



# Principal's Newsletter

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## Principal Strategy Spotlight

**Tonia J. Cook - 2026 Principal of the Year Finalist**

Effective leadership begins with the ability to pause, reflect, and make intentional refinements that strengthen practice over time. Being named a Principal of the Year finalist was both an honor and a reaffirmation of the reflective processes that shaped my work as a school leader. Now, in my role as Supervisor of Elementary Education for the Terrebonne Parish School District, I have the privilege of expanding my reach beyond a single campus to influence teaching and learning districtwide. Although my lens has widened, my core mantra remains the same: support teachers, grow students, and create the conditions for excellence to become the norm. The difference now is that my support is directed toward principals, empowering them to build the instructional practices that, in turn, strengthen teachers and positively impact student outcomes.

The Reflective Practice components of the Louisiana Leader Rubric (LLR) provide a grounding framework for this work. As a principal, reflection meant examining instructional outcomes, teacher needs, and student data to refine systems and provide targeted coaching. At the district level, this reflection now occurs at a more global level, prompting me to evaluate patterns across schools, consider principals' capacity, and anticipate where structures may need adjustment. Each reflective cycle results in clear action steps, whether it be differentiated principal support, refining district professional development, or strengthening expectations for curriculum implementation.

Building principals' capacity has become the heart of my action planning. Through targeted professional development aligned to the LLR, particularly in Goal Setting and Monitoring, Teacher Effectiveness, Meeting Student Needs, and Leadership Development, I work to strengthen leaders' understanding of

what effective practice looks like and how to support teachers in achieving it. This includes reinforcing the value of effective teacher collaboration, strengthening data-driven decision-making, and promoting a cyclical approach to reviewing data, refining instructional plans, and monitoring progress. When principals develop these habits of mind, they become instructional multipliers, creating lasting impacts on both teacher growth and student achievement.

Collaborative opportunities have also become an essential part of my reflective leadership approach. During our monthly principals' meetings, leaders engage in shared problem-solving, calibration activities on proficient instructional practices, and reflection tied directly to the LLR. These sessions are intentionally designed to build coherence and consistency across the district, ensuring that principals not only reflect individually but also learn collectively. Hearing from peers, analyzing common trends, and aligning expectations all contribute to a stronger, more unified vision for instructional improvement.

Ultimately, reflective practice is not a moment in time; it is a continuous cycle that drives improvement at every level of leadership. Whether I am examining the effectiveness of districtwide initiatives or collaborating with principals to refine their school-based practices, reflection leads to purposeful action. It reinforces what is working, illuminates areas for adjustment, and keeps us focused on our shared goal: empowering leaders to build strong teachers so that all students thrive.

## Announcements

### New: Principal Webinar Series

The LDOE has developed a new series of webinars designed specifically to meet the needs of school leaders. The first webinar, "Supporting Implementation of HQIM in Classroom," will be held on **January 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** In this webinar, principals will have the opportunity to hear about best practices for supporting teachers in implementing and using HQIM from the Academic Content team. What will make this webinar different from other series on this topic is that after a short overview, principals will have the opportunity to break out into groups and have honest discussions based on their individual needs. This group will primarily rely on collaboration with other school leaders, but will also have LDOE support and guidance to help push the work further.

Webinar Date and Time: **January 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.**

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95815056755?pwd=UJMhjwTm4f19dwbvDEREcwDuwalblo.1>

Meeting ID#: 958 1505 6755

Passcode: 983914

Webinar Phone Number: +1 312 626 6799 US or +1 346 248 7799 US

### 2025-2026 Graduate Diploma and Seal Orders

Please use the [Diploma and Seal Order Form](#) to submit an order for 2025-2026 graduates. All diploma requests must be submitted through the electronic form by **February 6, 2026**. Only one form should be completed for each school system. The LDOE will cover the costs for the initial order and distribution.

Please contact [jenny.moran2@la.gov](mailto:jenny.moran2@la.gov) with questions.

# Resources

## LEADS Corners

### LEADS Resources

Many resources, including handbooks, forms, and guides, are available in the [LEADS Library](#) to support LEADS implementation. School leaders may use the following resources to support first-semester implementation.

- [Other Personnel Guidance](#)
- [LA Leader and Counselor Evaluation Process: Sequence and Timeline](#)
- [LA Educator Evaluation Process: Sequence and Timeline](#)
- [Pre-Conference Template and Post-Conference Template](#)
- [PGP/Coaching Plan Samples, PGP/Coaching Plan Template, and Counselor PGP/Coaching Plan Template](#)
- [Student Learning Target \(SLT\) Reflection Tool](#)

Materials to support rater reliability are available in the Professional Learning Platform: LEADS Public Collections.

- [Full Length Lesson Sets](#)
- [Video Clip Collection](#)

The following newly added training and resource modules are also available for leaders.

- [LEADS Leader Module: Understanding Leading Instructional Rigor](#)
- [LEADS Leader Module: ILTs that Impact Teacher and Student Growth](#)
- [Purpose of LEADS & Creating Observation Schedules to Support the Process](#)
- [BOY Conference & Goal-Setting Process for Leaders/Counselors](#)

Please contact [leads@la.gov](mailto:leads@la.gov) with questions.

## Numeracy

### Math Leader Community of Practice

The LDOE, in partnership with the Charles A. Dana Center, is launching a [Community of Practice for Math Leaders](#) to strengthen math teaching and coaching across Louisiana. Through this initiative, participants will connect and collaborate with math leaders from across the state, sharing best practices and coaching strategies for implementing High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) more effectively in their work.

Beginning in January 2026, participants will meet virtually for two hours each month and will conclude their experience with a special session at the [2026 Teacher Leader Summit](#). The [Community of Practice for Math Leaders](#) includes more information, including access to the interest form.

Please contact [math@la.gov](mailto:math@la.gov) with questions.

## **K-3 Numeracy Screener**

The LDOE is implementing the K-3 Numeracy Screener in alignment with [Act 650 \(2024\)](#) and [Bulletin 118](#). The 2025–2026 school year serves as a learning year before full implementation in 2026–2027.

**School systems completed the Beginning-of-Year (BOY) screener within the first 30 days of school and should now prepare for the Middle-of-Year (MOY) window in December.**

The best preparation is strong core math instruction and clear communication about the screener's purpose: to identify students needing support, not to measure mastery of all standards. Viewing it as a comprehensive assessment may misrepresent student progress and hinder long-term success. Visit the [Numeracy Screener](#) web page for more information.

Please contact [math@la.gov](mailto:math@la.gov) with questions.

## **Louisiana Achievement in Numeracy Act (LANE)**

Per [Act 260 \(2023\)](#) and [Act 353 of 2025 \(LANE\)](#), all K-8 math teachers must complete an LDOE-approved numeracy course. School and system leaders must collect proof of completion from all new hires teaching these grades. An optional numeracy course for high school math teachers is also available.

Teachers can access courses through the 2025–2026 school year, and system contacts have received the course codes. [Guidance and Framing](#) information is available on the [Louisiana Math web page](#). Systems should actively support teachers in meeting these requirements. Numeracy leaders are invited to join monthly office hours on **December 17 at 9 a.m.**

Please contact [math@la.gov](mailto:math@la.gov) with questions.

## **Social Studies**

### **Social Studies Office Hours**

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

- Webinar Date and Time: **January 7 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](mailto:socialstudies@la.gov) with questions.

## **Land of Liberty: The History of the United States Webpage**

The LDOE is excited to announce the launch of the new [Land of Liberty: The History of the United States web page](#). Teachers can view a sample Land of Liberty unit and take a closer look at curricular features such as the unit study tool. Once the curriculum is fully released this spring, teachers can use these resources to collaboratively plan and pace the curriculum for the 2026-2027 school year.

Please contact [socialstudies@la.gov](mailto:socialstudies@la.gov) with questions.

## **Computer Science and STEM**

### **Computer Science Education Week is Coming Soon!**

Participate in Computer Science Education Week (CS Ed Week), **December 8-14**, to raise awareness and prepare for implementing the [Louisiana Student Standards for Computer Science](#).

Teachers may plan engaging experiences using a [collection](#) of activities and resources for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 covering core concepts such as coding, computational thinking, and cybersecurity. Use this week to get students excited about computer science, whether exploring computer science with a single classroom activity, a school-wide spotlight, or a system-wide focus.

Please contact [STEM@la.gov](mailto:STEM@la.gov) with questions.

## **Educational Technology**

### **Updated Digital Literacy Guidance**

The LDOE published updated [Digital Literacy Guidance](#) to support educators in integrating technology into instruction purposefully.

This document serves as a flexible framework, not a curriculum, intended to support schools in modeling technology use at the appropriate grade level. The guidance outlines digital literacy target skills organized by grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) across eight Core Competencies, including

- Computational Thinking & Problem Solving
- Creativity & Innovation
- Information & Data Literacy
- Collaboration & Communication
- Digital Citizenship & Ethics
- Cybersecurity & Online Safety
- Technology Operations & Concepts
- Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies

To make planning easier, the document includes specific subject area connections for mathematics, ELA, science, social studies, and health education. Whether it is K-2 students using drawing apps to express ideas or high schoolers analyzing the societal impacts of artificial intelligence (AI), this guidance helps connect the Louisiana Student Standards to essential digital skills.

Please contact [digitallearning@la.gov](mailto:digitallearning@la.gov) with questions.

## World Languages

### World Language Tech Passport

The LDOE is excited to share a collection of EdTech resources designed to help educators integrate technology into world language instruction. Explore these guides to discover implementation strategies, best practices, and relevant tools:

- [AI Translation for World Languages](#)
- [Interpretive Reading Tools in World Language Instruction](#)
- [Video Creation Support and Tools for World Language Instruction](#): While designed to support the creation of authentic target-language videos, this guide offers valuable strategies and practical tips applicable across all subject areas.

Continue to visit the [Digital Learning webpage](#) for updates and resources.

Please contact [digitallearning@la.gov](mailto:digitallearning@la.gov) with questions.

## High Dosage Tutoring

### Ensuring Alignment and Quality in High-Dosage Tutoring Sessions

High-dosage tutoring has the potential to transform learning outcomes when schools prioritize high-quality implementation. Aligning tutoring to LDOE-approved curriculum, student data, and continuous progress monitoring helps ensure every session effectively meets students' needs.

Principals and other school leaders are encouraged to regularly observe high-dosage tutoring sessions to ensure quality and provide targeted feedback to tutors. Leaders are encouraged to utilize the [High-Dosage Tutoring Quality Assessment](#) tool during observations. This tool supports consistent monitoring of session quality, provides guidance for constructive feedback, and ensures tutoring remains tightly aligned with core classroom instruction.

Effective high-dosage tutoring also requires tutors to use materials on the LDOE's approved curriculum list, including those created or provided by the LDOE. Lessons should be informed by student data and tailored to each learner's specific skill needs. Tutors should use consistent progress monitoring to ensure instruction remains responsive and that students are making meaningful gains over time.

When working with an external tutoring provider (in-person or virtual), it is critical that school leaders regularly monitor tutoring sessions and provide specific feedback directly to the provider and/or the tutor. Principals should keep their system-level high-dosage tutoring lead informed of any concerns related to services offered by external tutoring providers.

Please contact [tutoring@la.gov](mailto:tutoring@la.gov) with questions.

## Safe and Healthy Schools

### Act 93 Jason Flatt Act and Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training

Revised Statute 17:282.4 requires public and approved nonpublic school employees to participate in a suicide prevention in-service training. Schools that are offering youth suicide prevention programs report on participation to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) no later than March 1st of each year via survey. Professional Development resource: [The Jason Foundation Training Modules for Suicide Awareness and Prevention](#).

For more information on school policies, visit the [Louisiana Department of Education \(LDOE\) website](#).

Please contact [healthyschools@la.gov](mailto:healthyschools@la.gov) with questions.

### Annual Lead Occupational and Physical Therapist Summit

On **January 15, 2026**, the Annual Lead Occupational and Physical Therapist Summit will take place at Treen Technology Center, 2024 Livingston St., Mandeville, LA 70448. This professional development is free of charge. Registration will be accepted through **December 15, 2025**.

The summit will focus on collaboration among Lead OT/PTs. It will include discussions on the revisions to Bulletin 1508, Medicaid claiming, multi-tiered systems of support, transportation safety, and school-based health services and practices. The summit is free of charge. Lead Occupational and Physical Therapists from each parish and charter school are encouraged to attend. CEUs are pending.

## Educator Recognition

### Educator Opportunities

#### Teacher/Principal of the Year and New Teacher of the Year Application Online Portals Are Due in January

The online portals for coordinators and state-level applicants for Teacher/Principal of the Year and New Teacher of the Year are now open. All application materials and links to the online portals are available on the [Staff and Educator Awards](#) page.

All school systems are encouraged to:

- Select one honoree per elementary, middle, and high school division level as their local level honorees for the following:
  - Teacher of the Year
  - Principal of the Year
  - New Teacher of the Year (with less than one year of teaching experience)
- Submit these selections to the state-level process.

#### Application Deadlines

- Teacher/Principal of the Year applications due **January 14**.
- New Teacher of the Year applications due **January 21**.

The dates and times of future webinars are listed in the [Zoom Details for Candidates and Stakeholders](#) document.

Please contact [excellenteducators@la.gov](mailto:excellenteducators@la.gov) with questions about Teacher/Principal of the Year, and [laurie.carlton@la.gov](mailto:laurie.carlton@la.gov) with questions about New Teacher of the Year.

## 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.

## Principals for Principals Newsletter

The LDOE has released a new monthly newsletter designed to meet the practical needs of principals. Please visit the [LDOE's Principal Development Opportunities](#) landing page to read previous and current entries.