

LDOE Weekly Newsletter: February 25, 2025

In This Issue

[Message from the State Superintendent](#)

[Important Dates for School Systems](#)

[Teaching and Learning](#)

[Career and College Readiness](#)

[School Choice](#)

[School System Relations](#)

Message from the State Superintendent

Dear Colleagues,

Louisiana is reimagining the high school experience so that every student graduates with a diploma of value — prepared for a career, college, or service. I had the opportunity to join our annual Fast Forward Summit this morning, where educators, school system leaders, and industry partners came together to collaborate on preparing students for high-skill, high-wage jobs in Louisiana’s workforce.

February is National Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, making it the perfect time to highlight the incredible work happening across our state to expand career readiness opportunities. [We’ve made a number of resources available on our website.](#)

As we celebrate CTE Month, we also recognize the important role our public schools play in shaping the future of Louisiana. Thank you to our educators, school leaders, and support staff for your commitment to student success. Wishing you all a happy Public Schools Week.

Please note that we will not have a weekly newsletter next week due to Mardi Gras.

Thank you for continuing to push for greater outcomes for the students of Louisiana.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

Important Dates for School Systems

Office Hours and Monthly Calls

- Computer Science Office Hours: [February 27 at 10 a.m.](#)
- Safe and Healthy Schools Monthly Call: [February 27 at 2 p.m.](#)
- Social Studies Office Hours: [March 5](#)
- Data Coordinator Monthly Webinar: [March 6 at 1 p.m.](#)
- System Leaders Monthly Call: [March 7 at 9 a.m.](#)
- LEADS Implementation Monthly Call: [March 10 at 12 p.m.](#)
- Zearn Support for Leaders: [March 11 at 9 a.m.](#)
- Nutrition Support Monthly Call: [March 11 at 1 p.m.](#)
- Diverse Learners Office Hours: [March 11 at 2 p.m.](#)
- Early Childhood Community Network Office Hours: [March 11 at 3 p.m.](#)

- High School Science Leaders Support Monthly Call: [March 12 at 10:30 a.m.](#)
- Child Welfare and Attendance Monthly Call: [March 13 at 8 a.m.](#)
- Educational Technology Monthly Call: [March 13 at 9 a.m.](#)
- School System Financial Services Monthly Call: [March 19 at 2 p.m.](#)
- Federal Support and Grantee Relations (FSGR) Monthly Call: [March 20 at 10 a.m.](#)
- Career and College Readiness Monthly Call: [March 20 at 3 p.m.](#)

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- Reading Intervention in Secondary Schools Webinar Session 2: [February 26](#)
- 2025 Future Law Enforcement Youth Academy Application Deadline: [February 28](#)
- LA GATOR Student Applications Open: [March 1 at 9 a.m.](#)
- Data Coordinator Webinar: [March 6 at 1 p.m.](#)
- Launching Louisiana Literacy MTSS for System Leaders: [March 12](#)
- Last day to administer LEAP Connect, ELPT, and ELPT Connect: March 19
- Reading Intervention in Secondary Schools Webinar Session 3: [March 26](#)
- Launching Louisiana Literacy MTSS for School Leaders: [March 27](#)
- Title IV, Part A Program Evaluation Submission Deadline: April 4
- LA GATOR Student Applications Close: [April 15](#)
- CSI/TSI Plan Submission Deadline in eGMS: May 2
- English Learner Institute Session 4, Baton Rouge: [May 14](#)

Teaching and Learning

Diverse Learners

April Dunn Act Implementation Monitoring

Please share with special education leaders.

To support the effective implementation of the April Dunn Act (ADA), school systems are required to complete an ADA self-assessment annually. School systems must complete all sections of the [ADA Self-Assessment Guide](#) by February 28. The assessment results should be kept on file. The LDOE will audit the self-assessment results to ensure they accurately represent best practices in the implementation of the April Dunn Act.

Resources to support effective implementation are available in the [Students with Disabilities library](#).

Please contact ashley.augustine@la.gov with questions.

Office Hours for Diverse Learners

Please share with school leaders, special education leaders, and special education teachers.

The Diverse Learners team will begin hosting virtual office hours on March 11 at 2 p.m. Content supervisors, special education leaders, school leaders, and special education teachers are encouraged to attend [Diverse Learners Office Hours](#) to receive important updates each month.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

School Improvement

2025-2026 School Support Institutes & System Leader Regional Collaborations

Please share with system leaders and school leaders.

The dates for next year's School Support Institutes and System Leader Regional Collaborations have been released. SSI will be held from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the System Leader Regional Collaborations will be held from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the same dates and at the same locations, with the exception of New Orleans which is now consolidated into the Baton Rouge cohort for system leaders.

The 2025-2026 School Support Institutes & System Leader Regional Collaboration dates are:

- Monroe Cohort: September 23 and January 27
- Shreveport Cohort: September 24 and January 28
- Lafayette Cohort: October 2 and January 23, 2026
- Baton Rouge Cohort: October 1 and January 22
- New Orleans Cohort (**SSI only**): September 30 and January 21

In 2025-2026, SSI will consist of two in-person sessions during the year, one asynchronous session, and a culminating session at TLS 2026.

Please contact SSIsupport@la.gov with questions.

Level Up: School Support Institutes at Teacher Leader Summit 2025

Please share with school system leaders and school leaders.

Three ILT members from each CIR school (the principal and two others) are required to attend one half-day session of Level Up SSI at TLS 2025. A special TLS Level Up registration link has been emailed to designated system and school leaders. Please email SSIsupport@la.gov if you need the link and code.

Please contact SSIsupport@la.gov with questions.

Stay Informed with the LEADS Educator Newsletter

Please share with principals, school leaders, school system leaders, and teachers.

The LDOE has launched the LEADS Educator Newsletter, a monthly publication designed to provide in-depth guidance on key aspects of the LEADS process. This newsletter serves as a valuable resource for educators, offering expert insights, best practices, and peer-driven advice to support a smooth transition to LEADS. Each edition focuses on a specific topic relevant to teachers and leaders. Previous issues have covered:

- [Self-Assessment](#)
- [Tips for Effectively Planning for Instruction](#)
- [Preparing for a Successful Post-Conference](#)
- [The 6-Step Coaching Cycle](#)

Teachers and leaders are encouraged to [subscribe to the LEADS Educator Newsletter](#) to receive these valuable insights each month.

Please contact leads@la.gov with questions.

Career and College Readiness

New: Jump Start Construction Scholarship Available

Please share with CTE supervisors and high school counselors.

The Louisiana Construction Education Foundation (LCEF) [Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program](#) is accepting applications for up to 40 one-time \$1,000 scholarships. The scholarships are geared toward students who have:

- Earned a Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma
- Earned a National Center Construction Education and Research credential
- Plan to enroll at an LCTCS campus:
 - On a construction pathway
 - In an Associated Builders and Contractors Training Program

This is the state's first and only scholarship dedicated exclusively to Jump Start graduates. This effort is a collaboration of the Louisiana Construction Education Foundation, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and the LDOE. Completed [applications](#) are due April 22.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

The Louisiana Course Choice Program Updates Webinar

Please share with administrators, counselors, and school system leaders.

Recent policy changes to the Course Choice program have impacted system requirements and parental enhancements. This webinar will provide an overview of the updates, explain key changes, and guide schools on implementation.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 13 at 9:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93167652159?pwd=RT7EzS8Jt9bSR50Z3HNGuzjiF9cdf.1>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470 250 9358
- **Meeting ID:** 931 6765 2159

Please contact sca@la.gov with questions.

Proficiency Exam Reporting Per Policy

Please share with CTE instructors, CTE supervisors, and high school counselors.

Credit by proficiency is awarding a student credit in a course in which he or she has never been enrolled but has taken an exam or completed a portfolio that exemplifies proficiency. The LDOE may accept the exam, recommend that the exam should not be used to award credit, and/or make recommendations for changes. The LDOE may deny an exam be used to award credit if it does not meet standards. The revised [Proficiency by Exam Submission Form](#) will be used to collect exam submissions through March. The LDOE will process these requests in April and May and report acceptance or denial in June.

Please contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

Fast Forward Summers Application Webinar

Please share with CTE supervisors, school administrators, and school system leaders.

The application for Fast Forward Summers (formerly known as Jump Start Summers) is now open and will close on March 21. A new evaluation process has been created for individual program review. This webinar will review the application process and explain the new evaluation tool.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 13 at 12:30 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91722761121?pwd=u0EMWCvJf4bCagUG3tVWVFECrxE3wg.1>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 1 312 626 6799
- **Meeting ID:** 917 2276 1121
- **Passcode:** 287250

Please contact fastforward@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council Now Accepting Applications

Please share with administrators, counselors, and students.

The Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) is accepting applications for membership from high school students interested in representing the voices of young people around the state. LYAC is an annually appointed body composed entirely of students who tackle issues affecting the youth of Louisiana. The purpose of LYAC is to facilitate communication between youth and the legislature and to give students a unique opportunity to be involved in the workings of state government. The Council studies and addresses various issues of importance to young people, such as education, mental health, civic engagement, the environment, and school safety.

Members of LYAC are selected from a large pool of applicants who display a strong interest in civic involvement. The 31 members include three students representing each of the six congressional districts, and the remaining serve at large. Applicants must be between the ages of fourteen and nineteen and enrolled in a public or private high school, charter school, home school, or GED skills program during the 2025-2026 school year.

The new LYAC will meet for the first time in July, with a two-day seminar at the state capitol. It will then meet every other month in person on a Saturday in Baton Rouge beginning in September. In the months in between, the LYAC will meet on Zoom.

The application deadline is March 28. Visit the [Louisiana Commission on Civic Education](#) for more information. All applicants must submit two letters of recommendation in addition to the six short answer questions on the application form.

Please contact Megan Bella at bellam@legis.la.gov or 225-342-2361 with questions.

School Choice

Charter Schools

Charter School Reporting Calendar

Please share with charter school leaders and system leaders.

BESE Charter Schools submit items to multiple departments throughout the school year. Submissions may include Charter Accountability, financial documents, or data items. The Charter Accountability team tracks the school's submission. Charter Schools should refer to the [2024-2025 Charter School Reporting Calendar](#) for submissions that were due in February. There are no upcoming submissions for March.

Please contact charters@la.gov with questions.

LA GATOR Scholarship Program

LA GATOR Student Applications Open March 1

Please share with charter, nonpublic, and public schools.

LA GATOR student applications will be available at lagator.la.gov beginning this Saturday, March 1 at 9 a.m. Applications will close on April 15 for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Participating LA GATOR schools and interested families should review the [Parent Training Instructions](#) for additional application details and preparation tips. More information can be found at lagator.la.gov. The program administrator, Odyssey, will be available to support families during the application process and will have three customer service options:

- Help Desk Ticket: [Submit a Request](#)
- Help Desk Email: help.la@withodyssey.com
- Call Center: 225-422-1538

Please contact help.la@withodyssey.com with any questions.

School System Relations

The LDOE Announces 2025 Students of the Year Finalists

Please share with school and school system leaders.

The LDOE recognizes that many outstanding students are enrolled in public, nonpublic or charter schools throughout the state. To acknowledge these accomplishments, the LDOE, in conjunction with BESE, annually honors one incredible 5th, 8th, and 12th grade student based on their leadership, academic performance, achievements, citizenship, and service to the school and community.

This year, school systems across the state submitted Students of the Year candidates for the zone-level process. In January, the 2025 Students of the Year Regional Honorees were named. From this impressive group, the LDOE is proud to announce the [2025 Students of the Year Finalists](#).

All finalists will be recognized and celebrated at the 2025 Students of the Year Award Ceremony, which will be held at Louisiana State University's Cook Hotel and Conference Center on May 16. During this prestigious event, the 5th, 8th, and 12th grade Students of the Year will be named.

Please contact exemplaryeducator@la.gov with any questions.

America's Field Trip Contest

Please share with administrators, counselors, students, and teachers.

In 2026, the United States will celebrate the Semiquincentennial, marking 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The [America's Field Trip Contest](#) invites students in grades 3–12 to share perspectives on what America means to them for a chance to win a memorable field trip to iconic historical and cultural landmarks.

Participants can submit writing or original artwork in response to the prompt: "What does America mean to you?" Twenty-five first-place winners from each grade level category and a chaperone will receive airfare and lodging for a 3-day, 2-night trip to a selected historical or cultural site. The submission deadline is April 16 at 5 p.m. ET.

Please contact jennifer.tuttleton@la.gov or whitley.moore4@la.gov with any questions.