

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



October 2, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

In recent years, our state has taken strides toward a more meaningful system of assessing student learning. Students are now called on to explain their responses, to use evidence in making arguments, and to demonstrate content knowledge more than ever before. Furthermore, teachers have the opportunity to evaluate student progress over the course of the year, rather than using misaligned formative tests or simply waiting until the end of the year to evaluate student progress.

It is important, however, that assessment be focused and purposeful. It should consume the amount of time, energy, and resources necessary to assist teachers in doing their job. And it should consume no more time and energy than that. Many of you have provided guidance to the Department regarding how state assessments can be more efficient and more focused. In light of that guidance, the Department is making a couple of important shifts in the administration and design of state assessments for 2019.

First, social studies tests administered at the end of the year in grades 3 and 4 will be reduced by roughly 25 percent in terms of the time needed to complete the assessment. Furthermore, students in grades 5 through 8 will experience a social studies test on which a full set of questions has been removed. Both of these steps will allow teachers more time for focused instruction and will allow students to put all of their energy into demonstrating what they know and have learned. To further reduce social studies testing time in grades 5 through 8, the Department will only field test questions, as is required for ongoing test validity, with a sample of students rather than all students statewide. Test designs will be available in the updated [assessment guides](#) being posted tomorrow, October 3 and in the practice test webinars. Details are provided in the newsletter.

Second, science summative assessments will be fully operational this year. These improved assessments fully reflect Louisiana's science standards and reinforce the quality instruction necessary to prepare our students for jobs of the future. Like with social studies, after the spring 2019 administration, we will study closely the results and similarly shorten the blueprint for the spring 2020 administration wherever possible.

Assessment remains an important part of the toolbox we carry as educators. An accurate and frank evaluation of what students are learning and not learning is essential to building skills and making progress. But our time with students is precious. These steps should help teachers and schools to maximize the time they have with students without sacrificing the critical objective of gathering information on how well each student is progressing.

As always, thank you for all you do for our children,

John

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Important Dates for School Systems

Upcoming Events

- [Practice Test General Information Webinar](#) (for DTCs, STCs, and school system supervisors): October 3 at 11:30 a.m.
- [Early Childhood Care and Education Commission](#): October 3 at 12:00 p.m.
- [October School System Planning Call](#): October 3 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Practice Test General Information Webinar](#) (for teachers and instructional supervisors or coaches): October 3 at 4:00 p.m.
- [Special Education Leader Monthly Webinar](#): October 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- [Special Education Reporting \(SER\) Webinar](#): October 8 at 1:00 p.m.
- [Assessment and Accountability Office Hours](#): October 9 at 1:00 p.m.
- [ESSA Alternate Assessment Webinar](#): October 9 at 1:00 p.m.

Important Deadlines

- [2018-2019 eScholar data updated in eDIRECT](#): By October 4

School System Support

New: November Supervisor Collaborations

The November Supervisor Collaborations will focus on providing resources and training for the new School System Planning Process and the launch of the Super App. **This is an all-day event for Supervisors only. The originally scheduled Principal Collaborations will be held in January.** Attendees should include those who supervise academic content, assessment, high schools, CTE, workforce development, diverse student populations (including SPED), federal grant programs, and budgeting and finance.

The Collaborations will be offered on the following dates and locations from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.:

- November 8: Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning, Bossier City
- November 13: Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge
- November 14: Calcasieu Parish School Board Assessment Building, Lake Charles
- November 15: Jefferson Parish School Board, Harvey

Registration will open in WisdomWhere on October 15. Supervisors do not need a code to register.

Please contact districtsupport@la.gov with questions regarding these events.

New: Updated School System Support Calendar

The [School System Support Calendar](#) has been updated to reflect the following changes highlighted in yellow in the calendar.

- October Assessment and Accountability Call moved to October 16
- Change of audience and locations for November and January Supervisor Collaborations
- Addition of the 2018-2019 Counselor Collaborations

Email districtsupport@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: October School System Planning Call

The [October School System Planning Call](#) will take place tomorrow, **October 3 at 1:00 p.m.** The following school system supervisors should participate:

- Early childhood supervisors
- Curriculum and instruction supervisors
- District test coordinators and accountability contacts
- High school and career and technical supervisors
- Personnel directors
- Talent (Mentors, Content Leaders, Teacher Leaders) supervisors
- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 3 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/>
- **Meeting ID#:** 398875849
- Please enter your full name, and school system name when logging in.

Email districtsupport@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Request for Nominations for the 2019 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

The nomination process for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is now open. Each state can nominate up to 25 students for one of the following [categories](#):

- **General:** outstanding academic performance on the ACT or SAT
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE):** outstanding performance in CTE (*new this year*)

The Department invites school systems to submit nominations for up to three outstanding students. The nominations must include a male and female student for the general category, and at least one nomination should be for a student who has been successful in career and technical education. Students must be high school seniors scheduled to graduate or receive a diploma between January-June of 2019. Additional program requirements are available on the U.S. Department of Education's [website](#).

Nominations should be submitted through a single nomination letter for all nominees (not to exceed three pages total), signed by the local superintendent or charter school leader, and emailed to leslie.hill@la.gov no later than **November 2 at 4:30 p.m.** with "Presidential Scholars" in the subject line. In the letter, please include the following information for each nominee:

- the student's name, home mailing address, gender, and email address; and
- high school name, mailing address, and (College Entrance Examination Board) CEEB code.

Please contact leslie.hill@la.gov with questions.

Assessment and Accountability

New: Timeline for Fall School System and School Performance Score Release

Please share with principals.

The 2017-2018 school system and school-level performance scores will be released through the Louisiana School Finder on November 8. Below is a timeline of events that will take place before and after this release.

Action	Release Date
School system leaders prepare principals for SPS release	Early-mid October
Release of Communications Toolkit	October 16
Briefing calls with school system leaders	Week of October 28
Release of school and school system performance scores in School Finder	November 8
Release of secure portal for school system and school leaders	Winter

Email assessment@la.gov with questions.

New: Social Studies Test Reduction Pilot

After analyzing the past two years of assessment data and holding many conversations with stakeholders, the Department is shortening the LEAP 2025 grades 3 and 4 social studies summative assessments to reduce testing time by approximately twenty-five percent.

- The new design of the **grades 3 and 4** social studies assessments reduces the number of sessions from three sessions to two by eliminating the task set and one of the item sets.
- The **grades 5 to 8** social studies assessments will be shortened by removing an item set and the field-test portion of the tests. The grades 5 to 8 field tests will only be required for a sample of students, rather than all students statewide.

More specific test design information is detailed in the updated [social studies assessment guides](#), which **will be available tomorrow, October 3, and provided on the [LEAP 2025 practice test webinars](#)**. Details below.

Although the 2018-2019 practice tests for social studies do not reflect the new social studies test designs, the [LEAP 2025 Social Studies Practice Test Guidance](#) will be updated to include recommendations on how to address the design changes, especially in grades 3 and 4.

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

New: LEAP 2025 Practice Test Webinars

Please share with school leaders and teachers.

DTCs, STCs, and school system supervisors interested in learning general information about reference materials, and test set-up, administration, scoring, and reporting should join any **one** of the following practice test webinars.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 3 at 11:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/689628154>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID#:** 689628154

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 16 at 9:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/645134288>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID#:** 645134288

Teachers and instructional supervisors or coaches interested in learning general information about resources, and specific information about best uses and common misuses of the practice tests should join any **one** of the following practice test webinars.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 3 at 4:00 p.m.
 - **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/647834264>
 - **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
 - **Meeting ID#:** 647834264
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- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 16 at 3:00 p.m.
 - **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/222125262>
 - **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
 - **Meeting ID#:** 222125262

Please email assessment@la.gov with questions.

New: Reminders for District Testing Coordinators

General

- All changes to district test coordinators (DTCs) or accountability contacts must be submitted to the Department using the [DTC and Accountability Contact Update form](#) found in the [Assessment Library](#).
- At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, eDIRECT was populated with eSCHOLAR information from the 2017-2018 school year. **By this Thursday, October 4, all eSCHOLAR data must be updated for the 2018-2019 school year** in order for the students to remain populated in eDIRECT.
- DRC will only keep the following test results in eDIRECT based on the timeline below. For all administrations, notification will be posted at least 30 days in advance of the administration closure, so that DTCs can download any reports that are needed.
 - summative administration: keep for the two previous years
 - non-summative administration: keep current academic year after the administration
 - placement test: keep one full year after the administration
- Assessment windows are opening for Program for International Assessment (PISA) and IELTS. These assessments are administered to selected schools by Westat.
 - PISA: October 8 - November 30
 - IELTS: October 15 - December 7

K-3

- School systems should be submitting the kindergarten-readiness screener and a K-3 literacy screener data into SIS. The data will be submitted in the SIS October 1 MFP Collection. [2018-2019 Guidance](#) is available to support this process.

LEAP 2025

- School systems can now indicate the delivery mode, online or paper, in eDIRECT for grades 3 and 4 LEAP 2025 testing. In addition, school systems will verify or adjust the number of test booklets needed for the following conditions:
 - Grades 3 and 4 Regular Books (Paper Testers Only)
 - Grades 3 and 4 Accommodated Books (Paper Testers Only)
 - Grades 3 and 4 Large Print Books (Paper Testers Only)
 - Grades 3 and 4 Spanish Mathematics Books (Paper Tests Only)
 - Grades 3-8 Braille Kits
 - Grades 3-8 Communication Assistance Scripts

- Directions are [available](#). The window for selecting test delivery mode and verifying student counts will close on October 31.

LEAP 360

- Paper versions of the high school Interim Form 1 and 2 assessments and Interim Form 1 answer keys have been posted in [eDIRECT](#) under General Information → Documents → Diagnostic/Interim 18-19 → Paper Tests. Interim I for ELA and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school will go live on October 23.

ELPT and ELPS

- The 2018-2019 AIR Secure Browser is now available for download in the [EL Portal](#) under [Secure Browsers](#). Technology coordinators must have the new browser downloaded by January 1, 2019 on all devices being used for ELPT/ELPS.
- On October 15, the AIR Secure Browser and DEI will have a new look for login screens including: updated look and feel across all platforms, shorter login process, and key information highlighted to better prevent incorrect login attempts.

ACT and WorkKeys

- Today - October 16: WorkKeys **initial** accommodated testing window.
- Tomorrow, October 3 - 11: Order WorkKeys accommodated materials for **makeup testing**.
- The [2018-2019 ACT MOU](#) and related documents are now posted in the [Assessment Library](#). The MOU and [ACT Estimated Number of Testers](#) form was due on September 20. Please mail the forms to the address on page 2 of the MOU.
- [The ACT and WorkKeys Updates for 2018-2019](#) contains the changes for ACT and WorkKeys testing for the current school year.
- **Every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.** - Register for [ACT WorkKeys Online Administration Training](#) offered weekly. The link provided lists all current available dates and times.
- **Every Thursday at 10:30 a.m.** - Register for [ACT WorkKeys Groups and Batch Load Training](#) offered weekly. The link provided lists all current available dates and times.

Assessment Administration Support and Training

The Assessment and Accountability Monthly call has been moved from October 9 to October 16. Office Hours will be held on October 9 at 1:00 p.m.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 9 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID#:** 393463942

The [Office Hours Questions and Answers](#) document is posted in the [Assessment Library](#).

Reminder: Principal Training Deck for School Performance Score Release

Please share with principals.

During the September Collaborations, the Department previewed a training deck to be used with principals to help them prepare for the release of the 2017-2018 school performance scores. That [presentation](#) is now final and available in the [Principal Support Toolbox library](#) in the “School Finder Toolkit” section.

School system leaders should begin holding meetings with principals, using this training deck, to prepare them for the upcoming fall release.

Please email ldoecommunications@la.gov with questions.

High School Pathways

New: Save-the-Date for the 2019 Jump Start Convention

Please share with school leaders, counselors, and teachers.

The 2019 Jump Start Convention will be held at the Raising Cane Convention Center on January 29, 2019. Registration will open in early November.

For more information, please e-mail jumpstart@la.gov.

Reminder: 2018 Louisiana Counseling Association Annual Conference

Please share with school counselors and system supervisors.

The Louisiana Counseling Association will hold its annual conference at the Baton Rouge Crowne Plaza hotel on October 7-9 with pre-conference sessions from the [Louisiana School Counselor Association \(LSCA\)](#) and the [Louisiana Career Development Association \(LCDA\)](#) on October 6. This year's theme is *Stronger Together: 50th Anniversary of Counseling and Advocacy*. Counselors can expect the latest information in the field and earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Please visit the [LCA Conference](#) for more information.

Reminder: High School Planning Guidebook

Please share with administrators, school counselors, and teachers.

Each year, the Office of Student Opportunities publishes the High School Planning Guidebook to help administrators, counselors, and teachers use key policies, programs, and resources to help both students and schools achieve their goals. Specifically, the guidebook focuses on the following processes:

- planning for struggling students;
- foundational academic skills in the first two years of high school;
- developing basic and advanced college and workplace skills;
- providing Jump Start opportunities that can help all students, in all parts of the state, create the foundation for a successful adulthood;
- counseling and supporting all students throughout their high school career; and
- earning recognition for school excellence through an accountability system that rewards schools for helping students successfully pursue their college and career aspirations.

The print version of the 2018-2019 High School Planning Guidebook will be distributed at the Fall Counselor Collaborations. The online version is now available on the Department's [Principal Support Toolbox](#).

Please email highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions about this publication.

Reminder: Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Equipment Grants

The Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Foundation provides resources needed to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers in Louisiana. In order to inspire Louisiana students to pursue STEM degrees and careers, they are offering [robotic equipment grants](#) to Louisiana schools in support of the Louisiana STEM (LaSTEM) Advisory Council.

Grant applications are due October 26. Details about the grant can be found in the [overview](#), or by contacting luis_medina@roboticseducation.org or calling 1-832-683-1674.

Educator Preparation

Reminder: Compass Timeline and Training

The [Compass Timeline](#) for 2018-2019 is now available on [Louisiana Believes](#). Please note the following upcoming deadlines:

- **November 2** - All rosters should be updated in CIS for 2018-2019.
- **December 21** - Leader evaluations cannot be calculated until SPS scores are released. For this reason, leader evaluations can be updated in CIS after SPS scores are released in late fall until December 21.

Compass Training:

Per [state policy](#), all compass evaluators must attend a new evaluator certification training or a returning evaluator recertification training. If you were unable to attend the final Compass Evaluation webinars, they may be completed as a self-guided training using the presentation decks linked below.

- [New Evaluator Training Presentation](#)
- [Recertification Training Presentation](#)

In order to receive credit for the training, please make sure to complete the survey link provided on the final slide of either training to be marked as attended.

Please contact compass@la.gov for more information.

Special Education

New: Second Adaptive Assessment Field Added in SER

Please share with SER data clerks and pupil appraisal personnel.

School systems must verify that any student who may take the alternate assessment meets the state's eligibility criteria for cognitive and/or adaptive functioning. School systems do this by entering cognitive and adaptive assessment results in SER. Based on feedback from school systems, the Department has added additional functionality that will allow school systems to add a second adaptive score. The new field is optional, and SER will not require the new field to validate IEPs that already have evaluation results entered. The Department will review this additional functionality during the special education leader webinar this Thursday, October 4.

Please email specialeducation@la.gov with any additional questions.

New: ESSA Alternate Assessment Data Packages and Webinar

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), any school system with more than 1.0 percent of students participating in the ELA, mathematics, or science alternate assessment must take certain actions. The Department will provide all school systems with an alternate assessment package on October 5 via FTP with the file name: LEA Code_LEA Name_Prelim Alternate Assessment 2018.

School systems should review their data, and take the actions outlined in the package if they exceed the 1.0 percent participation threshold. To support school systems in this process, the Department will host a webinar on October 9.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 9 at 1:00 p.m.

- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/851446945>
- Phone Number: 408-638-0968
- **Meeting ID#:** 851446945

Please contact your school system's FTP coordinator to retrieve your alternate assessment package.

For more information, please email specialeducation@la.gov.

Reminder: Join the Special Education Leader Monthly Webinar

The Department will hold its **monthly webinar for school system directors, supervisors, and coordinators of special education on October 4 at 2:00 p.m.** Topics will include upcoming deadlines, updates, guidance, and training opportunities. Pre-registration is not required.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** October 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/670515231>
- **Phone Number:** 408-638-0968
- **Meeting ID#:** 670515231

For more information, please email specialeducation@la.gov.

Data

Reminder: Audit Assurances FY2017-2018

The Audit Assurances packet is now available on the INSIGHT Portal under Announcements. This packet contains information used to facilitate improvement in the data collection and reporting procedures during LEAs annual financial audit. Please note, this year there are some changes to the Agreed Upon Procedures (AUPs), including the elimination of several schedules. These changes are highlighted in the Audit Assurances packet. LEAs should download the packet and provide to the appropriate audit staff.

In order to better assist LEAs in this process, the Department has added documentation/reports for various audit assurance schedules which will be available on the data management FTP site September 25 through the month of December. The filename is "LEACode_LEAName_2017_Assurance Schedules.zip". Contact information for each schedule is included in the packet.

Please email systemsupport@la.gov with questions.

Reminder: Special Education Reporting (SER) Webinar

The Department is hosting a webinar to review the SER Crosscheck Reports for the Special Education Reporting System (SER). This webinar is for data managers who submit data to SER and SIS. The crosscheck reports compare the student data from SER against the student data in the Student Information System (SIS) and provides error messages for any data that is unaligned. Data managers will be given guidance to assist them in reviewing the reports and correcting any errors in SER or SIS.

- **Meeting Date and Time:** October 8 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us>
- **Phone Number:** 408-638-0968
- **Meeting ID#:** 163681224

Please email systemsupport@la.gov with questions.

Finance

Reminder: Federal Procurement Update

Please share with business managers and financial officials.

On June 20, the U. S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued [memorandum M-18-18](#). This memorandum raises the threshold for micro-purchases under federal financial assistance awards to \$10,000 and raises the threshold for simplified acquisitions to \$250,000 for all recipients.

Information on the new procurement standards contained in the OMB memorandum may be found in the [LDOE Quick Reference Guide](#).

Any questions regarding procurement updates may be sent to ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov.

Reminder: Career Development Funds (CDF) FY2018-2019

Please share with all business managers and financial officials.

Starting with the September 2018 payments, CDF payments will be provided in a single payment earlier in the school year rather than monthly. For more details, refer to the [memo](#).

Contact ldoemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

Policy

Reminder: Request for Information on Legal Services

The Department has received a legislative request to obtain the following information from each school system for the most recent fiscal year (FY2017-2018):

- Provide a listing of all legal services expenditures, including the amount paid, to whom payment was made, and for what purpose.
- Respond to the question, is the school system's legal counsel a full-time or part-time employee of the school system?
- If the answer to that question is yes, provide the legal counsel's annual salary and benefits.

Please submit this information by October 26 to leslie.hill@la.gov.

Federal Programs

New: High Cost Services Round 1 Application Released

The FY 2018-2019 High Cost Services (HCS) Round 1 application is currently available in the electronic grants management system ([eGMS](#)). The submission deadline is October 23.

For further information about the High Cost Services (HCS) Round 1 application submission, please contact ldoe.grantshelpdesk@la.gov.

Safe and Healthy Schools

New: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for School Year 2018-2019

Applications for the 2018-2019 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) are now available for returning sponsors via the [Child Nutrition Program \(CNP\)](#) website. The deadline for submission of the FFVP online application is October 19.

For additional information, please contact childnutritionprograms@la.gov.

New: Louisiana School Breakfast Challenge

All schools participating in the School Breakfast Program are invited to [register](#) for the 2018 Louisiana School Breakfast Challenge. Schools with the greatest increase in student breakfast participation (October 2017 vs. October 2018) will be eligible to win monetary incentives, Fuel Up to Play 60 Saints gear, or a pep rally with a New Orleans Saints celebrity. The entry deadline is October 31.

Please contact melissa.campbell@la.gov for additional information.

Reminder: Louisiana Farm to School Conference

[Registration](#) is open for the third annual Louisiana Farm to School conference. The conference will take place on October 9-10 at Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

Please contact melissa.campbell@la.gov for additional information.