilizing the charter model. Overall, more than 100 charter schools across Louisiana are educating nearly 60,000 students. A 2013 report by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) gave high marks to Louisiana's charter schools when compared to the state's traditional schools. CREDO found that, when compared to traditional public schools, students learning at a Louisiana charter school experience learning gains equivalent to two months of added learning time in reading and three months of added time in math. In New Orleans, where nearly 93 percent of public school students attend a state or Orleans Parish authorized charter school, this figure increased to approximately four months in reading and five months in math. The report revealed that Louisiana charter school students showed greater gains in ELA and Mathematics following students' second year of enrollment. These findings reinforce charter school impact and that students in Louisiana charter schools receive additional days of learning on a consistent basis as they continue their enrollment. For example, whereas on average, second year charter school students were roughly 80 days ahead of their counterparts in feeder schools, fourth and fifth year enrollees were 180-200 days ahead. Similarly, a review of the 2012-2013 School Performance Scores (SPS) for Louisiana charter schools revealed that charter schools, particularly those in New Orleans, continue to outperform the rest of the state. On average, in 2012-2013, charter schools grew 5.6 SPS points, as compared to 4.4 points by all other public schools.

In 2011, the state approved its first two virtual charter schools following extensive research, stakeholder engagement, and consultation with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning on best practices in quality virtual charter school authorizing. This work culminated in the development of a detailed addendum to the state's charter school application for virtual charter applicants, as well as state policy to address expectations for virtual charter providers and the unique needs of students enrolled in such schools and programs. During this time, the state also took steps to enhance Louisiana's charter school policies to address the performance of for-profit education management organizations who partner with non-profit charter operators, including required performance-based contracts. The LDOE will use these performance-based contracts as models to assist local school districts in forming partnerships with charter and other external providers.

In 2013, the LDOE introduced the Louisiana Charter School Performance Compact (CSPC). The CSPC is the accountability mechanism for all state-authorized charter schools. Establishing performance criteria for charter schools, the CSPC also ensures that the LDOE is held accountable for implementing a rigorous and fair oversight process that respects the autonomy vital to charter school success. It provides clear standards, timely feedback, maximum transparency; objective information for schools, students, and families; differentiated oversight, including incentives for high-performing charters schools; and comprehensive information to guide charter extension and renewal determinations. The CSPC was developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including charter school leaders, board members, charter management organizations, and financial experts.

Charter school contract renewal term length is based on the academic, financial, and organizational performance indicators defined in the CSPC. Charter contracts can be renewed for a maximum of ten years or a minimum of three years. State-authorized charter schools seeking subsequent renewal of their charter contract must meet a higher bar than in previous years. No charter school shall be renewed unless the charter operator can, at a minimum, demonstrate improvement in the academic performance of students over the term of the charter school's existence.

In requesting flexibility through this waiver, it should be noted that Louisiana will not weaken current flexibilities and autonomies afforded to charter operators, nor will it weaken the ability of authorizers to non-renew or revoke charter contracts for failure to meet established performance expectations.

Expanded Learning Service Providers

Community-based partners and other external providers can greatly support districts and schools in increasing student achievement. Such partnerships enable schools to extend learning time, engage students in activities aligned to the school's curriculum, involve families in their children's education, and expose students to diverse learning opportunities. While these partnerships are capable of producing many positive student outcomes, they ultimately must lead to improved student achievement outcomes. In 2008, Louisiana instituted performance standards for expanded learning service providers, basing one-third of evaluations on academic performance, one-third on program compliance, and one-third on parental satisfaction. In an effort to further increase expectations and enhance accountability, Louisiana will begin to base providers' evaluations predominately on evidence of raising student achievement, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. This new achievement-focused evaluation system will be used to enhance Louisiana's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, and while districts and schools will no longer be required to contract with an external provider for Supplemental Education Services as a remedy under the federal accountability system, the LDOE will continue to facilitate and promote school partnerships with providers that have demonstrated effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Expanded learning service providers' effectiveness data will be published online for review by education leaders seeking to partner with high-quality providers and parents seeking to enroll their children in effective programs. Additionally, Louisiana will require providers to demonstrate the degree to which their programs are aligned with the state's academic standards.

Moving Forward

The state can play an important role in ensuring that only the most effective providers make their services available to children and families and supplement the traditional school system. To that end, the LDOE will identify high-quality providers that can serve students and also leverage its scale and influence to provide support to districts, while respecting local autonomy. The LDOE has developed a rigorous central process that utilizes independent review for the approval and continued operations of external providers who deliver charter, virtual, and industry-based programs to Louisiana students and partner with local school districts. At the heart of that process will be the provider's ability to increase student achievement, demonstrating capacity, a track record of performance, alignment with the state academic content standards, and the use of effective educators. Like the state's rigorous performance expectations for charter schools, other external providers will be subject to a thorough initial evaluation, regular performance reviews, public reporting of performance data, and possible termination or non-renewal as an approved provider in Louisiana.

The LDOE will develop a rigorous process that utilized independent review for the approval and continued operation of external providers who deliver charter, virtual, and industry-based programs to Louisiana students and partner with local school districts.

How Will Louisiana Monitor the Implementation of Interventions in Priority and Focus Schools?

Implementation fidelity is the key variable that leads to continuous and sustainable change. Without clearly defining the change the LDOE seeks and embedding systematic routines to assess the extent to

which this happens, success will only be achieved incrementally. Thus, the LDOE has stated clearly the core elements that will lead to improvements for our students and these elements should be happening in every school. As stated previously, the core elements are goal setting, assessment and content, feedback, collaboration, and identifying leaders.

For Priority schools, the RSD provides support in this area to inform RSD school support and transformation decisions. The Achievement Team works with direct-run principals to review student data to inform personnel and instructional decisions. In direct-run schools, staff also participate frequently in each school's cluster meetings of teachers to review student data to analyze progress in achieving student performance goals, and interpret this data to inform instructional decisions inside the classroom. Cluster teams are groups of teachers in the same grade level for elementary school, and groups of teachers in the same subject-area for high schools.

Additionally, the state reports publicly on metrics of student achievement and college and career readiness and BESE will use this data to make school closure, charter approval, and turnaround decisions to ensure students continue to have access to high quality education options.

Achieving implementation fidelity is a process of data collection, review, and adaptation of actions in response to areas of implementation weakness. The relationship between the District Networks Teams and the Focus schools lends itself naturally toward strategic routine implementation, data collection, and conversation. As stated previously, these key points of interaction include goal setting, cross-district planning, and capacity building in schools and classrooms. Through school level interactions, the LDOE will partner with LEA leaders to observe implementation of the core elements in classrooms, specifically in Focus schools. This activity represents a direct data collection of implementation information. The LDOE and LEA will work together on reviewing the information and problem solving necessary adjustments to achieve improvements in implementation. More information on the role of District Networks teams can be found in section 2.E and records of the meetings used to monitor implementation can be seen here: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/network-focus-schools.zip?sfvrsn=2>

Another key metric that will be used statewide for assessing fidelity of instructional shifts aligned to the state's content standards will be the use of the teacher observation rubric. Louisiana has selected a modified version of the Danielson Rubric which has evidence of validity and reliability for assessing behaviors that drive student improvements. Implementation of this tool is crucial to ensuring success of our strategic plan. Thus, the LDOE is focused on achieving aligned understanding and use of the rubric throughout the state as it works with LEAs and schools. Through the process of frequently shared planning and data review, routine opportunities to discuss and problem solve issues around data collection of fidelity information and use of this data will emerge. Districts will have opportunities to learn from each other best practices and hold each other accountable for reporting and sharing this information.

While the activities stated above speak to the intent of building LEA capacity for understanding and collecting fidelity of implementation information, it is important to note that the LDOE will continue to maintain a focus on this issue. The LDOE is laying the groundwork for a clear vision and strategic plan in how the LDOE engages with districts and schools. The delivery unit will continue to support data collection and analysis on implementation information to ensure the LDOE strategic plan is achieving consistency and efficacy in its implementation and riving the changes the LDOE seeks to occur in classrooms. The most relevant information will be assessment of this classroom level change in instruction – the same metric directly relevant to LEAs. Thus, the partnership between the LDOE and LEAs around this key variable will be a turning point for understanding the extent to which Louisiana is

achieving sustainable change.

What is Louisiana's Process for the Rigorous Review and Approval of External Providers Used to Support Interventions in Priority and Focus Schools? Will Louisiana Leverage Funds from ESEA 1116(B)(10) TO Support School Interventions?

Louisiana has strong systems in place for the rigorous review and approval of external providers, including charter school operators, expanded learning providers, and other educational service providers. As described previously in this section, the Louisiana Department of Education and all local school districts are required by law to use rigorous independent evaluations of charter school applications that are in accordance with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. These evaluations include a review of the applicant's proposed educational, financial, and organizational plans, consideration of organization's track record of success, and an in-person interview. Charter contract renewals are based primarily on the school's academic performance and student growth, as well as its financial health, governance, and compliance with laws and regulations. This process has enabled Louisiana to grow one of the strongest charter school systems in the country, as evidenced by independent research and Louisiana's own comparison of student growth in charters versus traditional public schools. The use of this rigorous process for the selection of charter operators for Recovery School District (Priority) schools has been and will continue to be a successful strategy for rapidly turning around persistently failing schools.

Additionally, as described in Section 2.G., Louisiana has increased performance standards for expanded learning providers by basing evaluations primarily on student growth. Beginning in summer 2013, 21st Century Community Learning Center providers must show a positive effect on academic achievement as measured by the state identified assessment. The same evaluation framework will be used for expanded learning providers that apply to offer before or after school programs and summer programs in Louisiana public schools, including Priority and Focus schools. Priority and Focus schools have the opportunity to select providers from a list of approved providers that have demonstrated success through this rigorous evaluation process, if they wish to utilize such services.

In addition to charter and expanded learning providers, Louisiana has developed a high-quality course provider program, authorized by legislation passed and signed into law during the 2012 Legislative Session and described earlier in Principle 2. This program, which attracted many virtual education providers, will offer courses to all Louisiana students with an emphasis on low-performing schools and schools that do not offer the courses available through the program. Providers may apply to the Louisiana Department of Education for initial approval and undergo a rigorous external evaluation. They must achieve aggressive performance targets in order to remain authorized as an approved course provider. More information on the Louisiana Supplemental Course Academy can be access here: <http://lacourses.net/>.

The Louisiana Department of Education's network structure for district support includes guidance to districts with focus schools on effectively using these resources to improve student achievement, and the Recovery School District engages in the same processes with focus schools.

How Will Louisiana Hold LEAs, in Addition to Schools, Accountable For Improving School and Student Performance?

As described throughout the waiver, Louisiana has a long-standing, rigorous, state-created accountability system which holds both schools and LEAs accountable. LEAs, just like schools, receive

Letter Grades. These Letter Grades represent the overall performance of the schools and students within a district. In the past and moving forward, district (or LEA) letter grades will be reported using the refined Performance Report format. As a result, parents and community members will have access to overall district performance, but also district performance against key metrics – participation in advanced courses, ACT performance, graduation rates, etc. Given the new statewide system of choice (described previously), parents and communities may use this information to make critical student placement and school governance decisions.

In addition to Louisiana’s rigorous accountability system through which parents and communities hold districts accountable, the LDOE’s Network structure will also be used to hold LEAs accountable. The key points of interaction between the LDOE and LEAs discussed in this document represent routine systems of accountability for the LEAs. Because the LDOE intends to review and discuss data, planning, and school level change with LEAs regularly, a pressure point will be created to motivate LEA ownership of change. Through goal setting and data review (three times a year) LEA and LDOE leadership will have an opportunity to engage in targeted conversations around specific change and impact on student results. This relationship and routine will serve as an intimate pressure point for districts to take action against the key facts of student weaknesses. Through cross-district planning and sharing (at least five times a year), peer accountability will be established where districts will both challenge and support each others’ plans and progress against implementing the core elements in schools. Through activities of on- going capacity building in schools and classrooms, the LDOE and LEA will experience firsthand the progress being made in classrooms towards changes in instructional practices. This will serve as an immediate reality check against effectiveness of the LEA’s plan to drive change, which will serve as a pressure point for ensuring routine self-monitoring and self-accountability. All these factors taken together create frequent accountability pressures for LEAs to take control of driving sustainable change into their classrooms and schools.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p>Option A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14). 	<p>Option B</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.
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Please refer to Section 3.B, Stakeholder Engagement for a description of the process Louisiana used to meaningfully involve teachers and school leaders in the development of these guidelines.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA’s process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA’s adopted guidelines.

Louisiana’s Approach to Student Achievement: Educator Effectiveness

The rigorous standards and strong accountability system that Louisiana has put into place are only meaningful if accompanied by efforts to support high-quality instruction and continuous improvement of Louisiana’s educators. LDOE’s teacher and leader evaluation and support system, known as Compass, will provide educators with important information about their instructional practice and impacts on student performance. Compass has clear guidelines designed with high-quality evaluation and continual improvement of instruction and leadership in mind, and is aligned with Louisiana’s Race to the Top application.

The Development of Compass

Compass Pilot Overview

The Compass pilot began in 2009-2010 with the design of the value-added model (VAM). Compass was piloted during the 2011-2012 school year as an integrated system which includes the comprehensive performance management cycle, measures of student growth (value-added, NTGS), observations and other measures of effectiveness. The results of the pilot were critical to ensuring that Louisiana’s evaluation and support systems were valid, meaningful measures that clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and were implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA. The timeline below provides an overview of how components of Compass were piloted over time to prepare for statewide implementation.

2009-2010

The Compass pilot began in 2009 with a pilot of the value-added model in 24 schools across Louisiana. The goal for this pilot year was to create and test the Curriculum Verification and Results (CVR) portal. CVR is what VAM educators and principals use to verify their student rosters and to receive their annual ratings (Appendix 3.D). Within CVR, teachers are able to verify the students they taught to ensure that their students’ academic achievement data is tied directly to the teacher.

The LDE created a report on the development of the VAM as specified in Act 54 and this report can be reviewed in (See Appendix 3.E). This report reviews the processes supporting the development of the value-added model as well as the technical processes and findings from the initial 2009-2010 Compass pilot. Of note is that the value-added model system was able to identify groups of teachers who were consistently in either the lowest performing (i.e., bottom 10 percent) or the highest performing group (i.e., top 10 percent) of teachers across years. This data is critical in targeting strategic support for low-performing teachers and in targeting retention efforts for those teachers who are high-performing.

2010-2011

The value-added component of the Compass pilot continued in 19 districts in 2010-2011. Updates to CVR were made to enhance security of information, based on educator feedback. Efforts were made to shorten the turn-around time by which school leaders and teachers received value-added data results.

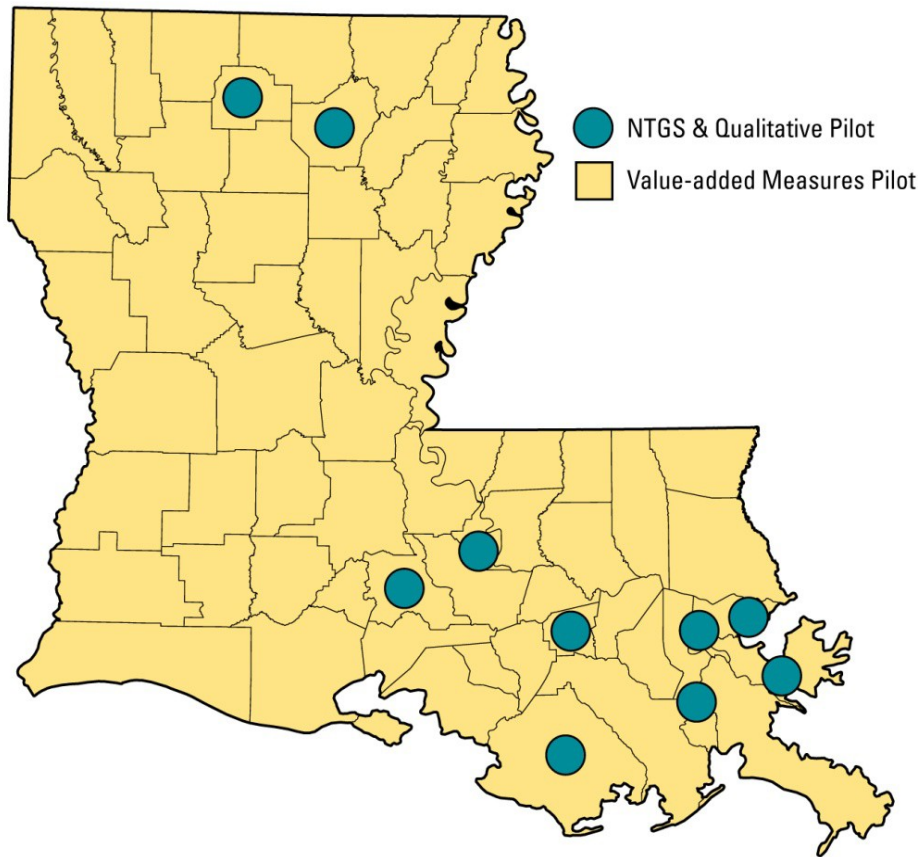


Figure 3.A. Compass Pilot Districts and Schools

2011-2012

Compass was piloted throughout Louisiana in 2011-2012 in 10 LEAs, including over 1,200 educators and 117 schools (See map below). All schools in Louisiana participated in using the VAM when available, as part of the Compass pilot.

Pilot districts were selected through a rigorous application process due to their capacity, commitment, and conditions for pilot participation. LEAs participating in the fully integrated pilot were selected from a diverse geographic representation of LEAs across the state in order to receive a diverse range of stakeholder feedback and to validate Compass effectiveness and reliability as the state educator support and evaluation model. The pilot confirmed systems and processes that drive student achievement regardless of teacher and student demographics and ensure that Compass can improve leader and teacher effectiveness regardless of the size of the LEA.

The LEAs that participated in the fully integrated pilot are described in the chart below. In addition to participation in the Compass pilot, 80 percent of the districts partnered with the state on other human capital (e.g. Model Staffing Initiative, Educator Pipeline, Teach For America) and school turnaround (e.g. Turnaround, Transformation) reforms. In addition to the Compass validation, the pilot is provided feedback and insight into local policy and district-wide best practices that can be leveraged statewide to accelerate implementation of a comprehensive and consolidated approach to human capital decision making.

Pilot LEA	2010-2011 Data				COMPASS Pilot Schools				
	Total Enrollment	% of Free/Reduced Lunch	% of Minority (Non-White) Students	Attendance Rate	Elem	MS	HS	Alt.	Total
Jefferson	45,253	76.00%	70.10%	92.70%	0	2	3	0	5
City of Monroe	8,818	78.90%	87.50%	94.00%	1	1	0	0	2
International School of Louisiana	525	52.40%	71.80%	96.90%	5	3	8	0	16
Lincoln	6,663	59.60%	52.50%	94.80%	4	0	1	0	5
Orleans	10,493	66.30%	84.00%	95.50%	3	0	3	1	7
St. Bernard	5,916	73.20%	41.10%	94.90%	5	3	1	0	9
St. James	3,825	70.80%	67.90%	94.60%	7	0	3	1	11
St. Martin	8,503	72.10%	50.30%	94.90%	9	4	3	1	17
Terrebonne	18,722	65.80%	43.00%	93.80%	20	11	5	4	40
West Baton Rouge	3,810	70.30%	55.00%	94.70%	1	1	0	0	2
State Profile	696,558	66.20%	52.20%	93.90%					117

Table 3.A. Compass Pilot Schools

Stakeholder Engagement

A critical component in the development of Compass has been and continues to be input and recommendations from stakeholders. Beginning in October 2010, teachers, principals, LEA administrators, board members, legislators, parents, students, community advocates and representatives of education organizations participated in workgroups, focus groups, webinars, surveys, pilots, and/or served on the Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation (ACEE) (See Table 3.B). To effectively reach as many stakeholders as possible, Louisiana implemented an aggressive communication campaign via the web (e.g., LDOE and Act 54 webpages), monthly superintendents’ conference calls, and educator and professional organization list serves. To ensure accessibility and representation across the state, events were held locally, regionally, and via webinar.

These stakeholder engagement sessions were organized to gather input on the following topics:

- Teacher and leader competencies and performance standards
- Educators’ perspectives on identifying effective teaching practices in the classroom
- Measures of student growth using the value-added model and for non-tested grades and subjects
- Policy development

An Educator-Driven Process

- Nearly **10,000** educators participated in Act 54 briefings;
- More than **2,600** educators participated in online surveys to inform design and development;
- About **250** teachers have been involved in workgroups and focus groups;
- More than **15,000** teachers have participated in three value-added pilots; and
- Over half of ACEE is made up of practicing teachers.

- Parent and community feedback on educator effectiveness reforms
- Compass Pilot

Stakeholder at various levels provided input on these topics. These stakeholders included:

- National experts on educator effectiveness and evaluation
- Superintendents
- Deans and professors of colleges of education
- Teachers
- Exceptional Student Services representatives, included Inclusion, English Language Learners (ELL), Gifted & Talented, and Profound Disabilities
- Central office supervisors
- Professional organizations
- Parents and students

Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation

State law required that a statewide advisory panel (ACEE) be formed to engage key members of the education community in the development of Louisiana’s new teacher and leader support and evaluation system. ACEE acts in an advisory capacity to provide the LDOE and the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) input on specific, key elements of the new educator support and evaluation system. Beginning in September 2010, the law charged ACEE with the three following responsibilities:

- Charge 1: To make recommendations on the development of a value-added assessment model to be used in educator evaluations.
- Charge 2: To make recommendations on the identification of student growth measures for grades and subjects for which value-added data is not available, as well as for personnel for whom value-added data is not available.
- Charge 3: To make recommendations on the adoption of standards of effectiveness.

Many resources were provided to the ACEE committee to support development of recommendations for each charge. On the first charge, regarding development of Louisiana’s value-added model, committee members worked closely with value-added expert and developer of Louisiana’s statistical value-added model, Dr. George Noell. In addition to this support, ACEE members also had the opportunity to participate in a discussion with national experts on value-added, including Dr. Jane Hannaway, the founding Director of the Education Policy Center at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. ACEE members also learned from and engaged with a panel of Louisiana teachers and administrators representing school districts who participated in the value-added pilot.

On the second charge, regarding identification of non-tested grade and subject growth measures (NTGS), committee members participated in discussion with national NTGS experts from Denver, CO; Hillsborough County, FL; the Tennessee Department of Education; and the Kentucky Department of Education. In response to these presentations, ACEE devised a process to construct specific NTGS recommendation which included:

- Breaking NTGS courses into manageable groups;
- Establishing NTGS Educator Workgroups; and
- Creating tools and guidance for NTGS Educator Workgroups.

The ACEE committee drew upon the expertise and analysis provided by the NTGS Educator Workgroups in making recommendations related to measures of student growth in NTGS.

On the third charge, regarding the adoption of standards of effectiveness, committee members participated in mini-workshops designed to explore the meaning of highly effective, effective, and ineffective educator performance. As a result of these workshops, the committee made recommendations regarding these definitions for educator performance with respect to student growth measures (value-added, NTGS) and qualitative observation rubrics and overall evaluation calculation methods.

In addition to the resources outlined above, over the course of the committee, the Hope Street Group, in coordination with the LDOE, provided a private online workspace for committee members to continuously communicate and discuss pertinent issues related to the charges of the committee (See Appendix 3.H for the ACEE Committee Summary Report).

In addition to ACCE, stakeholder input was crucial to the development and adoption of Louisiana’s support and evaluation system. Because of that, Louisiana created multiple venues and channels for educator and community participation. Stakeholder engagement remains a priority for gathering technical and general feedback throughout Compass’ statewide implementation and the LDOE is continuing to explore other avenues to ensure accessibility and participation of all stakeholders.

Phase	Events	Stakeholder Engagement	# of Participants
Tool Development	Task Force and Development Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCET Task Force meeting 1 • LCET Task Force meeting 2 • Teacher Standards Workshop 1 • Teacher Standards Workshop 2 • Leader Standards Workshop 1 • Leader Standards Workshop 2 • Superintendent Tiger² Team 1 • Superintendent Tiger Team 2 • NTGS Workgroup Meetings • Educator Policy Workgroup 	343 ¹
	Focus Groups – Feedback on Effective Teaching Practices and Measures of Student Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCET District Focus Groups • NTGS Focus Groups 	47
	Online Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCET Online Survey Completed • Leader Competency Model Online Survey • Supplemental Task Force Online Survey • NTGS Survey Respondents 	2,955
	Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCET Webinar for Colleges and Universities • Leadership Standards Kickoff Webinar Overview • Superintendent Policy Webinar 	37
	Oversight Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advisory Meetings • Superintendent Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation 	60%
	Parent & Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAACP panel discussion and work session on educator effectiveness and school turnaround reform 	34%

Phase	Events	Stakeholder Engagement	# of Participants
Policy	ACEE Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of practicing classroom educators • 1 appointee from Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana Department of Education • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Educators • 1 appointee from Louisiana Federation of Teachers • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of School Superintendents • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Principals • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools • 2 members of the Senate Committee on Education, appointed by the chairman thereof • 2 members of the House Committee on Education, appointed by the chairman thereof • 1 members appointed by each member of Louisiana's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education • 2 parents of public school students 	34
Pilot	Value-added Model	<p>Participating in the 2010 pilot was: 19 LEA's, which included 2 charters, 270 schools, and 3,019 teachers who received value added scores.</p> <p>Participating in the 2011 pilot are all LEA's and schools who have data, which equaled: 107 LEA's, 1,074 schools, and 12,273 teachers received value added scores.</p>	15,292
Policy	Qualitative Measures & NTGS	<p>In 2010, one school district participated in a pilot of qualitative measures. In 2011, nine school districts and one charter school are participating in the pilot of NTGS and qualitative measures. These LEAs were selected based on such factors as demographics, number of students, and region. There are several data collection points throughout this pilot that are planned to measure efficacy of the systems, processes, tools, and capacity of schools and districts to implement NTGS and the qualitative evaluation process. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and district leaders will be provided opportunities to share feedback via face-to-face interactions and surveys. Data will also be collected on usage of HCIS to drive the performance management process.</p> <p>In addition to these formalized opportunities for pilot participants to provide the LDE feedback, each district participating in the pilot is assigned an LDE liaison and performance management coach whose purpose is to become embedded in their assigned district to provide technical support, build district capacity, and gain feedback.</p>	~1,500
	Local Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Directors from LEAs across Louisiana • Deans from various Louisiana teacher preparation programs 	~45

Table 3.B. Compass Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Compass Policy

In 2010, the Louisiana Legislature passed groundbreaking legislation (Act 54) to improve teaching and learning across the state and to establish within each LEA an effective system for support and evaluation of certified and other professional personnel. The law's aim was to (See Attachment 11a):

- Support teachers, schools, LEAs and education leaders in raising student achievement by providing tools and information to drive improvement;
- Provide clear performance expectations and timely feedback to all teachers and leaders;
- Provide a framework and more opportunities for professional growth and development through a comprehensive performance management approach that begins at the beginning of the school year and ends at the end of the school year; and
- Establish professional development as an integral part of a career in education.

§3881(A) and (B)(3-4)	
Evaluation Requirements	Act 54
§3885(A) and (B)	Act 54
Supporting continuous improvement	§3881(A) and (B)(3-4) §3885(A) and (B) §3902(B)(2)
Meaningful differentiation	§3902(C)(2)
Multiple, valid measures	§3902(B)(5)
Regular evaluations	§3902(A)

Table 3.C. Alignment of State Law and Regulations with USDOE Guidelines

Bulletin 130- Regulations for the Evaluation and Assessment of School Personnel

Additionally, Louisiana’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) updated Bulletin 130, which defines their specific policies around the use of the Compass tool. (See Attachment 11b.) This Bulletin has undergone revisions in January and December 2013 in prodder to update these polices based on educator feedback on the Compass tool.

The purposes for which personnel evaluation will be used in Louisiana, as defined by Bulletin 130 §103 are as follows:

1. to support performance management systems that ensure qualified and effective personnel are employed in instructional and administrative positions;
2. to enhance the quality of instruction and administration in public schools;
3. to provide procedures that are necessary to retain effective teachers and administrators and to strengthen the formal learning environment; and
4. to foster continuous improvement of teaching and learning by providing opportunities for targeted professional growth and development.

Bulletin 130 further defines the specific requirements of personnel evaluation for teachers and administrators from state law:

- For teachers, the 50 percent of the evaluation based upon growth in student learning shall measure the growth of their students using data from the value-added model and/or student learning targets. For administrators, the 50 percent of the evaluation based upon growth in student learning shall incorporate a school-wide measure of growth.
- The 50 percent of the evaluation that is based on a qualitative measure of teacher and administrator performance shall include a minimum of two observations or site visits. This portion of the evaluation may include additional evaluative evidence, such as walk-through observation data and evaluation of written work products.
- The combination of the applicable measure of growth in student learning and the qualitative assessment of performance shall result in a composite score used to distinguish levels of overall effectiveness for teachers and administrators.

The evaluation formula, as defined in state law and Bulletin 130, demonstrates Louisiana’s commitment to improving student achievement and educator effectiveness by tying an educator’s evaluation directly to

their students' outcomes thus ensuring educators have meaningful data to facilitate ongoing professional development.

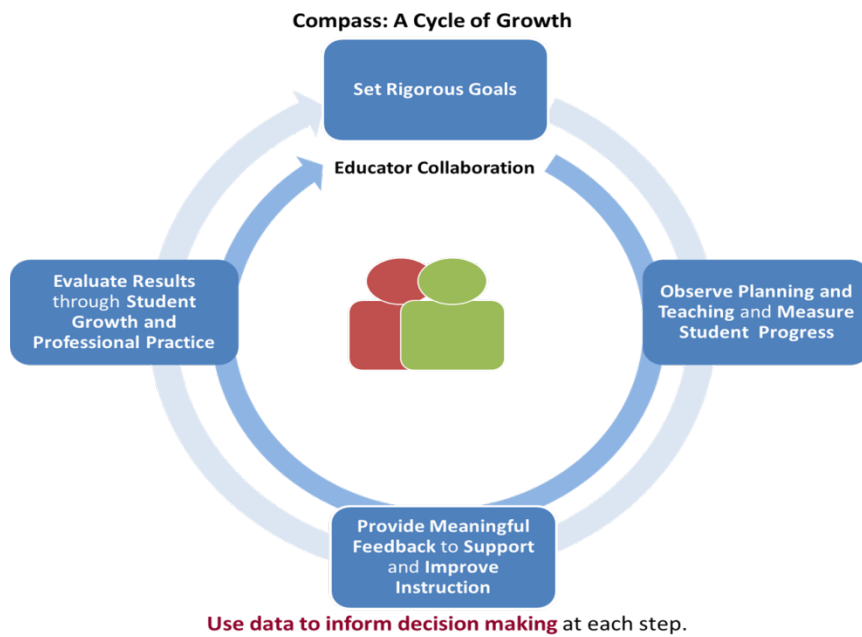


Table 3.D. The Compass Cycle

To effectively and meaningfully differentiate levels of teacher and leader effectiveness, a four-point rating scale is used. This scale allows for increased and targeted differentiation of educator performance and more precisely informs and guides the accompanying support and development.

Compass provides rigorous tools and a model for educator and leader support and evaluation statewide but also allows for evaluation, approval and implementation of rigorous local tools aligned with the requirements of state law (e.g. The System for Teacher & Student Advancement-TAP®). Through Compass, educators set meaningful and ambitious professional and student achievement goals and leverage a comprehensive system of observation, evaluation, and feedback to guide professional development specific to their needs and goals.

Compass provides a balance of support and accountability for student achievement, including consequences for those educators not meeting expectations. This ensures that Louisiana educators are held accountable to increasing student achievement while also receiving the support needed to grow and develop as professionals.

Continuous Improvements

Since the first year of implementation of Compass in 2012-2013, the LDOE has continuously sought feedback from stakeholders on how the tool could be improved to provide greater feedback to educators on their professional practice. State Superintendent White has engaged in numerous stakeholder meetings with district Superintendents, principals, teachers and community members in order to identify and implement the changes that have occurred to Compass during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. After consulting with these groups, and after a public comment period, the State Board of Education approved the following changes to Compass policy (Bulletin 130):

2012-2013

- **Increased Feedback to Teachers in the *Effective* Range:** To enhance the feedback to value-added teachers in the *Effective* range (20th-80th percentile), evaluators can now consider data from student learning targets, as well as value-added data, and use their professional judgment to assign these teachers a student growth rating of either Effective: Emerging (2) or Effective: Proficient (3). Evaluators may not assign a rating out of the Effective range.
- **Extenuating Circumstances:** Value-added data can be invalidated for teachers that have 60 or more excused absences in a given academic year due to approved leave, such as maternity, military, sick, or sabbatical leave. Other extenuating circumstances that have significantly compromised an educator's opportunity to impact student learning and have been approved by the state superintendent, at the request of the district superintendent.
- **Providing Greater Flexibility to Highly Effective Teachers:** One of the observations may be waived for teachers who have earned a rating of Highly Effective according to the value-added model in the previous year.
- For full details on all changes made to Compass during the 2012-2013 school year, including those that did not require a change to policy, see Attachment 11c.

2013-2014

- **Increased Flexibility in Observations:** Bulletin 130 requires a minimum of two observations annually, at least one of which is a full-lesson observation. Above and beyond this one required full-lesson observation, districts can make choices about the number of observations teachers receive over the course of a school year and the duration of those observations. Any classroom visit may be considered an observation, regardless of whether it is referred to as a walkthrough, a snapshot, or any other name. (See attachment 11d)
- **Hold Placed on Value-Added Data:** Louisiana is transitioning to higher expectations for students and assessments are changing to match these new expectations, therefore VAM data will not be available for the 2013-14 school year and the 2014-15 school year due to a lack of baseline data during this time period. Instead, the Department will share transitional student growth data during this time, however there is no requirement to use this data and therefore evaluators can use student learning targets as the basis of the student growth component of the Compass evaluation for all teachers.

2014-2015

Legislation from the 2014 Legislative Session required the LDE to establish a subcommittee, comprised of accountability commission members, educators, and legislators, to "report on and make recommendations regarding the overall effectiveness of the evaluation program, including but not limited to any recommendations for changes to board policy or state law with respect to":

(a) "value-added assessment model,"

(b) "measures of student growth for grades and subjects for which value-added data are not available and for personnel for whom value-added data are not available," and

(c) "elements of evaluation and standards for effectiveness as defined by the board."

This report led to a set of policy improvements.

- **Transition Policy:** "Time to learn" policies extended through 2015-2016 to establish a two year baseline.
 - For the 2013-2016 school years, transitional student growth data (TSGD) produced for use.
 - At the evaluator's discretion, TSGD can be used as a measure of student growth.

- LEAs may define local rules pertaining to the use of such data.
- **Principal Accountability:** Principals set at least two school goals, including:
 - Overall SPS growth goal; and
 - more specific SPS growth goal, based on a component
- **Principal Empowerment:** Prior to 2015-2016, if an educator was ineffective in the student growth or the qualitative evaluation, the teacher or leader automatically received an overall final evaluation rating of ineffective. Beginning in 2015-2016, principals will consider multiple measures when evaluating teachers and the automatic “ineffective override” will not apply. Further, when VAM is available, evaluators are empowered to use multiple measures, including VAM, for a rating that is within +/- 1 of the VAM score.

THE COMPASS TOOL

Compass Process Overview

Measuring and reporting performance metrics alone has rarely led to dramatic organizational improvement and outcomes. State law calls for implementation of an educator support and evaluation model that incorporates qualitative and student growth measures as part of a fair and rigorous comprehensive performance management process. Performance management is a systematic approach to using educator effectiveness data as well as other tools (e.g., observations, goal planning) to facilitate learning, continuous improvement, and a relentless focus on results (e.g., student achievement). It differentiates between educators’ effectiveness in a way that informs all human capital decisions (e.g., tenure, compensation, promotion, release), improves teaching and learning over time, and ensures all students are college and career ready.

Beginning in the fall of each school year, the evaluation process commences with educators setting goals, or Student Learning Targets (SLTs) informed through the use of pre-assessments and prior student achievement. Educators discuss these goals with their evaluator to determine if they are attainable, yet rigorous enough to push students towards higher academic expectations. Throughout the year, there are ongoing observations and evaluations against state-approved standards and goals, self-reflection, and discussions regarding teacher and leader performance.

The final performance evaluation is a combination of the qualitative assessment of professional practice and measures of student growth resulting in a composite score used to distinguish levels of overall effectiveness for teachers and administrators. Through the Compass tool, LEAs and schools provide multiple opportunities for teachers and leaders to receive feedback, reflect on practice, receive rewards for exceptional practices, and consider opportunities for improvement. This process also enables LEAs and schools to identify areas of high need and provide strategic, targeted, differentiated, and job-embedded support to those educators to more effectively enhance and sustain exceptional teaching and learning environments.

Performance Measures

Educator evaluation systems should meaningfully differentiate levels of educator effectiveness. This differentiation allows for increased and targeted educator support with the long-term goal of improving the educational outcomes of students in Louisiana. This more rigorous measurement of teacher and leader effectiveness will provide LEAs and schools with the information needed to more objectively identify highly effective and persistently ineffective educators to inform human capital decision making. Louisiana’s multiple measures are rated on a scale of one to four, with four equating to *Highly Effective* and one

equating to *Ineffective*. The average of the two will determine the overall composite score which will then translate into one’s overall effectiveness rating. Educators receiving an *Ineffective* rating in either measure will be rated overall as *Ineffective* and provided intensive support.

The two performance levels that fall between *Highly Effective* and *Ineffective* are *Effective: Proficient* and *Effective: Emerging*. These four rating levels are a major improvement from the three-point scale most LEAs previously used to evaluate educators. The additional performance level was designed to distinguish between multiple levels of educator performance and to provide educators more opportunities for growth as part of the comprehensive performance management process.

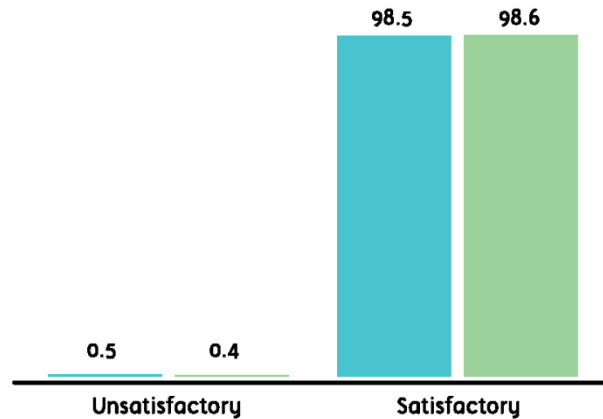
These distinct levels of educator proficiency allow school and district leaders to more strategically base all human capital decisions on educators’ demonstrated effectiveness, such as differentiated support and professional development; recognizing educators with exemplary performance; ensuring equitable distribution of effective educators; and hiring, compensation, promotion, and release.

Effectiveness Rating	Composite Score Range
<i>Ineffective</i>	$x < 1.5$
<i>Effective: Emerging</i>	$1.5 \leq x < 2.5$
<i>Effective: Proficient</i>	$2.5 \leq x < 3.5$
<i>Highly Effective</i>	$3.5 \leq x$

Table 3.E. Composite Score Scale

As a result of the Compass process, more Louisiana educators than ever before set goals and received feedback on their performance. In terms of educator feedback, past evaluation systems yielded minimal, uniform data that were not reflective of educators’ diverse skills and needs. In 2010-2011, for example, more than 98 percent of educators received a “satisfactory” rating. This year, however, evaluators used the Compass process to provide educators with individualized information based on multiple measures of performance. As a result, educators’ final ratings are more diverse than in past years, spanning four performance levels.

Educator Rating in 2010–2011:
Percentage of Educators



Teacher Data
Leader Data

Compass Ratings in 2012–2013:
Percentage of Educators

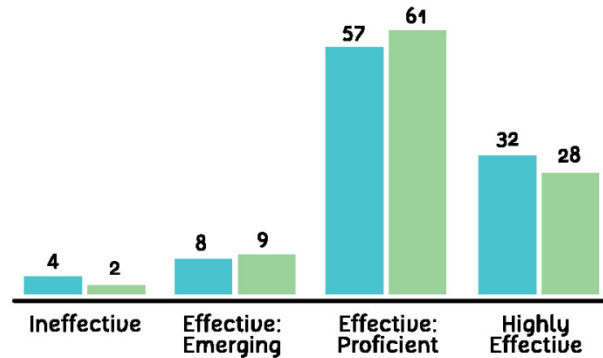


Table 3.F. Comparison of Educator Effectiveness Ratings

Measure of Professional Practice: Observations

Pilot Process

For the fifty percent of the evaluation based on qualitative data, Louisiana piloted a set of standards for both teachers and leaders that fall under the competencies listed below. Over 200 Louisiana educators used the guidance of multiple national experts to identify those teacher and leader standards and competencies believed to contribute to improved student achievement. Teachers in the pilot were observed according to 11 revised teaching standards that fall under four competencies. Administrators were evaluated using 17 standards that fall under five competencies. Pilot participants were evaluated on the standards using a preponderance of evidence, gathered over time, through both classroom observations and site visits and through a critique of submitted materials (i.e. lesson plans, assessments, and professional development certifications) as part of the comprehensive performance management process.

Teacher Competencies	Leader Competencies
Planning Instruction Environment Professionalism [Appendix 3F]	Ethics/Integrity Instructional Leadership Strategic Thinking Resource Management Educational Advocacy [Appendix 3G]

Table 3.G. Louisiana’s Pilot Teacher & Leader Competencies

The LDOE is incredibly grateful for the participation and feedback from over 1200 educators in the 2011-2012 pilot. Through feedback informed by the pilot, the LDOE followed through on its commitment to make revisions to the rubric and evaluation process in preparation for 2012-2013 implementation.

One clear takeaway from the Compass pilot was the need for a rubric that is clearer, more concise, and more directly aligned to the state academic content standards. To meet this need, the LDOE decided to adopt a modified version of Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* as the Compass teacher rubric. The modified framework consists of three domains and five components (See Table 3.H.) Changes were made to eliminate redundancies within the standards and descriptors, to make it easier for evaluators to distinguish between each level of effectiveness, and to ensure core competencies focused on supporting rigorous instruction. This rubric not only addresses the concerns of educators from the pilot, but will also allow educators to leverage resources available nationally as it has been implemented in over 15 states.

Domain	Component
I. Planning and Preparation	1c. Setting Instructional Outcomes
II. The Classroom Environment	2c. Managing Classroom Procedures
III. Instruction	3b. Questioning and Discussion Techniques
	3c. Engaging Students in Learning
	3d. Using Assessment in Instruction

Table 3.H. Louisiana’s Revised Teacher Domains and Components

Each teacher and leader standard includes a recommended model performance rubric and descriptors clearly summarizing observable and tangible instructional and leadership behaviors. They are provided to increase reliability among evaluators and to help educators focus on practices that enhance teaching and learning. Evaluators use these performance rubrics to assess how well a standard is performed.

The LDOE allows districts the flexibility to adopt alternate tools for measuring qualitative performance, provided they are reviewed and approved by the LDOE prior to implementation to ensure that they are aligned to the core competencies defined by the state, that they measure performance across multiple levels of proficiency, and that the LEA has demonstrated how the tool is valid, reliable, and supportive of student performance goals.

All new evaluators are certified by LDOE or its designee through Compass Evaluator Training sessions. These sessions provide evaluators with an overview of the Compass process, and the opportunity to norm on Compass rubric components.

Implementation

Compass, in its entirety, provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to continuous support and improvement. Observations of educator performance are an essential component of Compass. During the first year of Compass, 99% of teachers and leaders were observed using the Compass rubrics or an approved alternative. For those schools using the Compass rubrics, below is a chart that shows the statewide distribution of scores amongst the various components of the rubric.

2012-2013 Professional Practice Component Distributions (Statewide)					
Teachers	Average Score	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective
1c: Setting instructional outcomes	3.3	0.51%	6%	43%	51%
2c: Managing classroom procedures	3.2	0.49%	6%	46%	48%
3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques	3.0	0.78%	10%	59%	31%
3c: Engaging students in learning	3.1	0.55%	7%	56%	37%
3d: Using assessment in instruction	3.1	0.67%	8%	52%	40%
Leaders	Average Score	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective
1a: Sets ambitious, data-driven goals and a vision for achievement; invests teachers, students, and other stakeholders in that vision	3.3	0.26%	6%	46%	47%
2a: Facilitates collaboration between teams of teachers	3.2	0.57%	7%	49%	43%
2b: Provides opportunities for professional growth and develops a pipeline of teacher leaders	3.2	0.39%	7%	54%	38%
2c: Creates and upholds systems which result in a safe and orderly environment	3.5	0.09%	3%	32%	64%
3a: Observes teachers and provides feedback on instruction regularly	3.3	0.30%	8%	47%	46%
3b: Ensures teachers set clear, measurable objectives aligned to the state content standards	3.1	0.35%	11%	58%	31%

3c: Ensures teachers use assessments reflective of the rigor of the state content standards	3.1	0.61%	12%	57%	31%
Counselors	Average Score	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective
1: Individual Student Planning	3.4	0.30%	4%	39%	57%
2: System Support	3.3	0.10%	5%	46%	49%
3: Responsive Services	3.4	0.10%	4%	43%	54%
4: School Counseling Curriculum	3.1	0.70%	13%	45%	42%

Table 3.I. Statewide Observation Rating Distribution

All evaluators using the Compass rubrics to evaluate teachers and leaders are required to undergo Compass Evaluator Training that is offered continuously throughout the school year by each LDOE Network Support Team. During this training, evaluators watch instructional videos aligned to each component of the Compass rubric in order to norm of the critical attributes of each component. Additionally, the instructional Video Library offers evaluators exemplars of effective instruction aligned to the Compass rubric, with corresponding notes that provide details on how the teacher’s lesson could have been improved in order to achieve a *Highly Effective* rating.

Updates in Response to Educator Feedback

Act 54 requires that each evaluation at a minimum include at two observations with at least one of them being announced and lasting for the entire length of the lesson including a pre- and post-observation conference. For the 2013-2104 school year, districts and evaluators were provided with greater flexibility in observations above and beyond this one required full-lesson observation, allowing them to make choices about the number of observations teachers receive and their duration. The move from one annual observation every three years to multiple, annual observations, represents a paradigm shift in the way that leaders support and evaluate teachers as research shows the reliability of ratings increases with multiple observations. More observations will dramatically increase the amount of time school leaders will be able to observe classrooms and to provide timely feedback to teachers than ever before.

The LDOE has also responded to the field in the development of a compass rubric resource, the Guide for Evaluators of Teachers of Students with Significant Disabilities. While the Compass teacher rubric is inclusive enough to be applicable to all settings, this document provides additional support to these teachers and evaluators in better understanding how the rubric components apply to their classrooms. In addition, specific guidance for teachers of students with special needs, including teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs), has been provided relative to the student learning target process. The LDOE published an initial library of student learning target exemplars in May 2012, and made additions to the library in August of 2013 to include exemplars developed by workgroups of educators and experts in the areas of mild/moderate disabilities, significant disabilities, gifted/talented, speech, and ELL.

Measure of Student Growth: Value-Added Assessment Model

The Pilot

The value-added model was developed and validated for state use through the following process:

1. Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluations (ACEE): ACEE made recommendations on the development and use of a value-added assessment model to be used in educator evaluations.
2. Development, Testing, and Deployment of Curriculum Verification Record (CVR): The LDOE developed a secure web-based portal through which teachers and educational leaders verify the accuracy of class rosters prior to their use in the value added analysis, and access their value added reports.
3. Field Testing: Over a two-year period, the state conducted pilot and validation activities of the value-added model for teachers and educational leaders. Additional studies have been conducted and show moderate stability of educator performance across multiple years. Educators have been provided with ongoing professional development and resources to support effective use of the value-added model.
4. Establishing Measures of Effectiveness: For teachers where value added data is available, the composite percentile is converted to a 1.0-4.0 scale to use in the teacher's final evaluation. Teachers and leaders (school-wide) whose value added, composite percentile fall within the bottom 10% will receive an ineffective rating. Teachers in the middle 20-80% range will receive a rating of effective. The top 10% of teachers will receive a rating of highly effective.

Implementation

LDOE uses a statistical covariate value-added model to measure student growth for teachers and administrators, where available. The value-added model is applied to grades and subjects that participate in state-wide standardized tests and for which appropriate prior testing is available. However, the value-added model is not be used for evaluations where there are fewer than ten students with value-added results assigned to an educator. Overall, Louisiana's value-added model links academic growth of students and takes into account the following student-level variables:

- prior achievement data (up to three years);
- gifted status;
- section 504 status;
- attendance;
- disability status;
- eligibility for free or reduced priced meals; and
- prior discipline history.

Teachers in the following grades/content areas received value-added data for the 2012-13 school year:

- 3rd Grade: English Language Arts, Math
- 4th – 8th Grades: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies
- Up to 9th Grade: Algebra I, Geometry*

All teachers in the above mentioned content areas received value-added data, unless they had less than 10 students eligible for a value-added score in their classroom, or they experienced an extenuating circumstance that greatly impacted their ability to impact student achievement. The statewide distribution of value-added scores can be found in the 2012-2013 Compass Final Report's Teacher Compass Scores by District report.

Updates in Response to Educator Effectiveness

For the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, the Department will not calculate value-added data for teachers. Instead, the Department will share transitional student growth data during this time. Once the

new assessments aligned to Louisiana’s new content standards are fully integrated into Louisiana schools, and a baseline for student growth can be established, the LDOE will revisit the use of value-added data as part of Compass evaluations.

Measure of Student Growth: Student Learning Targets

The Pilot

SLTs allow educators to create the most meaningful goals for their students by taking into consideration course content, student population, and baseline performance data. The goal-setting practices on which Louisiana bases its SLT process has been shown to increase effectiveness. Teachers in Denver, for example, identified setting these types of objectives as “creating more focused efforts” (Locke and Latham, 2002). Furthermore, the differentiation inherent in Louisiana’s SLT process allows for greater personalization of goals and demands specificity, two factors which have been shown to increase the likelihood of goal attainment (Community Training and Assistance Center, 2008).

To develop the SLT process, educators (teachers and principals) from across the state worked with national experts on teacher evaluation and were guided through options for structuring SLTs, integration of rigor into these measures, and ensuring consistency in collecting the bodies of evidence which support the assessment of student learning. Workgroup recommendations and discussions were presented for the following groups:

- Elementary
- Secondary
- Creative Arts
- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Physical Education & Health
- World Languages
- Special Populations (includes Mild/Moderate, English Language Learners (ELL), Gifted & Talented, and Significant Disabilities)
- Instructional Coaches and Academic Interventionists
- Library Media Specialists.

To support statewide implementation, each workgroup provided formal recommendations regarding the type(s) of assessment that best measured student learning, as well as sample exemplars and non-exemplars. The work groups also provided guidance on assembling bodies of student work that adequately demonstrate rigorous student achievement and identified and proposed solutions to mitigate challenges to implementing SLTs. The state also piloted several measures of student learning in NTGS in small-scale pilots in 2011. This pilot helped Louisiana refine and enhance its strategy for evaluating student growth and statewide implementation approach.

In order to support educators’ development of SLTs, the LDOE has released an extensive library of SLT exemplars ranging from every grade level and covering all core subjects and several ancillary and special education classes. Additionally, the Department released a Student Learning Target Guide at the start of the 2013-2014 school year to support teachers and leaders in establishing goals that are more aligned to the more rigorous standards set forth by the state academic content standards.

Extensive professional development and ongoing guidance in establishing valid SLTs will continue to be provided to districts along with ongoing monitoring of educator progress on establishing goals and

measures. LDOE will pay special attention to teachers of English Language Learners and special education teachers to assure that they are able to create SLTs that accurately reflect their impact on student achievement. Concurrently, district personnel will provide campuses with guidance, support, and training in selecting assessments and SLTs.

These Louisiana value-added and SLT models ensure that all teachers in Louisiana receive an evaluation score based the demonstrated growth of the students on their rosters. Ensuring all grades and subjects has a valid method by which to measure student growth allows educators to hold themselves accountable for their students’ achievement. The overall success of Compass depends largely on the engagement of educators along with intensive support to districts and a feedback loop that allows the state to enhance both tools and supports.

Implementation

At the beginning of the school year, all educators, regardless if they are in a tested grade and subject or not, should define what students should achieve by the end of the school year, and set Student Learning Targets (SLTs). Each school leader and teacher will work with their evaluator to set a minimum of two SLTs that reflect an ambitious but reasonable expectation of learning over a set period of time for their students.

Once a teacher has determined the group of students for which she is aiming to set a goal, a teacher goes through four steps.

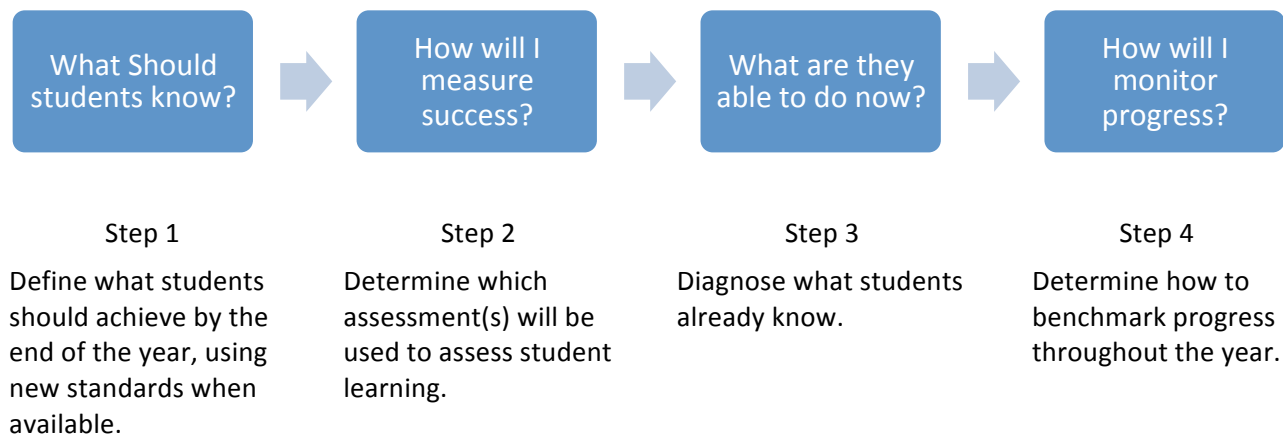


Table 3.J. Student Learning Target Development Process

Over the course of the school year, teachers may have shifting class assignments or shifting class rosters. Evaluators and teachers, together, should determine how to adjust student learning targets appropriately to accurately reflect ambitious, reasonable goals for each individual teacher.

The process for setting and progress monitoring SLTs is determined by each district and/or their Network Support Team. Evaluators receive in-depth training on how to support teachers and school leaders through this process during Compass training for new evaluators. Additionally, the LDOE provides an analysis of the ratings of teacher and leader SLTs and VAM scores to the actual proficiency rates of students in their schools through the Compass Final Report.

During the first year of implementation, 95 percent of teachers and 99 percent of leaders had a minimum of two rated SLTs entered into CIS as part of their final Compass evaluation. Below is the distribution of SLT

ratings statewide by personnel type:

Personnel Type	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective
Teachers	3%	9%	30%	58%
Leaders	2%	17%	42%	40%
Counselors	0.00%	12%	18%	71%

Table 3.K. Statewide Student Learning Target Distribution

Compass for School Leaders

Implementation

School leaders undergo the same evaluation process as teachers each year. The leader's SLTs account for 50 percent of their overall evaluation. With this data at hand, LEAs can more efficiently and thoughtfully identify the strengths of their school leaders and prioritize areas for professional development. Professional learning communities, monthly principal meetings, principal mentorships, and other support structures can then be refined based on the school leader effectiveness data that Compass provides to drive school-level student achievement.

The support and evaluation process for Louisiana leaders is nearly identical to the process for Louisiana teachers, as described extensively throughout Principle 3. The leader will be assigned an evaluator who will be responsible for conducting site visits to gather evidence and assign ratings to determine a final evaluation score, as well as providing ongoing feedback throughout the year in support of helping the leader reach her/his goals and targeted areas of development. This process was piloted along with the teacher evaluation and support process during the 2011-2012 school year and was fully executed during the 2012-2013 school year.

Also, the Compass leader rubric has been designed to align with the teacher rubric. Comparing the two rubrics, one will see that the teacher rubric requires teachers to think about those components of effective teaching most impactful to increasing student achievement, while the leader rubric requires leaders to think about what a principal needs to do to support teachers in those efforts while being able to effectively manage a school.

Updates in Response to Educator Feedback

In response to feedback from the field, the Compass leader rubric was revised in the summer of 2013 to reflect changes to the following components in order to further clarify feedback and collaboration practices for principals:

- Component 2a: Facilitates collaboration between teams of teachers
- Component 3a: Observes teachers and provides feedback on instruction regularly

The LDOE will continue to work with Network Teams and district leaders to continuously evaluate this rubric

to ensure that it is the best tool for improving leader practice and performance e across the state.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK

The LDOE provides guidance to LEAs on how to best utilize the tools and processes available to support the ongoing professional development of teachers and leaders. The state’s guidelines require that LEAs provide professional development to teachers and leaders based on their individual areas of need, as identified by the evaluation process. Below are the key support tools provided by the LDOE for educators and leaders:

- *Compass Evaluator Training*
- *Video Library*
- *Compass Information System*
- *Compass Final Report*

Compass Evaluator Training

All evaluators using the Compass rubrics to evaluate teachers must undergo a two-day Compass Evaluator Training prior to observing teachers or leaders. During these two-day training workshops, evaluators learn how to support and develop rigorous, standards-aligned instruction through the Compass cycle by:

- reviewing and providing feedback on student learning targets
- completing high quality observations focused on teacher development
- using observation evidence and student performance data to deliver feedback
- using collaboration to support teacher development
- utilizing the Compass Information System and Classroom Support Toolbox to support development

While there is not a formal process for monitoring the extent to which training is impacting observer practice in the field, the LDOE does provides an analysis of the ratings of teacher and leader SLTs, VAM scores and observations to the actual proficiency rates of students in schools through the Compass Final Report.

Compass Information System

The Compass Information System (CIS) is a free, web-based system that provides teachers, leaders, and administrators with the ability to record evaluations and access to individual and aggregate data needed to make informed decisions about teacher, leader, student, and school performance to drive instructional improvement. This allows educational leaders to more strategically prioritize professional development resources and learning opportunities for educators to improve teaching and learning. CIS also provides information on performance to teachers on an ongoing basis, including timely feedback linked to performance standards following observations.

Using the system:

- Teachers, librarians, counselors, and leaders can establish student learning targets (SLTs) and share them with their evaluators and administrators.
- Evaluators can perform observations on their assigned employees, upload observations notes and feedback, and review employee performance.
- School districts and charters track Compass implementation through detailed school and teacher-level reports and submit their own annual reports to the LDOE.

- Each district is assigned an LEA Administrator that is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of their district's CIS data.
- Additionally, the system automatically calculates evaluation scores from the data entered on observations and student growth when evaluators perform an end-of-year evaluation.

Following the 2012-2013 school year, the following updates were made to CIS to allow for greater flexibility by evaluators when observing educators, and to provide more detailed feedback on their performance:

- Redesigned observation and site visit screens: The new screens have a more flexible design and will enable observers to upload notes and other documents. These screens now accommodate multiple approaches to scoring as well.
- Flexible evaluator assignments: Allows multiple evaluators for a single employee and the ability to rate any rubric component in an observation or walkthrough.

Compass Final Report

In September 2013, the LDOE released the 2012-2013 Compass Final Report (Attachment 11e), detailing end-of-year outcomes for the first year of evaluators using the Compass tool. In its first year of implementation 99% of the teachers and leaders in Louisiana received a complete evaluation.

The intent of the Compass Final Report is to provide the public and educators a field of information that can help in adjusting implementation expectations, in making connections from school to school or district to district, and in considering future policy decisions. Beyond providing a comprehensive summary of districts' and schools' use of the Compass tool, the report details important trends.

Unlike in past years, evaluation results for administrators and teachers generally align with student progress and achievement results in school districts. For example:

- Of the ten parishes with the highest percentage of teachers rated in the top two levels, seven were in the state's top 25 percent in student progress or student achievement. All are in the top half of districts in terms of student achievement.
- On average, parishes in the top 50 percent in terms of student progress rated 10 percent of teachers in the bottom two categories. Parishes in the bottom 50 percent of student proficiency growth rated, on average, 17 percent of teachers in the bottom two categories.
- Of the ten parishes with the highest percentage of teachers rated in the bottom two categories, nine were in the bottom quartile in student progress or student achievement.
- Of the ten parishes with the highest percentage of teachers rated Ineffective, seven experienced an aggregate drop in student proficiency.

Some districts that achieved high levels of growth in 2012-2013 used classroom observations to set a particularly high bar for teaching quality, giving educators increased feedback and room to improve. This was particularly evident in districts that made gains with low-income students, implying a link between the rigor of classroom observations and student progress in challenging settings.

- Evaluators in the Recovery School District (RSD) in New Orleans, where the district ranked in the 97th percentile in terms of student progress, set a high bar and were less likely to assign highly effective observation scores: 9 percent in the RSD versus 27 percent statewide.
- St. Bernard Parish ranked in the 96th percentile in student growth and in the 88th percentile in terms of student achievement. The parish also had the highest percentage of teachers with value-

added scores in the top two levels (81 percent). Evaluators were less likely to assign Highly Effective observation scores, though: 8 percent in St. Bernard Parish versus 27 percent statewide.

- East Feliciana Parish ranked in the 94th percentile in terms of student growth yet assigned substantially more rigorous observation scores. East Feliciana evaluators assigned 64 percent of teachers Proficient or Highly Effective observation ratings compared to 90 percent statewide.
- Ascension Parish student progress ranked in the state's top quartile, but because of a very high bar for classroom teaching, 6 percent of observations yielded a Highly Effective measure, compared to a statewide average of 27 percent.

In order to further support leaders and teachers as they use the Compass tool in 2013-2014, the Department:

- Continued accountability guidelines. Differences in how the tool is used from parish to parish validate the continued need for stringent accountability guidelines, as with the current requirement that very low student progress results definitively lead to lower ratings.
- Provided additional tools and enhancements. In order to create a common understanding of teaching excellence, additional videos were added to the Video Library in December 2013 and more are planned for the spring of 2014.
- Increased support and feedback. The Department adjusted the school leader observation tool to be more specific in its expectation for principals to provide frequent, specific feedback to teachers. The state's Network Teams, led by former Louisiana administrators provided support to administrators in setting a high bar for teaching excellence.
- Improved technology. As a result of educator feedback, the Department made adjustments to CIS to make it easier to use and more flexible, allowing administrators to spend more time in the classroom and reflecting with teachers.

Instructional Video Library

The goal of the LDOE is to support improved teacher practice that will, in turn, ensure that Louisiana's students are college and career ready. As we raise our expectations for student learning and the rigor of classroom instruction in the 21st century, we (at the state, district, and school level) must also rethink how we support teachers.

In June 2013, the Department released a key tool in supporting LDOE's goal of improving teacher practice so that students are college and career ready, the Video Library. The library serves as a virtual resource for teachers and evaluators in highlighting effective instructional practices that will allow them to direct their own professional development. The library provides educators with materials that bring the Compass Rubric to life, in addition to guidance on how to align their instruction to the state academic content standards.

In addition to providing exemplars of instructional practices that are aligned to Compass and the state standards, the library also offers examples of lessons that are not aligned to the state standards and are rated Ineffective or Effective Emerging. The LDOE provides examples of how these lessons could be improved in the "Video Notes" that accompany each video in the library.

Ultimately, viewers of the video library will leave with a clear understanding of the rigorous standards for instructional practice set forth by the state's academic content standards and how to set higher expectations for student achievement through the implementation of the Compass Teaching Rubric. Educators can use the library independently, as a self-study tool; as a resource in collaboration meetings; or as the basis for professional development.

In December 2013, the LDOE expanded the Video Library to include nine new instructional videos and three new feedback videos that highlight effective feedback conversations between educators and their evaluator. The LDOE is planning to release additional tools to the video library in the spring and summer of 2014 including an instructional planning case study, collaboration videos and an Intensive Assistance Program video exemplar.

COMPASS DRIVES ALL TALENT DECISIONS

Research has shown that teacher effectiveness is the greatest determinant of student outcomes followed closely by principal effectiveness. More than 80 percent of all education funding is spent on personnel and traditionally little was done to build systems to support educators. Through creation of Compass, rigorous policies and tools, support resources, and training materials aligned to the state academic content standards, Louisiana is poised to dramatically improve the effectiveness of its educators. The state creates conditions for enhanced teaching and learning by:

- Further strengthening professional development opportunities to improve teaching and leadership over time;
- Implementing systems to base all human capital decisions on educators' demonstrated effectiveness; and
- Strengthening certification and training pipelines and placement practices for teachers and leaders.

Compass Drives Professional Support & Development Growth

The first year of implementation of Compass demonstrated a clear differentiation among teachers and leaders who are making significantly different contributions to student growth. Ensuring differentiation of teacher and leader performance was a priority for Louisiana and the many educators who played a central role in the design of Compass. Through the ACEE committee, educators endorsed an evaluation system with a scale that adequately addresses areas of strength while discerning specific areas for professional development.

The rigorous standards and strong accountability system that Louisiana put into place can only be meaningful if accompanied by efforts to support high-quality instruction and continuous improvement of Louisiana's educators. The LDOE released an interactive online Classroom Support Toolbox for educators and school districts in February of 2013. The toolbox provides increased clarity and support for teachers and districts without prescribing how to teach and was developed as a result of feedback from educators and districts.

Types of resources provided on the website range from sample yearlong curriculum plans to instructional videos and guidance on how to set goals for student achievement. Assessment guides for the upcoming school year are also included to clarify how the state tests align to the new, rigorous standards. Sample assessment questions will also be provided. Additional resources, such as additional sample plans, video exemplars, text sets and unit plans were added throughout the remainder of the 2012-2013 school year.

In addition to the Toolbox, Louisiana will strengthen professional development opportunities to improve teaching and leadership over time through the following Compass-aligned professional development centered on Louisiana's academic content standards and Common Assessments which includes:

- Creating training and tools to make the state academic content standard accessible to teachers through formative assessment and assignment tools;
- Giving teachers and administrators access to teacher performance data through the CIS

platform;

- Supporting districts in implementing strong job-embedded coaching models and professional development tools which allow teachers and principals to access performance data and curriculum supports to improve performance; and
- Building districts and schools capacity to use data well, LDOE will help LEAs and schools implement strong data structures and data use-practices; and
- Build evaluators' and central offices' skills at evaluating educator performance and providing student outcome-aligned feedback that drives enhanced practice.

Critical to Louisiana's plan to drive student achievement is the alignment and integration of the state academic content standards with Compass and other key opportunities along the talent continuum. The implementation of rigorous college-and-career-ready standards paired with advancement of talent reforms will facilitate strong educator effectiveness practices in every district, school, and classroom. This integrated approach, coupled with the implementation of strong, aligned assessments, will ensure that every student in Louisiana is taught by an effective teacher and every teacher is supported by an effective leader.

Compass Drives Compensation, Promotion, Tenure, Retention, and Release

Louisiana has performed a comprehensive review of its talent practices at the state and local levels to improve and align educator preparation, certification, support, and evaluation. Educator effectiveness information can be used when awarding promotions, prioritizing retention and release, as well as to inform tenure decisions.

All LEAs in Louisiana are required by law to dismiss teachers and administrators who chronically underperform despite receiving substantial assistance and support. Act 54 requires LEAs to implement intensive assistance programs for any educator rated ineffective even for a single year, and to initiate dismissal proceedings for all teachers and administrators who, after undergoing IAPs, are still ineffective. This plan must be created collaboratively with the educator and must also include specific steps that should be taken to improve, identify the assistance, support, and resources that are to be provided by the evaluator, establish an expected time line for achieving the objectives of the plan, and the procedures for monitoring progress including observations and conferences.

If after three years of ineffectiveness the educator is still rated ineffective and they are within an initial certification or renewal cycle, state law calls for that educator's certification to be not granted.

Act 1 of 2012 provided additional autonomy to district and school leaders in making personnel decisions based on merit and demand and in the best interest of students. Below is a summary of the law's major provisions:

- **Educator Compensation:** Districts adopted new educator compensation policies during the 2012-2103 school year that recognize performance, as defined by Compass ratings, demand, and experience. Educators performing at the *Effective* level or above are eligible for merit pay or stipends.
- **Hiring:** The law requires that school boards delegate personnel decisions to superintendents, including hiring, assignment, and dismissal. School boards are not to make, or require approval of, such decisions. The LDOE currently monitors school board meeting minutes to ensure that districts have policies in place that allow for this delegation of authority to occur.

- **Reductions in Force:** Districts adopted reduction in force policies that use performance as a criterion and do not permit seniority to be used. These policies were put into effect for the start of the 2013-2014 school year.
- **Tenure:** Educators who earned tenure prior to July 1, 2012, will retain this status in 2013 no matter their evaluation rating. Starting with the 2013-2014 school year, tenured teachers who are rated *Ineffective* will lose tenure. For educators without tenure, those who receive a *Highly Effective* rating for five years within a six-year timeframe will gain tenure. Thus, no teacher will be newly awarded tenure this year.

Ultimately, the role that annual evaluation will play in informing personnel decisions was designed to ensure that Louisiana has the most effective teachers and leaders working with its students. Compass encourages districts to take measures to ensure that the best teachers remain in their schools and expand their impact.

Compass Drives Certification and Training Pipelines and Placement Practices for Teachers and Leaders

The ability to predict future effectiveness is critical to making strong, sound human capital decisions that are in the best interest of students. This includes conducting analyses, building systems, and implementing policy that enable school and LEA leaders to reveal the knowledge, skills, and abilities that applicants possess that will lead them to be effective in the classroom early in an educator’s career.

Certification

According to state law, the state will no longer grant or renew certification without evidence of effectiveness during a three- year period, and it will revoke certification from individuals who demonstrate persistent ineffectiveness over time. Certification renewal decisions will be considered on an annual, rolling basis, allowing the state to leverage the most up-to-date information on educators’ performance in making certification decisions. Certification requirements will be streamlined and simplified to ensure that there is one common process for all educators and ancillary personnel.

Preparation

The LDOE believes that Louisiana’s students are capable of mastering even the most rigorous academic content. The Department has acted on this belief by raising academic expectations for students. Louisiana’s students have increased steadily on the LEAP over the past ten years as the graduation rate has increased to 72.3 percent. At the same time, though, performance on national assessments like NAEP shows that Louisiana’s students are not improving at the same rate as their peers nationally.

To help students meet these expectations, Louisiana has also raised the bar for teaching excellence. Louisiana has taken a significant step toward building a quality pool of certified teachers by evaluating teacher preparation programs in the state based on student achievement (value-added) in the graduates’ classrooms. Louisiana was the first state in the nation to develop and implement a statewide value-added model to measure the impact Louisiana teacher preparation program graduates impact student achievement in grades 4-9. Teacher preparation programs have responded positively to this available data.

In order to have the greatest impact on student achievement, future teachers and leaders must enter Louisiana’s schools prepared to help their students meet Louisiana’s rigorous state academic content standards. New student standards and assessments combined with new measures of effectiveness for educators will require significant shifts in educator preparation. To achieve this goal, the Department

launched *Believe and Prepare: Educator Preparation Innovation Grants* (Attachment 11.f) in December of 2013. Grants will be awarded in March 2014, and the pilot programs will be operational from April 2014 through September 2015.

Through the *Believe and Prepare: Educator Preparation Innovation Grants*, schools, districts, and preparation programs will have the opportunity to accomplish this goal by using Louisiana's best schools as classrooms to prepare future educators, giving them the opportunity to practice their skills with real students. Programs will also draw on the expertise of Louisiana's best teachers to ensure future educators develop the skills they need to be successful. Believe and Prepare grants offer schools, districts, and new and existing teacher and leader preparation programs the opportunity to work together to design innovative preparation programs centered on classroom-based, on-the-job training.

Recruitment

Districts can use teacher effectiveness data to make decisions on teacher recruitment and placement in order to ensure that the lowest-performing students and those in greatest need are served by highly effective teachers and leaders. This process is supported by the LDOE through the use of the *Talent Recruitment System*, a free, web-based service that pairs job-seeking educators with Louisiana districts/schools seeking to hire them.