



Principal's Newsletter



September 18, 2025

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Principal Strategy Spotlight

Justin Wax, 2026 Overall Principal of the Year



The school year is underway, and routines are settling in! The hard work of summer planning is already bearing fruit. We are seeing the impact of instructional leadership teams, new faculty roles, and fresh initiatives taking root. Observations are underway, sports seasons are in full swing, and your calendar is full.

With so many things competing for our time and attention, how can we prioritize being an instructional leader? How can we possibly get it all done?

You can't do it all alone. Read it again, principals: you can't do it all alone.

That is where capacity building comes in. Capacity building helps us budget the scarcest of all resources – TIME. As school leaders, our time is valuable and extremely limited. By building capacity, we multiply the impact of our efforts to increase student achievement. Capacity building demonstrates the law of exponential impact; small investments in people multiply over time. When we scale capacity building, we become **CAPACITY CATALYSTS**. If principals are truly going to be the instructional leaders on campus, we must consistently empower others to accomplish objectives, so we can prioritize supporting instructional effectiveness.

Sharing responsibilities is a critical role of the ILT. Building capacity in your team directly impacts student success. Ongoing professional learning cycles can embed growth into all levels of school culture, so that support is provided by all types of academic leaders, not just administrators. When leaders develop other

leaders, we multiply capacity. Students and teachers then receive more support because the capacity of their support system is enhanced.

As school leaders, we shoulder responsibility for student success. However, strengthening leadership teams improves student outcomes. With a focus **always** on student achievement, we have a unified goal. With a unified goal, we can trust our team to utilize their unique skills in developing solutions that we may have never considered. Set measurable, time-bound objectives for your team, assign clear roles and expectations, and empower developing leaders to use their unique skills.

The performance myth says, “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.” What happens when a team member doesn’t accomplish the sub-objective like I would have?

To build capacity in others, we must first acknowledge our own limitations; we cannot do everything alone and remain effective. Being a capacity builder is not about perfection anyway; it is about multiplication. A team member may do it differently from you, but that difference often brings new value. Was the objective clearly articulated, with a reasonable timeline and measurable expectations? Have I ensured the developing leader is well-trained? Are they empowered to accomplish the objective, and did I give enough support for them to be successful?

Finally, when (not IF, but when) a completed task does not meet the team’s expectation of success, this is not a failure; it is a teachable opportunity to build capacity by coaching a developing leader.

Entrusting projects to stakeholders fosters autonomy and creates buy-in. It also aligns responsibilities with team members’ skills and builds a culture that values diverse viewpoints. When we give others a voice, we must also choose to listen with intent, accept criticism with grace, and welcome the opportunity for a thought partner to provide valuable growth feedback to us as well.

The question is not if you can do it all, but if you are ready to multiply your impact. Are you ready to become a **capacity catalyst**? Now is the time to start. Allocate your personal time towards the top priorities, leverage the skills of others by empowering them with meaningful tasks, and develop leaders by coaching when opportunities arise.

As school leaders, we must all strive to be **capacity catalysts**, committed to multiplying our impact on student achievement by growing the abilities of the team around us.

Announcements

New: Menu of Services

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

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

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

There are still complementary seats available.

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.

Quarter 1 Pre-Educator Pathway System Lead Support Webinar

Please share with system leaders.

Offered quarterly, the Pre-Educator Pathway System Lead Support Webinars are virtual opportunities for Pre-Educator Pathway/Grow Your Own System Leads to share best practices related to developing and expanding access to the Pre-Educator Pathway. All school systems are encouraged to attend regardless of current pathway status.

- Webinar date/time: September 25 at 10:30 a.m.
- Webinar link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96480214276?pwd=ZzfpA8GPHiFs6dDSKb13VavovnuXs.1>
- Meeting ID: 96480214276
- Phone: 470-250-9358

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with any questions.

Pre-Educator Pathway Site Visit

Please share with school and system leaders

System leaders, teacher leaders, and postsecondary teacher preparation partners are invited to attend site visits for a day of learning and community building. During site visits, participants will have an opportunity to observe Grow Your Own work that is being done in another school system and strategize to improve Grow Your Own efforts in their system. Please complete [the registration form](#) to attend the visit in Ascension Parish on October 20.

Please contact believeandprepare@la.gov with questions

Safe and Healthy Schools

Biennial Seizure Training

Reminder to school districts: R.S. 17:436.4 that became law in 2022 requires seizure training for school nurses and school employees/bus drivers who have regular interactions with students for whom there is a seizure management and treatment plan. Two training resources for schools can be found on the LDOE website on the [Louisiana Coordinated School Health](#) page under the School Nursing Additional Resources section.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Requirement for Distribution of Type 1 Diabetes Information to Parents/Guardians

[ACT 402](#) of 2025 requires school districts to distribute information on Type 1 Diabetes. The law requires each city, parish, and other local public school board to distribute the information to parents and legal guardians of all PreK-12 students upon enrollment and annually thereafter by posting the information on school websites or by electronic distribution. LDH has developed the informational handout and it is now

available on the LDOE website on the [Louisiana Coordinated School Health](#) page under the School Nursing Additional Resources section: [Type 1 Diabetes - Fact Sheet](#)

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Mental Health Screening Requirements

[Act 504](#) of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session states that each public school shall make available to each student in grades three through twelve a mental health assessment by a licensed behavioral health provider. The assessment must be annually authorized by the student's parent or legal guardian. This regulation does not extend to charter schools.

Schools are mandated to submit an annual report to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) detailing the number of screenings administered to students, disaggregated by grade level. This report can be submitted electronically through the LDOE's designated Jotform platform starting May 2026.

[Act 324](#) of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session on behavioral or emotional challenges of students; referral for assessment and treatment, and reporting. A designee of each school will be responsible for identifying behavioral and mental health supportive services and facilitating a referral for assessment and treatment.

A city, parish, or other local public school board is mandated to submit an annual report to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the House and Senate committees detailing the number of students identified as having behavioral or emotional challenges, the number of students a conference was scheduled and the number of students referred for assessment and supportive services. This report can be submitted electronically through the LDOE's designated Jotform platform starting July 1st and shall reflect data from the previous school year. The jot form will be available May 2026.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

ACADEMICS

Literacy

ELA Guidebooks 6-8 Resources

The LDOE has updated the [ELA Guidebooks](#) webpage to include the [ELA Guidebooks 6-8 \(2024\) Standards Overview Document](#). This document provides information on student standards addressed in each grade-level unit, ensuring alignment and students' opportunities to meet the requirements of the grade-level standards.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

ELA Guidebooks Unit Updates

Please share with content supervisors, literacy coaches, and school leaders.

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the LDOE will implement revisions in select units of the [ELA Guidebooks curriculum](#). Below is an overview of unit updates.

- Unit text revisions:
 - Grade 8 The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: updated to use the Young Reader's version of the text
- Unit Readers:
 - Future communications will include more information about changes to Unit Readers.
- Unit no longer available:
 - Grade 11 Friday Night Lights
- Units moving grade levels:
 - Diary: Moving from grade 8 to grade 9
 - A Lesson Before Dying: Moving from grade 9 to grade 10
 - The Joy Luck Club: Moving from grade 9 to grade 10
- Additional unit development:
 - Development of additional units for grades 8, 9, and 11 is underway. Future communications will include further details.

Local school systems should determine the grade-level implementation of each unit.

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

Numeracy

Math Night Activities

Planning a Math Night to engage your students and families? Check out the [Louisiana Math](#) page for Math Night activities aligned with the Louisiana Student Standards for Mathematics for grades K-8. Each grade level includes three engaging, hands-on activities to support learning and encourage family participation. These ready-to-use resources are designed to make math fun, interactive, and meaningful for everyone involved.

Please contact math@la.gov with questions.

K-3 Numeracy Screener

In accordance with [Act 650 \(2024\)](#) and [Bulletin 118](#), the Louisiana Department of Education is implementing the K-3 Numeracy Screener. The 2025-2026 school year will serve as a learning year for the screener's administration, with full implementation scheduled for the 2026-2027 school year. The

administration timeline will align with that of the K-3 Literacy Screener, requiring schools to conduct the initial screener within the first 30 days of school.

All school test coordinators and test administrators for the statewide K-3 numeracy screener in KITE must complete the K-3 Numeracy Test Administrator Training, available on the [Louisiana Professional Learning Platform](#). Test administrators must achieve a score of at least 80% and submit their certificate to the school test coordinator. The Test Administrator Training Course Number is **F81C9F1F**.

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

The LDOE social studies team will hold its second office hours session of the 2025-2026 school year on October 1 at 3:15 p.m. This session will feature strategies for enhancing student engagement during guided reading. For access to past office hours slides and information on upcoming sessions, please refer to the [Social Studies Office Hours flyer](#) on the [K-12 Social Studies Planning webpage](#).

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 1 at 3:15 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**
<https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92800306323?pwd=eObx7y79EwbnVD7OGfK2nHap7GN7qV.1>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 346 248 7799

- **Meeting ID#:** 928 0030 6323
- **Meeting Passcode:** 644638

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Bayou Bridges and Foundations of Freedom Pacing Guides

The LDOE has released detailed alternate pacing guides for [Bayou Bridges: A K–8 Social Studies Curriculum](#) and [Foundations of Freedom: A Louisiana Civics Program](#). Developed by social studies educators, these guides offer standards-aligned pacing options that are coherent, flexible, and organized to support student needs. Units 1 and 2 are available now, and the remaining units will be released on a rolling basis. Teachers should utilize these pacing guides to adjust instruction and better meet the needs of their students.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Science

Updated Implementation Guidance for High-Quality Science Instructional Materials

Following the release of the updated [2025 Science Released Items Guides](#), the Science Academic Content team has updated the LDOE Formative Assessment Resources in the Louisiana Guides to Implementing High-Quality Science Instructional Materials. These documents support teachers in integrating assessment resources within relevant high-quality science units. Updated implementation guidance documents are now available on the [K-12 Science Planning webpage](#) for grade 3, with additional grades to follow soon.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Diverse Learners

New Resources for English Learners

The Department is pleased to share five new resources to strengthen programming and instruction for English Learners. These resources provide both system-level guidance and practical tools for classroom instruction.

- [Improving Outcomes for English Learners: Louisiana's Framework](#)
- [Strategies for English Learners: A Guide for Novice Teachers](#)
- [Manual for Special Education Referral of English Learners](#)
- [Secondary English Learner Toolkit](#)
- [Supporting English Learners Through the Writing Process](#)

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

Computer Science and STEM

New Micro-credential Program for K-5 Computer Science and STEM

We're excited to announce a new pathway for K-5 teachers to obtain a [certification add-on](#) in Computer Science and STEM! In partnership with Louisiana Tech University, the LDOE is offering a micro-credential program beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Vouchers are available for the first 25 teachers to cover the \$450 program cost. Interested teachers may [register](#) now for the fall semester.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Energize Project Praxis (5652) Computer Science Content Exam Preparation for 6-12 Teachers

The [Energize Project](#) offers 40 hours of no-cost preparation to 6-12 teachers for the Praxis (5652) Computer Science content exam. Formats include virtual, hybrid, and in-person, with cohorts beginning this fall. The deadline to [register](#) for the fall online cohort is **September 29**.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Ignite Initiative: Computer Science for K-5 Teachers

The [Ignite Initiative website](#) offers 24 hours of no-cost teacher training in computational thinking, block programming, and cyber safety. The training prepares K-5 teachers to integrate computer science education experiences into existing instruction. Cohorts are available in virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats, with the first cohort beginning this fall. Interested teachers may register using the Ignite Initiative website.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Transportation Research Center STEM Grant Opportunity

The Louisiana Transportation Research Center STEM Grant program will award grants of up to \$500 to full-time Louisiana K-12 classroom teachers to purchase STEM classroom activities and consumable materials for STEM lessons. Any STEM-discipline teacher may apply for this grant using [the online application](#). The application portal closes on **October 10**.

Please contact LTRCOutreach@la.gov with questions.

Educational Technology

2025 LACUE Annual Conference

The [Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators \(LACUE\)](#) will host its annual conference December 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans. This is an opportunity to connect with fellow educators, discover innovative classroom strategies, and explore the latest in edtech.

Interested in sharing information about a successful digital tool implementation? Educators are encouraged to submit a [presentation proposal](#). The deadline for proposals is **October 1**.

This is a fantastic chance to learn from inspiring speakers and network with peers from across the state. Lock in your discounted [registration](#) before the Early Bird pricing ends on **November 7**.

Please contact lacue@lacue.org with questions.

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

Seeking Nominations for Excellent Educators

The LDOE is currently seeking nominations for the following awards initiatives:

- Teacher and Principal of the Year
- Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year
- New Teacher of the Year.
 - Note- Candidates for the New Teacher of the Year program must have less than one year of teaching experience.

The deadline to submit nominations via the [nominations portal](#) is **September 30**. 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 contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions about Teacher/Principal of the Year, laurie.carlton@la.gov with questions about New Teacher of the Year, or shallan.jones@la.gov with questions about Early Childhood Teacher/Leader of the Year.

School Support, Health Provider, and Physical Activity Award Programs- Application Process is Open

The application process for the following awards initiatives is now open:

- [Outstanding School Support Employee of the Year](#)
- [School Health Service Provider of the Year](#)
- [School Physical Activity Award](#)

All application materials and timelines are available on the [Awards](#) page. All school systems are encouraged to select candidates as their local-level honorees and submit these selections to the state process.

By **December 9**, the state-level applications must be submitted via online application portals.

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions about Outstanding School Support Employee of the Year, and healthyschools@la.gov for questions about School Health Service Provider of the Year and School Physical Activity Awards.

Principal Newsletter Signup

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