



Principal's Newsletter



August 21, 2025

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Principal Strategy Spotlight

Anesha Ross, 2026 Principal of the Year Finalist



Welcome back to the 2025-2026 school year, Louisiana Principals! I hope that each of you was able to reset and recharge over your well-deserved summer to refocus your efforts in serving as the LEAD learners on each of your campuses.

Reflection is key as we welcome back our faculty, staff, and students. To clearly set the expectation and focus of our upcoming work, we must reflect on where we have been. Engaging in reflection gives us the foundation to develop and communicate an effective vision, mission, and yearly school goals.

What might this look and sound like?

Reflection looks like you are disaggregating multiple data sources as you prepare for the new school year, including but not limited to analyzing faculty, staff, student, stakeholder surveys, assessment data, exit and stay interviews, and teacher and support staff evaluations. It sounds like you are listening to those around you in order to determine your next steps.

Vision- Ensure that you effectively communicate your vision for your school. What do you want for your students in the long term? What do you want your school to be known for? That is your vision. Ensure that it does not live in your mind. Share it with your instructional leadership team and all stakeholders, including students and families, so that it becomes a shared vision, one that is long-term, visionary, and can be seen through your daily actions, not just your talk.

Mission- We all hear about mission statements at the start of each school year. What are these really about? It's less about the statements and more about the actual work. The mission is "how" we accomplish the vision, so the mission should be directly connected to the vision daily. The mission should be articulated and evident in everything that takes place on your campus. Doing so allows all team members to hold one another accountable, which supports meeting our common goal. Think about the vision as the targeted destination, and the mission as the journey.

Yearly school goals- By developing and communicating the vision and mission, you are setting the tone for the year. This is where your annual school goals come in. What should be the school's focus? Many well-intentioned team members will have great ideas, but what few actions will have the MOST impact on your GREATEST school need? Answering that question narrows the school's focus and creates system coherence that will positively impact teacher effectiveness and student achievement because each team member will know the goals and their specific roles and responsibilities in accomplishing those.

As a recap, reflect on the last school year by bringing your stakeholders to the table and analyzing data sources that will guide your work. Share your vision with everyone, and together create a mission, daily actions that everyone can commit to, that will help your vision become a reality. Once these are set, narrow the school focus by choosing high-impact initiatives, creating actionable deliverables, and committing to time-oriented measures in order to meet and/or exceed yearly school goals.

The beginning of the school year is a busy time for everyone, but please remember:

- Clarity is kind.
- Cooperation and collaboration are necessities.
- Clear communication is essential.

Wishing you all a STRONG START as you lead others in this most important work of educating Louisiana's students!

Announcements

LDOE Announces New Development Resources for Principals

In August, the LDOE unveiled a new resource for [aspiring](#), [novice](#), and [current](#) principals to explore development opportunities in school leadership. On the [School Leader Professional Development Opportunities Landing Page](#), principals can find more information about Staffing & Scheduling, Mentor Principal Opportunities, the Principal Newsletter, and monthly reflections of school leader best practices. This landing page will be updated regularly with new information and opportunities, so check back often to find new and more ways to grow in your school leadership skills.

Please contact LouisianaLeaders@la.gov with any questions.

LDOE Begins Releasing *Principles for Principals*

Moving forward, on the first Monday of each month, the LDOE will release a new *Principles for Principals*, a short reflection on a book, chapter, research paper, or literature article that provides practical advice for

school leaders. A series of reflective questions will accompany the brief reflection to help support principals in their practice. Access to the monthly posting of the Principles for Principals can be found on the [School Leader Professional Development Opportunities Landing Page](#). This month's principle is on [Servant Leadership](#).

Please contact LouisianaLeaders@la.gov with any questions.

Teaching & Learning Menu of Services

The LDOE Office of Teaching and Learning has officially launched its comprehensive [Menu of Services](#), offering tailored, one-on-one support to meet the specific needs of schools or systems across the state. From strengthening lesson prep to building collaborative teacher teams, these offerings are designed to improve instruction and student outcomes.

Please note: Only one designated point of contact (POC) per school system is authorized to submit support requests. If you're unsure who your system's POC is, please check with your central office before placing an order.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

RESOURCES

Educator Talent And Workforce Development

The New Teacher Experience Professional Learning Modules: Registration is now OPEN

The LDOE, in partnership with A+PEL, has developed monthly [professional learning modules](#) on topics that are critical for new teacher success. These modules include online asynchronous content followed by an in-person learning lab where participants practice and apply these concepts.

Teachers are expected to complete the entire series of Professional Learning Modules. These five modules are designed to build learning throughout the year.

- [Module 1: Classroom Management/Classroom Environment](#)
- [Module 2: Standards and Curriculum](#)
- [Module 3: Data Literacy](#)
- [Module 4: Literacy for 21st-Century Learners](#)
- [Module 5: Parent and Community Engagement](#)

This year, complimentary seating will be offered for the first 200 registrants.

Half of the seats for the northern location (Monroe) and half for the southern location (Baton Rouge) will be reserved as complementary seating. Once those seats are exhausted, teachers may still attend, but the cost to complete the series of modules will be \$1,272.00 per teacher.

Teachers must receive approval to attend from their school leader. [Registration](#) is now open. Once teachers complete the registration, participants will receive details on selected training locations and an invitation to access the online asynchronous modules.

Please contact laurie.carlton@la.gov with questions.

LEADS Resources

Many resources are available to assist in effectively conducting LEADS evaluations. The [LEADS Library](#) contains forms, guidance documents, and timelines. Leaders should utilize the [LA Educator Evaluation Process: Sequence and Timeline](#) and the [LA Leader and Counselor Evaluation Process: Sequence and Timeline](#) to ensure all evaluation processes are in place. Additionally, [Sample Observation Schedule A](#) and [Sample Observation Schedule B](#) may be used to plan observations.

To prepare teachers for LEADS evaluations, training materials are available in the [Professional Learning Platform: LEADS Public Collections](#). Leaders may utilize the Teacher Training Materials, located under the [LEADS Training Materials](#) header. These materials include a full-day training with video clips, speaker notes, and a participant guide; the training has also been adapted to a 90-minute session. The asynchronous module, [Louisiana Educator Evaluation Training for Teachers](#), may also be shared with teachers.

Please contact leads@la.gov with questions.

LES 2024-2025 Evaluation Closeout

Educator evaluations for 2024–2025 should continue to be finalized in LES by selecting 2024 to complete any remaining data. Evaluations, including those for VAM teachers, may be finalized if all required components are complete. VAM scores will be added on the backend once released.

The data entry deadline will be announced after VAM results are released this fall. Mark evaluations as incomplete for any employee who should have been evaluated in LEADS (or the Legacy system) but did not receive a 2024–2025 evaluation. Refer to [Bulletin 130](#) for the conditions under which an evaluation may be marked incomplete.

Please contact leads@la.gov with questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools

Back-to-School Safety Preparedness: Training, Activities, and Drills for K-12 Schools (August 28)

Please join Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) School Safety on Thursday, August 28, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. EDT for a [virtual training](#) on back-to-school safety and emergency preparedness actions for kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools.

The start of the school year provides a critical window for school and district leaders to reinforce a culture of safety and preparedness among students and staff. This interactive panel discussion will equip K-12

administrators with practical strategies to integrate emergency response drills, training, and exercises as core components of a safe and secure learning environment.

Attendees will gain insight into updating and sustaining crisis response and reunification plans, with an emphasis on ensuring that these plans are well understood and practiced by staff and students. The session will also provide actionable tools and guidance to support the implementation of developmentally-appropriate preparedness efforts throughout the school year.

[Back-to-School Safety Preparedness: Training and Drills for K-12 Schools](#) to register for the event.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

ACADEMICS

Literacy

2025–2026 Accelerate: High-Dosage Tutoring FAQ Now Available

As school systems begin planning for the 2025–2026 school year, the LDOE encourages leaders to utilize the [Accelerate: High-Dosage Tutoring FAQ](#) to inform planning and decision-making related to Accelerate: High-Dosage Tutoring. This updated document provides answers to common questions about implementation, eligibility, funding, and instructional requirements. It supports school systems in aligning with [Act 771](#) and effectively planning tutoring for the 2025–2026 school year.

Please contact tutoring@la.gov with questions.

Catalog of Supports for Literacy Teachers and Leaders

The Literacy Library now offers a catalog of support for literacy [leaders](#) and [teachers](#) in the [Literacy Professional Growth Resources](#). The Catalog of Supports for Literacy Leaders is a culmination of all of the literacy resources available for leaders. The Catalog of Supports for Literacy Teachers is organized by grade bands and recommends the resources and training most appropriate for that band. Both resources highlight our most recent courses on the Louisiana Professional Learning Platform: Unit Unpacking and Lesson Preparation (grades 4-12) and Using DIBELS to Drive Literacy Growth (grades K-3).

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks Unit Updates

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the LDOE will implement revisions in select units of the ELA Guidebooks curriculum. The updates will reassign specific units to a different grade level, revise some unit texts, and make other unit modifications. The LDOE will provide guidance and additional details for these updates in future communications.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Numeracy

Financial Literacy Activities

The LDOE has added additional financial literacy activities and a year-long project to the High School Guidance section on the [Louisiana Math](#) page. These resources are designed to support the implementation of Act 267 further and aim to enhance students' understanding of financial literacy concepts, helping prepare students for real-world financial decision-making.

Educators are encouraged to explore these new additions and incorporate them into their financial literacy instruction to enrich the learning experience for all high school students.

Please contact math@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Achievement in Numeracy Act (LANE)

[Act 260](#) of 2023 mandates that all mathematics teachers in grades 4–8 complete a Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE)-approved professional learning course focused on numeracy instruction by August 2025. System and school leaders must request a completed certificate from any employee being hired to teach mathematics in grades 4–8, following the completion date specified in the legislation.

Additionally, [Act 353 of 2025 \(LANE\)](#) requires all K–3 mathematics teachers to complete an approved foundational numeracy course by August 2027. Together, these laws ensure that all K–8 mathematics teachers participate in high-quality, LDOE-identified professional learning aligned with effective numeracy practices. While a course for high school mathematics teachers is available, it is currently optional. The [Guidance and Framing](#) document is available on the [Louisiana Math webpage](#).

Educators transitioning from teaching grades 4–8 to grades K–3 are expected to complete the K–3 course to deepen their understanding of the vertical alignment of mathematics standards and instructional models. For those who have previously completed the grades 4–8 course, progress may be transferred to the K–3 course for the 13 content modules and 3 disposition modules. This transfer will result in over 50% completion of the K–3 course.

To facilitate this process, please submit the names and email addresses of any participants requesting progress duplication.

Please contact math@la.gov with questions

Social Studies

Social Studies Office Hours

To support the implementation of [Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum](#) and [Foundations of Freedom: A Louisiana Civics Program](#), the Louisiana Department of Education social studies team will hold office hours on the first Wednesday of each month from 3:15 to 4 p.m. The information for the first office hours is below.

- Date and Time: September 3 at 3:15 p.m.

- Webinar Link:
<https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97436075546?pwd=bLSSw5AUjKUQL1a6wWUCfhfWoY5ZwR.1>
- Webinar Phone Number: 1 346 248 7799
- Meeting ID#: 974 3607 5546
- Meeting Passcode: 280838

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Bayou Bridges Student Workbooks

Bayou Bridges student workbooks are available for the 2025-2026 school year. These workbooks are designed to support student learning by including:

- student reading notes pages,
- primary sources,
- checks for understanding,
- activity pages,
- performance tasks, and
- supplementary map or source activities, as appropriate.

Leaders can download workbooks from the [Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Social Studies Curriculum](#) web page or purchase copies for \$2 each from Core Knowledge at labayoubridges@coreknowledge.org.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Social Studies Resources: Now Available

The LDOE Social Studies team has released several new, valuable resources to support high-quality instruction across K-12 classrooms. These additional Bayou Bridges and high school resources include

- Bayou Bridges Standards Trackers to ensure comprehensive coverage of each content standard;
- Bayou Bridges Resource Hubs to provide a centralized Google Sheet consolidating all internal and external resource links into one easy-to-access location;
- Bayou Bridges Alternate Pacing Guides for grades 3-8 that provide additional pacing options designed to offer greater flexibility for instructional planning;
- K-2 Instructional Slide Decks, developed in collaboration with the LDOE literacy team, to enhance student engagement, support lesson pacing, and facilitate formative assessments;
- Unit 1 of the World Geography and World History High School Frameworks to support instruction in high school social studies; and
- Student-facing [Performance Task Evidence Catchers](#) to help learners collect and organize key evidence to prepare for end-of-unit performance tasks.

Educators are encouraged to visit the [Bayou Bridges: AK-8 Social Studies Curriculum](#) and [K-12 Social Studies Planning](#) pages to access these valuable new resources.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Freedom Framework Diploma Endorsement

The LDOE is pleased to introduce a new recognition for high school students who demonstrate excellence in civics education. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, students who achieve a Mastery or higher on the LEAP 2025 civics assessment will receive a special diploma seal and a red, white, and blue honor cord to be worn during graduation. Educators play a vital role in helping students achieve this distinction by sharing this opportunity, encouraging academic success, and supporting civic learning in the classroom.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Science

Science Leader Community of Practice

The LDOE will host a series of targeted professional learning and collaboration opportunities geared towards school and system science leaders. Through a combination of virtual and in-person support, leaders will

- analyze science HQIM through the lens of the LER;
- increase capacity for facilitating teacher collaboration; and
- examine strategies for providing meaningful feedback on instructional practices and annotated lesson plans.

[Register now](#) to reserve your seat.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Now Available: LEAP 2025 Science Released Item Guides

The LDOE Division of Assessment Content has released the LEAP 2025 Science Released Item Guides containing released items, as well as alignment information, achievement level descriptors, rationale for answers, and the rubrics for constructed and extended-response items. These guides are for teachers and leaders to use to better understand how the achievement level descriptors are used in creating assessment items. These guides can be found on the Assessment Guidance Webpage under Science Assessment Resources.

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

Diverse Learners

Fast Track ESL Add-On

Tuition-free courses are available for teachers and leaders to earn an ESL Add-On credential. Please complete the 2024 - 2026 [Early Interest Survey](#) to receive information about Project Endorsement Plus opportunities.

Please contact alexandra.chenevert@la.gov with questions.

Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric (NAAR)

The Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric (NAAR) is the alternate assessment to the K-3 Numeracy Screener for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SWSCD) in kindergarten – 3rd grade. Resources for the NAAR are available online and include:

- [K-3 Numeracy Screener Diverse Learners Guidance](#)
- [Kindergarten- Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric \(NAAR\)](#)
- [1st Grade- Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric \(NAAR\)](#)
- [2nd Grade- Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric \(NAAR\)](#)
- [3rd Grade- Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric \(NAAR\)](#)
- [Individual Academic Support Plan: Numeracy Alternate Assessment Rubric \(NAAR\)](#)
- [NAAR Overview](#)

Please contact diverselearnersupport@la.gov with questions.

Computer Science and STEM

Now Available: Grade 4 Computer Science Implementation Framework

The LDOE has released the [Grade 4 Computer Science Implementation Framework](#) to support teachers with planning and delivering high-quality computer science instruction. Implementation frameworks in the elementary grades provide guidance and strategies for effectively integrating computer science into classroom instruction. Frameworks for additional grades will be released in the coming months.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Educational Technology

Back to School LMS Support

The LDOE is excited to offer resources to help educators confidently implement best practices in their digital classrooms. To support all educators, the LDOE has developed a toolkit of Learning Management System (LMS) resources, including:

- [Back to School: Google Classroom](#)
- [Back to School: Preparing Your Canvas Course](#)
- [Back to School: Microsoft Teams](#)

Educators can find next steps and tutorials in the additional LMS support resources. Continue to visit the [Digital Learning webpage](#) for updates.

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

New AI Guidance for Educators: The C.R.E.A.T.E. Framework and Strategic AI Integration Checklist

The LDOE has developed two new resources designed to help educators effectively and responsibly integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their classrooms: The [C.R.E.A.T.E. Framework for Effective AI Prompting](#) and [Strategic AI Integration: A Pre-Work Checklist for Educators](#).

The C.R.E.A.T.E. Framework offers a structured approach to designing effective AI prompts. This framework guides educators in crafting prompts by considering the following elements: Character, Request, Examples, Additions, Type of Output, and Extras.

Before using any AI tool, educators are encouraged to review [Strategic AI Integration: A Pre-Work Checklist for Educators](#). The checklist emphasizes the importance of prioritizing intellectual preparation to maintain the integrity of high-quality instructional materials. Key steps in this pre-work include defining a clear purpose and need, understanding existing HQIM, identifying relevant student learning goals, engaging in lesson internalization, considering ethical implications and safety, planning prompts strategically, recognizing AI as a supportive tool, establishing a plan for human oversight and review, and ensuring alignment with educational objectives.

By utilizing these resources, educators can significantly improve the quality and relevance of AI-generated content. Prompt engineering is a refinement process, and continuous revision will lead to the best results.

For additional resources on AI in education, please visit our [Digital Learning webpage](#).

Please contact digitallearning@la.gov with questions.

Physical Education

Upcoming Review of Physical Education Standards- We Need Your Input!

Beginning in October, LDOE will launch the review and revision process for the state's Physical Education standards. As teacher leaders and stakeholders in the education community, your input is invaluable to this work. We invite you to complete a brief [survey](#) to share your feedback on the [current standards](#). This is a key step in ensuring our updated standards reflect the needs of all students and educators across the state.

To learn more about this important initiative, please see the [Physical Education Standards Overview](#) page, which includes details about the committee's scope, responsibilities, and timeline.

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

Department Names State-Level Honorees for Award Programs

On July 26, the LDOE, in partnership with [Dream Teachers](#), hosted the 19th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Awards Gala at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. The evening honored outstanding educators from across the state and celebrated their dedication to students, schools, and communities.

During the event, the LDOE announced the [overall and division-level honorees for 2026 Teacher and Principal of the Year](#), along with the [2026 New Teacher of the Year](#) and the [2026 Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year](#) honorees.

Also recognized were the [New Teacher of the Year finalists](#), [Early Childhood Teacher and Leader finalists](#), [Milken Educator Award](#) recipients, [Louisiana's Public Interest Fellow](#), and the [Teacher and Principal of the Year semifinalists and finalists](#).

Congratulations to these outstanding educators!

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions.

Seeking Nominations for the School Support, Health Provider, and Physical Activity Award Programs

The LDOE is currently seeking nominations for the following awards initiatives: [Outstanding School Support Employee of the Year](#), [School Health Service Provider of the Year](#), and the [School Physical Activity Awards](#). The nomination portal is now open and will close on September 12.

By September 12, please submit nominations via the [nominations portal](#). Multiple nominations are accepted, as well as self-nominations. Upon portal closure, the nomination information will be shared with school systems for their consideration.

Please share the information for the [nominations portal](#) with stakeholders and encourage everyone to nominate outstanding health providers, employees, or schools.

See more information on the [Awards](#) page.

Please contact the following with questions:

- Outstanding School Support Employee of the Year - excellenteducators@la.gov
- School Health Service Provider and School Physical Activity Award- healthyschools@la.gov

Principal Newsletter Signup

Do you have a colleague who would benefit from receiving this newsletter? Forward this copy and encourage them to [subscribe](#) to receive our next monthly newsletter.