

## Louisiana Department of Education: A Call For Excellent Educators

### Which award do you want to apply for?

Teacher of the Year

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the Department, in partnership with

Dream Teachers

and the

Louisiana Association of Principals

, honors the state's most exceptional educators through the Teacher and Principal of the Year programs.

The Louisiana Teacher and Principal of the Year awards programs provide an opportunity to acknowledge those educators who are making exceptional gains with students. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

### Criteria- An exemplary candidate for Teacher and Principal of the Year is one who:

- Demonstrates **excellence and expertise** in the field, **guiding students** (and for principals, also teachers) of **all** backgrounds and abilities to **achieve success**.
- Demonstrates **leadership and innovation** in and outside of the school building walls and **helps students/teachers to excel**.
- **Builds collaborative relationships** with **colleagues, students and families** to create a **school environment** that is respectful, inclusive and **positively impacts** student growth and achievement.
- **Deliberately connects** the classroom/school to the **community** to **positively impact the students, school, and community**.
- Is **inspiring, compelling, professional**, and expresses themselves in an **engaging and clear way**, and demonstrates the ability to **connect with and represent** the state.

### Resources

To access application resources and materials, visit the

Award's page Resource Library.

**Naming Convention** - When uploading documents within your application, please title each document using this naming convention:

TOY or POY, First and Last Name, Document Name. For example, "TOY-Mary-Smith\_Reflection Response Upload"

### I. Basic Information

#### First Name

Regena

#### Last Name

Hartley [REDACTED] Beard

#### Title

Mrs.

Phone number with area code (preferable cell). List phone number with hyphens. For example, 225-342-1234.

[REDACTED]

Does this phone number receive text messages?

Yes

#### Email Address

[REDACTED]

**Division Level**

Elementary School

**If you serve students across multiple division levels, please check the box below.**

Multiple Divisions

**Grade(s) You Currently Teach**

Fifth, Sixth

**Subject(s) You Currently Teach**

Science, Other

**If "Other" please describe**

Robotics/STEM

**How many years have you been a classroom teacher, including this year? (enter numeric value, such as "6.")**

21

**Professional Bio** Add your professional bio in the textbox below. Your Professional Bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined [here]([https://docs.google.com/document/d/17awwZvUuZgIN5coh3oo-M\\_DtpR8qrEJvU4FObe1zJyY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17awwZvUuZgIN5coh3oo-M_DtpR8qrEJvU4FObe1zJyY/edit?usp=sharing)).

**Add Professional Bio Here**

Regena Beard is a dedicated educator specializing in 5th-grade science and 6th-grade robotics/STEM at Copper Mill Elementary in Zachary, Louisiana. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education degree from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Master of Curriculum and Instruction with a STEM concentration degree from Louisiana State University Shreveport. Recognized for her innovative approach to science education, she has been honored as a Louisiana finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and named the Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year by the Louisiana Science Teachers Association.

In addition to her classroom work, Beard has made significant contributions to the broader educational community. She is a certified teacher mentor, founded a robotics and coding club at Copper Mill Elementary, and serves on Teacher Advisory Councils at both the district and state levels. Her commitment to advancing computer science education includes serving on the Computer Science Advisory Council, and was also a member of the Let Teacher Teach workgroup.

Passionate about fostering real-world connections in her classroom, Beard emphasizes the integration of computer science in elementary education, helping students understand the relevance of STEM in everyday life. Her approach aims to empower young learners by connecting classroom concepts to practical applications, nurturing problem-solving skills, and inspiring lifelong curiosity in science and technology.

**II. School Related Information**

**School "System/District" Name (please start typing). Select "Other" if your school system isn't listed.**

Zachary Community School District

**If your school system/district was not listed above, please enter here**

**"School" Name (please start typing). School name is required. If your school is not listed, please proceed to enter name in next box.**

If your school is not listed, please enter the school name in the textbox below. Add full school name, such as "L.B. Landry Walker High School" and not "Landry Walker." You may find the full school name in the LA School and Center Finder List, see

here

**If your school is not listed above, please enter here**

Copper Mill Elementary

Were you at a different school last year?

No

Grade(s) at Your Current School:

Fifth, Sixth

Current School Address

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

School Phone Number (including area code). List phone number with hyphens, such as 123-456-7890.

[REDACTED]

Principal's Name (first and last)

[REDACTED]

Principal's Email

[REDACTED]

Principal's Office Phone (including area code and extension, if applicable)

[REDACTED]

**Region Number-** Click the Region List link to find the region number for your school system parish. If you are a charter/independent school, please select the parish where your school is located. For example, if your school is Lake Charles Charter, even though your school is not part of Calcasieu Parish, you would select region 5 as your school is located in the Calcasieu Parish "region." See [Region List Here.]

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LtUW52cn-8sz16CgEwIMTGvgjqrGtGKL8YZGu7SBtY/edit?usp=sharing> )

**Check Your Region Number**

2

### **\*III. Media Related Information**

Professional Facebook profile/name (optional)

Professional Instagram profile (optional)

Twitter handle (optional)

**Add an original social media quote (that could be used in print) in the textbox below that captures the essence of you as an educator. (280 character limit)**

As an educator, I strive to ignite my students with my passion for teaching, helping them go beyond mastering content to form meaningful connections that they can apply to their daily lives. I want their learning to resonate deeply and make a difference in how they see the world.

Other Social Media Account (optional)

Personal Blog Site URL (optional)

Personal Website URL (optional)

Classroom Website URL (optional)

### **IV. Awards/Leadership Roles**



If you serve in any leadership roles, such as master teacher, mentor teacher, TAP master teacher, etc., please select the checkbox for the role(s) and add the number of years served for each role in the textbox below.

Mentor and/or Believe and Prepare Mentor, Teacher Leader/Teacher Leader Advisor, Other leadership role

Number of years serving as a Mentor and/or Believe and Prepare Mentor

8.0

Number of years serving as Teacher Leader/Teacher Leader Advisor

2

If you serve/served in other leadership roles, please add role(s) and number of years served for each role in the textbox below.

Grade Level Content Lead (12)

Team Leader (10)

List any national awards or recognition you've received (include year won)

Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (2022 Awardee in K-6 Science Teaching)

List any state or local awards or recognition you've received (include year won)

Louisiana Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year (2022)

Has your work been published in journals or other juried and/or peer-review sources?

Yes

If "yes", please describe

In January 2022, I contributed an article to Edutopia titled "Incorporating Coding into STEM Classes," where I shared my journey from hesitancy to expertise in teaching robotics and coding. This journey began when I was unexpectedly tasked with teaching a robotics course despite having no prior experience. Initially apprehensive, I embraced the challenge by learning alongside my students and gradually developing innovative ways to incorporate coding into STEM lessons.

The article delves into how I leveraged coding platforms like Scratch to align classroom activities with core subject curricula. For instance, students tackled ratio-based challenges using robots, created Scratch animations to explain concepts like net forces, and practiced language arts skills by coding interactive Mad Libs. By connecting coding projects to real-world applications and interdisciplinary lessons, I demonstrated how coding could deepen understanding and engagement across subjects.

Additionally, I shared strategies for weaving coding into traditional classroom content, offering practical examples for educators to replicate. These strategies emphasized fostering creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking while gradually building students' coding and computational skills. My goal was to empower teachers to confidently introduce coding into their lessons, even without prior experience, and to inspire students to see coding as a valuable and accessible tool for problem-solving and innovation.

## V. Education Information

What year did you receive your baccalaureate degree? Add degree conferral year, such as 2011, in the textbox below.

2004

You may find that information in the Teach LA website

[here](#)

Choose the highest degree you have earned.

Masters

Did you attend an in-state or out-of-state institution for your undergraduate degree?

In-state

Please select the institution you attended for your undergraduate degree.

Southeastern Louisiana State

Did you attend an in-state or out-of-state institution for your masters degree?

In-state



**Please select the institution you attended for your masters degree.**

Louisiana State University Shreveport

**List your undergraduate major(s) in the textbox below.**

Elementary Education

**List your graduate major(s)/any additional major(s)/certification areas in the textbox below.**

Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in STEM

## **VI. Certifications**

**List where you completed your traditional teacher preparation program or alternate teacher preparation program.**

Southeastern Louisiana University

**\*\*Do you hold a valid LA teaching certificate?\*\***

**Upload the most recent version of your teaching/educational leadership certificate.** Certificates may be found on the Teach LA website [here](#)

**Certificate Upload**

## **VII. Written Reflection Response One**

Describe a content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher and include how you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning. In your response, include how your intentional instructional decisions impact student learning and success, as well as reveal your beliefs about teaching and learning. (750 words or less)

### **Add Reflection Response One Here:**

Teaching is an act of inspiration and transformation, extending far beyond mere knowledge transfer. It is about igniting curiosity and fostering understanding, as captured by William Arthur Ward: "Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding." This philosophy defines my approach to teaching and is exemplified in a lesson unit on Earth's Systems.

The unit begins with an exploration of familiar experiences. Students share what they eat for dinner, noticing that rice is a staple for many. This simple observation sparks curiosity about global rice consumption and production. Students investigate data and learn that Indonesia, despite its size, is a leading producer and consumer of rice. This discovery leads to an analysis of Bali's terrace farming system, encouraging students to model the interdependence of Earth's spheres. This inquiry-based approach engages students by connecting the content to their lives and fostering critical thinking.

To supplement the PhD curriculum and form a deeper understanding of sphere interactions, I incorporate a STEM component to answer the question, "Does the amount of water in an area change over time?". Using NASA's GRACE website, student pairs create line graphs of water trends for an assigned year. Students then display their graphs in chronological order to show ten years of data in a timeline to discuss trends. This activity employs interactive strategies such as think-pair-share, cooperative learning, and reflective discussions. Students analyze their graphs collaboratively, discovering seasonal patterns and hypothesizing about interactions between Earth's spheres. This lesson uses additional instructional approaches such as think-pair-share, cooperative groups, stop and jot, reflective discussions, and concept formation through graphing. To foster a sense of ownership and increase engagement, students research the answers to questions that arise. These instructional decisions empower students to take ownership of their learning.

A key element of my teaching philosophy is differentiation. Each class comprises diverse learners, and I strive to meet their individual needs through tailored strategies. For example, students with special needs watch summary videos before joining whole-group discussions. This front-loading builds confidence and ensures active participation. Kagan cooperative learning structures are used to create fluid, heterogeneous groups based on students' prior achievement levels for peer-supported learning and ensures all students are challenged appropriately.

Differentiation in this unit also includes letting students work independently when appropriate and sharing their work with a group. This approach respects the need for independence while also fostering teamwork, highlighting the balance between accommodating individual needs and promoting inclusivity.

Cultural responsiveness is another cornerstone of my teaching. A student who recently returned from living in Japan shared her experiences with mangrove forests during a lesson on Hargigo's ecosystems. By inviting her to share photos and stories, the class gained a global perspective and built a deeper connection to the content. This exchange not only enriched the lesson but also made the student feel valued and included.

Incorporating student choice further enhances engagement and understanding. For instance, while learning about the rain shadow effect, students create models using methods of their choice, such as three-dimensional designs, coding simulations, or creating skits. This flexibility allows students to express their understanding creatively and reveals misconceptions, which I address through targeted reteaching.

Assessment plays a pivotal role in my instructional approach. Pre-assessments provide insights into students' prior knowledge, enabling me to tailor lessons effectively. Formative assessments—including discussions, exit tickets, and warm-ups—offer continuous feedback on learning progress. Summative assessments, aligned with state standards, culminate the unit. For example, students code animations in Scratch to demonstrate sphere interactions, integrating technology with scientific content. This comprehensive assessment strategy ensures that learning is monitored, supported, and celebrated at every stage.

Underlying all these practices is my belief that strong relationships are the foundation of effective teaching. By understanding students' unique strengths, needs, and backgrounds, I create a supportive environment where they feel safe to explore, question, and grow. For example, observing students' comfort levels during group work and adjusting activities accordingly fosters a positive learning atmosphere. These relational strategies are instrumental in motivating students to reach their full potential.

Ultimately, my instructional decisions are guided by the principle that learning is most impactful when it is relevant, collaborative, and empowering. By integrating real-world connections, embracing diversity, and fostering critical thinking, I aim to inspire change and nurture understanding. My unit on Earth's Systems exemplifies this dynamic approach, demonstrating how intentional planning and responsiveness to students' needs transform learning into a meaningful and transformative experience.

**Reflection Response One- Optional file upload: (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your reflection response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY\_Mary\_Smith\_Reflection Response One."**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Reflection Response One.pdf

### **VIII. Written Reflection Response Two**

Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community to achieve success. In your response, explain how these community connections dissolve classroom/school walls and impact student learning/success for all. (750 words or less)



**Add Reflection Response Two Here:**

Connecting students with the community is a powerful way to enhance learning and foster success. By breaking down the walls of the classroom and integrating real-world experiences, I provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding, build engagement, and see the relevance of their studies in a broader context. Through thoughtfully designed activities such as field trips, virtual sessions, and guest speaker engagements, students are inspired to connect with their community and apply their learning in meaningful ways.

One of the most impactful methods I use is organizing experiential field trips. For example, during a visit to the local zoo, students explored ecosystems as part of our science unit on the Hargigo and Louisiana ecosystems. This trip was not just a passive experience but an immersive one, designed to bridge classroom learning with the real world. Students participated in a program led by zoo educators, allowing them to observe animals, interact with living organisms, and analyze food webs. They examined predator-prey relationships and learned about the delicate balance of ecosystems through hands-on activities. Parents were also invited to join, fostering a collaborative learning environment and strengthening the connection between home and school. This field trip not only deepened students' scientific understanding but also broadened their perspective on the interconnectedness of ecosystems and their role within the environment.

In addition to physical field trips, I leverage technology to bring the outside world into the classroom through live virtual sessions. An Amazon Robotics Packing Facility recently opened in our area and many of my students have family members who work at the facility. Because the facility is not open for public tours, I scheduled a virtual tour of other packing facilities around the world to give students a behind-the-scenes look. During the session, students observed how robots are used in industrial settings, connecting the concepts of automation and technology to their classroom learning. They saw the real-world applications of the robots we use in class, making the connection between theory and practice even more impactful. This experience was particularly meaningful because students were able to discuss what they learned with their family members who work at the facility, creating a bridge between their classroom learning and their personal lives. This reinforced the value of their education and deepened their understanding of how technological advancements impact their local community. Similarly, a live Zoom session with scientists in Yoho National Park in British Columbia, Canada provided students the opportunity to engage with an expert, ask questions, and learn about current research. Prior to the Zoom session, students researched the park location as well as animal species found in the park. These virtual experiences dissolved the physical barriers of the classroom, connecting students to professionals and environments they otherwise might not have access to, while also exposing them to potential career pathways.

Another way I connect students with the community is by inviting guest speakers to share their expertise. We had the pleasure of hosting the owner of Three-Sixty-Eight, a local company that specializes in computer science applications. During his visit, he was able to demonstrate the practical applications of technology in various industries. Students were able to see how the learning experiences in class connected to future careers by exploring the various projects of Three-Sixty-Eight. This experience not only made computer science more accessible but also empowered students to see themselves as creators and innovators. By connecting academic concepts to real-world applications, the speaker helped students see the value of their learning and motivated them to pursue their goals.

These efforts have a profound impact on student learning and success. Activities such as the zoo field trip make abstract concepts tangible and memorable, while virtual sessions with professionals broaden students' horizons and inspire curiosity. Guest speakers help students see the relevance of their studies and demonstrate that success in any field is achievable with dedication and effort. By involving parents, professionals, and organizations, these connections create a supportive learning environment where students recognize that their education is a shared endeavor. In summary, connecting students with the community transforms education into a dynamic and engaging process. These experiences dissolve classroom walls, making learning more meaningful and fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration. As students interact with real-world environments and experts, they develop critical skills, expand their perspectives, and envision their potential beyond the classroom. This holistic approach not only enhances academic achievement but also empowers students to become active, confident participants in their community and the world at large.

**Reflection Response Two- Optional file upload: (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your reflection response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY\_Mary\_Smith\_ Reflection Response Two")**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Reflection Response Two.pdf

**IX. Video Response**

What work best describes you as a leader and/or an innovator? In your response, explain your role, the positive impact this work has made on teachers, students, and/or the education profession, and also share the status of this work today. (2 minutes or less)

Add the YouTube video URL in the space below.

**Add your YouTube video URL Here: (video should be 2 minutes or less)**

<https://youtu.be/idFBP50eNME>



**Video Response- Optional file upload:** (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your video response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY\_Mary\_Smith\_Video Response Upload")

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Video Response Upload.pdf

## **X. Education Issue**

**What is an education issue you are most passionate about? Add your response in the textbox below in five words or less, Ex: Student Voice and Empowerment**

Teacher Retention and Recruitment

**Education Issue- Optional file upload:** Use this feature if you want to upload an item, such as a photo, newspaper article, etc., which relates to your education issue topic/work. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY\_Mary\_Smith\_Education Issue Upload."

TOY\_Regena Beard\_ Education Issue Upload.pdf

**Add a "Six Word Story" that captures the essence of you as an educator. For example, "He Is..because of what was," "Teaching Art is an Abstract Artform" and "I Teach So I Change Lives."**

Ignite passion, connect learning, transform lives.

## **XI. Uploads**

\*Note- To view uploads, select small yellow triangle next to the record title at the top of the page and select "preview form"

**When uploading documents within your application, please title each document using this naming convention:**

TOY or POY\_ First Name\_Last Name\_Document Name. For ex., "TOY\_Mary Smith\_Reflection Response Upload."

**Résumé (two pages or less) Include chronological list of workplaces with specific years at each site.**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Résumé.pdf

**Student Success Data 1 (SLTs or other recent data) Include Year- Please ensure that the data submitted does not contain Student Personal Identifying Information (PII).**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Student Success Data 1\_ 2022.pdf

**Student Success Data 2 (SLTs or other recent data) Include Year- Please ensure that the data submitted does not contain Student Personal Identifying Information (PII).**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_ Student Success Data 2.pdf

**Letter of Recommendation #1:**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Letter of Recommendation #1.pdf

**Letter of Recommendation #2:**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_ Letter of Recommendation #2.pdf

**Letter of Recommendation #3:**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_ Letter of Recommendation #3.pdf

## **XII. Teaching Video**

**You may view the Teaching Video Guide here:** [https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/teaching-video-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=76d8911f\\_8](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/teaching-video-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=76d8911f_8)

**Add your YouTube video URL in the textbox below (Note: Your YouTube video link visibility must be "Public" so the application reviewers may view your video. Before adding your link, please send it to a friend and have them check it to make sure it is viewable.)**

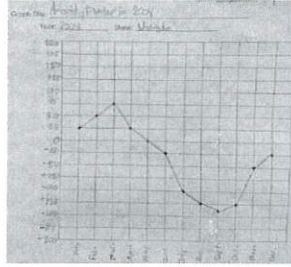
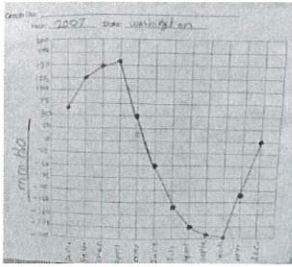
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oz2kW57uD1g>

**Upload the lesson plan that corresponds to teaching video here.**

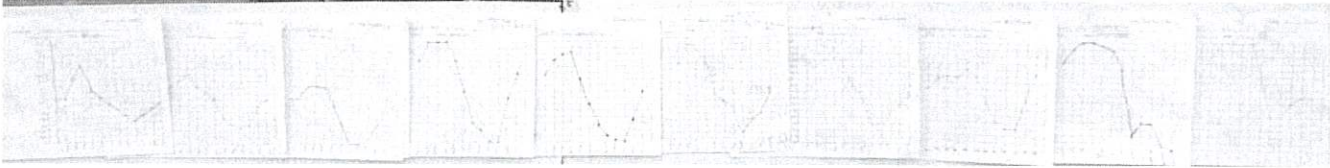
TOY\_Regena Beard\_Lesson Plan Upload.pdf

## Earth's Spheres Work Samples

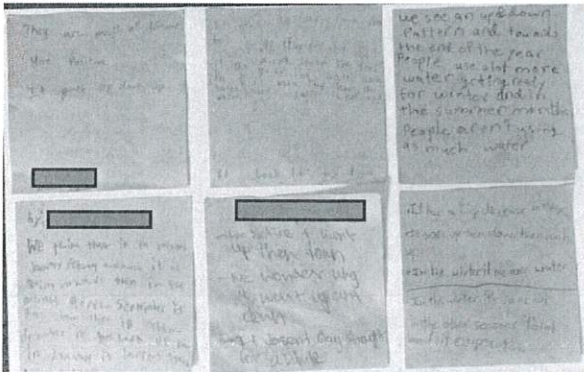
### Graphs created by individual groups



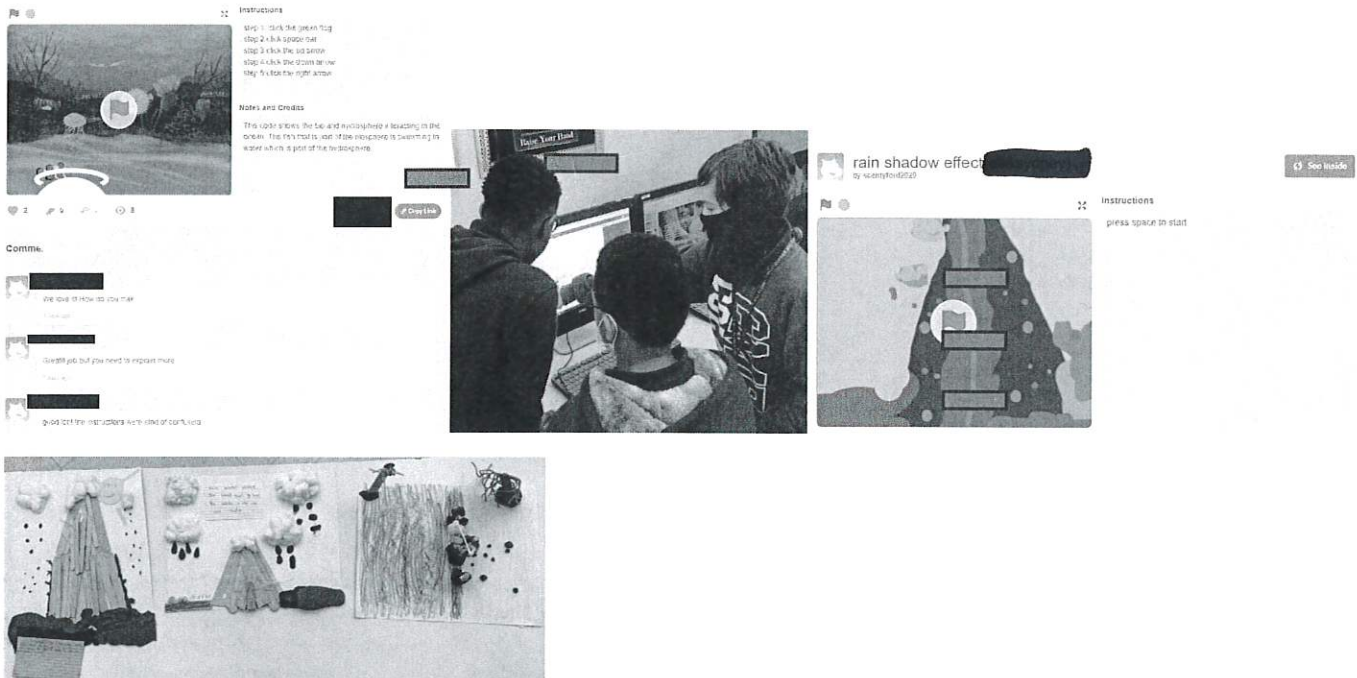
### 10 years of data in a timeline



### Stop-And-Jot notes on patterns noticed in the data.

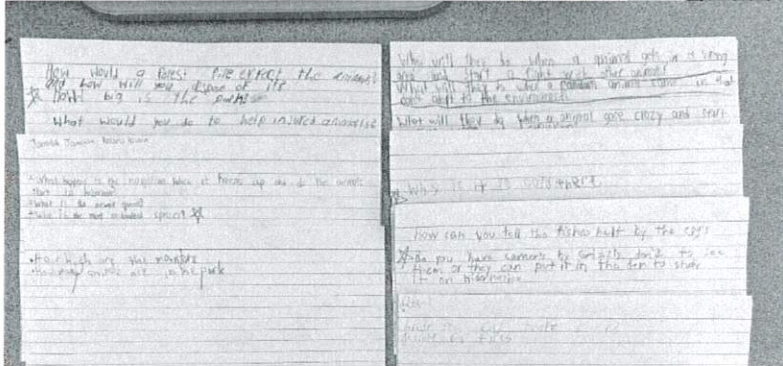


### Collaborate group work on Rain Shadow



## Written Reflection Response Two – Supplemental Materials

Yoho  
Park  
Zoom





Written Reflection Response Two – Supplemental Materials

Zoo  
Field  
Trip



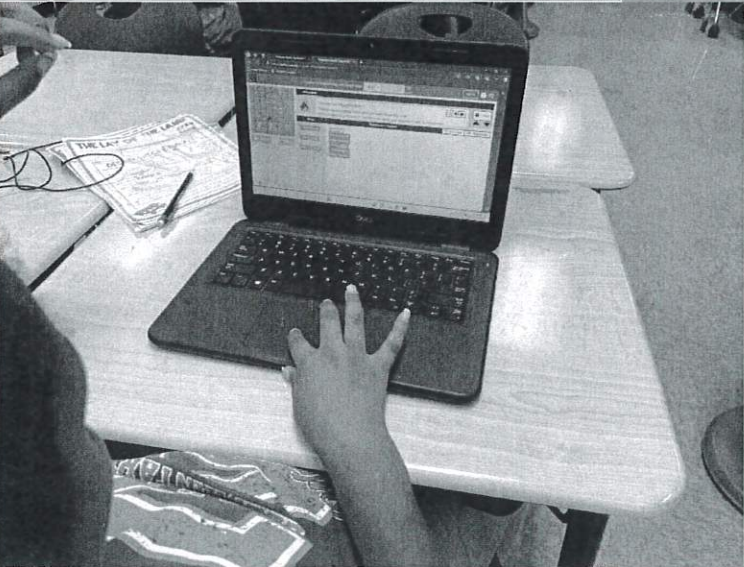
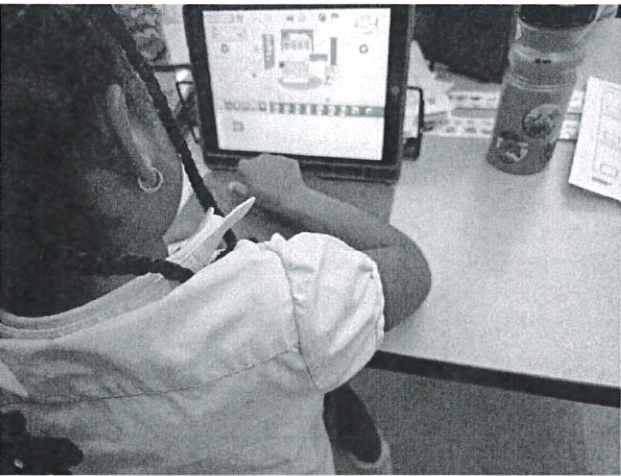
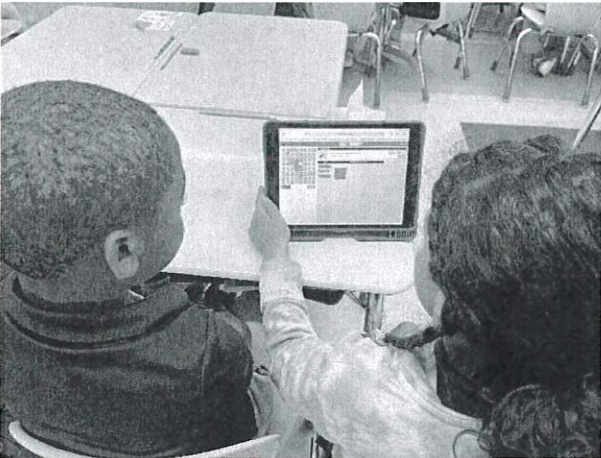
## VIDEO RESPONSE UPLOAD

Training teachers in grades K-5.





Computer Science Implementation in Grades K – 5





## REGENA HARTLEY BEARD

Baton Rouge, LA

### EDUCATION:

Southeastern Louisiana University  
B.A. Elementary Education

Hammond, Louisiana  
1998 – 2004

Louisiana State University  
Masters in Curriculum and Instruction; STEM

Shreveport, Louisiana  
2022 – 2023

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Copper Mill Elementary

Zachary, Louisiana

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher, STEM Teacher, Robotics Teacher, STEM Club Sponsor

2014 – Present

- Organized and implemented a tier 1 science curriculum; individualized lessons to accommodate student needs
- Created and implemented a STEM curriculum that fostered best practices in computer science teaching
- Created and implemented higher order assessments while ranking each question according to standardized testing achievement level descriptors to ensure assessments were aligned to the state test
- Used a variety of formal and informal assessments as well as prior data to drive future lessons
- Collaborated with Louisiana State University to provide a 4-H STEM unit concentrating on Engineering and Design
- Collaborated with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade content teachers to create and implement interdisciplinary units
- Integrated a variety of technology programs into instruction, including but not limited to: OneNote Notebooks, Microsoft Teams, LEGO Mindstorms Classroom, EV3 robots, Scratch, and Moodle
- Met with the robotics team to develop competition programs, earning third place at the State Beta Convention
- Participated in Arts and Science nights; students rotated to stations and participated in STEM projects
- Created and co-led a science club; invited guest speakers from multiple fields for real-world experiences
- Collaborated with NOLA Code in code week; held guest speakers to discuss computer science jobs
- Created an after-school STEM club

Northwestern Middle School

Zachary, Louisiana

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher

2004 – 2014

- Created, implemented, and coached cohorts in a rigorous, new science curriculum
- Maintained a highly qualified teacher status based on teacher observations and state testing scores
- Achieved high testing scores (top 99% in the state) and high scores on teacher observations
- Served on Principal Advisory Committee to act as a liaison between grade-level teachers and the principal
- Collaborated with 6<sup>th</sup>-grade content teachers to create and implement interdisciplinary units
- Created and co-led a science club; invited guest speakers from multiple fields to give student real-world experiences
- Analyzed data prior year state testing scores to meet student needs
- Analyzed assessment data throughout the school year to gain knowledge for student understanding

### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Computer Science Teacher Leader Advisor – Louisiana Department of Education

2024 – Present

LDOE Robotics Pilot – Pedagogy Support

2024 – Present

Ignite Ambassador

2024 – Present

Aspiring Leaders Academy – Zachary Community School District

2024 - Present

STEM Teacher Leader Advisor – Louisiana Department of Education

2022 – 2024

OpenSciEd Co-Designer

2023

### AWARDS:

Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Awardee

2022

Louisiana Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year

2022

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES:

NSTA

November 2024

LSTA/NCTM Joint Conference

November 2023

LASTEM Summit

October 2023

Code.org Computer Science Discoveries

July 2023

Louisiana Teacher Leader Summit  
ISTE Conference  
Louisiana STEM Annual Summit

May 2023  
July 2022  
February 2022

#### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Louisiana Science Teaching Association  
Computer Science Teachers Association  
Coastal Conservation Association

National Science Teaching Association  
Computer Science Teachers Association: LA Chapter

#### COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

Louisiana Department of Education Teacher Advisory Council	2022 – Present
Let Teachers Teach Workgroup	2024
Computer Science Education Advisory Commission	2022 – 2023
Assessment Development Educator Review Committee – Louisiana Department of Education	2020
Standard Setting Committee and Table Leader – Louisiana Department of Education	2019

#### MENTORING EXPERIENCES:

Certified Louisiana Mentor Teacher	2022 – Present
New Teacher Mentor	2016 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mentored multiple new teachers in a three-year induction program with 30 hours of meetings per semester</li><li>• Assisted the new teacher in developing a Professional Growth Plan and aided in implementing the plan</li><li>• Assessed new teacher needs and developed effective classroom management and instructional strategies</li><li>• Trained teachers in how to use programs such as Moodle, JPAMS, and Illuminate Education</li><li>• Planned professional development opportunities for new teachers and organized peer observations</li><li>• Conducted mentee observations and provided feedback using the COMPASS rubric along with suggestions</li><li>• Lead book studies on classroom management and classroom differentiation using implementation guides</li><li>• Assisted new teachers in creating a school-wide project</li></ul>	

#### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES:

Science Department Chair	2004 – 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acted as the primary spokesperson for department faculty, staff, and students</li><li>• Organized and led meetings among science cohorts</li><li>• Attended conferences and delivered material back to department members and administration</li><li>• Created and trained cohorts in science curriculum</li><li>• Fostered good communication between the science department, administration, and school board members</li><li>• Managed department funds while ordering and managing needed materials for science curriculum</li></ul>	
Team Leader	2005 – 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitated weekly meetings among team members that consisted of all disciplines</li><li>• Created and implemented weekly agendas based on the needs of students and administration</li><li>• Participated in meetings with administration to address the needs of everyone on campus</li><li>• Organized team events, including team competitions, events such as pep rallies, behavior rewards, and field trips</li></ul>	
Disney's Imagination Campus Trip Coordinator	2007 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organized and facilitated trips for students to attend Youth Education Series classes at Walt Disney World</li><li>• Collected payments and paid invoices for airfare, park tickets, classes, and food vouchers</li></ul>	

#### PRESENTATIONS:

Teacher Leader Summit	2023
Teacher Advisory Council Spotlight – Department of Education	2023
Illuminate Reports Training	2023
Featured guest on Easy EdTech Podcast	May 2022
Illuminate Education Training	2020

#### PUBLISHED WORK:

Are We Making Teaching Too Hard for Mere Mortals	American Enterprise Institute, 2024
Incorporating Coding into STEM Classes	Edutopia, 2022
Guest speaker: Easy EDTECH Podcast - Getting Over a Fear of Coding	May 2022





WWW

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I recommend Mrs. Regena Hartley Beard for the LDOE Teacher of the Year Award. As the superintendent of the Zachary Community School District, I have had the privilege of observing Mrs. Beard's exceptional contributions to education, particularly in STEM and science instruction. Her impact on students, colleagues, and the broader educational community is truly remarkable.

Mrs. Beard's career exemplifies excellence in teaching and leadership. With over two decades of experience, she has continually raised the bar for instructional innovation and student engagement. At Copper Mill Elementary, where she currently serves as a fifth-grade science and STEM teacher, she has consistently received highly effective performance evaluations. She also has introduced interdisciplinary units, cutting-edge technology integration, and hands-on learning opportunities that inspire curiosity and creativity.

Her leadership extends far beyond her classroom. As a Louisiana Department of Education STEM Teacher Leader Advisor, Mrs. Beard has influenced curriculum development and mentored educators across the state. Her efforts to integrate robotics and computer science into K-12 education are particularly noteworthy, as they align with the demands of our rapidly evolving technological world. Under her guidance, the school's robotics team achieved statewide recognition, and her after-school STEM club has become a model of student enrichment.

Mrs. Beard's accolades, including being named a Presidential Award Finalist for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Louisiana Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year, reflect her dedication to professional growth and excellence. Her ability to publish thought-provoking articles, present at esteemed conferences, and serve on influential committees further underscores her influence as a thought leader in education. She has also served on the Let Teachers Teach Committee and played an influential role in elevating the voices of teachers in the education profession.

Equally impressive is Mrs. Beard's commitment to mentoring and developing future educators. Her work as a Certified Louisiana Mentor Teacher and her support for new teachers ensure a legacy of instructional quality and student success for years to come. She embodies the essence of collaboration, exemplified by her ability to create partnerships with institutions like Louisiana State University and NOLA Code to bring real-world experiences into her classroom.

In all her endeavors, Mrs. Beard remains deeply dedicated to her students. She is not just a teacher but a visionary who recognizes the transformative power of education. Her classroom is a place where curiosity flourishes, critical thinking is nurtured, and the leaders of tomorrow are inspired.

I wholeheartedly endorse Mrs. Regena Hartley Beard for this honor and am confident that her selection as Teacher of the Year would highlight the qualities of dedication, innovation, and excellence that she brings to her profession and bring great credit to the State of Louisiana.

Should you require further information or have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at

Cordially,





January 2, 2025

2025 Louisiana Teacher of the Year  
Letter of Recommendation

**Mrs. Regena Beard**

To the Selection Committee,

It is my great pleasure to recommend Mrs. Regena Beard for the 2025 Louisiana State Teacher of the Year. As a mother of two of Mrs. Beard's former students, I can personally attest to her incredible and keen teaching strategies in and outside the classroom. Mrs. Beard has always maintained a personable, yet professional, demeanor with her students and parents, which as an involved parent within our school district, I consistently recognize and appreciate.

Zachary Community School District has been a top-performing district in our state for many years, and Mrs. Beard has played a large role in preparing and encouraging her students to stretch their minds, capabilities, and self-confidence. Although my husband and I do not pressure our children to perform at a certain level on state assessments, Mrs. Beard tactfully encouraged and instructed our daughter so well that she scored a remarkable 797 on the science portion her 5th grade year, the highest she's ever scored in any area! Mrs. Beard gave her the skill set, knowledge, and confidence to do so by encouraging her to set goals and achieve them. This has been impactful for our daughter in her education to this day.

I also have the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Beard on a personal level, as her son and our son both play in the Zachary High School band. Mrs. Beard not only encourages her students in the science classroom, but also cheers them on in the arts and many other areas!

We are extremely fortunate to have Ms. Regena Beard in our school district and as a teacher in Louisiana! Her desire to share knowledge of science and robotics

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Louisiana Department of Education  
Teacher of the Year Selection Committee  
January 5, 2025

Dear Selection Committee,

It is my honor to recommend Regena Hartley Beard for Louisiana Teacher of the Year. I have had the privilege of working alongside Regena since 2014 at Copper Mill Elementary, where she has consistently proven herself to be an exceptional educator, mentor, and leader.

I often reflect on the time Regena, and I joined the Copper Mill science team as the school transitioned to a fifth and sixth-grade model. I came from a small, rural school, where I taught 40 students, to suddenly teaching 140. Regena and I worked closely to unpack the 5th grade curriculum. Patiently and generously, Regena shared her expertise in teaching six classes, her classroom management strategies, and her wealth of science knowledge. Through her guidance, I quickly understood the value of working with a colleague who genuinely wanted me to become the best teacher I could be. And she never once laughed when I asked her for the 5th time to explain a new technology skill!

As I began pursuing professional development opportunities, Regena encouraged and supported me every step of the way. Although our interests diverged—mine toward ecology and environmental education, and hers toward STEM and robotics—Regena always found ways to collaborate, inspire, and empower me. Her encouragement allowed me to broaden my teaching skills and contribute to statewide initiatives. I knew that her support and assistance was unwavering even as she pursued her own passions.

After a few years of working side by side with Regena, I began to see that her dedication to empowering teachers extends far beyond just me. She works tirelessly to help all teachers reach their full potential, offering unwavering support and encouragement. It is this commitment to collaboration, patience, and communication that makes her an invaluable asset to our school, our school district and the broader teaching community.

Regena's career began in 2004 at Northwestern Middle School, where she taught sixth-grade science for a decade. Since joining Copper Mill in 2014, she has been a leader of the fifth-grade science team. Regena has led efforts to implement new curriculums and NGSS Tier 1 standards, developed a robust STEM program, and taught robotics while sponsoring a highly popular after-school STEM club. Under her guidance, students consistently achieve higher academic levels, driven by her encouragement and high expectations. Regena also assists our administration with countless projects, field trips, and day-to-day responsibilities, offering expertise and collaboration to support the school's overall success.

*What truly sets Regena apart*, however, is her commitment to mentoring and empowering her colleagues. Since 2016, she has officially mentored numerous new teachers for Copper Mill. She offers thoughtful, constructive feedback and creates a supportive environment where everyone feels valued. Her communication skills are clear and impactful, ensuring professionalism and effectiveness when she leads professional development sessions or heads a committee. During the challenges of the pandemic, she became a beacon of support for



our entire school, producing video tutorials, assisting with virtual learning, and ensuring her colleagues felt equipped to adapt to new teaching methods. Her leadership in technology and STEM education has enriched not only her students but also her fellow teachers.

Beyond her work within our school, Regena has had a significant impact on statewide initiatives. She has partnered with Louisiana State University to provide STEM enrichment, participated in the Louisiana Department of Education's robotics pilot program, and served as an LDOE Computer Science Teacher Leader Advisor. Her accolades, including being a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Louisiana Award winner and the Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year, underscore her dedication to excellence. Remarkably, Regena accomplishes all this with humility, without drawing attention to her achievements.

Regena is a natural leader who inspires everyone around her to achieve their best. I have witnessed firsthand how her support, encouragement and mentorship make a lasting difference. She embodies the dedication, humility, and relentless passion for improving education that define a Louisiana Teacher of the Year. Regena is not just an outstanding educator, she is the “teacher’s teacher”, the mentor who helps others grow and thrive. Regena has my highest recommendation for Louisiana Teacher of the Year

Sincerely,



*Faint, illegible text, likely a signature or stamp, visible in the bottom right corner.*


# Lesson 20

*make in advance*

**Objective:** Explain how an organism can affect the ability of other organisms to meet their needs.

## Launch

8 minutes

Explain that students will use the analogy of a web to model the mangrove tree ecosystem. Divide the class into two or three groups of approximately 10 students each, and have each group stand in a circle. Assign one student in each group to pass around a ball of yarn once the activity begins. Distribute name tags to the remaining students so that each represents an organism from the mangrove tree ecosystem. 

Explain that the yarn will represent feeding interactions in the ecosystem. Begin with an animal that eats other animals, such as the human or big fish. Hand the students representing the organism a ball of yarn. Ask the class where this organism gets the matter it needs to grow. Students can respond chorally or by pointing to the student who represents the next organism. The first student continues to hold the end of the yarn as the ball is passed to the student representing the second organism. Ask the class where this second organism gets matter.

When the yarn arrives at a plant, it can be passed to a student representing a decomposer. Point out that although plants do not feed on decomposers, they rely on decomposers to release carbon dioxide and other matter needed for growth and functioning. When the yarn reaches a decomposer, it can be passed to any other organism because decomposers grow by using matter from dead organisms and their waste. The cycle begins again, and groups continue to pass the yarn around until it forms a web by reaching every student at least once.

## Agenda

Launch (8 minutes)

Learn (32 minutes)

- Describe Ecosystem Balance (5 minutes)
- Learn about the Emerald Ash Borer (4 minutes)
- Analyze Ash Tree Data (10 minutes)
- Read about Ecosystem Impacts (13 minutes)

Land (5 minutes)

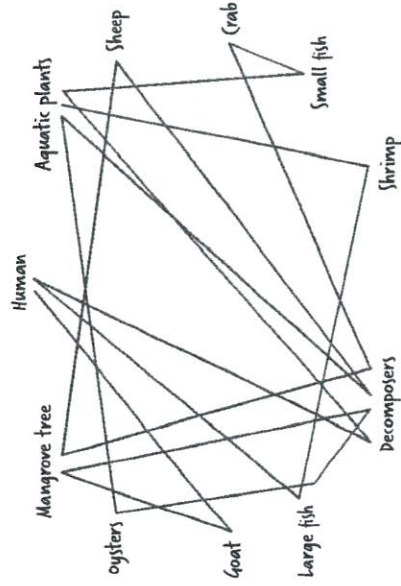


### Teacher Note

For small groups, combine the roles of small aquatic animals such as the shrimp and crab. For large groups, divide the role of decomposers into fungi and bacteria.



Sample mangrove tree ecosystem yarn web:



sample depending  
tree optive  
on students

Next, groups will model how the ecosystem might change if one species was removed. Focus on aquatic plants as an example.

► What could cause all the aquatic plants in an ecosystem to die?

- The water could dry up.
- Pollution in the water could kill them.
- Something might eat them. If the population of crabs or shrimp grew a lot, they might eat all the aquatic plants.

Agree that several different factors could remove aquatic plants from the ecosystem. Explain that groups will use their yarn webs to represent the effects of removing aquatic plants. Identify the organisms that eat aquatic plants, and tell students representing those organisms to drop their yarn. Then identify organisms that eat consumers of aquatic plants, and tell students representing those organisms to drop their yarn as well. Continue until all relevant organisms in the ecosystem have been affected. Reflect with students on the drastic change in the amount of food available to those organisms.

Introduce the Phenomenon Question **How can the balance of an ecosystem change?** Explain that in this lesson, students will continue exploring how organisms within an ecosystem affect one another.

### Extension

Students can create another model and select another variable to change, such as removing a different organism, adding an organism, or changing one species' population size. They can also create a similar model for a local ecosystem, researching organisms and their food sources as needed.

add mangrove species  
as predator  
as prey

Ask students to reflect on the yarn web used to represent the balance of the mangrove tree ecosystem.

► **What are the limitations of this model?**

- Some organisms get matter and energy from more than one organism. For example, if humans don't have as many fish to eat, they might be able to eat more sheep and goats.
- There are other organisms in Hargigo we didn't show, like other plants on land.
- It only shows feeding interactions. Removing aquatic plants would affect the ecosystem in other ways, like having less oxygen for animals to use.

Acknowledge the complexity and challenges of modeling the balance of an ecosystem.

## Learn about the Emerald Ash Borer 4 minutes

Explain to students that the introduction of a new species is another factor that can change the balance of an ecosystem. 

Remind students that mangrove trees do not naturally grow in some of the places Dr. Sato planted them. (If needed, reread pages 3 and 5 from *The Mangrove Tree* (Roth and Trumbore 2011), and then read page 7.)

► **Why did Dr. Sato plant mangrove trees on the shore of the Red Sea?**

- There was not enough food. The animals and families were starving. The mangrove tree would provide food for the animals, which meant more food for people.
- Most plants couldn't grow in Hargigo because it's too dry and dusty. The mangrove trees could grow in the salty seawater.

Agree that a new organism, the mangrove tree, was introduced in Hargigo to help the people and other animals in the village. Explain that nonnative organisms can be introduced to places for a variety of reasons. Some are introduced by humans intentionally, as the mangrove tree was. Others are introduced accidentally.



### Teacher Note

If students mentioned an invasive or introduced species in the Launch discussion, highlight those responses as examples.



was found. Inform students that they will analyze data about ash trees and that the data could provide evidence about the effects emerald ash borers have on the ecosystems in which they live.

Direct students to locate the data table containing population data for live ash trees (NPS 2017a) (Lesson 20 Activity Guide A). Explain that this table shows the estimated number of living ash trees in national parks in the Washington, DC, area over two periods: 2010–2013 and 2014–2017. Scientists believe the population of emerald ash borers has since increased. ✱ TPS



### Content Area Connection: Mathematics

Challenge students to use their rounding skills (CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.A.3) to estimate the difference in the population of the trees at a given park. Ask questions such as “What place would you round to before finding the difference? Hundreds? Thousands? Ten thousands? Why?”

Park	Live Ash Trees 2010–2013	Live Ash Trees 2014–2017
National Capital Parks–East	68,976	25,720
GW Memorial Parkway	56,205	33,586
Antietam National Battlefield	3,194	2,527
Catoctin Mountain Park	48,440	38,752
Monocacy National Battlefield	3,112	2,490
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park	18,522	15,434
Manassas National Battlefield Park	49,585	41,756
C&O Canal National Historical Park	73,140	64,298
Rock Creek Park	6,046	5,441
Prince William Forest Park	7,647	7,647
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts	123	123
<b>National Capital Region TOTAL</b>	<b>334,990</b>	<b>237,774</b>


Have students annotate the data table in their Science Logbooks to identify patterns. Discuss students’ findings as a class.

↑ if more  
↓ if less  
= if same



### English Language Development

After reading aloud an important word that is likely unfamiliar to students, stop and briefly define the term and provide an example sentence. Then reread the text's sentence without interruption and continue reading. Unfamiliar terms that are important to students' understanding of this article may include *larvae*, *circulatory system*, *integral*, *extinction*, *exclusively*, *temporarily*, *toxic*, and *canopy gaps*. English learners may benefit from additional vocabulary supports such as images illustrating these terms.

After reading the excerpts, ask students to complete the chart in their Science Logbooks (Lesson 20 Activity Guide B) by recording examples of how different organisms are affected by the emerald ash borer. Keep the article visible so students can refer to the text. 

Sample student response:

Organism	How does the emerald ash borer affect this organism?
Ash tree	Larvae eat the inner bark of the tree, which cuts off the tree's circulation. Trees can die within a few years.
Insects and spiders	Many insects and spiders get food and shelter from ash trees. Some species only eat ash trees. These species may become extinct because they will not have food.
Woodpeckers and some other birds	These birds get food and shelter from dead ash trees. For a while, they may have more food and shelter because there are more dead ash trees.
Caterpillars and butterflies	When ash trees die, more sunlight can reach the ground. This can cause some plants to become more toxic. Caterpillars that eat those plants may die.



### Differentiation

Consider allowing students who need writing supports to annotate a copy of the article instead of writing in their science logbooks. Students can circle the organisms affected by the emerald ash borer and underline the effects. Ensure that these students orally describe the effects in their own words; speaking about the effects will help students process the information.



- Different ecosystems have different species of plants and animals. For example, the emerald ash borer would only affect woodpeckers in ecosystems that have woodpeckers.
- Ecosystems with a lot of ash trees may become unstable faster than ecosystems with just a few ash trees.

Point out that the article and the data from the Washington, DC, area national parks each describe different ecosystems. However, some patterns in the emerald ash borer's effects remain consistent across ecosystems with ash trees.

## Land

5 minutes


\* Chart w/ partner then create a class chart

Inform students that they will compare the effects of the emerald ash borer and the mangrove tree on the ecosystems into which they were introduced. Have students contrast the effects of the two organisms by using a collaborative conversation routine such as Inside-Outside Circles or Think-Pair-Share.

As students share, capture their ideas on the whiteboard or a piece of chart paper.

Sample class comparison chart:

Effects of Emerald Ash Borer on North American Forest Ecosystems	Effects of Mangrove Tree on Hargigo Ecosystem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kills ash trees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not kill other organisms (that we know of)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes many insects to have less food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides food for animals that eat plants and animals that eat those animals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes some animals to have less shelter, but some birds have more shelter for a while</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides shelter for some animals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harms many organisms, and some may become extinct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps many organisms, including people</li> </ul>

Guide students toward the understanding that, based on the evidence the class gathered, the mangrove tree has an overall positive effect on the balance of the Hargigo ecosystem, while the emerald ash borer has an overall negative effect on the balance of North American forest ecosystems.  *key term*

Explain that the emerald ash borer is an example of an **invasive species**, or a species that is not native to an ecosystem (that is, it arrived from a different ecosystem) and has the tendency to spread rapidly and disrupt the balance of the ecosystem.



### English Language Development

The term *invasive species* is used repeatedly in upcoming lessons. Introduce this term explicitly. Sharing the Spanish cognate *especie invasora* may be helpful. Explain that *invade* (verb) means the act of taking over an area. Consider having students act out an invasion and take over an area of the classroom to help them visualize the ideas of invasion and invasive species.

Introduce students to the next Phenomenon Question: **How can we reduce the damage an invasive species causes to an ecosystem?** Explain that in the next lesson, students will participate in an engineering challenge to develop solutions that could protect the balance of North American forest ecosystems from the effects of the emerald ash borer.

## Optional Homework

Students research invasive species in their local area and share what they find with a family member.



### Teacher Note

Introduced species can affect many organisms in the environment where they are introduced and in different ways. Clarify for students that an introduced species can positively affect some organisms while negatively affecting others, so determining whether an introduced species is beneficial to an ecosystem's balance is a matter of perspective.





### Check for Understanding

As students work, ensure that they correctly describe the effects of the emerald ash borer on other organisms.

#### Evidence

Look for evidence that all students

- identify ash trees, arthropods (insects and spiders), woodpeckers, and butterflies or caterpillars as affected organisms;
- describe the relevant interactions of those organisms (e.g., arthropods eat ash trees); and
- briefly explain the effect on the organism (e.g., some arthropods may become extinct because they will not have a source of food).

#### Next Steps

If students are unable to describe the effects of the emerald ash borer on other organisms, reread the excerpts in a small group. After reading about an effect on an organism, have students draw a model of the relevant interactions of those organisms and describe the resulting effects.

Explain that students will combine information from the article about the emerald ash borer and the data on living ash trees in the Washington, DC, area to explain how the beetle affects other organisms.

#### ► What other changes might the emerald ash borer cause in an ecosystem? —in Louisiana?

- Other animals might be able to eat emerald ash borers. So, those other animals might actually have more food.
- For a while, the soil might have more nutrients because decomposers would decompose the dead ash trees.

#### ► How do you think changes in the balance of an ecosystem could be measured?

- You could count the number of each type of organism each year. Over the years, you could see whether populations increased, decreased, or stayed the same.
- You could observe what animals eat over several years. Then you could analyze the data and see whether the food web is changing.

#### ► How might the emerald ash borer have different effects in different ecosystems?

- It would probably kill ash trees in any ecosystem that has ash trees.
- Are there ash trees in Asia? Can the emerald ash borer eat different types of trees? In ecosystems without ash trees, it might not kill so many trees.



### Spotlight on Crosscutting Concepts

Use this opportunity to discuss the concept that “change is measured in terms of differences over time and may occur at different rates” (CC.7).

### ► What patterns do you notice in the data?

- Most of the parks had fewer live ash trees in 2014 through 2017 than in 2010 through 2013.
- The number of ash trees changed by different amounts. For example, the ash trees in National Capital Parks-East went down by 43,256 trees, and Rock Creek Park went down by 605 trees.
- Two parks did not have a decrease in ash trees: Prince William Forest and Wolf Trap.

### ► What effects might the emerald ash borer have on ash trees?

- I think the emerald ash borers kill the ash trees somehow. The total number of ash trees decreased a lot in the Washington, DC, area.

### ► Does this data prove that emerald ash borers cause ash trees to die? What other evidence would support that claim?

- No, this data does not prove the claim. We would need to know about other variables in the ecosystem. Something else could be causing ash trees to die, like a drought or other organisms.
- Are other trees dying or just ash trees? If many kinds of trees are dying, there might be another cause.
- Are there emerald ash borers in the Prince William Forest and Wolf Trap parks? If those are the only two parks without ash borers, it would support the claim that ash borers kill the ash trees.
- How does the emerald ash borer interact with ash trees? Can a small insect kill a tree?

Point out that events occurring at the same time may or may not have a cause and effect relationship, and students will need to gather more information to understand whether emerald ash borers can cause ash trees to die.

## Read about Ecosystem Impacts 13 minutes

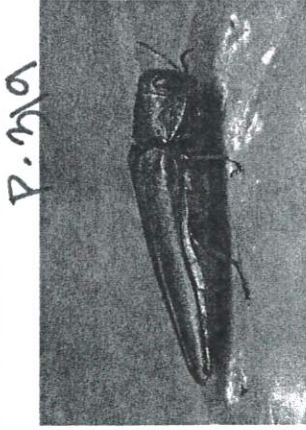
Introduce the article *Emerald Ash Borer Invasion of North American Forests* (Rice and Klooster 2014) (Lesson 20 Resource B). Display the article or provide students with a copy, and then read both excerpts to the class. While reading, pause after key details and ask students to orally paraphrase the idea with a partner.

*highlight organisms & how they are affected*

*'Shoulder Partner' read aloud*



Tell students they will observe another organism that is new to its current ecosystem. Display the photograph of an emerald ash borer (Lesson 20 Resource A), but do not tell students what it is.



► **What do you notice about this organism?**

- It looks like a type of insect.
- It is shiny green with a little bit of yellow.
- It has large black eyes.
- It might have wings.

► **What do you wonder about the organism?**

- What does it eat?
- How large is it?
- How did it arrive to the new ecosystem?
- Where does it live? Does it live in our state?

After students share, inform them that the photograph shows a type of beetle called an emerald ash borer. Explain that students will learn about how the emerald ash borer affects the balance of certain ecosystems in North America. They will then compare these effects to those of the mangrove trees in Hargigo.

## Analyze Ash Tree Data 10 minutes

Explain that arborists, specialists who care for trees, first detected the emerald ash borer living in the United States in 2002. They noticed that ash trees were present in many ecosystems where the beetle

→ Point out that the EAB has been found in 10 provinces in north & A.



### Teacher Note

Background for teachers: The emerald ash borer (EAB) is a beetle from northeastern Asia. It was unintentionally introduced to the United States in the 1990s, most likely in a cargo ship or airplane that was carrying wood, and was first discovered in Michigan in 2002. Adult emerald ash borers lay eggs on ash trees, in cracks in the bark. Larvae hatch and feed on the inner bark of the tree. The damage disrupts the tree's water and nutrient transportation systems, eventually killing the tree. EAB is still spreading across the United States and Canada.

# Learn

32 minutes

## Describe Ecosystem Balance 5 minutes

Explain that ecologists often use terms such as **health** or **balance** to describe the state of an ecosystem. Ask students to use evidence from their yarn webs to describe the balance of the mangrove tree ecosystem.

### ► When was the ecosystem balanced? Why?

- *Before the aquatic plants died, all the animals had food to eat.*
- *In the first model we made, the ecosystem was balanced. All the organisms had the matter and energy they needed.*

### ► When was the ecosystem less balanced? Why?

- *When the aquatic plants died, the ecosystem went out of balance. All the animals that ate aquatic plants ran out of food. Then the animals that ate those smaller animals ran out of food.*
- *When aquatic plants were removed, all the organisms were affected. Even the decomposers would have fewer dead plants and animals to decompose. Other plants might not have as many nutrients to use.*

### ► What do you think it means for an ecosystem to be balanced?

- *An ecosystem is balanced when everything in the food web has enough to eat.*
- *In a balanced ecosystem, all the organisms have the matter and energy they need to live.*
- *I think it also means that one population doesn't get too big and eat too much food.*

Review the ideas that organisms can only survive in environments in which their needs are met and that organisms rely on each other and the environment to obtain the matter and energy necessary for life. Tell students that many ecologists consider an ecosystem to be balanced or healthy when its web of interactions is stable. This means that many species can meet their needs without the ecosystem changing too much.



Attachment: TOY\_Regena-Beard\_-Headshot.jpg



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to recommend that Mrs. Regena Beard, an exemplary teacher, represent the teachers of the Zachary Community School System and the state of Louisiana as Teacher of the Year. As her former principal, I have had the fortunate opportunity to work with and observe Mrs. Beard and the impact that she has on children and colleagues alike.

In the classroom, I have observed Mrs. Beard as an excellent teacher who implements effective teaching strategies into her science instruction. Mrs. Beard has proven year after year that she is a highly effective teacher. She takes pride in her student's growth and pushes them to their maximum potential. This can be seen in her highly effective evaluation scores each year, the highest a teacher can earn.

She has eagerly participated in many partnerships with STEM organizations. These partnerships have not only ensured professional growth and knowledge for Mrs. Beard, but they have also provided exposure of these organizations to students and even opportunities for other teachers on campus to further develop their knowledge of curriculum and supports for their standards.

She has initiated a virtual meeting with Charlie Barnes, the Co-founder and President of the Board of Nola Code and code.org to discuss implementing Hour of Code into her classroom. In this meeting, discussions were had about best practices in computer science education along with professional organizations for computer science educators. This collaboration also helped Mrs. Beard to set up a guest speaker in the classroom from a local business to talk with students about careers in computer science.

In a partnership with The Technical Education Research Centers, Mrs. Beard enrolled her students to participate in a study to develop learning materials called INFAC: The Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Foundations and Applications of Computational thinking. Her students' data helped to develop, test, and improve the learning of computational thinking.

In an effort to incorporate different STEM curriculums to support the student standards, Mrs. Beard implemented the 4-H Robotics Curriculum through Louisiana State University. Her students participated in the curriculum and provided LSU with data via online surveys. The surveys were done before the curriculum implementation, after each lesson, and at the end of the unit.

For several years, Mrs. Beard provided opportunities for science interested students to explore the physics and technologies of Disney parks. While managed by Disney Imagineers and Mrs. Beard, students were able to explore the physics principles Disney Imagineers use to create new and classic Disney theme park attractions. Not only is this experience fun and engaging, but it connects the classroom curriculum to the real, outside world.

Mrs. Beard works throughout the school year and in the summer to align curriculum and assessments with the standards. She evaluates students' performance on standardized tests and common assessments to progress monitor the growth of students. This progress monitoring tracks their performance as it aligns to the LEAP standardized test. Because of these trainings



and experiences mentioned in this letter, in addition so many more, she enters each teaching experience with the best knowledge and understanding of practices that may benefit her students. Mrs. Beard set up a pilot program for fourteen teachers in the school. This pilot allows teachers to have access to an online program to help close learning gaps. Within this program, she implemented a reward system to motivate students to continue to learn online while at home. This is evidence that Mrs. Beard is not only impacting her students, but through programs such as this one, she is impacting almost every student at Copper Mill Elementary School.

As a mentor in the district's new teacher induction program, Mrs. Beard serves as mentor teacher to several teachers each year. Mentor teachers are local educators who have the knowledge and skills to effectively coach and support aspiring, new, and resident teachers in the district. Support is given through weekly meetings, peer observations, needs assessment, and a book study. As a mentor leader, Mrs. Beard can be a model to her team.

Among her colleagues, Mrs. Beard is respected professionally. She shares practices learned at professional development sessions with her colleagues. She often presents to staff on district professional development days. To carry out her professional responsibilities, she gives generously of her time, yet still has volunteered to lead groups of students in after school Science events.

Recently, Mrs. Beard published an article titled, *Incorporating Coding into STEM Classes* on the online professional source, Edutopia. Edutopia is a trusted source that serves as a hub for professional articles written with a focus on giving educators ideas on how they can adopt or adapt best practices through innovation and continuous learning in the real world. At present, Mrs. Beard is assisting in the pilot RoboBlocky Robotics program as part of the Louisiana STEM initiative. Since RoboBlocky is a web-based robot simulation environment for learning coding, math, and robotics, Mrs. Beard is a perfect leader for this program with her extensive science, engineering and robotics background.

One amazing accomplishment that Mrs. Regena Beard has achieved this year is being selected as a PAEMST state recipient. These awards are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teaching. The award recognizes those teachers have both deep content knowledge of the subjects they teach and the ability to motivate and enable students to be successful in those areas. As a state recipient, Mrs. Beard is currently awaiting to hear if she was selected as a national recipient of the award!

The above-mentioned accolades and contributions were under my supervision as principal of Copper Mill Elementary School. Since my retirement, Mrs. Beard has continued her excellence. This is evident by the fact that she was selected as the district Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Beard is an asset to her students, colleagues, school, and community. I feel honored to have worked with her and proud to recommend her as Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the principal.

## Let Teachers Teach Webinar

On August 8, 2024, I had the opportunity to represent the Let Teachers Teach workgroup in a webinar titled *"Have We Made Teaching Too Hard for Mere Mortals?"* The event featured Robert Pondiscio from the American Enterprise Institute, Dr. Cade Brumley from the Louisiana Department of Education, and Michael Sonbert from Skyrocket Education. Together, we explored strategies for making teaching a more appealing and sustainable profession.

Click to watch the webinar, ["Have we Made Teaching Too Hard for Mere Mortals?"](#)



## Louisiana Robotics Pilot Program

I am honored to provide pedagogical support to educators across Louisiana who are participating in a groundbreaking initiative—the middle school robotics pilot program sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Education. This program is designed to introduce students to foundational concepts in robotics and coding while fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

As part of this initiative, on November 21, 2024, I facilitated a *Community of Practice* session tailored for teachers involved in the pilot. This professional development opportunity focused on equipping educators with the tools and strategies needed to effectively integrate *RoboBlocky* and *Barobo Linkbots* into their classroom instruction.

The session emphasized core aspects of pedagogy, such as classroom/materials management, planning resources, differentiation, facilitation, and assessment. Specifically, we explored how to leverage the RoboBlocky platform before, during, and after the lesson using best practices.

Click here to see the [slide deck](#) and a [recording of the COP session](#).

## 2024 App Round 3:

### 2026 Teacher/Principal of the Year Finalist Tasks

#### Which are you- Teacher of the Year or Principal of the Year?

Teacher of the Year Finalist

#### School System Name

Zachary Community School District

### Written Response Prompt

**As the 2026 Louisiana Teacher or Principal of the Year, serving as the ambassador of education for Louisiana, you have been asked to give a speech to an audience of education stakeholders (Teachers will be addressing teachers and principals will be addressing principals.) What is your message? Please add your speech below.**

#### Add your written response here.

Before I prepared to speak with you today, I turned to the experts I know best—my fifth-grade students. I asked them what they thought I should share with a room full of teachers. Without hesitation, they told me to let you know that they are, in their words, “the best class ever” and “extremely smart.” And honestly, I agree!

But what struck me most was what came next. They wanted you to know that you, their teachers, are the reason they feel smart. That simple statement hit me deeply. These students recognize that their learning this year has shaped how they see themselves. They feel capable, confident, and intelligent because someone took the time to teach, to encourage, and to believe in them.

What other profession has that kind of impact? Where else can you help a child walk away with not only new knowledge but also with a stronger sense of self?

One student added a comment that stayed with me: “You have to be a student to be a teacher.” While she meant this quite literally, it gave me pause. In many ways, she’s right—we are students. We are constantly learning, adapting, and evolving to improve our practice. We study our students, refine our methods, and learn from one another. We reflect, adjust, and grow. Being a teacher means being a lifelong learner. It means staying curious, open, and committed to becoming better—not because we aren’t already doing incredible work, but because our students deserve our very best.

Wherever I go, in every classroom I visit, I witness something profoundly beautiful: the quiet strength of educators. The magic of teachers who continue to show up—not for the spotlight, not for the salary, not for the neatly packaged lessons, but for the kids. You show up for the child who barely makes eye contact, for the one who talks too much because they’re afraid of silence, and for the one who never has a pencil, but always has questions worth answering.

Teaching is about the look in a child’s eyes when they realize you believe in them. It’s about knowing that even if you never see the final outcome, you are planting seeds that may take years to bloom.

Now let me be clear: curriculum matters. Students need a high-quality, rigorous curriculum in a classroom environment where relationships are built and the child feels safe, seen, and supported. It is our job to grow students academically, emotionally, and socially. We grow the whole child.

We celebrate the child who reads two levels below grade but finally finishes their first chapter book. We comfort the child who just had a meltdown because life outside of school is difficult. We make space for joy, curiosity, and even silliness.

Teaching is sacred work, and yet, we often forget that. We’re so busy navigating behavior plans, student standards, and the newest curriculum; we sometimes forget that we are the ones who bring the standards to life. We are the ones who turn content into connection, and structure into support. But let’s also be honest with each other, this is hard. There are days we question if we’re making a difference; if we’re enough. There are days when we give everything, and it still feels like it wasn’t quite right. And on those days, I want you to remember this: you are not alone. We are united by one shared truth: we chose this work because we believe in something bigger than ourselves. We believe in students, their potential, and their future impacts on the world.

So, if no one has said it to you lately, let me say it now: Thank you. Thank you for every early morning, every late night, every tough conversation, every smile you forced when you were tired, and every second you spent thinking about how to help just one student move forward.

You are seen. You are valued. You are making a difference.

You are not just teaching content! You are shaping character. You are not just guiding lessons. You are guiding lives. You are not just a teacher.

You are a mirror, a mentor, a model of what it means to care, to try, and to grow.

You are the heart of this profession. Your impact can’t always be measured, but it can always be felt. Let us keep showing up and lifting each other. Let us keep growing the whole child and in doing so, growing the future.

### Additional Uploads



**Written Response Upload-** You may submit additional artifacts that support your response. (Optional)

**Professional Bio** Add your professional bio in the textbox below. You may use the same bio you submitted in your initial application. Your professional bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined

here

#### Round 2 Bio

##### Add Bio Here

Regena Hartley Beard is a dedicated educator specializing in 5th-grade science and 6th-grade robotics/STEM at Copper Mill Elementary in Zachary, Louisiana. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education degree from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Master of Curriculum and Instruction with a STEM concentration degree from Louisiana State University - Shreveport. Recognized for her innovative approach to science education, she received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) and has been recognized as the Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year by the Louisiana Science Teachers Association. She is a certified teacher mentor, founded a robotics and coding club at Copper Mill Elementary, and serves on Teacher Advisory Councils at both the district and state levels.

In addition to her classroom work, Beard has made significant contributions to the broader educational community. Her commitment to advancing computer science education includes serving on the Computer Science Advisory Council and is a Computer Science Teacher Leader Advisor. She is a member of the Teacher Advisory Council and was also a member of the Let Teachers Teach workgroup, helping to make the teaching profession more sustainable.

Passionate about fostering real-world connections in her classroom, Beard emphasizes the integration of computer science in elementary education, helping students understand the relevance of STEM in everyday life. Her approach aims to empower young learners by connecting classroom concepts to practical applications, nurturing problem-solving skills, and inspiring lifelong curiosity in science and technology.

Optional Upload- If you would like to include any additional item(s) to accompany your application, such as a video, newspaper article, etc., please upload below.

##### Optional Upload 1

##### Optional Upload 2

**Candidate Consent** Please review the terms in the candidate consent form and check the appropriate box below. You may view the consent form here- [here](#).

##### Checkbox

I consent to the terms in the form.

**Student Consent** Student consent forms are needed for each student included in your state-level application, such as in photos, videos, etc.

Link to Student Consent Forms: [https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/student-consent-form.docx?sfvrsn=98d9911f\\_4](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/student-consent-form.docx?sfvrsn=98d9911f_4)

**Are there any new students that were not included in the previous round?**

No

If you would like to include a note/message, please enter here.

##### 2024 App Round 1



## 2024 App Round 2: Regena Hartley Beard

### **\*\*Teacher/Principal of the Year Semifinalist Application\*\***

#### **\*\*Which are you- Teacher of the Year or Principal of the Year?\*\***

Teacher of the Year candidate

**\*\*By the end of day on Tuesday, March 26, please complete all tasks and submit.**

#### **Written Response**

##### **Written Response One**

Teacher and Principal of the Year Prompt: How do you teach and support students to persevere in the face of challenges, underscoring the importance of bouncing back from difficulties? In your response, include how you draw on your own experiences to teach resilience. (maximum of 750 words)

#### **Add your written response in the textbox below. (750 words or less)**

In my personal life, I have persevered through challenging situations such as the loss of family members, losing everything in the flood of 2016, a divorce, and Covid; the list is endless. Challenges are a part of daily life, varying in scale for each individual. While some obstacles may seem minor to us, they can be significant hurdles for our students. As educators, it is essential to equip students with the skills and resilience needed to navigate and overcome challenges, fostering their growth both academically and personally.

At the start of each school year, I share the inspiring story of my brother [REDACTED] diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy at the age of five and given a life expectancy of just 18 years. [REDACTED] faced immense challenges throughout his life. Yet, he remained unwaveringly positive, embracing every moment with determination and a passion for art.

As his condition progressed, creating art became increasingly difficult. By age 10, he was confined to a wheelchair, and by the time he graduated from high school, he had lost the ability to move his limbs. Despite these obstacles, he refused to let them define him. When I began my teaching career, [REDACTED] wanted to see my classroom but was unable to visit in person. Instead, he asked me to describe it to him. Quietly and persistently, he spent the entire school year bringing my words to life, drawing a picture of my classroom one small pencil stroke at a time. That drawing has hung on my classroom wall ever since, serving as a daily reminder to me and my students that challenges will arise, but perseverance and resilience can turn obstacles into achievements.

[REDACTED] surpassed all expectations, living to the age of 32 and leaving a profound impact on both those who knew him and those who never had the chance to meet him. His story embodies resilience and the power of persistence. When students feel frustrated, I point to [REDACTED] drawing and remind them to take it one step—one pencil stroke—at a time. In our classroom, we embrace productive struggle, knowing that growth and persistence, not perfection, are our goals.

I also believe that being transparent with students teaches them how to bounce back from difficulties. When I notice a student struggling, I take the time to engage in meaningful conversations, offering support and guidance drawn from my personal experiences.

One poignant example involves a student who began exhibiting unusual behavioral changes. Recognizing the shift, I approached him with empathy, and he eventually confided in me that his parents were going through a divorce. I was able to share my own experience of navigating a divorce and the challenges it brought to my children. By discussing the emotions my own family faced and the strategies we used to cope, I provided him with reassurance that he was not alone. This connection helped him feel understood and empowered him to find healthy ways to manage his emotions.

Teaching perseverance also requires fostering a classroom environment where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. I encourage students to embrace challenges and remind them that failure is not an endpoint but rather a stepping stone toward success. Whether it's struggling through a difficult math problem, refining a science experiment, or overcoming personal struggles, I celebrate their efforts rather than just the outcomes. Through positive reinforcement and ongoing encouragement, I help students build confidence in their ability to persevere.

Additionally, I incorporate growth mindset principles into my teaching. By reinforcing the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed with effort and practice, I help students shift their mindset from "I can't do this" to "I can't do this yet." I share with students that I also adopted this mindset when I began teaching science, a subject that I grew up saying I was not good at. When students encounter difficulties, I guide them in breaking down challenges into manageable steps, teaching them that perseverance is about consistent effort and adaptability.

Ultimately, my goal is to equip students with the mindset and skills necessary to navigate life's challenges with determination. By sharing personal stories, fostering a supportive learning environment, and encouraging a growth mindset, I help my students develop the resilience they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Through these efforts, I hope to leave them with the understanding that perseverance is not just about academic success—it is a lifelong skill that will empower them to overcome any obstacle they encounter.



## Video Response

Please respond to the prompt below. The video should not exceed one minute and 30 seconds. After recording the video, put into a YouTube link and add the link in the textbox below.

Teacher and Principal of the Year Prompt: What education issue are you most passionate about? In your response, tell why this issue is important to you, as well as describe any work you've done to address this issue and how this work embodies you as an educator, as well as future work you hope to accomplish. Include evidence of the impact of this work to support your response.

**Add your Youtube video link in the textbox.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiX2u1kINUw>

**Video Response Upload (optional)**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Video Response Upload.pdf

## Additional Uploads

If you would like to upload any additional items to your application you may do so below. This is optional. Examples could include newspaper articles, photos, videos, awards, etc.

**Additional Upload 1 (optional)**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Additional Upload 1.pdf

**Additional Upload 2 (optional)**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_Additional Upload 2.pdf

## Social Media and Bio

**Professional Bio** Add your professional bio in the textbox below. You may use the same bio you submitted in your initial application. Your professional bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined

here

**2024 App Round 1- You may search by name for the bio you submitted in Round 1.**

### Professional Bio textbox

Regena Hartley Beard is a dedicated educator specializing in 5th-grade science and 6th-grade robotics/STEM at Copper Mill Elementary in Zachary, Louisiana. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education degree from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Master of Curriculum and Instruction with a STEM concentration degree from Louisiana State University - Shreveport. Recognized for her innovative approach to science education, she was recognized as the Outstanding Science Teacher of the Year by the Louisiana Science Teachers Association and received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). She is a certified teacher mentor, founded a robotics and coding club at Copper Mill Elementary, and serves on Teacher Advisory Councils at both the district and state levels.

In addition to her classroom work, Beard has made significant contributions to the broader educational community. Her commitment to advancing computer science education includes serving on the Computer Science Advisory Council and is a Computer Science Teacher Leader Advisor. She is a member of the Teacher Advisory Council and was also a member of the Let Teacher Teach workgroup, helping to make the teaching profession more sustainable.

Passionate about fostering real-world connections in her classroom, Beard emphasizes the integration of computer science in elementary education, helping students understand the relevance of STEM in everyday life. Her approach aims to empower young learners by connecting classroom concepts to practical applications, nurturing problem-solving skills, and inspiring lifelong curiosity in science and technology.

**Your six word story will be used with various graphics and comms. If you would like to update your original six word story, please add it below.**

Igniting a lifelong passion for learning.

## Photo Uploads

Please upload a headshot and a photo of you participating in your favorite past-time/hobby. Be sure and follow the photo guidelines outlined

here

**Headshot**

TOY\_Regena Beard\_ Headshot.jpg

**Hobby Photo**

IMG\_9865.jpg

**Candidate Consent** With your consent, your photos and/or videos could be used in media (such as on the Dept.'s or Dream Teacher's social media accounts), as well as shared with others (such as your fellow semifinalists), to celebrate you as a state-level honoree. Please check the appropriate box to indicate if you consent or not. You may view the consent form [here](#)- [here](#).

**Please check the appropriate box below.**

I agree to the terms in the consent form.

**Student Consent** If students are included in your application, you must have a consent form on file. If you obtained a consent for a student in your initial application and still have on file, you do not need to get a new consent form. Student consent forms are needed for each student included in your state-level application, such as in photos, videos, etc.

Link to Student Consent Forms: [https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/student-consent-form.docx?sfvrsn=98d9911f\\_4](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/student-consent-form.docx?sfvrsn=98d9911f_4)

**Are there any new students that were not included in the previous round?**

No

**Additional Information**

**Your current phone number (Preferably cell, with area code. Please list with hyphens, such as, 225-342-7695.)**

[REDACTED]

**Your email address.**

[REDACTED]

**School System Name**

Zachary Community School District

**School mailing address**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Your name as you'd like to see it in print on a certificate (include Dr., Ms., etc., if you like.)**

Regena Hartley Beard

**Name Pronunciation – Please add a note for pronouncing your name (if needed) in the textbox below. Examples include- Francois ('franz-swah); Hebert (A-Bear); Soileau (swah-'low), etc.**

**Teachers- What grade(s) do you teach this year?**

5th and 6th

**Teachers- What subject(s) do you teach this year?**

5th - Science

6th - Robotics/STEM

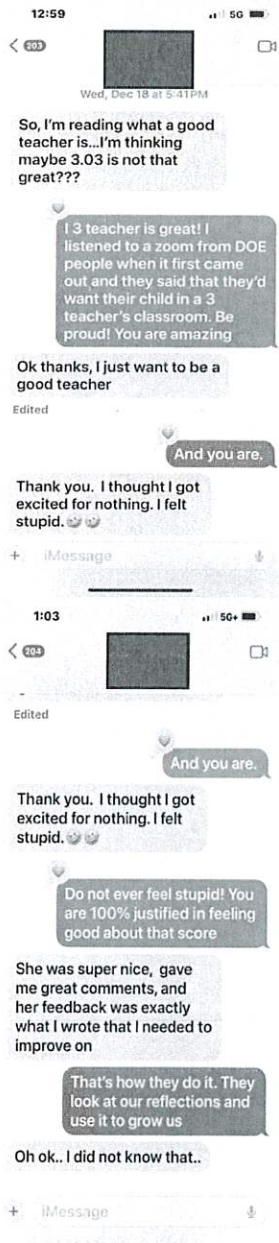
**Principals- What grade(s) do you serve as the school leader this year?**

**If you know you will serve in a different role next year, please add role in the textbox below.**

**If you'd like to include a note, please add here.**



## Mentor/Mentee Communication



## Mentee Receives New Teacher of the Year



### Copper Mill Elementary School

Nov 28, 2023 •

CME is excited to announce Ms. Bri... See more

51

23 comments 5 shares

Like Comment Send Share



### Copper Mill Elementary School

Nov 28, 2023 •

CME is excited to announce Ms. Brittaney Rosenbohm as the CME New Teacher of the Year! Ms. Rosenbohm, known around school as "Ms. R," brings an infectious positive energy to our campus. CME is honored to be support you in your career as an educator.

51

23 comments 5 shares

Like Comment Send Share

## Let Teachers Teach Press Conference



### Competency Three Addendum

I regularly engage in collaboration with my content cohorts twice a week, where we analyze student data to identify academic gaps and create focused plans that address specific student needs. This data-driven approach ensures that our strategies are aligned with the goal of improving student outcomes. Additionally, I meet with a multidisciplinary team of teachers to discuss students' academic, social, and emotional needs across various subjects. This holistic approach allows us to support each student more effectively by addressing their needs throughout the entire school day and ensuring that no aspect of their educational experience is overlooked.

At the beginning of the school year, I guide my students in creating a class vision that unites our learning. Using the Socratic method, I ask students why they come to school and take their answers to ask why those reasons are important. We continue several rounds of questioning, refining their responses until we arrive at a class vision that encapsulates our purpose as a learning community and is posted for the duration of the school year. This process not only encourages deep thinking but also fosters student ownership of their education, creating a shared commitment to success.

As a member of the Zachary Teacher Advisory Council, I collaborate with educators, instructional coaches, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors from all schools in the district. This council provides valuable input on the district's strategic plan, helping to shape decisions that affect our educational community. Through these collaborative efforts, I work to ensure that our collective vision and strategies are aligned to foster both academic success and the overall well-being of our students.

Engagement with parents is also a key aspect of my approach to fostering student growth. At the start of the school year, parents and students are invited to attend orientation where they have the opportunity to meet the teacher, familiarize themselves with the school environment, and feel comfortable as they prepare for the academic year. This initial meeting helps establish trust and open lines of communication. Later in the year, during an open house, I provide parents with strategies to stay actively involved in their child's learning. I emphasize the importance of accessing our Team's page for daily updates on standards, objectives, agendas, and study materials. I also share strategies for supporting their child with our curriculum and maintaining an open dialogue with me throughout the year. To maintain consistent communication, I send reminders about upcoming assignments and tests and share short instructional videos that help both students and parents navigate our digital platforms and understand key concepts.

Through these efforts, I strive to build strong, meaningful relationships with my colleagues, students, and families. This collaborative approach helps create a safe, thriving learning environment that is centered around respect, achievement, and the well-being of all stakeholders. By keeping communication clear and impactful, I ensure that everyone involved is equipped to support the student's academic journey, leading to lifelong success. Ultimately, this continuous collaboration contributes to student growth and achievement, as we work together to provide a comprehensive and supportive educational experience.



