

CORE CONNECTION

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FOR LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES



November 10, 2020

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Welcome Our Newest Employees

2021 Annual Enrollment

October 1st - November 15th

Annual enrollment for the 2021 plan year begins October 1, 2020 and runs through November 15, 2020. The Office of Group Benefits (OGB) has hosted informational meetings for members across the State of Louisiana beginning in September.

It is important to note that this is a passive enrollment. If a member would like to remain in their current OGB health plan with the same covered dependents for the 2021 plan year, they do not need to do anything. Their coverage will continue for the 2021 plan year.

[Members enrolled in the HSA and/or FSA options MUST update their contributions in LEO for 2021.](#)

Active Employees Annual Enrollment Meetings

Meetings were held virtually through zoom by region. If you missed the available Active Employee meetings, click [here](#) to view a recorded video of the presentation.

Non-Medicare Retirees Enrollment Meetings

Meetings will be held in person and will require registration through EventBrite. Please note that due to Hurricane Laura, there will be no meetings in Lake Charles this year. **The full meeting schedule can be found [here](#).** A recorded version of the presentation is available [here](#).

Employees may also visit the [OGB Annual Enrollment website](#) for more information on their benefits and what you need to know about 2021 annual enrollment.

If you have any questions, please contact OGB customer service at 1-800-272-8451.

Annual Enrollment Appointments

Hurricane Laura Victims

Due to the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Laura, the Office of Group Benefits (OGB) has opened up call-in appointments before and after regular working hours for victims of the storm to call in and speak with a customer service representative about their benefits and 2021 benefit options.

Appointments are available on a **first come, first serve basis** between **7:00 AM - 9:00 AM** and **4:30 PM - 7:00 PM, Monday through Friday**. To schedule an appointment, please call OGB customer service at **1-800-272-8451**. On the date and time of your scheduled appointment, an OGB customer service representative will call you at the number you provided.

Members with questions about a specific plan benefits should contact their plan administrator at the number listed below:

- **Access2Day Health** - 1-800-797-9503
- **Blue Advantage** - 1-866-508-7145
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana** - 1-800-392-4089
- **Discovery Benefits** - 1-866-451-3399
- **Humana** - 1-877-889-9885
- **Peoples Health** - 1-866-912-8304
- **Via Benefits** - 1-855-663-4228
- **Vantage Health Plan** - 1-888-823-1910

Walk-in visits at the OGB offices are by appointment only.

2020 Annual Training Reminder

Must be completed by December 31st

In an effort to avoid system overload and/or issues for OTS, we would like to encourage everyone to complete the **CPTP Preventing Sexual Harassment 2020** and **2020 Code of Ethics for Public Servants** trainings in LEO as soon as possible.

Please make sure to print your certificates upon completion, this is your proof of course completion. In the event of system issues, providing your certificate will ensure that you receive credit for completing the training course(s).

Required Supervisor Training

We would also like to remind all employees that are in job titles considered part of the supervisory training group of the **Preventing Sexual Harassment for Supervisors-WBT** training. These employees are required to complete an additional web-based training to raise awareness of supervisors regarding the prevention of sexual harassment.

Preventing Sexual Harassment Completion Rate	Preventing Sexual Harassment (Supervisor) Completion Rate	Code of Ethics for Public Servants Completion Rate
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We would like to acknowledge and thank the top five offices/divisions for having the highest completion rate of employees that have completed both annual trainings (excluding supervisor training). Everyone please keep up the great work!

1. Licensing
2. Early Childhood Operations - CCAP
3. Nutrition Support
4. Early Childhood Operations - Contact Center
5. Career & College Readiness

Thank You Veterans

The LDOE would like to extend a special thank you to the following veterans and service men and women. We cannot thank you enough for your sacrifice, bravery, and dedication.



Ken Bradford



Shelia Campbell



Michael Comeaux



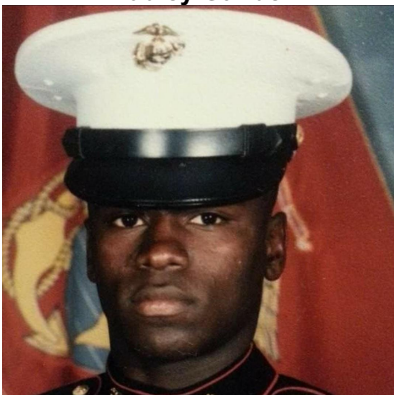
Dudley Garidel



Dr. Jerrick Hornbeak



Dr. Keith Leger



Romney Manuel



Reynaldo Valde juli

*Viola Allen
*Daisy Grotsma
*Anthony Martin
*Brittany O'Bryan

To all those who have served and those who continue to serve, thank you!

Human Resources Updates

Housekeeping Items

Workplace Etiquette

We would like to remind team members to be courteous of your workspace neighbors. While we understand everyone has different preferences in how we work and make our workspace comfortable, this may be distracting to others around us. Below are some tips to prevent distracting behavior to your workspace neighbors:

- Refrain from spraying strong air fresheners
- Refrain from talking on speaker phone
- Use earbud or headphones when listening to audio on the computer
- For staff in offices, please close your doors when on conference calls or Zoom meetings

December 2020 BESE Meetings

Important Dates

Action	Deadline	Contact
Notify Policy of items to be included in December 2020 BESE tracker	12:00 PM - Wednesday, November 4th	Ryan Gremillion
Notify Policy of any BoardDocs extension requests	12:00 PM - Friday, November 6th	Ryan Gremillion
Submit Bulletin revision drafts to Policy for final review	5:00 PM - Friday, November 6th	Ryan Gremillion
Submit allocations to Grants Management	5:00 PM - Wednesday, November 11th	Randy Littleton
Submit Contracts/Amendments and Contract Summary Forms to Education Finance	5:00 PM - Wednesday, November 11th	Belinda Flaherty
Submit Bulletin revisions to Policy for final review	5:00 PM - Friday, November 13th	Ryan Gremillion
Submit talking points to Policy	5:00 PM - Monday, December 7th	Ryan Gremillion

Saturday, December 5th - All meeting agendas and material available to the public

****Tuesday, December 15th - Wednesday, December 16th - BESE and Joint BESE/BOR meetings****

COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance for LDOE Employees

Phase Three Continues

On November 5th, [Gov. John Bel Edwards extended Phase 3 order](#) until December 4th, including the statewide mask mandate.

In alignment with guidance issued from the Governor's Office and LDH, the Department has provided the [COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance for LDOE Employees](#).

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)

We would like to remind all employees of the FFCRA Act which requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020. For more information, click [here](#).

Facial Coverings Required

A mask, scarf, bandanna or other such facial covering **must be worn** upon entering and leaving the office building. A mask **must be worn** anytime you step away from your desk and enter into a common space such as hallways, walkways, stairwells, elevators, kitchens, break rooms, meeting rooms, and restrooms.

Employees assigned to private offices or individual cubicles may remove the facial covering **only while working alone within their designated work space. The facial covering must fully cover the mouth and nose area and may not contain images or text that is inappropriate or may be offensive to others.

Please note that **not all staff are expected to report to the Claiborne building** at this time. If you are expected to return to the building, your Assistant Superintendent will notify you.

Teleworking Logs

Due Weekly

As a reminder, each employee who continues to work remotely two days each week or every day (Monday - Friday) should continue to download and complete the weekly [teleworking log](#), or a similar log, and submit to their supervisor for approval at the beginning of each week (outlining tasks) and at the end of each week (outline notes relative to each task).

Upcoming Holidays

We would like to remind everyone that all state agencies will be closed on the following dates.

Date	Holiday
Thursday, November 26th	Thanksgiving Day
Friday, November 27th	Acadian Day <i>*Pending Official Proclamation*</i>
Thursday, December 24th	Christmas Eve <i>*Pending Official Proclamation*</i>
Friday, December 25th	Christmas Day

State Combined Charitable Campaign

October 1st - December 1st

The 2020 [State Combined Charitable Campaign](#) (SCCC) will be held from **October 1, 2020 through December 1, 2020**. The SCCC is the only state approved charitable activity that enables payroll deducted contributions from LaGov HCM paid state employees. Employees have the option to donate through the convenience of payroll deduction or make a one-time gift via cash, check, credit card, or through payroll deduction.

Online Enrollment through LEO!

Although the SCCC does not officially launch until October 1, 2020, employees can begin designating their payroll deductions for the SCCC through LEO. Click [here](#) for instructions on how to contribute to SCCC using LEO. **Only one enrollment method is necessary, online through LEO or by paper pledge form, not both.**

Pledge forms will be distributed to each LDOE office over the next few weeks. **All pledge forms, online donations and special event/fundraiser revenue are due to Human Resources by December 1, 2020.** If you do not receive a pledge form by September 30th or have any questions about the SCCC, please contact Staci.Johnson2@la.gov.

Visit <http://www.lasccc.org> for more information about the SCCC, fundraising ideas, and to view a list of participating charities.

Online W-2

Elect to View and Print

The Office of State Uniform Payroll (OSUP) offers active employees the option to elect to view and print their W-2 in Louisiana Employees Online (LEO) in lieu of receiving a paper W-2 form via the United States Postal Service (USPS). Active employees choosing this option have access to their W-2 sooner than employees who choose to receive a paper copy via the USPS (paper copies will be mailed on January 31, 2021).

Employees choosing this option are able to view and print their W-2 by mid-January. See bullets below for specific details and/or requirements.

- **Active employees must provide consent to the W-2 on-line self view and print option in LEO by December 31, 2020.** This consent will be for the current reporting year and will continue for each subsequent reporting year until either the employee terminates employment or revokes their consent in LEO.
- Active employees **not** providing consent in LEO by the required deadline will continue to receive a paper Form W-2 via the postal service. Paper W-2s will be mailed each year by January 31st.
- Active employees **wishing to revoke** a prior consent for the on-line self view and print option must do so in LEO. Revocation must be provided by December 31 for the current reporting year.

- Active employees who do not choose the on-line self view and print option and who need a duplicate copy of their W-2 may obtain a copy in LEO beginning February 1st.
- For active employees who elected to self view and print their prior year W-2s, be sure to check your Election for Online W-2 for accuracy.

If you do not elect the on-line self-view and print option, and wish to receive a paper copy, please review your mailing address in LEO and update as necessary prior to December 31, 2020, to ensure receipt of your 2020 W-2.

Click [here](#) to view instructions on how to obtain your W-2 online.

Live Better Louisiana

November Newsletter

Is it a Cold, the Flu, or COVID?

You wake up one day not feeling so hot. Normally you may have assumed a sore throat or body aches were because of a common cold or the flu. This year's COVID-19 pandemic adds a whole new element of concern to getting sick.

Cold symptoms are mild and usually don't include a fever or headache. Congestion and runny nose are common with a run-of-the-mill cold and would be uncommon to be the only symptom of the flu. Congestion and runny nose can be a symptom of a COVID infection and might be the only symptom in mild cases.

Flu symptoms often come on quickly, whereas COVID symptoms can be rapid or a gradual onset. One symptom that is more unique to a COVID infection is the loss of taste and/or smell.

Sometimes, the only way to tell the difference between COVID and the flu is by testing. If you have fever/chills, new cough or new shortness of breath, you should stay home and arrange to be tested for COVID. If you have two or more of the following symptoms you should consider COVID testing:

- headache
- new muscle aches
- new upper respiratory symptoms (congestion, runny nose, sore throat)
- new loss of taste or smell, new nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- or a new rash

If you have had close contact exposure to someone with COVID, you should be tested even if you have only one mild symptom. If you are over the age of 65 or have a chronic health condition, you are at a higher risk for getting a severe COVID infection and you should call your doctor.

Please click [here](#) to view the November Live Better Louisiana Newsletter for more information from OGB.

2nd Quarter Safety

Review by November 30th

Driving at Night

Daylight Savings Time has ended which means it getting darker much earlier when many of us will be traveling home from work. As we 'Fall Back' to shorter days, lets take extra care on the road.

Tips to combat darkness while driving:

- Aim your headlights correctly
- Dim your dashboard
- Look away from oncoming lights
- If you wear glasses, make sure they're anti-reflective
- Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduce stopping time

Click [here](#) for more information for driving safely in the dark.

LDOE Employee Support Website

The [LDOE Employee Support Google Site](#) is a newly designed, dedicated space for the most up-to-date information for LDOE staff. By now, all LDOE employees should have received an email granting access to the site, which includes information about COVID-19, tools and resources for managing and working remotely, HR resources, as well as guidance from the Office of Technology Services (OTS).

In addition to reviewing content found on the [LDOE Employee Support Google Site](#), employees are strongly encouraged to continue reading Core Connection, which includes pertinent information for all state employees.

We hope this new intranet will be a helpful resource for all LDOE employees. For questions regarding the site, please contact ldoecommunications@la.gov.

LDOE Brand and Communications Style Guides



Both guides can be found in your Google Team Drive under LDOE Documents and Training > Public Affairs > Branded Documents, and will be updated as new templates and tools are created. You can provide feedback to the Office of Public Affairs by emailing _DOE-PublicAffairs@la.gov.

Employee Birthdays - November



1st	2nd Mona Atchison Daphne Flentroy	3rd Nakia Jason	4th	5th Keith Leger
6th Alyson Dooley Keisha Payton Taylor Porche	7th Monique Livious Angela Randall	8th Karen Fletcher Elaine Strauss	9th Tracy Buhler John Dupre	10th Linda Williams
11th	12th Contessia Brooks Gina McKnight Julian Shorts	13th	14th	15th Lydia Hill Zhang Yonggang
16th Lauren Cuevas Tamara Patrick Tamika Warner-White	17th Crystal Wilkinson	18th Shelia Jackson	19th	20th
21st	22nd Alyson Louque	23rd David Thibodeaux Kahree Wahid	24th	25th Helen Folks Loria Jackson Satoiya Jones
26th Lori Rumfola Jonathan Trosclair	27th Melissa Beck	28th Steven Brailsford Denise Brou	29th	30th Gwen Banks Breigh Rhodes

Team Member Spotlight

Do you want to brag on a team or team member? Have great news to share? Please email Maranda.Rispon@la.gov to be featured in the edition of the Core Connection.

A Tribute to Dr. Jackie Bobbett, Supervisor of Instructional Materials Reviews From the Academic Content Team



In 1993, nine years before the Claiborne Building was built, Jackie Bobbett began her career at LDOE as a Management Intern in Education Finance while working on her doctorate degree. She worked on the early development of the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) and helped train school superintendents across the state.

After having earned a reputation for being honest, thorough, and hard-working during her internship in Finance, she was asked by State Superintendent Cecil Picard to begin leading textbook adoption and bring the program into compliance with ethical regulation.

As she had success streamlining programs, she was assigned to oversee and refine more. Jackie greeted each new assignment and challenge with unfettered eagerness to improve, to streamline, to welcome new team members, and ultimately, to learn more about the needs of students, families, and educators and figure out how the Department could serve them. For the majority of her 27-year career at the Department, she managed a team of over ten staff members and was responsible for the oversight of multiple programs including: State Textbook Adoption, Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM), 8(g) Superior Textbooks, Diplomas and Transcripts, Nonpublic School Approval, Home Study, Homeless and Migrant Education, and

Federal Monitoring, and numerous reading and math programs including DIBELS, Dyslexia, and Reading First. In 2003, Jackie led the 3-person team who wrote the Department's first Reading First grant, in which Louisiana was awarded roughly \$124.7 million over a six-year period.

Jackie is known for being helpful, fair, and ethical and for being able to handle large, wide-scale projects, with little to no complaining, remaining the consummate professional. And though she's always been kind, compassionate, and servant-oriented, she had no problem holding others accountable to the state's ethics laws, especially when it came to textbook publishers.

She became a confidante to many as they sought her wisdom and historical knowledge. Often, others could be observed stopping by her office for advice on how to handle a work issue. There were many times that someone was charged with setting up a new process or an RFP, and the Deputy Superintendent at the time, Carole Wallin, would say, "Go talk to Jackie and set up your process however she would do it."

Beginning in 2013, she helped the state leadership navigate yet another reform of the textbook adoption process to address major shifts in standards and allow for a more nimble online instructional materials review (IMR) process. And she was an integral part of the original core team of 5 who ran ALL logistics for the inaugural Teacher Leader Summits, solving problems and setting up systems that are still used today.

Jackie's work ethic is irreproachable. When retirement began crossing Jackie's mind, she immediately worried about us and the work and desired to pass the baton with a steady hand. She assured us that she would not leave us "in the lurch." She gave us a loooooong runway to make sure we soaked in all we could learn from her, all the while showing unending patience in training others.

Jackie, you have been more than a supervisor. You are our mentor and friend. May you enjoy your well-earned retirement!

****Submissions for the December 9th Core Connection must be received by Wednesday, December 2nd.***

Welcome Our Newest Employees

LDOE is pleased to welcome our newest employees to our team!

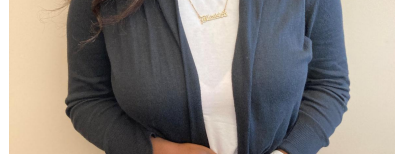




Tonya Harden
Education Program Consultant
Early Childhood Strategy



Shelia Montgomery
Social Services Analyst
Early Childhood Operations



Shatoi Stevenson
Student Worker
Early Childhood Operations



Detra Gauden
Education Program Consultant
Equity, Inclusion, & Opportunities



Max Daigh
Chief of Staff
Equity, Inclusion, & Opportunities



Lyshinda Brown
Social Services Analyst
Early Childhood Operations

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LDOE Links

[LDOE Website](#)
[Contact Us](#)