Consideration of a discussion of funding for special education in the 2018-2019 school year

Students With Disabilities in Louisiana

Louisiana believes that all students, even those with the most significant disabilities, deserve an education that prepares them to be independent and successful in life after high school.
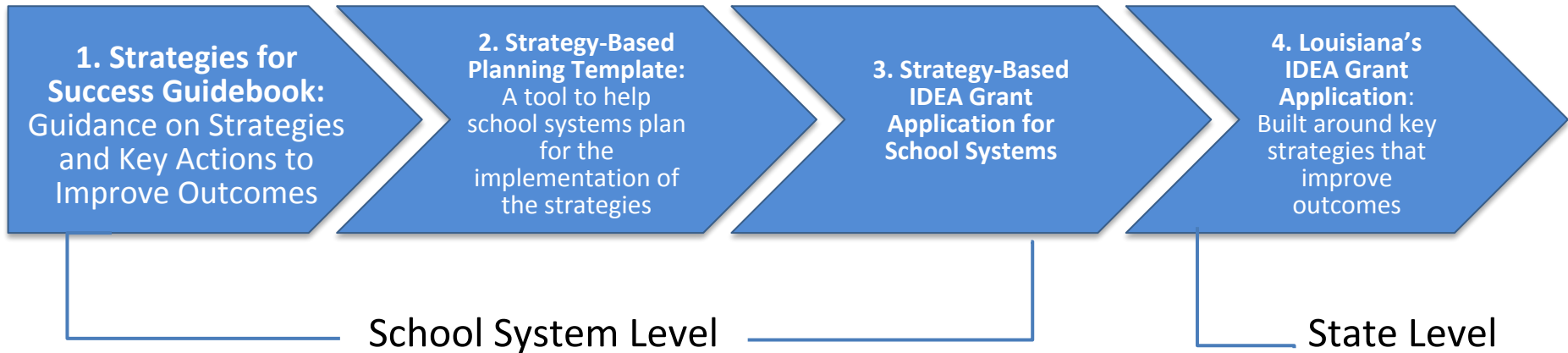
The reality is that, while Louisiana has made significant strides in raising expectations for what all students can learn and achieve through designing and delivering standards-aligned instruction, the performance and outcomes of students with disabilities in Louisiana lags behind that of other students.

Data show achievement gaps across all disability classifications, and these gaps have persisted over time.

Building a Seamless Support System

Achieving this vision requires that we build a seamless support system and that we embrace, at all levels—from the State to the classroom—policies and practices that guarantee high-quality educational experiences for the most vulnerable learners.

LDOE has taken several steps toward building this seamless support system.

1. Strategies for Success Guidebook: Guidance on Strategies and Key Actions to Improve Outcomes

2. Strategy-Based Planning Template: A tool to help school systems plan for the implementation of the strategies

3. Strategy-Based IDEA Grant Application for School Systems

4. Louisiana's IDEA Grant Application: Built around key strategies that improve outcomes

School System Level

State Level

Strategies for Success Guidebook: Improving Outcomes for Students With Disabilities

The Department has identified four strategies that lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities:

1. Identify disabilities early and accurately
2. Provide high-quality instruction to ensure the achievement of ambitious IEP goals
3. Strengthen instruction with specialized supports and related services
4. Coordinate effective transition planning and implementation

Improving Outcomes for
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

EARLY & ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION

COORDINATED & EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS

SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS & RELATED SERVICES

Strategy-Based Planning Template and Aligned School-System Grant Application

Strategy-Based Planning Template
Designed to support school systems as they develop plans for implementing each of the strategies and associated key activities during the 2018-2019 school year.
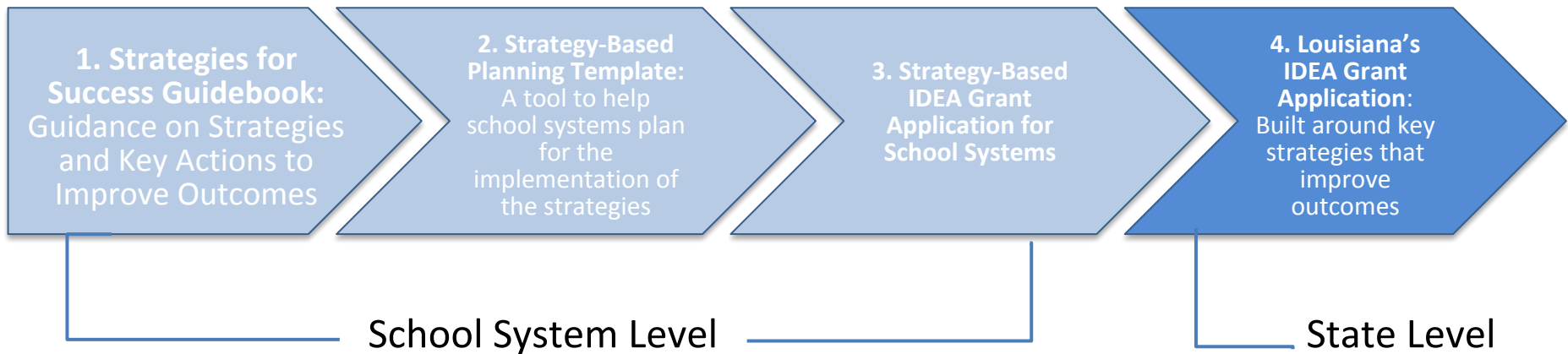
School System IDEA Grant Application
Restructured to mirror the strategy-based planning template and to support school systems in more seamlessly directing funds to support their Special Education plans.

The strategy-based planning template and the high-level changes to the IDEA Grant Application were communicated to school systems during the March Supervisors Collaborations.

Building a Seamless Support System

Achieving this vision requires that we build a seamless support system and that we embrace, at all levels—from the State to the classroom—policies and practices that guarantee high-quality educational experiences for the most vulnerable learners.

LDOE has taken several steps toward building this seamless support system.

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School System Level

State Level

Strategy-Based Funding:
Louisiana's FFY18 IDEA Grant Application

Louisiana's IDEA FFY 18 draft grant application prioritizes funding activities and initiatives for the 2018-2019 school year that will support the following strategies:

- Strategy 1: Identifying disabilities early and accurately;
- Strategy 2: Providing high-quality instruction to ensure the achievement of ambitious IEP goals
- Strategy 3: Strengthening instruction with specialized supports and related services
- Strategy 4: Coordinating effective transition planning and implementation

IDEA Funding Sources

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides states with multiple funding sources. Louisiana currently receives funds from all parts of the IDEA but not all are managed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

	IDEA Part C	IDEA Part B 619	IDEA Part B 611	IDEA Part D
Students Served	Ages 0-3	Ages 3-5	Ages 3-21	N/A
Grant Focus	Formula grant that assists states in providing early intervention services for infants and toddlers	Formula grant targeted specifically at children ages 3-5 with disabilities to provide a FAPE	Formula grant to provide funding for the provision of FAPE for students ages 3-21	Discretionary grant to support research, technical assistance and dissemination, technology, personnel development and parent-training and information centers. (LA Ex: SPDG and LAPTIC)
State Agency	LDH	LDOE	LDOE	Anyone who applies for specific grants
Application Required	Y	N	Y	Y

IDEA 611 Grant Overview

The IDEA Part B 611 grant award details the amount that must be spent in the following three categories of expenditures:

IDEA Flow Through
The State must flow this money directly to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for the provision of special education services to eligible students. This historically comprises 85 percent or greater of the total award.

IDEA Set Aside
Set aside funds are approximately 10 percent of the total grant award and are managed at the state level to support projects that improve outcomes for students receiving special education services. This section requires states to complete a budget outlining how funds will be spent in general categories as part of the application.

IDEA State Admin
The administrative funds are approximately 2 percent of the total grant award. These funds are reserved at the state level to carry out administrative functions of the grant (grant administration, database management, travel, etc.)

Louisiana's IDEA 611 Draft Grant Application

Louisiana's IDEA FFY18 draft grant application was developed by the LDOE after consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders and is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students, educators, and families. It is intended to be:

1. Responsive to, and provide additional support to, the overall education funding environment specific to students with disabilities;
2. Aligned to larger education initiatives across the state while maintaining a specific focus on proven strategies that improve outcomes for students with disabilities; and
3. Rooted in a system of routine data analysis and response to outcomes.

IDEA 611 Set Aside Grant Application Categories

The US Department of Education IDEA grant application requires states to outline how state-level set aside funds will be spent in 15 different categories. Each state is required to devote some set aside funds to a complaint enforcement and monitoring system and has the option of devoting funds in categories that support activities such as technical assistance, high risk pool, provision of assessment accommodations and an alternate assessment, workforce development, building an effective transition process, and use of technology.

Though states are required to project the use of funds in certain categories in the grant application, final awards are not broken out or monitored by categories listed in the application. They are only separated by IDEA flow through, state set aside, and state admin.

A full break down of the application categories, corresponding activities, and proposed use of funds can be found in Louisiana's IDEA Grant Application Project Description.

Necessary Activities

In addition to funding to support the four key strategies, the IDEA FFY 18 draft grant application includes a plan for activities that the State must conduct to ensure the provision of FAPE is available to students across the state.

Necessary Activities:

- Implement a monitoring and complaint investigation system*
- Support the provision of assessment accommodations and implement an alternate assessment
- Employ staff to provide assistance and support to LEAs
- Support the special education services for students enrolled in programs supported by the Special School District
- Provide support and professional learning opportunities for families
- Maintain a Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)*

*Indicates that this is a requirement of the IDEA.

Changes from FFY17 to FFY 18

For some categories in the grant application, there is a difference in budgeted amounts from FFY 17 to FFY 18 that may be attributable to one or both of the following:

- The calculation of Indirect Cost
- The completion of a specific activity
- Introduction of new activities

Differences Due to Indirect Cost Calculation

Indirect Costs are costs that have been incurred for common or joint purposes, that benefit more than one cost objective, and that cannot be readily identified with one particular cost objective.

Rates change yearly and we include an indirect cost calculation in our budgeting projections. Changes in IDC can impact what you're seeing budgeted in particular categories.

Category H: For monitoring, enforcement, and complaint investigation.		
	FFY 17 Grant Application	FFY18 Grant Application
Activities	• Monitoring and complaint enforcement	• Monitoring and complaint enforcement
Total Budgeted (inclusive of IDC)	$475,513	$434,309

Differences Due to Completion of Activities

In some cases, specific activities that were included in the FFY 17 grant application were completed in the 2017-2018 school year. As a result, the continuation of those activities in the 2018-2019 school year may either not be necessary or may be carried out through a different activity at a different funding level, which would be reflected in the FFY 18 grant application.

Examples include:

- State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Implementation and Scale-Up (j)
- Enhancing ELA and Math Guidebook resources to support students with disabilities (m)
- Development of Louisiana Science Connectors (m)

Differences Due to Introduction of New Activities

In some cases, new activities will be undertaken in the 2018-2019 school year. These activities will be represented in the FFY18 grant application.

Examples include:

- School Redesign plans for students with disabilities (t)
- Pilots for behavioral intervention for students with disabilities (k)

Category T

In the application for FFY 18, the Office of Special Education Policy (OSEP) at the US Department of Education specifically highlights two amendments to State-level activities that were made by ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). One of those amendments is reflected in Category T, which creates the opportunity to direct funds toward "*activities or **targeted support and improvement activities under Section 1111(d) of the ESEA on the basis of consistent underperformance of the disaggregated subgroup of children with disabilities***."

Louisiana's ESSA Plan and Students With Disabilities

As required by ESSA, the LDOE is identifying persistently struggling schools.

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, school systems are required to submit a plan to address the needs of any schools labeled Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR) as a result of consistently low overall performance or graduation rate.

In the 2018-2019 school year, schools in Louisiana will begin to be flagged as Urgent Intervention Required (UIR) as a result of consistently low performance by disaggregated subgroups of students, including students with disabilities. School systems will be required to submit a plan for any schools labeled UIR.

Category T: Urgent Intervention Required Plans

While not required until 2018-2019, school systems had the option of creating plans this year for schools that would have been labeled as Urgent Intervention Required. Through the school redesign process in 2017-2018, 17 school systems submitted plans specifically targeted at improving outcomes for the subgroup of students with disabilities.

In the 2017-2018 school year, 63 school systems were identified as Urgent Intervention Required (UIR) based on the subgroup of students with disabilities. This encompasses 222 schools. In 2018-2019 school systems with identified schools will be required to submit plans through the school redesign process.

LDOE has made a strategic decision to budget a portion of FFY 18 IDEA funds to support the implementation of plans specific to students with disabilities.

FFY17 IDEA Grant Application	FFY18 IDEA Grant Application
$0	$1,965,564

Category M

To support capacity building activities and improve the delivery of services by local educational agencies to improve results for children with disabilities.

- From FFY 17 to FFY 18, there is a difference in funds directed toward Category M as a result of increases in other categories that provide support for the improvement of services such as category T.

| FFY17 IDEA Grant Application	FFY18 IDEA Grant Application
$6,002,190	$3,622,883

- Additionally, several specific activities budgeted to Category M in FFY 17 were completed and no longer require funding at the same level (ELA and Math Guidebook resources, development of Louisiana Science Connectors).

Category K: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Public Survey Results

In January, LDOE released a survey to better understand what priorities the public views as important for the State to direct IDEA funds toward.

*"Students with disabilities have unique needs that may require educators to receive additional training and support to help students succeed in the classroom. When you think about these unique needs, do you believe the State should prioritize helping schools to improve how educators…**support students with behavioral or mental health challenges**?*

Low Priority for Me   High Priority for Me
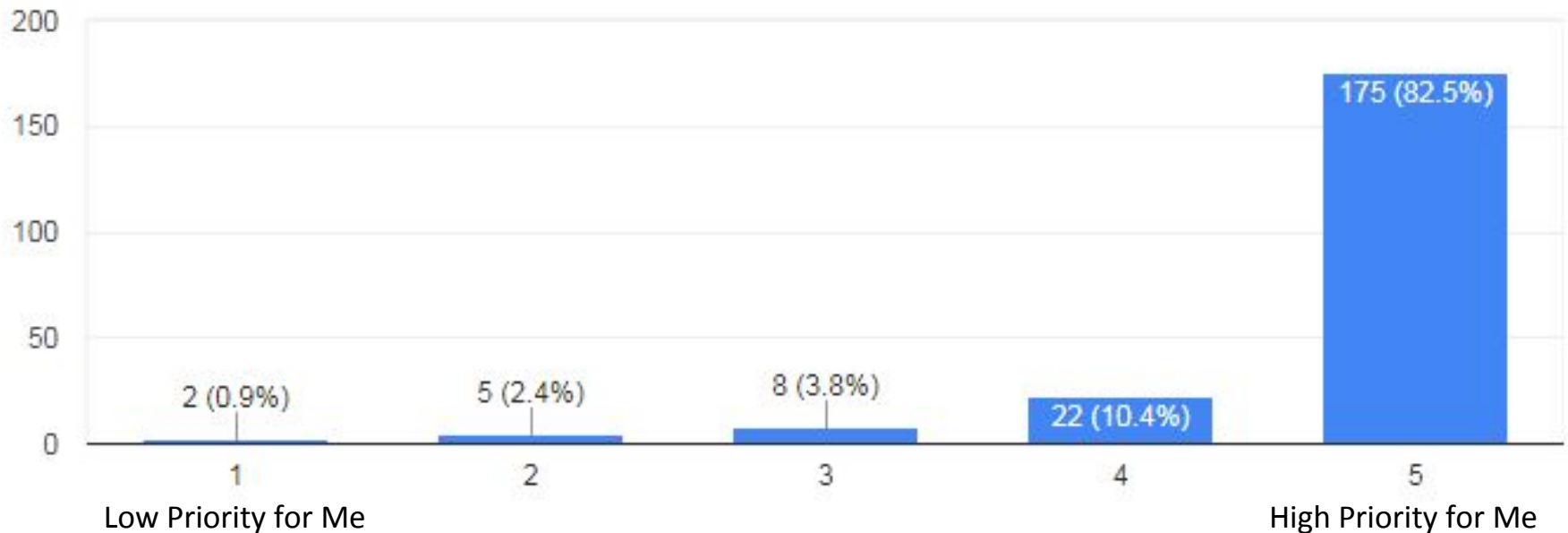
Category K: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

In FFY 18, LDOE will continue funding the eight consortia that have supported Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) for students with disabilities around the state.

Additional funds have been budgeted to support school systems in piloting the implementation of evidence-based behavioral interventions, supports, and strategies that focus on supporting the school system's model master plan for discipline.

These pilots will prioritize improving behavioral intervention for students with disabilities, including data analysis of placement patterns and the development of effective strategies to address the disproportionate representation in the identification and discipline of students with disabilities.

FFY17 IDEA Grant Application	FFY18 IDEA Grant Application
$500,000	$650,000

Category Q: Transition Programs
Public Survey Results

"When you think about the needs of students as they transition to life after high school, what matters the most to you?"

Schools prepare students for college or careers after high school.

Unimportant to Me   Very Important to Me
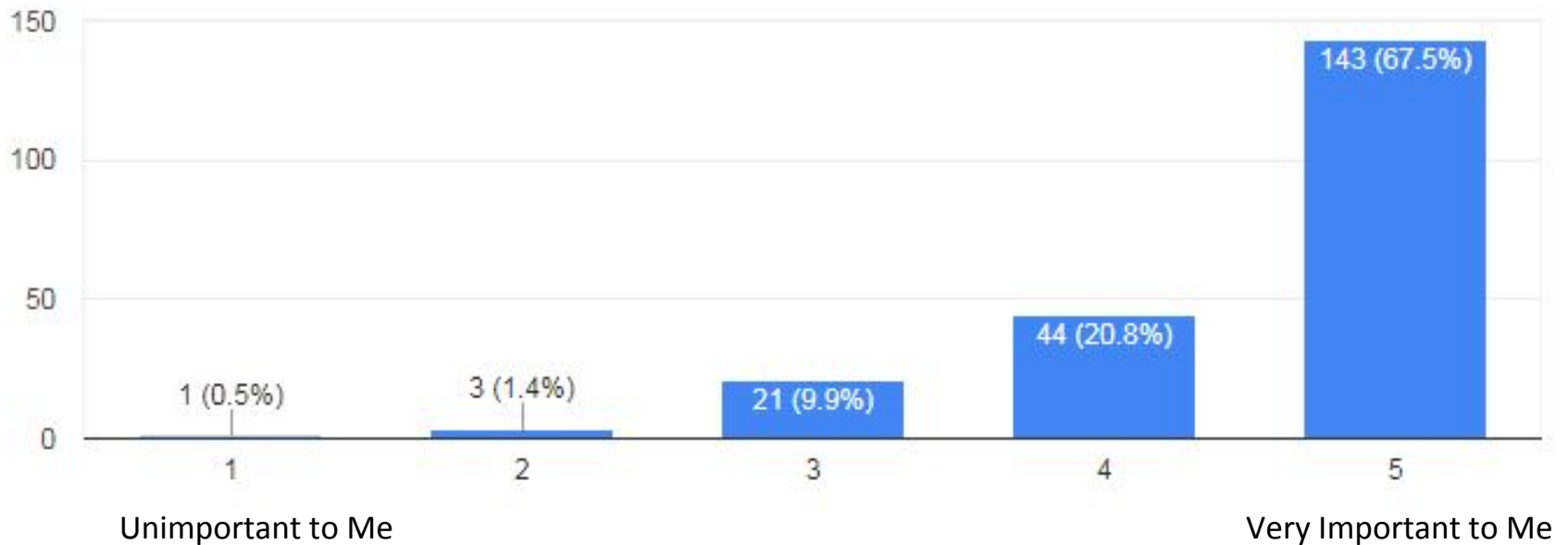
Category Q: Transition Programs
JAG AIM High!

The JAG AIM HIGH! Middle School program assists students with disabilities in transitioning into high school with the primary objective of keeping at risk students in school through graduation and setting them up to pursue postsecondary education.

Currently, 281 students with disabilities are participating in a JAG AIM High! program. The Return-to-School rate for JAG participants is 93.6%.

The program operates 19 middle school sites that receive IDEA funding, but there is no clear pipeline within the JAG program to support students with disabilities in transitioning from a middle school JAG program to a high school JAG program.

Category Q in the FFY 18 grant application includes funding for school systems to develop pilots of JAG programs at the high school level that are specifically designed to create a pipeline from middle school to high school JAG programs for students with disabilities.

Category Q: Transition Programs

In FFY 17, LDOE released a Request for Applications seeking partnerships between LEAs or between LEAs and Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) to collaborate in the development of post-secondary transition programs for students taking the alternate assessment.

In 2017-2018 LDOE supported six partnerships with Phase 1 of this initiative—the creation of transition programs for students taking the alternate assessment.

In 2018-2019, the initiative will move into Phase 2, in which will support partnerships that are implementing three distinct priorities:

- High schools building partnerships with colleges to create dual enrollment programs for students with disabilities
- High schools building systematic and sustainable partnerships within the community to create a network of businesses that consistently offer work-based experiences to students with disabilities
- Colleges creating on-campus opportunities upon graduation from high school for students who take the alternate assessment

Category Q: Transition Programs

In the 2016-2017 school year, 1,728 high school students in Louisiana took the alternate assessment.

Number of Seats Created by transition programs in '17-'18	Number of Seats in Known Existing Programs*	Total Number of Seats
115	148	263

Category Q in the FFY 18 grant application includes increased funding for the continuation of these programs and the development of additional programs across the state.

Not all of these seats are reserved for students taking the alternate assessment.

Category Q: Transition Programs

Development and implementation of transition programs, including coordination of services with agencies involved in supporting the transition of children with disabilities to post-secondary activities.

Activities
- JAG AIM High!
- Post-secondary transition programs

FFY17 IDEA Grant Application	FFY18 IDEA Grant Application
$919,665	$1,784,000

IDEA Grant Application Timeline

IDEA State-Level Activities Funding	
January 22nd – February 14, 2018	Public survey open on 18-19 IDEA funding priorities
January 24, 2018	SEAP discussion of application development timeline
January – April 2018	Internal development of application and stakeholder discussions
March 9, 2018	Draft application posted
March 28, 2018	SEAP discussion of draft application
March 28 – April 28, 2018	30-day public comment period open
April 28 – May 10, 2018	Final revisions to application
May 10, 2018	Submit Louisiana's IDEA application to OSEP
May 18, 2018	Deadline for OSEP to receive application

Communication and Public Comment

The 30-day public comment period will open this afternoon and will close at 5pm on April 28, 2018. A Google form has been created to provide comment on the FFY 18 IDEA grant application.

Key documents related to Louisiana's FFY 18 IDEA grant application can be found in the Students with Disabilities section of Louisiana Believes and are also linked below:

FFY 18 Documents:
- FFY 18 IDEA Grant Application DRAFT
- FFY 18 IDEA Grant Application Project Description DRAFT

Communication and Public Comment

Please use the link below to access the public comment survey:

https://goo.gl/forms/FVobyvJsTA6H8HTf1