Teacher Leader Newsletter

March 2026

My name is Tamieka Zachery, and I am a certified Health & Physical Education Teacher, School Building Level Chairperson, and Instructional Leadership Team Member at Creswell Middle School in St. Landry Parish. In addition to my roles at the school level, I have the privilege of serving on the current Physical Education Standards Review Steering Committee. The most inspiring aspect of completing this task is the collaboration amongst colleagues who recognize and understand the value of establishing a high-quality instructional framework that supports the kinesthetic aspects of student success at all stages of development.

I am eager for physical educators across the state to recognize the improved vertical alignment of the standards between grade levels. The progression of lower elementary students learning and demonstrating individual skills in closed environments to middle and high school students performing skills in practice activities, small-sided games, and individual and team sports provides for the introduction, reinforcement, and mastery of motor skills. The revised standards create the conditions for all students to internalize physical education concepts that promote well-being for a lifetime.

The proposed physical education standards are now available for public review. The LDOE will release the public comment form in its Weekly Newsletter in early March and in the April Teacher Leader Newsletter. I encourage you to review the draft of the updated standards and to share your input. Teachers of all content areas understand how important it is to have strong standards. Your voice is important and will support us in ensuring every child in our state receives a high-quality, meaningful physical education.

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NUMERACY RESOURCES

Zearn Math Challenge

With the LEAP 2025 Assessment just six weeks away, now is the time to maximize impact with Zearn. Schools that prioritize consistent usage, three or more grade-level lessons per week, see stronger math growth and greater student confidence heading into testing. The LDOE is challenging every student to complete 30 lessons before LEAP to reinforce key standards and close learning gaps. Let's rally together, set clear goals, and finish strong!

Please contact math@la.gov with questions.

Zearn's Louisiana Math Challenge

It's swish season with Zearn's fourth challenge kit, All-Star! The printable kit includes bulletin board materials, student trackers, and certificates — all designed to support your students in completing at least three grade-level Zearn lessons per week. Join schools across Louisiana and download the All-Star challenge now.

Please contact math@la.gov with questions.

LITERACY

K-2 Knowledge and Skills Unit and Lesson Preparation Protocols

New K–2 Knowledge and Skills Preparation Protocols are now available to support high-quality literacy instruction. When planning for an upcoming unit of instruction, teachers should use both the Knowledge and Skills Unit preparation protocols. Then, before implementing the lessons within a unit, teachers should use the Knowledge and Skills Lesson Preparation Protocols to prepare for effective lesson implementation.

These protocols provide a clear, consistent process for preparing units and lessons using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and feature a two-phase lesson preparation structure designed to build readiness and deepen teacher expertise over time. Together, the tools support intentional, text-based instruction that strengthens vocabulary, language development, and comprehension, while also ensuring systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction aligned to student needs.

System and school leaders are encouraged to explore implementation of the K-2 Knowledge and Skills Unit and Lesson Preparation resources within ILT and Teacher Collaboration structures.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

Grade 3 Instructional Preparation and Tiered Support Course

The LDOE has released a new Grade 3 Instructional Preparation and Tiered Support Course to strengthen planning and instructional decision-making in grade 3 ELA. A total of six modules will be available within this self-paced course, guiding teachers through lesson preparation, assessment data analysis, and intervention to ensure instruction meets the needs of all learners. The course is available on the Louisiana Professional Learning Platform with the course code **15E4719D**.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

3-12 Literacy Extension In ELA

A new Literacy Extension Guidance document for grades 3–12 is now available. This resource supports teachers in planning intentional extensions during core instruction and intervention blocks for students who have already met proficiency. It provides practical ways to deepen learning within existing HQIM lessons while keeping the lesson learning objectives constant.

Please contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.

ELA RESOURCES

ELA Guidebooks Updates

Additional information for the updates announced earlier this school year for the ELA Guidebooks curriculum is now available.

- New Unit Development
  - Grade 8 - The new unit, Laughter, is replacing Diary. As a reminder, Diary is moving to grade 9.
  - Grade 9 - The new unit, The Odyssey, is replacing The Joy Luck Club. As a reminder, The Joy Luck Club and A Lesson Before Dying are moving to grade 10.
  - Grade 11 - The new unit, Storytelling, is replacing Friday Night Lights.
- Text Updates
  - Grade 5, Shutting Out the Sky - The text, *Seedfolks*, is removed from this unit. Unit Readers for the 2026-2027 school year will include excerpts from *Finding Refuge*. Student materials and teaching guides for the 2026-2027 school year will reflect this text update.
  - Grade 5, The Birchbark House - Due to changes to the anchor text, the Louisiana Curriculum Hub will include two versions of this unit, ensuring ease of implementation for teachers. Future LDOE communications will include additional guidance on accessing the content for both versions of the unit. Student materials, TWR materials, and teaching guides for both versions of the unit are available from Ed Elements (formerly XanEdu).

Please contact elaguidebooks@la.gov with questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES RESOURCES

Foundations of Freedom Civics Content Update

Student and teacher-facing materials for Unit 5: Elections and Politics in Foundations of Freedom: A Louisiana Civics Program are updated to reflect changes to the state's primary system enacted by the Louisiana Legislature in Act 1 of the 2024 First Extraordinary Session. These revisions ensure the curriculum aligns with the new primary rules, which take effect in 2026. Civics teachers should review the updated digital materials before teaching the unit to ensure that their lessons reflect the updated election procedures.

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

Social Studies Office Hours

The LDOE will hold Social Studies Office Hours on April 1 at 3:15 p.m. Participants will review Grade Band Standards Roadmaps for grades K-3, 4-5, and 6-8, and see how standards progress throughout each year. Teachers will also analyze spiraled review questions to guide lesson planning, activate prior knowledge, and reinforce key concepts as students advance through units and grade levels.

Teachers may access past office-hour slides and information on upcoming sessions on the Social Studies Office Hours Flyer.

Webinar Date and Time: April 1 at 3:15 p.m.
Webinar Link: https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97436075546
Webinar Phone Number: 346-248-7799
Meeting ID#: 974 3607 5546

Please contact socialstudies@la.gov with questions.

SCIENCE RESOURCES

OpenSciEd Grades 6-8 Guidance for 2026-2027

The LDOE is developing new guidance for the 2026-2027 school year for all versions of Grades 6-8 OpenSciEd. The transitional scope and sequence recommendations address feedback from Louisiana educators after years of implementation. The updates will include the following recommendations:

- The Ecosystem Dynamics unit will appear on both the Grade 6 and Grade 7 scope and sequences.
- The Genetics unit will appear on both the Grade 7 and Grade 8 scope and sequences.

Additional guidance related to pacing, unit order, and future academic years will be provided soon. The LDOE will host webinars this spring to provide further explanation of this guidance.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND STEM RESOURCES

Teacher Leader Summit Session Preview: STEM and Computer Science

The 2026 Teacher Leader Summit will feature targeted sessions designed to support computer science implementation planning and expand STEM education opportunities, empowering educators with the knowledge and resources necessary for high-quality STEM and computer science instruction. STEM and computer science sessions will

- enhance computer science (CS) instruction and implementation, and weave CS into existing K–12 math and science lessons with the Energize Project, Ignite Initiative, and updated implementation frameworks; and
- uncover ways to bring STEM opportunities into library programming, share the real-world impact of the Greauxing STEM Stewards Grant, and include a panel of young scholars and professionals to see how STEM education shaped their career paths.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

Ignite Initiative: Computer Science for K-5 Teachers

The Ignite Initiative 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 currently enrolling and are available in virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats. Interested teachers may register using the Ignite Initiative website.

Please contact STEM@la.gov with questions.

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

BESE Tuition Program for Teachers Application Now Open

The BESE Tuition Program for Teachers Application for the summer and fall 2026 semesters is now open. The deadline to apply is March 27. This program provides tuition funding for classroom teachers to enroll in courses at regionally accredited colleges or universities in Louisiana. Program details and a link to the application are available on the Continuing Opportunities for Educators web page.

For questions about the BESE Tuition Program for Teachers, visit the Frequently Asked Questions page.

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

Aspiring Principal Fellowship Applications Now Open

The LDOE is now accepting applications for the Aspiring Principal Fellowship (APF), a selective, year-long leadership development experience for educators preparing to step into the role of principal.

Participants engage in full-day school visits with high-performing Louisiana principals, collaborative learning aligned to state priorities, and job-embedded leadership experiences focused on instructional leadership skills.

Educators who are ready to grow as a leader and join a statewide network of future principals committed to improving student and teacher outcomes are encouraged to apply by completing the APF Application. The deadline to apply is **April 1.**

Additional information about the Aspiring Principal Fellowship can be found in the APF Overview.

Please contact louisianaleaders@la.gov with questions.

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

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

The 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.

Congratulations to these exceptional educator stakeholders!

Please contact excellenteducators@la.gov with questions.

CONTACT US

For questions related to...	Contact:
AP Courses and Exams Contact	highschoolacademics@la.gov
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Collaborations	districtsupport@la.gov
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