Guiding Beliefs

Louisiana’s students—all of them, no matter race, disability, or creed—are as smart and capable as any in America. They have gifts and talents no lesser than those given to any children on this earth.

Louisiana has worked hard to raise expectations for students, and as a result, students are performing at higher levels than ever before.

While Louisiana has made great strides in increasing life opportunities for its students, there remain serious challenges in Louisiana’s schools. Often these challenges are experienced to the greatest extent by children of historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

As educators, we have a powerful role to play in helping all students overcome the challenges they will experience on the way to leading healthy and productive lives as adults.
Agenda

- Innovative Assessment Pilot
- Interests and Opportunities
- Upcoming Meetings
Research shows that students need to possess deep knowledge of a subject in order to effectively read, comprehend, and write about complex texts.

- “(O)nce kids can decode fluently, reading comprehension depends heavily on knowledge. By failing to provide a solid grounding in basic subjects we inadvertently hobble children's ability in reading comprehension.”

  “School Time Knowledge and Reading Comprehension.”

- “(W)hether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much background knowledge and vocabulary they have relating to the topic than on how much they’ve practiced comprehension skills. That’s because writers leave out a lot of information that they assume readers will know. ...But if readers can’t supply the missing information, they have a hard time making sense of the text. If students arrive at high school without knowing who won the Civil War they’ll have a hard time understanding a textbook passage about Reconstruction. Students from less educated families are usually the ones who are most handicapped by gaps in knowledge.”

  “Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years.”
Despite the research, reading tests traditionally use passages that include experiences and vocabulary that students may have never encountered to measure students’ mastery of literacy skills, placing those who have less life experience at a disadvantage.

To solve for this disconnect and to better assess students’ knowledge of complex texts, Louisiana has partnered with school systems to pilot an innovative, joint English language arts (ELA) and social studies assessment that ensures all students have an equal opportunity to succeed on the test.

During the 2018-2019 school year, pilot school systems include Ouachita, Lincoln, Assumption, and St. John the Baptist parishes, and Celerity Louisiana.
Pilot Benefits

• **Integration:** Several brief assessments including both ELA and social students content are administered throughout the year, rather than one end-of-year ELA exam and one end-of-year Social Studies exam, to measure students’ deep knowledge of books or passages that they have studied in class.

• **Focus:** Teachers can focus instruction on background knowledge and making meaning of full texts.

• **Equity:** All students have the opportunity to develop background knowledge together so that no student is at a disadvantage due to a lack of life experiences.

• **Preserves local control:** School systems continue to decide which books and assessments their students will take.
Pilot Design Timeline

• **August 2018:** Following approval from USDOE, initial pilot launched with grade 7

• **2018-2019:** Pilot schools administered first assessment pilots

• **2019-2022:** Grade 7 operational LEAP 2025 Humanities in pilot school systems; pilot expands to additional school systems, schools, and grade-levels, replacing LEAP 2025 ELA and social studies assessments in participating grades/schools

• **2022-2023:** All Louisiana schools have access to the new LEAP 2025 Humanities assessments
Reflections from Pilot Participants

This year, 25 schools, 44 teachers, and approximately 2,500 students tested questions for the new assessments.

“This is a more authentic and effective way to assess students' knowledge of texts and topics. When students can take information from texts apart and put it back together in a way that deeply expresses their understanding of the world around them, we know that real learning is happening.” -- Emily Howell, Lincoln Parish

“The assessment changes would provide an equitable experience when testing for the students in St. John the Baptist Parish. Students can apply knowledge of grade level content learned in classes on assessments. This will even the playing field for our students and we are enthused about the pilot.” -- Angela Davis, St. John the Baptist Parish
When new high-stakes assessments are introduced, BESE has historically put in place accountability transition policies to ensure educators have time to adjust.

The policies below will apply to each grade level participating in the humanities assessment pilot during the transition period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Accountability</th>
<th>Teacher Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA and social studies scores used in the SPS calculation (Assessment Index and Progress Index) cannot be lower than most recent LEAP 2025 scores</td>
<td>VAM cannot be calculated for use in Compass ratings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2020-21, Pelican Middle School’s 7th grade students participate in the humanities assessment for the first time.

When calculating the SPS, use the most recent LEAP 2025 scores only if higher than the actual scores in the current year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>7th grade ELA Assessment Index</th>
<th>7th grade Social Studies Assessment Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-19 (LEAP 2025)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20 (Humanities Y1)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai used in 2019-20 SPS</td>
<td>115 (2018-19)</td>
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Interests and Opportunities

Louisiana’s ESSA plan proposed an Interests and Opportunities indicator to measure whether schools are providing students with access to a well-rounded education, exposing them to diverse areas of learning in which they can develop their skills and talents.

Over the last two years, the Department has worked with local stakeholders and national experts to develop this new measure. Louisiana stakeholders have articulated the need for a measure that is:

- Simple and easy to implement, while also valid and reliable like all Louisiana’s accountability measures;
- Fair for all schools and school systems, regardless of size and access to resources;
- Provides a menu of means by which schools can demonstrate success;
- Ready to be implemented full scale and with high stakes in the 2019-2020 school year as defined in Louisiana’s ESSA plan; and,
- Above all, represents Louisiana’s values and high expectations for all kids.

This has not been done anywhere in the nation. However, the Department is committed to finding a solution that represents stakeholder input and the vision articulated in its ESSA plan.
Objectives for 2019-20

1. Incentivize a more well-rounded experience for all students
2. Establish a baseline
3. Limit complexity and risk
Establish a Baseline in 2019-20

The Department will gather comparable data across schools as to the substance of what is implemented and how well it is implemented, through the steps outlined below.

● Principals complete an online survey, validated by superintendents.

● Five categories, one question per category: Health & Physical Education, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, World Languages, Leadership Development.

● For each survey item, a 5-point scale to reflect the school's effort to make services available to all children in the school. Principals provide both narrative and quantitative facts as evidence of their rating.

● Principals will also respond to other survey items that assist in refining the measure next year.

● In addition to descriptive analytics based on the survey responses, a small number of site visits will be conducted. Analyses will consider school size, location, grade configuration, and staffing.
Accountability in 2019-20

In order to limit complexity and risk, the Department has heard support for a 5% Interests and Opportunities measure in 2019-20 that includes the following components:

- Survey completion
- For grades K-8 only: Course enrollment in physical education, visual arts, performing arts, and world languages (grade 4-8 only)
- “Hold harmless” policy: If the Interests and Opportunities score results in a lower SPS, the SPS will be calculated without it.

2019-20 will serve as a baseline score. The Department will develop a methodology for 2020-21 and beyond informed by the information gathered.
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Upcoming 2019 Meetings

- August 26
- October 28
- December 2