



Principal's Newsletter



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Principal Strategy Spotlight

Brandon Singleton - 2026 Elementary Principal of the Year



Creating an Environment of Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

The days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that a single administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without substantial participation from other educators. Instead of relying on the principal alone for instructional leadership, we need to develop leadership capacity across the entire school community.

-Linda Lambert

Creating an environment of collaboration and continuous improvement begins with a simple but powerful belief: we are stronger and smarter together. When stakeholders intentionally share ideas, reflect on practice, and focus on what works, learning becomes a collective responsibility rather than an individual burden. Such an environment values curiosity over perfection, feedback over blame, and small, steady improvements over one-time fixes. By embedding routines for collaboration, we build a school where student achievement is valued, professional growth is normalized, and every member feels invested in advancing the whole community.

As we enter the second semester, the work of leadership shifts from planning to precise revision. The first semester has delivered a wealth of data and evidence that must now be translated into focused action. Principals should not enter this work in isolation. This transition presents an opportunity to implement or improve the collaborative structures on your campus. Collaborative Practices transforms leadership from a single voice into a shared enterprise. When principals invite Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

members and teacher leaders into the planning and revision process, improvement becomes co-owned. This is not mere consultation; it is the deliberate distribution of responsibility for diagnosing needs, designing targeted strategies, and monitoring implementation. Teams then have a unique opportunity to create routines of mutual accountability. Those routines build teacher buy-in because teachers see their colleagues test strategies, gather data, and refine practice based on real classroom results. Principals who cultivate these collaborative norms enable ILTs to function as rehearsal engines in which instructional practices are planned, practiced, observed, and improved through concrete feedback rather than abstract mandates.

These collaborative practices also open meaningful pathways for district staff and principal supervisors to engage directly with school improvement work. When district leaders participate alongside school teams, they help dismantle traditional barriers between the central office and individual schools, creating a clear pipeline for resources, decision-making, and mutual learning. As principals and supervisors work side by side, relationships deepen, and trust grows. That trust translates into more responsive support, quicker removal of obstacles, and shared ownership of challenges and successes. Ultimately, this level of connection strengthens principals' sense of genuine support, empowers instructional leadership, and accelerates sustainable improvement across the district.

Continuous Improvement gives collaborative work the discipline and tempo it needs to produce results. School Improvement Plans (SIP) are the vessel you should use to promote continuous improvement on your campus. In our district, we have always been taught that School Improvement Plans should be treated as living documents that guide daily work on our campuses. This is the time to revisit your SIP. A collaborative revision of the SIP can fundamentally change how principals lead ILTs and engage teacher collaboration. This process sharpens instructional focus, increases the quality and speed of feedback, builds distributed leadership, and enables data-driven pivots. As ILT members and teacher leaders become more involved, principals free up capacity to coach, remove barriers, and attend to system-level alignment.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this collaborative approach are teachers and students. Teachers working in structures that prioritize co-planning, evidence collection, and refinement develop deeper instructional practices. Their improvements are not isolated or transient; they are reinforced by regular cycles of practice, feedback, and recalibration. Students receive more consistent, targeted instruction aligned with their needs, leading to stronger engagement and higher achievement.

So to make this semester's revisions actionable, principals and supervisors should use a tight protocol:

- Begin with a shared review of student data and observation artifacts. Identify one to two root causes, select one to two high-leverage instructional practices, and define short-term, measurable success criteria.
- Structure ILT agendas around protocols that prioritize these practices. Run short (2–4 week) improvement cycles with clear duties for evidence collection and review.

- Push this work down into teacher collaboratives to ensure the work trickles down to impact teacher effectiveness and student achievement.
- Schedule regular principal supervisor calibrations to refine measures, confirm coaching priorities, and identify district supports.

When principals increase the focus on collaborative practices and continuous improvement, leadership becomes an engine for collective problem-solving rather than isolated decision-making. That shift increases principal effectiveness, strengthens ILTs and teacher collaboratives, and most importantly, results in more consistent, evidence-based instruction that advances student learning. I know your job is not easy, but we are in our positions to make a difference and impact. Surround yourself with a solid team and build a collaborative environment that will take your school to the next level.

Announcements

Principal Webinar Series

The LDOE has developed a new series of webinars designed specifically to meet the needs of school leaders. The next webinar, “Score Your Scorecard”, will be held on **March 26, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** In this webinar, principals will not only hear about Louisiana’s revised accountability system but also receive implementation support resources from the LDOE. After a brief overview, participants will have the opportunity to break into groups for candid discussions tailored to their individual needs. This group will primarily rely on collaboration with other school leaders and will also receive LDOE support and guidance to advance the work.

Webinar Date and Time: **March 26, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.**

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95475405417?pwd=G2n4CYH9WuubRGgpS4iabCcVXaQpBa.1>

Meeting ID#: 954 7540 5417

Passcode: 025422

Please contact LouisianaLeaders@la.gov with any questions.

Registered Apprenticeship Funding

Please share with high school principals, counselors, CTE, and secondary supervisors.

There is funding available for students enrolled in approved Registered Apprenticeships at the rate of \$2500 per non-rural and \$3500 for rural enrollments as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. This funding may be used to support all costs associated with the delivery of apprenticeship programming for these students, such as student stipends, instructor costs, travel, uniforms, mandatory work supplies, etc. These students must be uploaded correctly into the [Course Choice Portal](#) by **March 7**. The system is open for uploads until **January 30**. Enrollments added after the system closes must be sent to coursechoice@la.gov for upload. Due to increased funding requests this school year, eligible enrollments will be funded in the order in which they are successfully uploaded. The enrollment upload spreadsheet can be accessed in the [Course Choice Portal](#). Payment for this round of funding will occur in June.

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

Internship Funding

Please share with high school principals, counselors, CTE, and secondary supervisors.

Funding is available to defer the costs of delivering internship programming to students. The allocation is \$ 1,000 per eligible student enrolled in a spring internship program that meets policy requirements. To request this funding, students must be enrolled in the Course Choice [portal](#) in a spring LDOE Internship course. Enrollments entered after January 30 should be sent to coursechoice@la.gov for upload. The template can be found on the Course Choice [website](#). An [attestation](#) for the 2025-2026 school year must be completed and sent to coursechoice@la.gov, and all required documentation must be on file at the local level. The deadline for reporting spring enrollments is **March 7**. Due to an increase in funding requests, enrollments will be funded in the order in which they are received. Payment for this round of funding will occur in June.

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

Academics

High-Dosage Tutoring

Elevating High-Dosage Tutoring Through Feedback

Please share with system and school leaders.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), in partnership with NIET, is offering regional learning opportunities focused on strengthening high-dosage tutoring through high-quality, actionable feedback. These interactive, two-hour sessions will support school leaders in identifying what effective, evidence-based feedback looks like in tutoring settings and how leadership teams can use feedback to strengthen tutor practice and instructional coherence.

Sessions will be held from **9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** at the following locations:

- **March 12:** Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge
- **March 17:** Rapides Parish School Board Media Center, Alexandria

School leaders are encouraged to [register](#) soon, as space is limited.

Please contact tutoring@la.gov with questions.

ELA

ELA Classroom Support Tool

The LDOE has updated the [K-2 Classroom Support Tool](#) and [3-12 Classroom Support Tool](#) to align with the language in the Louisiana Educator Rubric (LER). Teachers can use these resources as a reflection tool to examine their classroom practices, and instructional leaders can use these tools to examine the quality of classroom instruction.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Numeracy

Zearn Math Challenge

The LDOE is excited to invite math educators to participate in [Zearn's Louisiana Math Challenge](#). This challenge provides a collection of kits filled with resources designed to motivate students and celebrate their achievement as they complete at least three grade-level Zearn lessons each week. Visit [Zearn's Louisiana Math Challenge](#) webpage to see how schools across the state are celebrating student success and to download challenge materials to use in the classroom.

Please contact 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 should reach out to their system-level numeracy contacts for access to system-specific course codes through the 2025–2026 school year. For more information, see the [Guidance and Framing](#) document on the [Louisiana Math web page](#). Systems should actively support teachers in meeting these requirements.

Please contact math@la.gov with questions.

Social Studies

Social Studies Office Hours

The LDOE will hold Social Studies Office Hours on **March 4 at 3:15 p.m.** During this session, the LDOE will define and explore effective teacher planning by examining the social studies lesson study protocol outlined in the Bayou Bridges and Foundations of Freedom Curriculum Guides. Participants will identify the instructional decisions that enhance student learning. Teachers will also deepen their understanding by analyzing a page from the teacher guide to recognize the teaching strategies embedded in the lesson.

Teachers may access past office hours slides and information on upcoming sessions on the [Social Studies Office Hours Flyer](#).

Webinar Date and Time: March 4 at 3:15 p.m.

Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97436075546>

Webinar Phone Number: 1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID#: 974 3607 5546

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

K-2 Social Studies Instructional Slide Decks

[K-2 Instructional Slide Decks](#) are now available on the [Bayou Bridges web page](#). These tools strengthen

knowledge building, support effective lesson pacing, and offer built-in opportunities for formative assessments. Each deck includes images, framing questions, supporting questions, and teacher notes needed to guide Bayou Bridges lessons.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Computer Science and STEM

Quality STEM Implementation Guide

The updated [K-12 Quality STEM Implementation Guide](#) is now available on the [STEM Initiative webpage](#). This resource provides K-12 educators, as well as school systems, with

- An overview of STEM education;
- K-8 STEM resources reviewed by Louisiana STEM Teacher Leader Advisors (TLAs), including newly added resources from Project Lead The Way (PLTW) – PLTW Launch (Grades K-5) and PLTW Gateway (Grades 6-8);
- an overview of 9-12 Louisiana STEM Renaissance Pathways; and
- available STEM awards, clubs, and competitions.

This resource supports K-12 STEM implementation in STEM or content classrooms, after-school/summer programs, and school-wide STEM events.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Educator Recognition

Educator Opportunities

Announcing the 2026 Health Provider, School Support, and Physical Activity Award Finalists

Please share with school and school system leaders.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is pleased to announce the [2026 finalists for the Health Provider, School Support, and Physical Activity Awards](#). These outstanding honorees are making remarkable strides in their schools and communities, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to student success and well-being. Their efforts exemplify the very best of Louisiana’s education system.

All honorees will be formally recognized at the state Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) meeting in Baton Rouge on **Wednesday, April 15**, followed by a special celebration at the Old State Capitol. That day, the overall honorees will be named for the Outstanding School Support Employee of the Year and the School Health Service Provider of the Year award programs.

Congratulations to these exceptional educator stakeholders!

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions.

C.R.E.A.T.E. Framework

The C.R.E.A.T.E. framework offers a structured approach to creating effective AI prompts that can be adapted for educational leaders, such as school principals, to support their specific tasks. This framework helps you achieve more relevant, valuable results by providing the AI with the necessary context and instructions.

Example C.R.E.A.T.E. Prompt to help identify opportunities for coaching a teacher after completing an observation cycle.

The C.R.E.A.T.E. framework	
C	<p>Character: Who is the AI? Assign a specific leadership role. Instead of just "administrator," try: "Act as a veteran Principal," "an Instructional Coach grounded in the Science of Reading," "a Data Analyst," or "a PR specialist for community engagement."</p> <p>Example: <i>Act as an expert, Instructional Leader, and Mentor Principal, highly familiar with the Louisiana Educator Rubric.</i></p>
R	<p>Request: What is the task? Use specific administrative verbs. "Draft a weekly parent newsletter," "Analyze this 3rd-grade benchmark data for trends," "Write a remediation plan," or "Script a difficult conversation with a staff member."</p> <p>Example: <i>I need you to outline a 4-week coaching plan for a mid-career teacher who is currently scoring 'Below Expectations' on Domain: Instruction; Indicator: Questioning; Descriptor 3b: Questions are purposeful and coherent.</i></p>
E	<p>Examples: What should it look like? Paste a previous example of a successful document to guide the AI. For instance: "Use the same structure as my previous 'Friday Update' email below," or "Format the lesson plan like the attached 5E template."</p> <p>Example: <i>The output should follow a structure similar to a standard 'Cycle of Inquiry,' where we identify the problem, model the strategy, observe the practice, and provide feedback.</i></p>
A	<p>Additions: What is the context/style? Refine the voice for your specific stakeholder audience. Tell the AI: "Write this for the School Board (formal/concise)," "for a frustrated parent (empathetic/clear)," or "for new teachers (encouraging/instructional)."</p> <p>Example: <i>Keep the tone supportive and developmental, specifically focusing on a 'growth mindset.' Avoid punitive language; focus on capacity building.</i></p>
T	<p>Type of Output: What is the format? Ask for usable administrative formats. Examples: "A 5-minute staff meeting agenda," "A bulleted email summary," "A spreadsheet compatible with Excel," or "A slide deck outline."</p> <p>Example: <i>Present this as a structured table with columns for: Week Number, Specific Leader Action (e.g., Modeling, Observation), Teacher Action Step, and Success Criteria.</i></p>

The C.R.E.A.T.E. framework

E

Extras: What constraints apply? Feed the AI the necessary governing documents. Paste in: "The LDOE Compass Rubric descriptors," "The School Improvement Plan goals," or "District policy text."

Example: *Refer specifically to the descriptors in the 'Effective' column of the LDOE Compass Rubric for Component 3b to define the success criteria.*

Completed prompt

Act as an expert, Instructional Leader, and Mentor Principal, highly familiar with the Louisiana Educator Rubric. I need you to outline a 4-week coaching plan for a mid-career teacher who is currently scoring 'Below Expectations' on Domain: Instruction; Indicator: Questioning; Descriptor 3b: Questions are purposeful and coherent. The output should follow a structure similar to a standard "Cycle of Inquiry," where we identify the problem, model the strategy, observe the practice, and provide feedback. Keep the tone supportive and developmental, specifically focusing on a "growth mindset." Avoid punitive language; focus on capacity building. Present this as a structured table with columns for: Week Number, Specific Leader Action (e.g., Modeling, Observation), Teacher Action Step, and Success Criteria. Refer specifically to the descriptors in the "Effective" column of the LDOE Compass Rubric for Component 3b to define the success criteria.

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.