

This document is the second draft of Louisiana's ESSA state plan framework issued for public consideration and comment. It reflects feedback captured through statewide dialogue about Louisiana's long-term plan for educating children. A final plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval in April in order to provide educators and families with clear expectations prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

THE HEART OF ESSA: REFLECT ON RESULTS, PLAN AND PRIORITIZE, AND FUND PRIORITIES

Passed by Congress in 2015, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) is a federal law that requires states to articulate a cohesive plan for measuring the skills students learn, reporting information to parents and the public, supporting students in making academic progress, and spending federal funds. [ESSA](#), which replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), is largely focused on the needs of historically disadvantaged students, including students from low-income homes, students whose first language is not English, and students with disabilities. The law is not a federal plan; it is a federal law requiring states and local education agencies (LEAs) to develop their own plans within certain parameters. For details on the plan development timeline and stakeholder engagement in the process, see [Appendix A](#).

This framework proposes a state plan focused on five challenges Louisiana students experience in significant numbers:

- **Fundamental Expectations for Graduates**
- **Deep Struggles for Historically Disadvantaged Students**
- **Fair Access to Experiences Essential for Success in School and Beyond**
- **A Strong Educator Profession**
- **Persistently Struggling Schools**

The backbone of Louisiana's plan will be a unified plan, aligned to these five areas, for every school system. This streamlined planning process will include an annual cycle of reflection on results, strategic academic planning, and applications for federal funds.



Step 1: Reflect on Results

To commence planning for the following school year, school systems, in partnership with Department of Education network staff, will review quantitative and qualitative data to reflect on academic successes, academic challenges, and past investments of federal funds.

Step 2: Plan and Prioritize

School systems will develop academic plans aligned to the five challenge areas that prioritize solutions for the weaknesses identified in step one of the planning process.

For whole schools or distinct subgroups of students that struggle persistently and are in need of intervention, ESSA includes grants for evidence-based interventions approved by the state. This step of the planning process includes the formation and submission of those plans. Further information on these comprehensive support (school) and targeted support (subgroup) grants can be found in the challenge two and challenge five sections of this document.

Step 3: Fund Priorities

The final step in the annual planning process is the electronic submission of a school system's application for federal funds tied to the identified priorities and strategic academic plan. ESSA includes targeted funds for specific student services and school leaders that a school system may choose to access.

LOUISIANA'S PLAN

The draft framework of Louisiana's plan is centered on five challenges that Louisiana students experience in significant numbers. This framework document describes how the planning process will address each challenge by outlining the following information for each challenge:

- **Evidence of the challenge** provides data to illustrate the challenge that Louisiana students and schools are facing.
- **Current efforts** outlines the initiatives already in place within each challenge area that will provide a foundation for the state plan in the challenge areas.
- **Impact measures** are qualitative and quantitative identifiers that indicate schools are on track to successfully resolve critical issues. During the planning process, school systems will consider which impact measures to achieve based on past results.
- **Long-term indicators** are quantitative measurements of student learning, such as performance on assessments, graduation rates, college credit, or workplace credentials. These indicators comprise the bulk of the state's school rating and accountability system.
- **State support** depicts specific opportunities and resources the state will provide to assist schools and school systems in the implementation of their district and school plans.

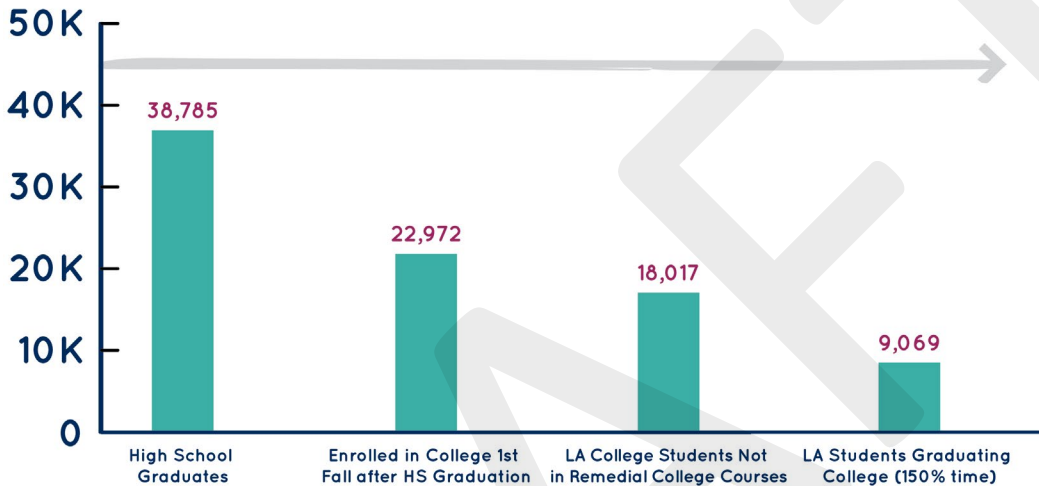
Q Will the use of federal funds in this plan redirect funding from school systems to the LDOE?

A While ESSA does allow for increases in targeted grants in areas where it is needed the most, the percentage of overall federal funds going to schools and school systems in Louisiana will not change. A chart that compares the percentage of Louisiana's federal dollars provided to school systems under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and under ESSA is available in [Appendix C](#).

CHALLENGE ONE: FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

Evidence of the challenge: Louisiana has the highest percentage of young adults of any state in the nation who are neither employed nor enrolled in school or college. Nearly one in four Louisiana students does not graduate from high school,¹ and of those who graduate and go on to college, nearly one-third need to repeat high school coursework.² In fact, among those who attend college, only 40 percent complete a degree in the expected time period.³

TABLE 1 - Progression of High School Graduates Through College



Current efforts: Louisiana has established new, challenging expectations for students in reading, writing, mathematics, and social studies called the [Louisiana Student Standards](#). Work is also underway to develop new Louisiana science standards and an aligned set of learning expectations in ELA and mathematics, known as “Louisiana Connectors,” for students who have significant cognitive disabilities and those who are learning English. Students demonstrate skills on LEAP and ACT assessments that indicate their preparedness for the next level of education and their ability to compete with peers across the country. Schools can choose from curricula that teach students to think critically and independently. Teachers, principals, and other school personnel receive support as they implement state standards. Parents can review their child’s progress, as well as the results achieved by their school and school district, through a series of annual reports.

Louisiana has also established unified birth-to-five standards, which are used by child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs. Due to the young age of children involved, programs are evaluated based on instruction and classroom interactions between teachers and children, and the information is provided to families on Performance Profiles.

Q How will the state ensure that schools and school systems are not penalized as they work toward the 2025 goal?

A These are ambitious goals and will not be achieved immediately in most schools. Therefore, in order to ensure a fair representation of school improvements, the state will adjust the points earned in the accountability system over time through 2025. The timeline for raising the bar is being considered by Louisiana’s Accountability Commission.

1 Louisiana Department of Education. (2016). High School Graduation Rate Vaults to All-time High. Retrieved from <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2016/05/02/high-school-graduation-rate-vaults-to-all-time-high>

2 Louisiana Board of Regents. (2017). Response to Act 619 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Retrieved at <http://regents.state.la.us/assets/others/619Docs/619FinaldraftforSSrev1.pdf>

3 Louisiana Board of Regents. (2010). BoR Graduation Rate. Retrieved from <http://as400.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/grate/grs1011.pdf>

Impact measures: Research suggests that core academic supports, such as a top quality curriculum, have a greater impact on student learning than many other factors.⁴ School systems in Louisiana will thus include Title I investments, such as the following, in their annual plans to address fundamental expectations for students and graduates.

- Use a standards-aligned curriculum;
- Implement aligned, informative, reduced local assessments;
- Provide curriculum-aligned professional development for teachers inside and outside of school; and
- Prepare school leaders to set bold goals with the teachers they monitor and work to continuously improve in order to achieve those goals.

Louisiana will raise the ambition of its long-term goals for students to levels exceeding the national average in every measure. Today a school's students must average only basic in literacy and math skills, have a high school graduation rate of 75 percent, and average an ACT score of 18 in order for the school to earn an "A" in the indexes of the state's rating system.

This framework proposes that the scoring system for schools be adjusted such that the following criteria become the essential, statewide definitions of excellence.

- A statewide high school graduation rate of 90 percent by 2025;
- An average ACT score of 21 by 2025; and
- Postsecondary success as indicated by completion of university or technical credentials.

In each of these areas, the state's system of rating schools will adopt these goals as new benchmarks for achieving a score of 100. In other words, earning a score of 100 or higher in the accountability system's achievement indexes would require:

- Student demonstration of mastery of skills rather than simply basic skills ("basic" would continue to generate some points), as prioritized by Louisiana's state education board in 2013;
- An ACT score of 21, rather than an average of 18 (scores of 18, 19, and 20 would continue to generate points); and
- A 90 percent graduation rate, rather than 75 percent (graduation rates lower than 90 percent would continue to generate points).

These are ambitious goals that will not be achieved immediately in most schools. Therefore, Louisiana's Accountability Commission—an advisory panel comprised of educators, school administrators, education advocates, community leaders, and parents—will advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) on a multi-year, multi-stage transition plan for raising the state's expectations toward meaningful "A" targets. See [Appendix B](#) for more details on these targets, related indexes, and timelines.

Q Why was an ACT score of 21 selected as the goal?

A According to the [ACT College Readiness Benchmarks](#), students who score an average of 21 or higher on the ACT are more likely to be successful in college; students meeting the college readiness benchmarks have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in credit-bearing first-year college courses. Louisiana's average ACT score has improved by 0.4 points since 2013 to 19.5 in 2016, and the average ACT score in A schools is a 21.7.

⁴ Kane, T. J., et al. Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research. (2016). Teaching Higher: Educator's Perspectives on Common Core Implementation. Retrieved at <http://cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/teaching-higher-report.pdf>

State support: Ambitious goals necessitate that educators spend as much time as possible teaching and evaluating student learning to inform further instruction, rather than assessing for measurement purposes only. With that information, teachers need regular, ongoing training and support that helps them deepen their understanding of the content and resources they use for instruction. This draft framework involves the following steps at the state level to support these efforts.

- Confining end-of-year state testing to no more than two percent of all instructional minutes in a year while improving the quality and depth of information reported.
- Eliminating the duplication between the ACT series of tests and End-of-Course tests in high schools. This draft framework proposes one test of math and English per year in grades 9, 10, and 11, with all duplication between ACT and end-of-course tests removed. See full details on changes to high school assessment in [Appendix B](#).
- Making available to schools and school districts a series of optional, efficient “check-up” tests that align with state standards in grades K-10 so that districts can eliminate time-consuming, antiquated, costly, and unhelpful tests administered throughout the year.
- Continuing to review and provide curricular tools needed to support informed local decision making in mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies.
- Providing curricular tools and guidance for supporting standards-aligned, individualized programming for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Broadening training opportunities for principals and Teacher Leaders so they are prepared to support other educators as they set goals for student learning, monitor learning, and work to improve.
- Providing guidance for educators and principals to use developmentally appropriate instruments to monitor the development of early learners in child care centers, Head Start centers, and pre-K through 2nd grade classrooms and make appropriate referrals for additional interventions and support.

Under the plan outlined in this draft framework, the state will also produce detailed reports for school system leaders and principals. Using these annual reports, superintendents, principals, and educators will determine annual goals for their schools and school systems including:

- Developmentally appropriate goals for early learners;
- Student skills on assessments in grades 3-11, including the ACT;
- High school graduation rates (including subgroup results such as students with disabilities and English learners); and
- Advanced coursework, such as Advanced Placement,⁵ dual enrollment, and Jump Start.

Q Are there opportunities under ESSA to improve Alternative Education in Louisiana and help inform how it should be measured within accountability?

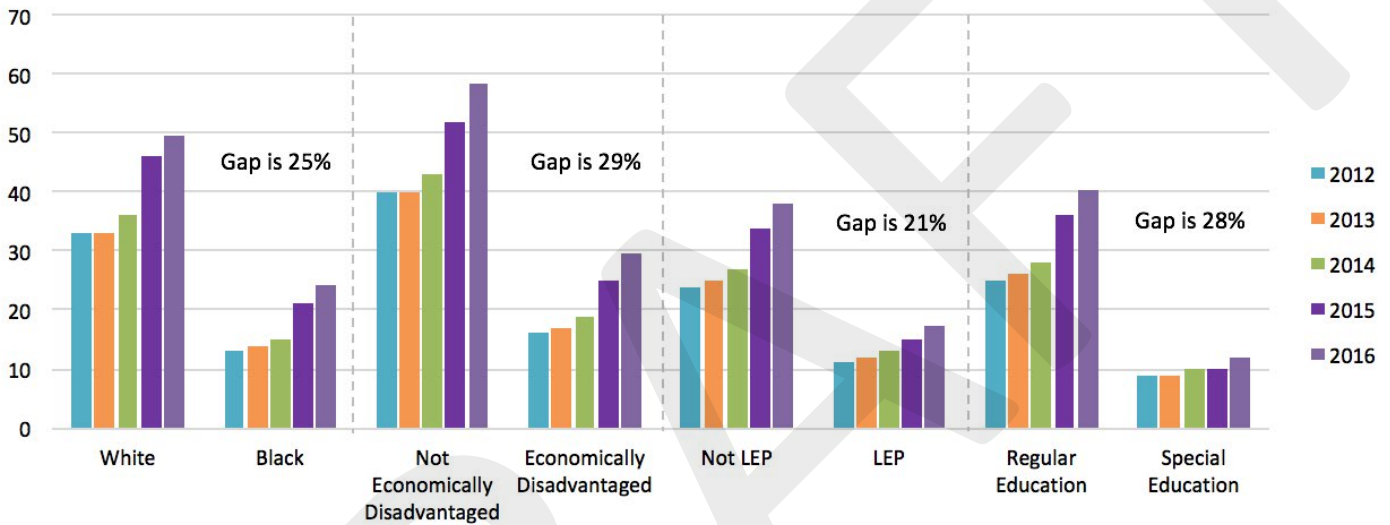
A Yes. A study group of key external stakeholders working in areas related to school culture, student behavior and discipline, juvenile justice, and alternative education programming will begin reviewing laws, regulations, and new opportunities this spring in order to develop recommended policies and supports going forward.

5 Education Week. (2016). Data Shows Value of Advanced High School Classes in Arkansas. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/12/12/data-shows-value-of-advanced-high_ap.html

CHALLENGE TWO: DEEP STRUGGLES FOR HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Evidence of the challenge: The challenges of meeting the needs of diverse learners begin early. When Louisiana improved the LEAP assessment, higher-achieving students were able to perform at higher levels than ever before. But the gap between low-income and middle-income students, and the gap between students with disabilities and their peers, were shown to be larger than previously understood. The graph below highlights that while student performance has increased over the last five years, significant achievement gaps between historically disadvantaged students, such as students with disabilities and English learners, and their peers still exist.

Table 2 - Percentage of students scoring Mastery or above on grade 3-8 ELA and math assessments from 2012 to 2016



Similar gaps exist on ACT assessments, high school graduation rates, and Advanced Placement assessments. The gap in identifying and addressing student needs even plays out in the identification of gifted children: low-income students are less than half as likely as their peers to be identified as gifted.

Current efforts: Schools and school systems across the state have [unified and expanded](#) child care, Head Start, and pre-K into one system of quality options more capable of preparing at-risk students for kindergarten, so that students do not start school behind the curve. In 2015-2016, 96 percent of at-risk four year olds were served in a publicly-funded care and education program. Similarly, schools now identify struggling students early and are rewarded when their performance exceeds annual progress targets through the progress point system. Students that continue to struggle in 8th grade now move into [transitional 9th grade](#) to spend a year focused on remediating their challenges while still accumulating high school credits toward graduation.

Specifically for students with disabilities, schools across the state are focusing on improving literacy outcomes by analyzing student data and targeting academic support through the [state systemic improvement plan](#). Additionally, in the high school grades, the Louisiana Legislature created a path to graduation for students with disabilities that allows for [alternate means](#) to demonstrate skills and student progress, and BESE approved an alternate set of diploma requirements for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Q How will the LDOE help schools and educators serve students with disabilities and students who are English learners?

A Just as the LDOE has done with all content areas, educators will receive a host of resources to support their diverse learners. New [aligned standards](#) were approved by BESE in January 2017 for English learners and students with significant cognitive disabilities; resources to support educators and families will be released this summer and fall.

Impact measures: Research indicates that early and accurate identification of disabilities, dyslexia, English language needs, and other learning needs leads to more successful intervention than is the case when the condition is left unattended. Therefore, identification is an essential first step in supporting diverse learners—specifically special education students and English language learners.⁶ Strong schools have a systemic approach to **early grade screening, diagnosis, and intervention**, starting with the connection of Early Steps and prekindergarten, and continuing through high school.

Once students are identified as having a disability, English learning needs, or other academic interventions, strong schools immediately provide unique support for each child. Further, schools that effectively support these needs also monitor progress and adjust instruction based on each student's learning experience. This includes providing individual and appropriate access to grade-level learning and non-disruptive classroom structures such that students with disabilities or English learners learn and grow at the same pace or faster than their peers.

School systems in Louisiana will thus include Title I, Title II, and Title III investments such as the following in their annual plans to address the challenges of historically disadvantaged students.

- High-quality, early screening and continued monitoring until the student is exited effectively from additional support services such as academic interventions, special education, or English language services;
- Interventions and instructional practices that help students access grade-level learning along with their peers rather than maintaining a below-level learning gap; and
- School structures for learning that are the least disruptive and best integrated for a student's needs.

Long-term indicators: Schools in Louisiana are currently rewarded more for the absolute performance of their students in a given year than for the progress their students make over the course of the year. Under the plan in this draft framework, the state will redefine what it means to be a "good school" by making annual student progress a critical feature of that definition, rather than just the average level of absolute performance.

First, after thorough review and development by the Accountability Commission, the rating system for schools and school districts will include a calculation of individual student growth for all students as a significant factor in the rating formula itself, rather than as a progress point add-on. Adopted as a unanimous recommendation by the commission on January 9, 2017, this growth model will make up a significant percentage of a school's rating, thereby recognizing and incentivizing growth for all children (specific percentage is still under consideration by the Accountability Commission). See [Appendix B](#) for greater detail on the model.

Second, ESSA calls on states to calculate and report not just the progress of schools but also the attainment and progress of individual groups of students within schools, particularly historically disadvantaged groups of students such as those still learning English and those with disabilities. The state will continue to provide public report card data on the performance of the state's largest subgroups, but the state will also provide each school with a performance score for each subgroup of students to provide easy-to-understand, easily comparable data to guide planning and intervention. Schools excelling with struggling students will be recognized for their important achievements.

Third, the growth of English language learners will be recognized within the core accountability system like all other students. Per ESSA, recently-arrived English language learners will participate in state English, math, science, and social studies assessments, but their results will be excluded from accountability in the student's first year in the U.S., and will be included only in the Growth Index in the second year.

Q Is the academic growth component of the accountability system inclusive of all students?

A Yes, Louisiana is committed to recognizing the growth of all students—low-achieving and high-achieving. Additionally, once the long-term assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (formerly LAA 1) is determined, a growth methodology will be considered.

6 U.S. Department of Health and Human Service. (2014) Birth to 5: Watch me Thrive! A Compendium of Screening Measures for Young Children. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/screening_compendium_march2014.pdf

Fourth, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and who receive a high school diploma will now be positively recognized within the state's cohort graduation rate, as allowed by ESSA. Further, once the long-term 1% assessment is identified, a growth methodology will be explored to recognize student growth.

State support: Schools achieving persistently low marks in subgroup performance will be identified as schools in need of targeted support and will have the ability to apply for competitive grants of up to \$50,000. Specifically, schools in need of targeted support will be those not already determined to be in need of comprehensive support and whose overall performance with a particular subgroup of students ranks in the bottom tier statewide for three or more consecutive years. Please refer to challenge 5 for more information on comprehensive support schools. Additionally, schools exhibiting excessive out of school discipline and/or chronic absenteeism within certain subgroups will be considered for targeted support.

Successful applications for funds will identify district- and school-level approaches to: improving early identification of struggling students, providing higher-quality instructional experiences that help students achieve grade-level learning faster, or providing individualized and inclusive school structures. Strong applications will also demonstrate use of specific practices or support organizations backed by a strong research base.

To assist with these local plans for targeted support the state will:

- Make available a series of optional, efficient check-up tests that align with state standards in grades pre-K to high school so that districts can eliminate time-consuming, antiquated, costly, and unhelpful tests administered throughout the year.
- Develop and identify an appropriate series of screening instruments and guidance for use from age three through the third grade and train teachers statewide to use these instruments to identify when students are in need of additional learning supports. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, the state has worked with school systems to pilot screening assessments in the early grades. Those instruments demonstrating the greatest utility will replace the state's reliance on DIBELS in future years and will provide a more holistic view of student needs for educators and parents alike. Over time, the state will also provide recommendations and tools for monitoring the progress of ELL monitoring and support.
- Develop curricular supplements for teachers across the state—adding to the literacy, mathematics, and social studies curricula already developed—to address the needs of English learners and students with disabilities in mathematics and ELA.
- Develop a series of intensive mathematics short learning experiences and, where appropriate, full courses that support struggling students throughout the K-12 system. This will include full courses to support students in their sometimes difficult transition to high school through Algebra I.
- As with curriculum, conduct an open and thorough review process of outside providers of interventions and support used during the school day and in alternative settings (e.g., summer school, after school programming) which schools or school systems may contract with to implement plans for struggling students.
- Work with a group of lead districts and charter schools to explore the best scheduling and school model structures for identifying, intervening, and supporting all unique populations of students, with a specific focus on special education students and English language learners. This work will inform the additional guidance and tools the state will provide others throughout the system. This will begin in early childhood, supporting Early Childhood Community Networks to build enrollment plans that specifically address increasing access for children with disabilities.
- Develop, through the nationally-recognized [Believe and Prepare](#) program, undergraduate or alternative certification programs using curricula that teach and require competency in identifying and addressing students' unique learning needs, particularly those with disabilities, and that provide a full year of residency in the classroom that allows prospective teachers to work directly with students.

Q What is the status of the alternate diploma pathways for students with disabilities under the new state plan?

A Diplomas earned by students implementing the provisions of [Act 833 \(2014\)](#) are currently, and will continue to be, counted as regular diplomas for the purposes of school and district accountability. Students who take the alternate assessment will continue to be eligible to obtain a high school diploma at the point in which they are ready to exit high school by meeting the components of the [diploma pathway](#). Under the new state plan, students who obtain a diploma through this pathway will be counted positively in the cohort graduation rate for the year in which they graduate.

**CHALLENGE THREE: FAIR ACCESS TO EXPERIENCES
ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND**

Evidence of the challenge: A voluminous series of rankings and reports, as well as self-reported data from Louisiana school systems, indicates that some Louisiana students have struggles not only in academic endeavors traditionally measured by the state, but also in areas important for a productive and healthy life after high school. School should involve the development of interests, habits, and relationships that endure after high school, yet too often the opportunities for young people to develop in these ways are sparse.

- Elementary and middle school students in [half](#) of Louisiana's school districts are not being exposed to or provided instruction in a second language like their peers in most other states.
- More than one-third of Louisiana eighth grade students attend a school that does not offer Algebra I. Among high schools with student bodies that are majority African-American students, approximately 25 percent do not offer chemistry, 70 percent do not offer advanced mathematics courses like calculus, 20 percent do not provide Algebra II, and 90 percent do not provide advanced science courses such as physics.
- While two-thirds of Louisiana students are classified as being economically disadvantaged, only one-third of students identified as "gifted" or "talented" are economically disadvantaged.
- A recent [study](#) revealed that Louisiana has the nation's highest rate of adult obesity and the fourth highest rate of childhood obesity.
- A task force of Louisiana music educators and statewide arts organizations [reported](#) earlier this year vast differences in music education and performing arts offerings to elementary school students across and within school districts in our state.
- Only half of economically disadvantaged students attend a high school that offers access to dual enrollment coursework, compared with 65 percent of non-economically disadvantaged students. And out of the total population of students participating in dual enrollment, just over one-third are economically disadvantaged and even fewer are racial/ethnic minorities.
- Louisiana school systems reported that more than 61,000 students, as young as pre-K, spent time outside of school for disciplinary reasons last year. Of these students, low-income students, African-American students, and students with disabilities were disproportionately impacted.
- While 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide after-school and summer learning programs to almost 22,000 students across the state, 19 percent of Louisiana students—147,333 school age children—are on their own during the hours after school.⁷
- Though Louisiana ranks near the bottom among states in annual household income, fewer than half of all Louisiana high school graduates apply for financial aid to fund higher education or workforce training.
- In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that only 67.7 percent of Louisiana residents 3 years and older reside in a home with Internet access.⁸

Q Are there resources in the plan to help educators influence student behavior?

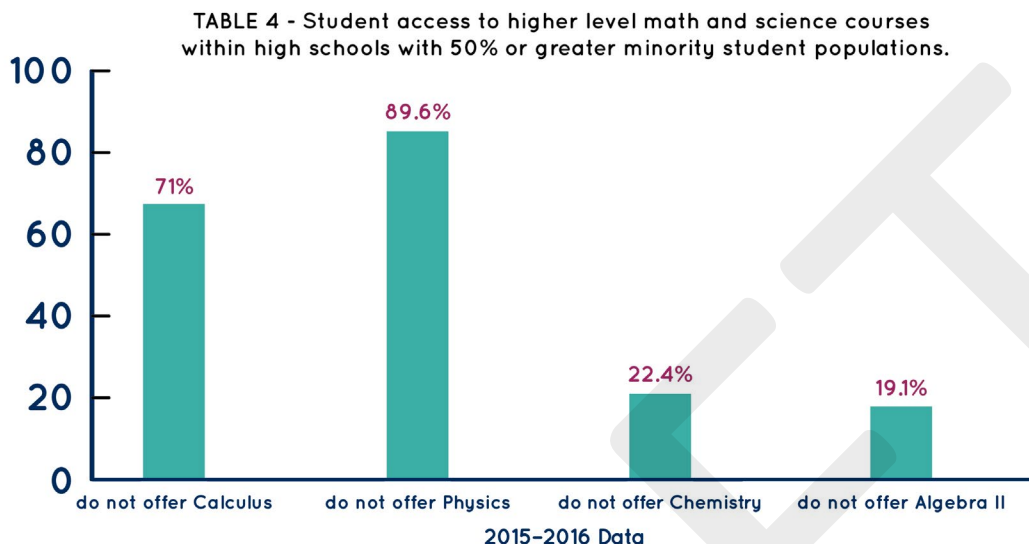
A Yes. Federal programs authorized by ESSA provide funds for schools to support student counseling and mental health programs, tiered behavioral interventions, professional development for educators and other school professionals, conflict resolution, positive behavior supports, bullying and harassment prevention, and student and family supports. Additional federal funds are available to support students with special needs and students in rural schools.

The lack of fair access to advanced and enriching courses and experiences not only places Louisiana students at a disadvantage compared to their peers nationally, but also impacts their eligibility to attain Louisiana merit based [TOPS scholarship](#). Consider, for example, that of the 183 high schools that have a racial minority student population of 50 percent or higher, nearly 20 percent do not offer Algebra II, a required course for Louisiana's TOPS University Diploma and TOPS scholarships.⁹

7 "Afterschool Fostering Student Success in Louisiana." Afterschool Alliance, May 2016.

8 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). Reported Internet Usage for Individuals 3 Years and Older, by State. Retrieved at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2012/demo/computer-internet/computer-use-2012.html>.

9 Louisiana Department of Education Student Transcript System, November 3, 2016.



Each of these challenges illuminates a larger issue: schools can have a significant influence over a wide range of interests, habits, and skills that help students thrive throughout their educational journey and are important to living a productive and healthy life, but student access to enriching experiences varies widely.

Current efforts: The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Legislature have taken steps to bolster state support of schools and districts pursuing increased access to critical, non-traditional coursework and experiences.

- **Arts:** BESE convened a task force to study elementary student exposure and access to music coursework, the [findings](#) from which are being implemented statewide. The study revealed vast differences in music education offerings across and within local school systems.
- **World languages:** The Legislature recently earmarked funds to support the expansion of dual language programs across the state. The Legislature also called on BESE to [study](#) the feasibility of establishing two-way dual language immersion programs and to provide greater [incentives](#) for local school systems to offer quality language immersion education to students.
- **Nutrition and physical activity:** Over the past several years, the legislature has enacted several laws, supported pilot programs and other supports, and elevated public attention to the availability of healthy and fresh foods and beverages at public schools and providing regular, vigorous physical activity for students during the school day.
- **Student behavior and discipline:** The Legislature established a 24-member [advisory council](#) to provide advice and guidance as to the use of appropriate, effective behavioral interventions and expansion of best practices. The council will meet at least three times per year to review school discipline data, study best practices, and make recommendations on more effectively addressing students' behavioral needs.
- **Career education access:** Louisiana developed a career education initiative, **Jump Start**, as well as a diverse course delivery program known as [Course Choice](#). Using funds won through the [New Skills for Youth grant](#), Louisiana conducted an inventory of every pathway offered in every high school in the state. Further grant funding will in part go toward bolstering connections among employers, higher education, and high schools. Students with disabilities eligible to pursue a high school diploma via an alternate pathway may also select a Jump Start pathway to earn a career diploma and a recognized workforce credential. All Jump Start pathways are accessible to these students, with the student's IEP team setting alternate exit and performance criteria.
- **Early college coursework:** [House Concurrent Resolution 141](#) and [Senate Resolution 182](#) of the 2016 Regular Session call for BESE and the Board of Regents to design statewide systems of expanded early college access for eligible students and to report back to the legislature by February 2017.

- **Increased access to technology and digital learning:** In the Technology Readiness Survey most recently conducted in December of 2016, 93.4 percent the state's public schools meet the state's minimum 5:1 student-to-computer and connectivity model required for offering a reasonable level of technology-based instruction. Nearly 350 schools have begun shifting their instruction to a digitally interactive model by implementing 1:1 student-to-computer programs, and 49 school systems have adequate access to broadband Internet capacity. [Act 722 of 2014](#) urged Louisiana's state agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, and post-secondary education systems to pursue innovative, collaborative public-private partnerships to expand access to broadband Internet.
- **School Culture and Discipline:** Louisiana supports training for school systems in the use of positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS), which are evidence-based, proactive approaches for developing positive student behavior and a positive climate where all students in a school can achieve social, emotional and academic success.

Impact measures: LEAs in Louisiana will include Title I and Title IV investments in plans to reduce chronic absenteeism and excessive out-of-school discipline; to provide access to challenging coursework; and to increase access to enriching experiences that foster lifelong interests. See the "state support" section of this challenge area, below, for a description of competitive Title I and Title IV grants to address these purposes.

Long-term indicators: As part of its ESSA plan, Louisiana will begin the development of an "Interests and Opportunities" indicator, designed to promote the expansion of experiences through which students develop well-rounded and enduring interests and habits. This indicator will seek to measure and evaluate, for example, the extent to which elementary and middle schools are exposing students to high quality arts and foreign language experiences. Similarly, it will seek to measure the evaluate high school's efforts to expand access to advanced courses in both applied and academic fields. In all schools, the Interests and Opportunities index aspires to measure not only the expansion of such experiences for students but also the extent to which students of all backgrounds experience the offerings fairly.

The Interests and Opportunities indicator will be developed over a period of three years. For more information, see [Appendix B](#).

The state will also make two changes to the "strength of diploma" index of the high school accountability system as part of this plan. The attainment of a HiSET credential (formerly known as a GED), when coupled with a high-wage industry credential, will see an increase in its value within the index. Similarly, attainment of 30 college credit hours also will be rewarded more prominently in the state's accountability system. See [Appendix B](#) for greater detail.

State Support: Newly authorized in ESSA are two distinct programs meant to increase student access to challenging courses and enriching opportunities - Direct Student Services (DSS) and Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants (SSAE). The two programs offer the flexibility to tailor investments based on the needs of their unique student populations, particularly students attending schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support where enriching experiences and challenging coursework are too rare today.

Q How will this work to improve student access support and enhance efforts already underway?

A Louisiana's school professionals, including librarians, counselors, psychologists, and teachers of physical education, the arts, and world languages, deliver a number of courses, programming, and experiences that are essential to support students in developing into well-rounded citizens. This work will be supported through an enhanced annual academic planning process that more prominently focuses on these areas, as well as dedicated state funds to support increases in both access and quality.

Direct Student Services

Congress has provided the opportunity for states to target up to three percent of the state's total Title I allotment for grants to geographically diverse local school systems, prioritizing those with greatest needs, to support students in gaining access to academic courses, credentials, and services that are not currently available at their schools. These student experiences include:

- Advanced courses such as dual enrollment coursework;
- Career and technical education courses;
- Credit recovery and academic acceleration courses that lead to a high school diploma;
- Examinations used to validate learning and earn college credit;
- High-quality academic tutoring;
- Transportation to enable students to receive instruction at another public school; and
- Post-secondary transition support.

Under this framework, Louisiana will use the DSS opportunity in the new law to establish Enrichment Academies (for elementary schools) and Opportunity Academies (for middle and high schools). These academies will provide students access to courses and experiences that align with the specific goals they are working to achieve, that parents seek for their students, and that are offered by the school. High schools, for example, can dramatically expand access to dual enrollment courses, Jump Start internships, postsecondary transition counseling, advanced academic coursework, and financial aid planning support. Elementary and middle schools will be able to make significant strides in offering music and dual language curricula, or tutorial services to benefit struggling students.

As part of the annual planning process, Louisiana school systems will identify strengths and weaknesses within this challenge area. Local school systems may apply for competitive DSS Academies grants to address weaknesses, identifying the specific courses and/or services they wish to provide based on identified student needs and articulating the manner in which they will involve parents and high-quality providers. In accordance with ESSA, the Department will award grant funds based on the strength of applications and prioritizing quality applications received from schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement.

To view the percentages of Title I funds that are targeted to specific student needs, please see [Appendix C](#).

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

All local school systems will receive the newly authorized Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) formula grants. These grants will, pursuant to ESSA, support local school systems in providing all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Budgets for the SSAE grants will be added to the consolidated application for federal funds in the 2017-2018 school year (pending Congressional appropriation) and LEAs will be able to tailor investments based on the needs of their unique student populations, coordinate and integrate SSAE funded activities with other federally funded activities, and leverage these funds in combination with other dollars to improve outcomes for students. Specific allowable uses of funds include direct services to students, professional development for teachers, administrators, and other school professionals, salaries of school personnel to carry out identified programs and services, and supplemental educational resources and equipment. View a [comprehensive guide to SSAE](#).

CHALLENGE FOUR: A STRONG EDUCATOR PROFESSION

Evidence of the challenge: The teaching profession¹⁰ is under significant strain. While more positions are available following recession-related reductions in the late 2000's, [qualified educators are hard to find](#). Studies also show that while compensation for most workers with bachelor's degrees continues to grow, [compensation for educators](#) remains stagnant. These challenges are evident in Louisiana, as they are across the nation. Two thirds of Louisiana school system leaders [reported](#) that they cannot hire enough teachers to meet staffing needs in certain certification areas and schools. In 2015-2016, 20 percent of secondary math and science classes and 23.5 percent of special education classes in Louisiana public schools were taught by out-of-field or uncertified teachers.¹¹ These issues are more acute in school systems with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. For example, in Louisiana school systems with the highest concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, 15.8 percent of teachers are teaching outside of their certification area as compared to 10.4 percent statewide.¹²

Q What funding is available to support workforce development?

A Louisiana has dedicated \$7.3 million of state-level funding over the next two years and \$2.1 million of state-level funding in 2019 and beyond to support yearlong teacher residencies. Additionally, ESSA allows for an optional Title II set-aside to specifically support school leaders. The LDOE is evaluating the level of need that exists to determine whether to reserve this targeted funding.

Current efforts: Efforts to strengthen the educator profession in Louisiana start with teacher candidates in the state's colleges, where professional residencies – akin to those undertaken by aspiring doctors and architects – will be a part of every aspiring teacher's preparation by 2018-2019. These residencies prepare teachers for Louisiana's classrooms and convey to undergraduates that teaching is a valued and respected profession. To further elevate the teaching profession, and to increase the prestige of the teaching profession in Louisiana, these next generation preparation programs will serve as the basis for a marketing campaign designed to recruit and retain talented educators.

In Believe and Prepare partnerships, preparation programs work with districts to ensure that what is taught to aspiring teachers is based on current expectations for students and teachers. A set of [competencies](#) developed in collaboration with educators and higher education leaders, and approved by BESE in October 2016, reflect these expectations and will serve as the basis for teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. The competencies place emphasis on ensuring that all teachers are prepared to work with all students, including those who have special needs, and ensuring that teachers are culturally responsive in their practice.

Research indicates that teacher residencies encourage mutually beneficial relationships¹³ and help ensure new teachers are more likely to feel prepared for full-time teaching upon graduation.¹⁴ Through the use of Title I funds, Louisiana has incentivized placement of residents and identification of mentor teachers in high-need schools, which are more likely to experience challenges with talent identification and cultivation.

Mentoring and induction are critical components of Louisiana's teaching residencies. Using [evaluations of classroom effectiveness](#) and recommendations from school leaders, Louisiana school systems work with preparation partners to identify [Believe and Prepare](#) mentor educators, who host teacher candidates for a full-year, classroom-based residency while still in college. These mentor educators step into a leadership pathway that starts with training that equips them to coach aspiring and new teachers, and that includes access to increased compensation when serving as a mentor to an undergraduate resident.

10 References to "teachers" or "educators" includes not only classroom teachers, but other school personnel, including but not limited to school librarians, psychologists, counselors, diagnosticians, and other school professionals.

11 [2015-2016 workforce data](#) from Profile of Educational Personnel, Teacher Certification Management System, Compass Information System.

12 Louisiana's Plan for Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers. (2015). Retrieved at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/laequityplan12315.pdf>.

13 [Coffman, A., et al. \(2014\). Teacher residencies: Redefining Preparation through Partnerships. National Education Association. Retrieved from https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Teacher-Residencies-2014.pdf](#)

14 Silva, T., et al. (2014). Teaching residency program: A Multisite Look at New Models to Prepare Teachers for High-Needs Schools. Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20154002/pdf/20154002.pdf>

Additionally, the state has identified more than 5,000 [Teacher Leaders](#), who lead teaching and learning improvements in their schools and who meet on a quarterly basis through regional and statewide collaborative sessions. Strong Teacher Leaders and mentors can choose to pursue administrative pathways through the [Louisiana Principal Fellowship](#). Similarly, school and district administrators wishing to pursue district leadership can join the recently created [Louisiana Superintendents Academy](#).

Louisiana has also created a [professional credential](#) for child care teachers to ensure that more children, especially under age three, have access to a prepared educator. Through Believe and Prepare: Early Childhood, the state is using federal dollars to help launch high quality, affordable preparation programs that child care teachers can complete while still working. Similar to their pre-K-12 counterparts, these teacher candidates receive practice and mentoring opportunities that prepare them to be effective in the classroom immediately.

Impact measures: Strong schools and school systems create a “talent pipeline” at every level of the system.¹⁵ They proactively identify excellent educators and create professional growth experiences, cultivating future leaders for the next challenge based on their ability to ensure learning and development for educators and students. LEAs in Louisiana will thus include Title II investments such as the following in their annual plans to strengthen the educator profession:

- Dedication of resources to support a system of talent cultivation, from aspiring educators through administrative leadership. Such a system will include a means of inducting educators into the profession through partnership with preparation providers, strategic placement of residents to meet specific staffing needs, identifying effective teachers for leadership roles within schools, and a system of identifying and cultivating the next generation of administrative leadership. The system would draw on the data reported in the annual Educator Workforce Report, including the report’s portrayal of talent in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students of color.
- Evidence of a functional talent pipeline would include improved measures of workforce strength, including:
 - » reduction in hiring shortage areas;
 - » the number of effective educators identified and trained as mentors;
 - » reduced percentages of uncertified or out-of-field teachers, particularly in high-need schools; and
 - » retention and promotion of highly effective teachers and leaders.

Long-term indicators: The Department will continue providing superintendents and principals with an annual Educator Workforce Report as part of the annual reporting cycle, providing detailed information on the distribution of effective educators, their tenure status, their compensation, and the opportunities for advancement that await them. The state will also provide the [regional education workforce report](#), a publicly available report with data on regional workforce trends.

State support: While educator professional pathways must be a local endeavor, the state can provide training, support, and funding at statewide scale.

- The state will continue to financially support the growth and sustainability of teacher residencies.
- The Teacher Residency role will become a certification in state regulations. Teacher candidates in a full-year residency will be granted a stipend of \$2,000 minimally per year in order to cover lost part-time wages and travel expenses through 2018-2019. School systems may supplement this stipend and, following 2018-2019, may use a variety of means to provide this stipend if they choose, including using residents as part-time substitute teachers.
- The state will add and expand pathways to leadership roles through the following initiatives:
 - » The state will create a Teacher Mentor certificate, granting mentors a stipend of \$1,000 per year and adjusting the accountability framework for such professionals through a Compass rubric and goal-setting framework specific to

Q Are Title II funds restricted only to activities that support classroom teachers?

A No. Title II funds may and should be used to provide training, professional development, and supports to all school professionals as they strive to better serve the diverse needs of Louisiana’s students.

15 New Leaders. Nd. Teacher Leadership. Retaining Great Teachers and Developing a Pipeline of Future Leaders. Retrieved at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED559349.pdf>

mentors. The state will invest \$100,000 annually in mentor training that prepares mentors to work with aspiring and new teachers.

- » Louisiana will grow its Teacher Leader initiative, doubling it in size, creating a vast pool of teachers with leadership experience and deepening their content expertise.
- » The state will continue to launch new early childhood educator preparation programs and provide more than \$5 million in scholarships to help all child care teachers obtain the new credential by 2019.
- » Pilots are planned to study adjustments for school leader preparation akin to adjustments currently in process regarding classroom teacher preparation.

CHALLENGE FIVE: PERSISTENTLY STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

Evidence of the challenge: There are 83 schools in Louisiana in which either no more than 12 percent of students have demonstrated mastery levels of proficiency or no more than two-thirds of students have graduated in any of the last three years. African-Americans are disproportionately assigned to these schools. While African-American students make up slightly more than 40 percent of students statewide, in these schools they make up more than 75 percent of the population.

Current efforts: Interventions in persistently struggling schools range in nature, from the incremental to the dramatic. Research indicates that both can be done well.¹⁶ In Louisiana, federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding has fueled the creation of “transformation zones” in Ascension Parish, Caddo Parish, Jefferson Parish, and Rapides Parish. Districts such as Ascension, Caddo, Desoto, Iberville, Lafourche, and Rapides have adopted [The System for Teacher and Student Advancement \(TAP\)](#) whole-school model, which has shown positive effects, especially in districts implementing some form of the model at scale. The [Recovery School District](#) created charter schools that will soon be authorized by the Orleans Parish School Board, as well as a cluster of charter schools called the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone. Research has attributed positive effects to the New Orleans charter school and school transformation strategies.¹⁷

Long-term indicators: Under ESSA, states must develop criteria and identify schools in need of comprehensive support. In Louisiana, any school rated ‘D’ or ‘F’ for three consecutive years will be classified as a comprehensive support school in a given year. Additionally, schools exhibiting excessive out of school discipline and/or chronic absenteeism will be considered for comprehensive support. ESSA requires a district with a comprehensive support status to develop a plan for urgent intervention and improvement that must be approved by the state and may be funded through a competitive grant using seven percent of the state’s Title I funds starting with the 2017-2018 school year.

In Louisiana, school systems with comprehensive support schools will build a multi-year plan to improve the achievement of students in each of these schools grounded in research-based strategies and in collaboration with an external partner. The plans will be submitted to the Department for review and successful plans will be funded with the Title I comprehensive support funds.

The Department will also monitor the effectiveness of the plans. If a comprehensive support school does not make progress, ESSA requires that the Department intervene by requiring the district to implement strategies with greater research validity. If the school does not demonstrate improvement in the first two years, the district and school will experience increased monitoring, planning and execution support. If, after four years, the school does not improve its “F” rating, the school will be eligible for inclusion in the Recovery School District. The state will also continue to play a

Q What were the prior uses of the School Improvement Grant funding?

A The previous federal law included two funding streams, School Improvement Grants (SIG) and 1003a, that states were required to allocate to schools identified for school improvement. In ESSA, Congress replaced those programs with the required seven percent Title I grant for comprehensive and targeted support schools.

16 FSG Social Impact Advisors. (2010). The School Turnaround Field Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-School-Turnaround-Field-Guide.pdf>

17 Tulane University Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives. (2015). The State of Public Education in New Orleans: 10 Years After Hurricane Katrina. Retrieved from <http://www.speno2015.com/images/SPENO.2015.small.single.pdf>

role in pursuing evidence-based interventions to turnaround persistently struggling schools. Through the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, for example, the state has re-started struggling schools, started new schools, and provided alternative school options for families.

State support: Comprehensive support schools have often attempted a variety of strategies to improve achievement without clear or timely success; such schools benefit from support that improves and maintains student achievement within one to three years.¹⁸ Radically underperforming schools often require outside guidance, support, or intervention to quickly improve student outcomes.^{19,20} The organizations providing this type of support run the gamut. Some models, such as community schools, involve a coordinated series of entities providing a suite of wrap-around services for students including but not limited to social services, tutoring, and employment support for families. Some, such as the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) provide an intensive academic framework and training model for teachers. Others call on teams of administrators and teachers from within and outside the school to make significant changes; this model was used to great effect in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools.²¹ Some, such as IBM's P-tech model, call for outside design partners. Others, such as Empower Schools, assume the management and operations of the school. Some place the school under a new governing board; this model has often been used in New Orleans.

LEAs in Louisiana will thus include Title I investments such as the following in their annual plans to address persistently struggling schools. Rather than prescribing school turnaround models in this document, Louisiana is developing its approach for comprehensive support in partnership with school systems and external organizations throughout the fall and winter of 2016-2017. To do this, the state has taken the following steps:

- Issued a Request for Information (RFI) from more than [200 school improvement providers](#) within the state and across the nation including non-profits, universities, start-up organizations and even traditional districts that have demonstrated success in turning around struggling schools, soliciting their best thinking on how to approach the issue in urban, suburban, and rural communities within Louisiana.
- Based on responses, [invited qualified groups](#) from across the state and nation to the Louisiana Redesign Summit held January 19, 2017, to meet with Louisiana school systems likely to have schools on the comprehensive support list. Together, districts and partners began to brainstorm ideas for how to improve student performance across these schools.
- Issued a planning grant that allows districts to begin collaborative work with partners in advance of submitting a final plan for school redesign. This grant can be used to co-construct the district's final plan with a partner, to begin preliminary improvement work with a partners before making a long term commitment, or to engage in some further exploration as districts determine how they will approach redesign.
- After matching organizations and districts, solicit from school system leaders thoughts on the models and organizations they believe are most promising for persistently struggling schools; draft the state's ESSA comprehensive support plan to include these lines of thinking.

Q Which possible school improvement design partners received the RFI?

A *The RFI was intended to identify expert partners locally and across the country to join our schools and district leaders in their effort to transform Louisiana's lowest-performing schools and welcomed responses from a range of entities, including not-for-profits, charter organizations, innovation management organizations, start-up organizations, traditional district school systems, and institutions of higher education. The full list of entities that received the RFI may be seen [here](#).*

18 Hassel, B., et al. (2007). Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement, Section 1: Overview of Restructuring. Retrieved from <http://www.infoagepub.com/products/Handbook-on-Restructuring-and-Substantial-School-Improvement>

19 U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2008). Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

20 Klute, M., et al. (2016). Summary of Research on the Association between State Interventions in Chronically Low-Performing Schools and Student Achievement. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565613>.

21 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Nd. Strategic Plan 2018: For a Better Tomorrow. Retrieved at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/mediaroom/strategicplan2018/Documents/StrategicPlan2018.pdf>.

APPENDIX A - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Public Feedback on Framework and Draft Plan

The Department encourages all interested individuals, including parents, educators, business and industry representatives, and community advocates to email their reactions to this framework, and the upcoming full draft plan directly to the Department at essalouisiana@la.gov, or attend one of the winter public meetings listed below.

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION	AUDIENCE
February 7	Supervisor Collaboration	Ruston	school system leaders
February 8	Accountability Commission	Baton Rouge	open meeting
February 9	Supervisor Collaboration	Lafayette	school system leaders
February 16	Superintendent's Advisory Council	Baton Rouge	open meeting
Late February	Post ESSA draft plan for public comment	ESSA webpage	N/A
March 7-8	BESE Meetings	Baton Rouge	open meeting
March 29	Special Education Advisory Panel	Baton Rouge	open meeting
April 3	Deadline for LDOE to submit ESSA plan to USDOE		
August 21	Deadline for USDOE to respond to plan submitted April 3		

Details on these meetings are available at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/essa> as they are finalized.

See a [timeline for the process of developing Louisiana's plan](#). View the [recorded public testimony on the plan and a summary of public comment](#) received so far.

Family Engagement

Families know that excellent schools provide students with more than just high-quality teaching in core academic subjects, but also support their physical and mental health, behavior and social-emotional development, and preparation for postsecondary education and the workplace. Therefore, ESSA requires states to provide information to families to let them know if their child's school is:

- adequately meeting the learning needs of all students so that they are ready for the next level of study;
- providing access to enriching and rigorous experiences and courses; and
- staffing classrooms with excellent teachers.

Under this framework, the state is committed to providing families:

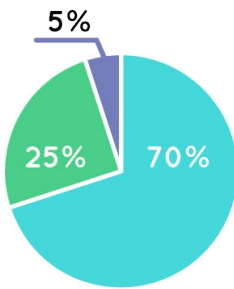
- reports of individual student performance in the core subjects, as well as whether they are on track to proficiency (when not yet proficient)
- high-quality school options when their own school is not meeting the needs of its students
- school and district report cards that include not just overall scores and ratings, but specific data on:
 - » how well the school supported the academic growth of all students--historically high-achieving students as well as students who have struggled or have unique learning needs due to a disability;
 - » how well the school is preparing the whole child for success in college or a career (e.g., access to rigorous coursework, college enrollment and persistence);
 - » the extent to which students in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students or students of color are taught by qualified, effective teachers; and the per-pupil expenditures, by funding source, at each school.

APPENDIX B - OVERVIEW OF ACCOUNTABILITY SHIFTS

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAE

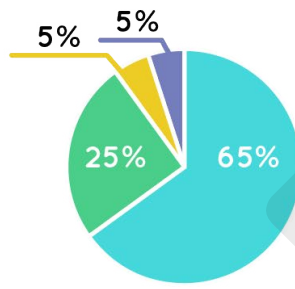
Beginning in 2017-2018, Louisiana will use the following formulae when evaluating school performance:

Elementary Schools



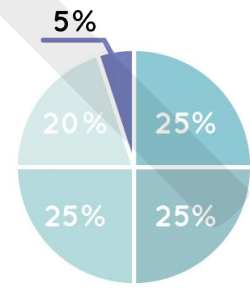
- Assessment Index
- Growth Index
- Interests & Opportunities

Elementary/Middle Schools (with Grade 8)



- Assessment Index
- Growth Index
- Interests & Opportunities
- Dropout Credit Accumulation Index

High Schools



- EOC Status & Growth
- ACT/WorkKeys
- Strength of Diploma
- Cohort Graduation Rate
- Interests & Opportunities

NOTE: The interests and opportunities measure will not be included within annual results until 2019-2020.

These formulae represent three critical shifts in the design of the accountability system.

1. **Ensuring an “A” in Louisiana’s letter grade system signals mastery of fundamental skills.** This will be achieved by raising expectations for what is required in order for a school to earn A-level points based on student achievement and attainment.
2. **Adjusting school rating calculations to value more the progress of every individual child, including (a) measuring whether students are on a path to master fundamental skills; and (b) measuring how effectively students are advancing relative to their peers.** This growth index will replace the current progress point system.
3. Expanding the school performance score formula to emphasize access, in addition to traditional assessment and graduation outcomes, as five percent of school scores.

Shift 1: Earning an “A”: Mastery of Fundamental Skills

To encourage full preparation for postsecondary studies and high-wage employment opportunities, Louisiana will raise the ambition of its long-term student achievement goals within the school performance score system. The transition will occur gradually from 2017-2018 through the 2024-2025 school year.

SPS INDEX	CURRENT “A” BENCHMARK (Earns 100 points in current formula)	PROPOSED “A” BENCHMARK (Will earn 100 points in 2024-2025)
Grade 3-8 Assessments	Basic	Mastery
Dropout Credit Accumulation Index (DCAI)	5 or more credits	6 or more credits
End-of-Course exams (EOC)	Good	Mastery on 5-level tests, as Louisiana will utilize aligned, comparable measures of student learning from grades 3 to 10
ACT and WorkKeys	18 or Silver	21 (NOTE: Workkeys results will still earn points. For example, as it does today, a Silver on WorkKeys will continue to earn the same number of points as an 18).
Strength of Diploma	Four-year graduate with a diploma	Four-year graduate with a diploma (no change)
Cohort Graduation Rate	75% of cohort graduates in four years	90% of cohort graduates in four years

Schools will still earn fewer points for students performing below readiness (e.g., Basic on LEAP, 18 on ACT).

Shift 2: Celebrating Student Progress

Louisiana is focused on ensuring students ultimately achieve Mastery on state assessments, signaling full “mastery” of fundamental skills. However, two additional questions are also important to consider when evaluating schools:

- If students are not yet achieving Mastery, are they on track to doing so?
- Are students progressing a rate comparable to their peers?

Louisiana’s new progress index shall consider both questions.

Question 1: On Track to Mastery?

Elementary and Middle: On Track to Mastery?

First, it is a goal of elementary and middle schools to have all children at Mastery by eighth grade. Therefore, every student scoring below Mastery will receive a simple, clear growth target for the following year that illustrates the growth required to be on track to Mastery in ELA and math by 8th grade. These clear targets will not only guide educator planning, but also provide parents—for the first time—with a clear, measurable, meaningful target for all students who have yet to master fundamental skills.

If a student achieves the target, the school shall earn 150 points, equivalent to an A+, for achieving the desired target. However, if a student does not achieve the target, then the formula moves to question two.

High School: On Track to Mastery?

It is a goal of high schools to have all students demonstrate mastery of core academic content—English I, English II, Algebra and Geometry—by 10th grade so as to allow students to explore their college or career interests in the last two years of high school. Using a student’s 8th grade score as the starting point, every student will have a simple growth target demonstrating what it takes to be on track to Mastery by English II and Geometry. For example, if a student is ten scaled score points from Mastery in 8th grade, then they will be expected to grow 5 scaled score points in the next year (e.g., English I) and 10 total points by 10th grade (e.g., English II).

If a student achieves the target, the school shall earn 150 points, equivalent to an A+, for achieving the desired target. However, if a student does not achieve the target, then Louisiana will consider question two.

Question 2: If not on track to Mastery, are students progressing at a rate comparable to their peers?

Using Louisiana’s value-added measurement, it is possible to compare students’ individual performance to that of similar peers—including students with similar prior scores, students with similar attendance and discipline records, and even students with the same disabilities where relevant.

As part of question two, Louisiana will calculate an expected score for each student based on the characteristics described above. Student results will then be ranked based on the degree to which individual students’ results exceeded or fell short of the expected scores. Schools will earn points based on students’ percentile ranks as compared to peers.

PERCENTILE RANK	POINTS AWARDED
81 to 99th	150
61 to 80	115
41 to 60	85
21 to 40	25
Below 21	0

How can high achieving students show progress?

Students already scoring at the highest levels on state assessments require a different means of calculating annual progress. For students scoring Advanced (the highest possible rating) in the prior year:

- If the student maintains a score of Advanced, the school earns 150 points or an A+.
- If the student drops to the Mastery level or below, the school is awarded points based on the student’s performance compared to similar peers (Question 2).

For students scoring Mastery in the prior year:

- Once students achieve Mastery, they will receive a Continued Growth target that illustrates what it will take to get to Advanced (by 8th grade or by 10th grade, per above rules). If a student achieves this target, then the school is awarded 150 points or an A+.
- If a student does not achieve the Continued Growth target, the school is awarded points based on the student’s performance compared to similar peers (Question 2).

The progress of all individual students attending a given school will be averaged together—across two years—to calculate the final progress index. The Accountability Commission is still considering recommendations related to the appropriate weight for such a growth index; however, a weight of 25% was recommended for their consideration.

How can students with significant cognitive disabilities taking the 1 percent assessment (LAA 1) demonstrate progress?

Once the long-term assessment for students taking LAA 1 is finalized, a growth methodology will be determined.

Shift 3: Measuring More Than Tests: Interests and Opportunities

The interests and opportunities indicator (five percent of each school's score) will measure whether schools are providing students will access to a well-rounded education, exposing them to diverse areas of learning in which they can develop their skills and talents. This indicator will also measure the extent to which schools are providing students the opportunity to take courses needed to successfully transition to postsecondary studies, including courses for college credit and those that lead to a recognized industry credential.

All elementary and middle settings should offer every Louisiana student access to quality visual and performing arts, foreign language instruction, technology consistent with current standards, and a variety of co-curricular activities (academic, athletic, and special interest clubs).

High schools should offer all Louisiana students access to all courses required for receiving TOPS University and TOPS Tech scholarships, a variety of statewide Jump Start training pathways leading to advanced credentials, or an associate's degree aligned to top-demand occupations.

Timeline for implementation:

- 2017-2018: Collect all data necessary
- Summer 2018: Outline pilot index for measuring success
- 2018-2019: Pilot interests and experiences index for all schools; report publicly with no stakes
- 2019-2020: Interests and experiences measure included in SPS

ACCOUNTABILITY TIMELINE

How Will Louisiana Transition To This New System?

The Louisiana accountability system will adjust ambitiously and cautiously.

Beginning in 2017-2018, Louisiana's accountability standards will shift modestly in order to begin making progress toward the 2025 "A" benchmarks. While basic scores will earn schools points, for example, they will not earn schools a full 100 points. Similarly, scores at the mastery level will earn schools points lower than 125 and closer to 100. These are the first steps in a gradual shift.

This shift will proceed for two years—2017-2018 and 2018-2019—and letter grade ratings will be curved during this period. The overall distribution of letter grades will not worsen.

During the 2019-2020 year, the Accountability Commission and BESE will review the results of the shifting system to determine if any adjustments are needed and whether the letter grade curve should be maintained or ended. Assuming the board and commission determine that the current plan should proceed, the scoring system will shift incrementally two additional times—in 2021-2022 and 2024-2025—such that Louisiana has fully transitioned to the 2025 standards. The Accountability Commission will be considering the precise elements of this scoring system February 8, 2017.

ADDITIONAL UPDATES

English Language Learners

ESSA requires that states include an accountability measure of English learners' progress toward English language proficiency (ELP). Louisiana will measure school success with English language learners in two ways:

1. Progress toward English language proficiency, as measured by the English language proficiency exam, will be included within the assessment index of each school. This ensures all student scores are included regardless of the number of English language learners in a school, and that all such scores are weighted equally with the assessment results of all students in the school. As provided in ESSA, the measure of progress towards English language proficiency will consider a student's ELP level at the time of identification and may also account for other characteristics such as age, grade, native language proficiency level, and time in formal education.

2. Both the English language proficiency results and English learner subgroup results on all other SPS indicators will be publicly reported on school report cards.

Per ESSA, recently arrived English learners will participate in state English, math, science, and social studies assessments, but their results will be excluded from accountability in the student's first year in the U.S., and will be included only in the Growth Index in the second year.

NOTE: Because Louisiana recently finalized its English language proficiency standards, and because the aligned exam will be administered for the first time in 2017-2018, progress towards English language proficiency will be included in school and district accountability beginning in 2018-2019.

Alternative Education

ESSA provides an opportunity for states to reconsider the way they measure and report on the performance of alternative schools that serve traditionally disadvantaged student populations with unique needs. Quality alternative education can provide students who are struggling or who have left their traditional school an opportunity to achieve in a new learning environment. The Department of Education will convene a study group of key external stakeholders representing local school systems, student and family advocacy organizations, student behavior and discipline experts, and juvenile justice stakeholders during spring 2017 in order to identify quality indicators of effective alternative education and to recommend accountability measures appropriate for such schools.

High School Assessments

In 2016-2017, Louisiana reduced high school testing by ending use of the PLAN (10th grade) and EXPLORE (8th and 9th grade) tests.

Beginning 2017-2018, students will take end-of-course exams in English I and II, rather than the junior year (e.g, English III), reducing the testing burden on juniors, who often pursue AP, WorkKeys, CLEP, and other assessments.

All exams will be reported on the same five-level scale as is used in grades 3 to 8 so as to allow:

1. High schools to earn points for Basic, Mastery and Advanced, as is currently possible in elementary/middle but not in high school.
2. High schools to demonstrate growth to Mastery in the growth index, as is possible for elementary/middle schools.

NOTE: Students who entered high school prior to 2017-2018 will continue to take the English III.

Will graduation requirements change?

No, graduation requirements will remain the same. The "Fair" passing score for graduation will also be reported in Spring 2018 for all exams.

APPENDIX C – NCLB AND ESSA FUNDING COMPARISON

The funding allocated to states and local education agencies within ESSA is not intended to provide an educational foundation within school systems (this is the role of the state’s Minimum Foundation Program). Instead, ESSA funding is dedicated to meeting the specific, additional needs of disadvantaged students. The law requires the funds are spent on behalf of these students in two ways:

1. Most federal dollars flow directly through the state to local schools and school systems as unrestricted, lump sum grants. This framework document calls on school systems to use funds from ESSA’s “titles” (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) in order to achieve both leading and long-term indicators of success in the state’s accountability system.
2. A small amount of federal funding must be or can be targeted by the state to address specific student needs. What this framework document proposes that students, teachers, principals and other school professionals (including but not limited to school librarians, counselors, and psychologists) receive specific services or training, the proposal is often funded by targeted funds rather than lump sum funds.

In order to increase support directly provided to disadvantaged students, Congress increased the percentage of federal funds that can be spent as targeted dollars to be used for specific needs rather than unrestricted “flow-through” dollars that can be used for any allowable purpose. Under ESSA, targeted funds must be used to:

- Improve the most struggling schools or support the most disadvantaged students;
- Provide grants to schools and school systems to provide early college coursework, career preparation, college and career counseling, arts education, foreign languages classes, teacher mentoring, and nutrition and health programming where it does not exist; or
- Provide grants to districts for recruitment and professional development activities for principals and other school leaders.

The chart below compares the percentage of Louisiana’s federal dollars provided to school systems under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and under ESSA. While there are shifts from the unrestricted flow-through category to the targeted category, targeted funding must still be allocated to schools or school systems. Thus the total percentage of the federal funding provided to school systems does not change from NCLB to ESSA.

Funding Source	NCLB Targeted Grant	NCLB Admin Funds	NCLB Unrestricted Flow Through	NCLB Total Funding to LEAs	ESSA Targeted Grant	ESSA Admin Funds	ESSA Unrestricted Flow Through	ESSA Total Funding to LEAs
Title I - Supporting Disadvantaged Students	7%*	1%	92%	99%	7%-10%**	1%	89%-92%	99%
Title II - Supporting Educators in Low-Income Communities	4%	1%	95%	≥95%	4%-7%***	1%	92%-95%	≥95%
Title III - Supporting English Language Learners	2.5%	2.5%	94%	>94%	2.5%	2.5%	94%	≥94%
Title IV - Academic Enrichment and Student Support Grants (NEW)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	1%	94%	≥94%

* Under NCLB, this funding was divided into two separate grant programs for LEAs. This percentage reflects the funding in both the 1003a funding reservation and the School Improvement Grants (SIG).

** The LDOE must reserve seven percent for school improvement grants to LEAs. The LDOE may reserve an additional 3 percent for subgrants to LEAs to provide direct student services. The targeted funds may not be spent at the state education agency (SEA) level.

*** In addition to a 5 percent set-aside, the LDOE may reserve an additional 3 percent for subgrants to LEAs for school leadership activities. The targeted school leadership funds may not be spent at the SEA level.