

LOUISIANA ANNOUNCES SIXTH COHORT OF LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TO ENHANCE EARLY LEARNING

August 19, 2024

30 Directors were selected to participate in the sixth cohort of the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy

The Louisiana Department of Education announced that 30 early childhood directors, from various parishes across the state, have been selected to participate in the sixth cohort of the [Louisiana Early Leaders Academy](#) (LELA). This executive-level program for directors of publicly-funded early learning centers will help ensure that more and more providers throughout the state are prepared to provide high-quality care and education to children. In addition, LELA works to ensure that the work environment for teachers and early education staff is supportive, development-focused, and a place where a career can be made. The ultimate aim is to create excellent education opportunities and excellent work environments where teachers want to stay and thrive.

Each participating director, called a Fellow, was selected through a competitive application and interview process. In their applications, center directors were asked to describe their goals for improving instructional leadership in their centers and increasing their influence in the early childhood field across the state and country.

The Academy holds its first training in August. The 10 month fellowship offers participants:

- Full cohort meetings that will cover a strategically-planned syllabus about leadership skills and best practices that participants can bring back to their centers, to improve the quality of care for children and the work environment for their teachers and staff, including
 - The Whole Leader Framework
 - Building Equity and Leadership in Your Center
 - Building Quality Improvement Systems in Your Center
 - Core Knowledge for Instructional Leaders
 - Key Skills and Mindsets for Instructional Leaders
- Monthly “Home Team” calls, of small groups of fellows, collaborating to address complex problems, particularly ones that impact their specific regions, cultural experiences, communities, etc. These small groups allow for more in-depth problem-solving and brainstorming, as well as building a more tight-knit community of leaders who establish trust and collaboration amongst their peers.
- Monthly one-on-one coaching on topics such as transferring knowledge to practice, effective goal setting, and building strong teaching teams, to ensure that the learning happening in the full cohort meetings are being absorbed and implemented at the center level.

- Monthly assignments to help participants build the skills taught in the full-sessions, such as how to implement the Whole Leader Framework in their day to day operations and what quality improvement systems they will implement at their center.

Over the course of the program, fellows will learn about managing systems changes, building strong teams, and improving program operations. # # #

Fellows participating in Cohort 6 of the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy include:

East Baton Rouge Parish: Ashley Nettles-Sims, Ivy League Learning Academy

East Baton Rouge Parish: Ashley Ward, Robyn's Nest Learning Center

East Baton Rouge Parish: Bianca Rice, Young Scholars Academy

East Baton Rouge Parish: Carla Richardson, In Loving Arms Scholars Academy

East Baton Rouge Parish: Ethel Felder, University Presbyterian Day School

East Baton Rouge Parish: Jocelyn Taylor, Raising Angels Stem Academy of excellence

East Baton Rouge Parish: Dr. Nikki Honore, Village Kidz Early Learning Center

East Baton Rouge Parish: Shalanda Leonice White, Little Dreamers Christian Academy - Zachary & Baker

Iberville Parish: Rockeisha Walker, Bright Star

Jefferson Parish: Jessica Sintes, Louise Hayem Manheim Gates Preschool

Jefferson Parish: Kendra Whitaker Sims, Spring Ridge Academy

Jefferson Parish: Naya Turner, It takes a Village Academy

Jefferson Parish: Regina Chesterfield, Wonder Bees Academy

Lafayette: Deshanique Silvan, Sugar 'n Spice Children's academy

Lafayette Parish: Heather Ashley Kimble, Sugar 'n Spice Broussard's Preschool

Lafayette Parish: Mackenzie Lane Romero, Gifted Early Learning Academy Broussard

Orleans Parish: Ashley Jackson, Sentino Too and SEA 3 Academy

Orleans Parish: Chantrell Causey, McMillian's First Steps CDC/Academy

Orleans Parish: Monique Jeanmarie Wilson, Wilson Academy Childcare Center

Ouachita Parish: Abigail Williams, Sprinkles Early Learning Academy

Ouachita Parish: Katie Sue Trichell, Sprinkles Early Learning Academy

Ouachita Parish: Marva Muhammad, Crescent Academy and Childcare Center

Ouachita Parish: Whitney Amber Cheek, McGuire MC CDC

Rapides and Winn Parishes: Shannon Elaine Johns, Cenla Christian Childcare Centers

Richland Parish: Novelette Dorsey, Tender Touch Nursery II

St. Landry Parish: Shelley Joubert, Children of Grace Daycare and Preschool

St. Tammany Parish: Cheryl Steilberg Firmin, Tree of Life Christian Daycare Academy

St. Tammany Parish: Gia Cousin, My Little Sprout Too

Terrebonne Parish: Laquette Edmond, Hope Christian Academy

Washington Parish: Sarah Pierce, The Garden of Knowledge