Louisiana's ESEA Flexibility Request 2014-2015 Extension

(Amended as of May 8, 2015)

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Washington, DC 20202

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Please refer to the "List of Attachments File" to access all Attachments described below. A table of contents is included with that file.

LABEL	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	PAGE
1	Notice to LEAs	See Attachment File
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	See Attachment File
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	See Attachment File
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	See Attachment File
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	N/A
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	See Attachment File
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	N/A
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	See Attachment File
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	See Attachment File
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	See Attachment File
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	See Attachment File

COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: John White, State Superintendent of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 94064 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Bridget Devlin Position and Office: Policy Director Contact's Mailing Address: Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 94064 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064 Telephone: 225.342.3600 Fax: 225.342.0195 Email address: Bridget.Devlin@la.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): John White	Telephone: 225.342.2573
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____	Date: 02/2/15
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that

section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The

SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

☒ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Louisiana believes that the successful implementation of innovative policies relies on the input and investment of local educators and other stakeholders. For this reason, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) sought extensive input into the development of the various initiatives included in this application and into the development of the application itself. Groups involved include educators – teachers, principals, district-level officials and Superintendents, and university and college professors and deans – and the public – business leaders, civic leaders, and parents.

Stakeholder Engagement for Application Initiatives

College- and Career-Readiness: Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments

In early 2010, the LDOE contacted several statewide professional education organizations to announce the release of the draft Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and to discuss their adoption. The organizations approached for this opportunity included:

- the Louisiana School Boards Association;
- the Louisiana Federation of Teachers;
- the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana;
- the Louisiana Association of Principals;
- the Louisiana Council of Teachers of English (LCTE);
- the Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics (LATM);
- the Louisiana Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (LCSM); and
- twenty teacher panels representing English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

The input and comments of these groups were then incorporated into the official input that the LDOE provided to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) regarding the draft CCSS standards. In July 2010, with overwhelming support from the public and from educators, the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the adoption of the CCSS in a public meeting.

Major work on CCSS at the state level began in 2011, as the LDOE developed and disseminated the first CCSS communications tools and a webpage specifically for the transition to CCSS. This website served as a repository of information regarding CCSS and Louisiana's implementation plan, webinars, crosswalk documents, training and modeling videos, brochures, and other related materials, which can be accessed by teachers, school leaders, parents, and the general public. Grade-by-grade parent guides of the CCSS, published by the National Parent Teacher Association, are included on the site. During the same year, the LDOE also convened committees of Social Studies educators who developed new Social Studies Grade-Level Expectations to complement the CCSS. The new Social Studies Grade-Level Expectations were adopted by BESE in June 2011. Updates to the LDOE website include a Common Core specific page developed for parents (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards) and toolboxes (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox) tailored to district and school leaders (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox) and teachers (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox) to assist in the implementation of the new standards.

CCSS outreach and communications priorities for summer and fall 2011 focused primarily on CCSS awareness. The general awareness webinar was presented to postsecondary education campus leaders – presidents/chancellors, chief academic officers, and deans – district superintendents, charter school leaders, and curriculum supervisors, as well as some education stakeholder organizations. These individuals then re-delivered this information to college faculty, teachers, parents, and community leaders.

Additionally, the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence adopted a 2011-2012 agenda that focused on the preparation of students who are college- and career-ready as new CCSS and PARCC assessments are implemented in Louisiana. Composed of 36 state, university, district, school, and community leaders, the Commission was formed in 1999 by the Governor, the Board of Regents (BOR), and BESE to improve teacher quality and educational leadership in Louisiana. Its specific charge was to recommend policies to the Governor, Board of Regents, and BESE that would lead to a cohesive PK-16+ system – a system that holds universities and school districts accountable for the aggressive recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of quality teachers and educational leaders. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Commission set out to answer specific questions around the integration of CCSS and PARCC assessments across all grades and higher education. The work of this group further signifies the commitment by Louisiana's entire education community to implement the CCSS and PARCC assessments, to align elementary and secondary standards and assessments with college and university expectations, and to ensure a seamless PK-16 education system aimed at preparing all students to be college and career ready.

The LDOE has assembled a state leadership team to ensure the effective implementation of CCSS. In addition to LDOE staff, leadership team members also include two district superintendents, two senior district leaders in charge of curriculum and assessments, and the Associate Commissioner for Teacher and Leadership Initiatives at the Louisiana Board of Regents. Close collaboration with the BOR ensures full state implementation of the CCSS in schools, districts, and educator preparation programs. BOR has

convened meetings of college and university presidents and chancellors, provosts, vice presidents for academic affairs, and the deans of colleges of arts, sciences, and education, for the purpose of developing an implementation plan to revise educator preparation programs to reflect the CCSS.

As Louisiana moves forward with its initiatives, the LDOE continues to seek stakeholder input as it is essential to success. The state is in the process of revising its state Science standards in collaboration with other state education agencies through Achieve CCSS, as well as other stakeholders in science, science education, higher education, and business and industry. (Achieve is an independent, bi-partisan non-profit organization with a 15-year track record of working with states to improve student achievement by aligning K-12 education policies with the expectations of employers and the postsecondary community.) In summer 2013, the LDOE conducted a series of meetings with science teachers around the state to discuss the extent to which current science standards are meeting the needs of Louisiana students and preparing them for college and careers. Several strengths and limitations were noted, and teachers expressed strong interest in upgrading Louisiana's standards to improve pedagogy and incorporate recent scientific discoveries. The LDOE will continue working with science teachers and other stakeholders to determine the best options and timeframe for strengthening science standards and aligned assessments as more rigorous standards in other content areas are fully implemented.

Priorities for CCSS outreach and communications during spring 2012 included professional development for educators and college faculty about the new standards, as well as modeling effective instructional strategies to teach the new standards. General awareness activities continued in order to inform stakeholders, including policymakers, community and business leaders, parents and students. LDOE's communications strategy has focused on conveying a single, powerful message about Louisiana's education priorities and reforms in a manner that is clearly understood by the general public. That message has encompassed CCSS as well as educator effectiveness, Louisiana's strong accountability system for schools and districts, and the state's commitment to provide high-quality education for all children – all of which are critical to ensure that students graduate prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Since 2012, the LDOE has greatly enhanced its support of local school systems, educators, and parents with regard to effective implementation of the CCSS. These supports have included:

- Network teams to provide ongoing, on-the-ground instructional leadership support to local school systems;
- Curriculum guidebooks and other instructional materials aligned with the CCSS;
- A state review process for textbooks, curricula, and other instructional materials to determine alignment to state standards;
- New assessment guides and sample items for teachers and a CCSS-aligned field test taken by 50,000 students;
- Support for district technology coordinators, new technology discounts for local school systems through state contracts, and bi-annual, public technology readiness assessments;
- Training and ongoing support for a 4,000-member Teacher Leader cadre of instructional leaders from every school system;
- Robust classroom and district leader support toolboxes to assist educators and administrators with planning, interim assessments, evaluating academic progress; and
- Greatly increased communications and resources for parents, including parent guidebooks for each grade and subject.

Educator Effectiveness: A Clear, Overall Measure of Performance to Analyze and Support Success (Compass)

During the 2010 legislative session, Louisiana passed Act 54 – legislation that required Louisiana to revise its educator evaluation system to include student achievement as a significant measure of educator effectiveness. In September 2010, the Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation was assembled to engage key members of the education community in the development of Louisiana's new teacher and leader support and evaluation system, Compass. Classroom teachers made up fifty percent of the Advisory Committee on Educator Effectiveness. Other members included appointees from:

- the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana,
- the Louisiana Association of Educators,
- the Louisiana Federation of Teachers,
- the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents,
- the Louisiana Association of Principals,
- the Louisiana Association of Public Charter School,
- the Senate and House Committees on Education,
- the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and
- parents.

The Advisory Committee on Educator Effectiveness was charged with three specific considerations:

1. To make recommendations on the development of a value-added assessment model to be used in educator evaluations;
2. To make recommendations on the identification of student growth measures for grades and subjects for which value-added data is not available, as well as for personnel for whom value-added data is not available; and
3. To make recommendations on the adoption of standards of effectiveness.

Over the course of approximately one year, from September 2010 to November 2011, the Advisory Committee on Educator Effectiveness met regularly in order to ensure that it provided recommendations about each of its foci, and it reported its recommendations to the BESE in December 2011. These recommendations directly informed the implementation guidelines approved by BESE.

While the Advisory Committee on Educator Effectiveness was meeting regularly to help to develop Compass, the LDOE was also engaging teachers, principals, central office supervisors, superintendents, deans and professors of colleges of education, parents, legislators, and representatives of education organizations through workgroups, focus groups, webinars, and surveys in order to develop the details of Compass' accompanying policies and tools. Specific topics discussed during these feedback opportunities included teacher and leader competencies and performance standards, measures of student growth for Non-Tested Grades and Subjects, and policy development.

The LDOE implemented a number of pilots of the Compass system, including a statewide value- added

model pilot in all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) across Louisiana and an integrated Compass system pilot in select schools and districts (See Principle 3 for more information). The purpose of these pilots is was to implement Compass in order to analyze challenges with the system and to receive and integrate feedback from district leaders, principals, and teachers regarding the new evaluation system. This feedback informed the statewide implementation of the finalized integrated version Compass during the 2012-2013 academic year.

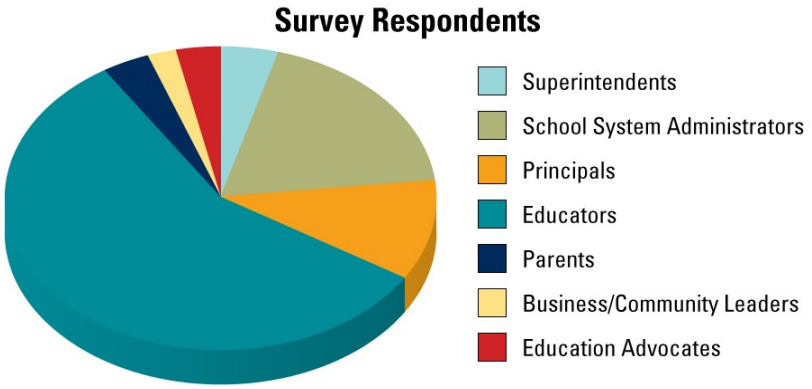
In the 2014 legislative session, the legislature created a stakeholder advisory group to study the progress of Compass and make any needed recommendations for improvement. This group will serve as a subcommittee to the statewide commission that constitutes Louisiana's committee of practitioners. A report with findings and recommendations is expected in February 2015.

Stakeholder Engagement for Flexibility Application

When developing Louisiana's ESEA Flexibility Application – just as with the specific reform initiatives described previously – the LDOE engaged in extensive stakeholder outreach. This outreach ranged from individual brainstorming meetings and small-group sessions to State Board policy forum presentations and statewide communications.

The outreach efforts started with an October 2011 comprehensive survey to determine the interests, values and reform ideas of various key constituents (See Attachment 2a). Originally disseminated in October 2011 through targeted emails, the survey was distributed to all key educator groups, as well as non-educator stakeholders, including LEA Superintendents, unions and professional organizations, parent organizations, business and community leaders and education advocates. The survey was also posted on the LDOE website for public participation. As of February 24, 2012, more than 700 stakeholders responded to the survey.

Recognizing that the ESEA flexibility waiver initiative also represented an opportunity for Louisiana to re-examine its approach to accountability in public education, the LDOE posed questions related to the strengths and weaknesses of the state's current accountability system, as well as the public's thoughts on accountability systems in general. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated two important attributes of an accountability system – that it be easy to communicate (75.4%) and that it motivate improvement (77.3%). Respondents also indicated that a focus on student proficiency was paramount (85.4%). This feedback has been important for the LDOE, as through this application the LDOE has decided to simplify its accountability system by honing in on student achievement as the primary indicator of school performance.



Respondents shared that there were several elements of Louisiana's current accountability system that should be preserved. In addition to a focus on proficiency (67.5%), respondents indicated that expectations for annual growth (64.5%) and required interventions for low-performing schools were important (65.1%). This application does preserve and enhance those positive elements of Louisiana's

accountability system. However, Louisiana's accountability system also had areas of weakness. Respondents highlighted that restrictions on the use of funds (54.2%) and operational restrictions and bureaucracies (56.8%) were major hindrances to school improvement. Louisiana has used this ESEA Flexibility request as one way to dramatically reduce the funding restrictions that many districts and school face. In addition, the LDOE established the Burden Reduction Initiative, which reduced and streamlined reporting and application requirements so that districts may use their time to focus on their most critical work – educating Louisiana's children. (For more information about the Burden Reduction Initiative, see Principle 2, Section F.)

Results from the statewide survey indicate that respondents were in favor of pursuing changes that place the state-developed accountability system at the forefront. This application has thus been a result of feedback from educators and the general public about successes within the current system and areas that need improvement. (See Attachment 2b for survey results.)

In addition to the survey, several organizations that include educators have been directly consulted regarding the flexibility application. Example groups include:

- the Accountability Commission,
- the Special Education Advisory Panel,
- the Committee of Practitioners,
- Superintendents,
- the Nonpublic School Commission,
- the NAACP, and
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Outreach to these groups included surveys, briefings, feedback sessions, and more formal presentations.

The feedback received from these various groups has been seriously considered by the LDOE in its development of this application. For example, the Special Education Advisory Panel and Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages recommended that Louisiana's accountability system include measures of student status, or achievement at a given point in time, as well as student growth. The LDOE has incorporated this feedback into its proposal by focusing on student status in its calculation of School Performance Scores and including student growth, particularly for subgroups, in its development of Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and the state's School Performance Report. Similarly, numerous superintendents recommended the value-added model for measuring student growth – a recommendation that was followed. Although ensuring that student status and student performance are integrated into the accountability system is important, the Committee of Practitioners also highlighted the importance of maintaining a system that is easy to understand. To this end, Louisiana has simplified its accountability calculations and applied letter grades to more easily interpret schools' performance.

Groups also provided input regarding the rewards provided to successful schools and districts. The Special Education Advisory Panel recommended rewards that included money and public recognition, which have been integrated into this application. The Chairman of the Parish Superintendents Advisory Council found that Louisiana's focus on funding flexibility and reduced reporting would be well-received statewide and would be effective rewards and incentives to ensure student growth and achievement. In addition, the Committee of Practitioners recommended the addition of School Performance Score points if schools exhibited exemplary improvement. This has been taken into account in the additional School Performance Points awarded to schools that make significant leaps in student subgroup growth. These examples serve as only a few highlights of the critical feedback received from stakeholders throughout the development of this waiver. Additional suggestions are noted and incorporated throughout the application.

Implementation Plan

See below for a summary of stakeholder engagement throughout the waiver process.

Stakeholder	Engagement	Publicity	Date
8(g) Advisory Council	Survey	Email	11/8/11
Advisory Council on Educator Effectiveness	Survey	Email	11/8/11
Accountability Commission	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Overview Presentation	Email	12/12/11
	Detailed Presentation	Email	2/7/12
	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	Survey	Email	10/28/11
	Jan. Policy Forum (Adapted Overview and Principles Presentation)	Email; Publicized on BESE website	1/18/12
	Individual Briefings (Detailed Presentation)	Conference Calls	2/5/12
	Follow-up Briefings on Final Proposal	Email	2/23/12 and 2/25/12
Black Alliance for Educational Options	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Blue Ribbon Commission	Survey	Email	2/16/12
	Detailed Presentation	Email	2/16/12
Blueprint Louisiana	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Center for a Better Louisiana	Survey	Email	12/15/11
	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
College- and Career-Readiness Commission	Survey	Email	11/8/11
Committee of 100	Survey	Email	11/8/11
Committee of Practitioners (including 7 districts who are Title III grantees)	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Overview Presentation	Email	1/27/12
	Detailed Presentation	Email	2/23/12
Education Organizations/Associations (LAE, LFT, APEL, LASBO, LSBA, Principal's Association)	Survey (NOTE: Also represented on Accountability Commission)	Email	11/8/11
	Final Proposal Briefing with leadership of LAE, LFT, and LSBA	Email	2/27/12
General Public	Survey	Email	11/21/11
	Waiver Website	Publication on website; Email all stakeholder groups	Mid-January
	Detailed Presentation	Website	2/7/12
	Final Proposal Overview and Waiver Document	Website	2/27/12
Governor's Office	Overview of Accountability Proposal	N/A	Mid-January
	Executive Summary & Detailed Presentation	N/A	Late January
	Briefing on final application	N/A	Mid-February

Stakeholder	Engagement	Publicity	Date
LEA Superintendents and Charter Leaders	Survey	Email	10/28/11
	Waiver Update	Superintendents' Conference Call	2/13/12
	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
	Final Proposal Briefing	Superintendents' Conference Call	2/27/12
Louisiana Association of Business and Industry	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Briefing	N/A	1/5/12
	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Louisiana Association of Principals	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning	Meeting with Executive Director, partners, and sponsoring agency	Email	12/19/11 1/30/12 2/15/12
Louisiana PTA	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Final Proposal Overview	Email	2/27/12
Louisiana School Boards Association	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Migrant Education Program (5 districts)	Overview Presentation	Email	1/27/12
NAACP	Survey	Email	1/24/12
	Overview Presentation	Email	2/3/12
	Updated Proposal Summary	Email	2/24/12
Non-public Advisory Council	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Overview Presentation	Email; BESE Public Notice	2/7/12
Special Education Advisory Panel	Survey	Email	11/8/11
	Overview Presentation	Email	1/25/12
	Finalized Proposal Briefing with Leadership	Email	2/24/12
Stand for Children	Detailed Presentation	Email	2/9/12
Superintendents' Advisory Council	Briefing with leadership (Superintendent Faulk)	N/A	1/6/12
	Detailed Presentation	Email; BESE Public Notice	2/16/12
Urban League	Survey	Email	1/24/12
	Phone Conference	N/A	2/8/12
	Detailed Presentation	N/A	2/8/12
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages	Overview Presentation	Email	1/21/12
	Draft ESEA Waiver Application and Detailed Presentation	Email	2/7/12

Several of the organizations described in the previous section, such as the Accountability Commission, the Blue Ribbon Commission, and the College- and Career-Readiness Commission, include a number of non-educators. In addition to its efforts with those organizations, the LDOE has also sought to engage feedback from other organizations and the general public through additional briefings, surveys and formal presentations. Specific non-educator organizations that have been approached regarding the waiver include the Committee of 100, which is a statewide group of business leaders, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Stand for Children, the Louisiana PTA, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the general public. Many stakeholders chose to publicly support Louisiana's efforts to secure more flexibility through Letters of Support (See Appendix i.A). Others, such as the NAACP, have signaled their intent to formally support this application when they hold scheduled organizational meetings during the next month.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☐ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Louisiana has been and continues to be a leader in implementing educational reforms in standards, assessment, accountability, data, and educator quality – critical areas recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in the Race to the Top competition and the ESEA waiver process. The Recovery School District – Louisiana's state-led turnaround district – is a national model for the transformation of failing schools, for example. In order to support all schools in raising student achievement and avoid state takeover, Louisiana has adopted a statewide system of educator and school leader evaluation based in part on student achievement, and the state is a lead designer of rigorous PARCC assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards. However, in order to focus school leaders and classroom teachers on these important changes and ensure effective implementation, state education leaders have recognized the need to increase educator capacity by removing much of what currently occupies their time and energy – red tape and bureaucracy. For this reason, Louisiana's application for flexibility reflects ambitious commitments to new standards and evaluations tools as well as significant changes in monitoring and compliance practices. Both components are essential to achieve higher expectations.

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) has identified three foundational principles for the ESEA flexibility waiver initiative: (1) college and career-ready expectations for all students, (2) state-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, and (3) supporting effective instruction and leadership. Louisiana is well-positioned to meet each of these principles through:

- Louisiana's adoption of Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments;

- Louisiana's long-standing, rigorous accountability system;
- The Compass evaluation and support system for educators; and
- Ongoing burden reduction efforts.

These initiatives become integrated through Louisiana's mission – to ensure that all students attain academic proficiency through the effective teaching of college- and career-ready standards. To support this mission, the state will deliver targeted interventions and supports to struggling schools while motivating and rewarding districts and schools for high performance.

Louisiana recognizes that its goal to prepare all students to be proficient cannot be achieved through limited federal and state capacity using one-size-fits-all strategies. Instead, Louisiana must enhance educators' capacity through the elimination of burdens and through real reforms that enhance their work and accelerate student growth. This requires a clear articulation of the roles of critical players in Louisiana's schools:

- The USDOE, charging states with achieving proficiency for all students and supporting their work through the provision of flexible resources;
- State educational agencies, setting state-specific, rigorous goals for all students, encouraging improvement through strong incentives and consequences, and removing all other burdens;
- District and school leaders, managing and overseeing effective instruction in schools; and
- Most importantly, educators, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills and coaching all students to achieve their fullest potential.

In an effort to align these roles and responsibilities such that the state truly enhances the capacity of educators, on behalf of the more than 200,000 Louisiana children performing below grade level they serve, and in response to USDOE's calls for bold, innovative state-led reform, Louisiana presents this ESEA Flexibility Application for expeditious review and approval.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Overview

Louisiana's education leaders understand that in order for students to graduate from high school truly college- and career-ready, rigorous standards, curricula and assessments must support and build upon their learning in every grade level of their PK-12 education. Several years ago, the University of Louisiana System coined the phrase and adopted as its slogan "College Begins in Preschool," which has been embraced by Louisiana's entire PK-12 education community. Realizing that the ability of Louisiana students to be successful in life and

the ability of the state of Louisiana to thrive economically is dependent upon the quality of education and continuous improvement to reflect ever-changing global competitiveness, Louisiana policymakers require regular review of standards at least once every seven years. Louisiana first standards and benchmarks were developed in 1997-1998, and they were amended by adding Grade-Level Expectations in 2004.

The Grade-Level Expectations on which the state-developed Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum was based was aligned with criterion-referenced assessments and a strong statewide accountability system, which had produced steady gains in student achievement. From 1999 to 2011, the percentage of students scoring at proficient levels on state assessments increased from 45 percent to 66 percent. However, Louisiana still had over 230,000 students who were not performing at grade level, and 44 percent of schools received a "D" or "F" label under the statewide accountability system in 2011. This is was unacceptable, and Louisiana knew it was necessary to do more to achieve rapid improvement and prevent more generations of students from leaving school unprepared for rigorous postsecondary education studies or a job in this increasingly knowledge-based economy. Although Louisiana had several effective programs and initiatives in place, programs and initiatives alone were insufficient to achieve this level of improvement. The state must reach to the very foundations of its public education system – what educators are teaching students in the classroom and how students are being educated – and make sure that its curricula and instruction are aligned with college and workplace expectations. Based on the number of college freshmen requiring developmental courses and feedback from Louisiana businesses on the quality of its workforce, Louisiana knew that its current standards and expectations required further improvement.

In early 2010, LDOE contacted several professional statewide education organizations to announce the release of the draft Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics and to request an opportunity to discuss their adoption. The group consisted of the state's three educator organizations as well as organizations representing local school boards, school superintendents, and school principals. The LDOE provided suggested questions they should consider when reviewing the draft standards, as well as a process for them to provide input. These groups' input and comments were then incorporated into the official input the LDOE provided to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers on the draft standards.

The LDOE received feedback from the Louisiana School Boards Association, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana, and the Louisiana Association of Principals. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In addition, the following groups provided input:

- Louisiana Council of Teachers of English (LCTE)
- Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics (LATM)
- Louisiana Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (LCSM)
- 20 Member Teacher Panels representing English and math (all grades and including university panels)

In July 2010, in recognition of the need for more rigorous and relevant standards to more effectively prepare Louisiana's children for college and careers and with the support of Louisiana's education community, BESE approved the adoption of Common Core State Standards. (See supporting document in Attachment 4.) The CCSS fully replaced Louisiana's Grade-Level Expectations for ELA and Mathematics in 2013-2014.

In order to align Louisiana's state assessments to the new standards and to determine if Louisiana students

are on track to enter postsecondary or pursue a professional career after graduating from high school, Louisiana also joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in ELA and Mathematics. PARCC is funded through a $186 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top assessment competition. The grant supports the development and design of a next-generation assessment system that:

1. Builds a pathway to college and career readiness for all students;
2. Creates high-quality assessments that measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards;
3. Supports educators in the classroom;
4. Makes better use of technology in assessments; and
5. Advances accountability at all levels.

Leading Effective Implementation of CCSS

The LDOE and the Board of Regents (BOR), the state's coordinating board for post-secondary education, have jointly undertaken the responsibility of implementing the CCSS throughout Louisiana's PK-16 education system. Dr. Jeanne Burns, Associate Commissioner for Teacher and Leadership Initiatives at the BOR for post-secondary education leads implementation for higher education. The LDOE's district support network teams and Office of Academic Content support implementation in PK-12.

As part of the initial implementation, the LDOE and BOR led two major stakeholder groups to inform the state's implementation plan including:

- Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence: A long-standing, 36-member commission created by LDOE and BOR that is composed of 1/3 post-secondary education representatives, 1/3 PK-12 representatives, and 1/3 members representing state agencies, parents, businesses, and community leaders. The Commission provided recommendations for new policies, laws, and procedures to the BESE, BOR, and Governor on issues pertaining to the CCSS and PARCC assessments.

- CCSS/PARCC State Implementation Team: A team consisting of LDOE and BOR executive staff including those charged with implementing the state's new educator evaluation and support system, district superintendents, and district curriculum, assessment, and accountability coordinators. The State Implementation Team developed the state's initial transition plan.

The chart below depicts the structure of Louisiana's CCSS/PARCC implementation strategy and how schools and post-secondary education institutions throughout the state implemented the work of each of these two groups.

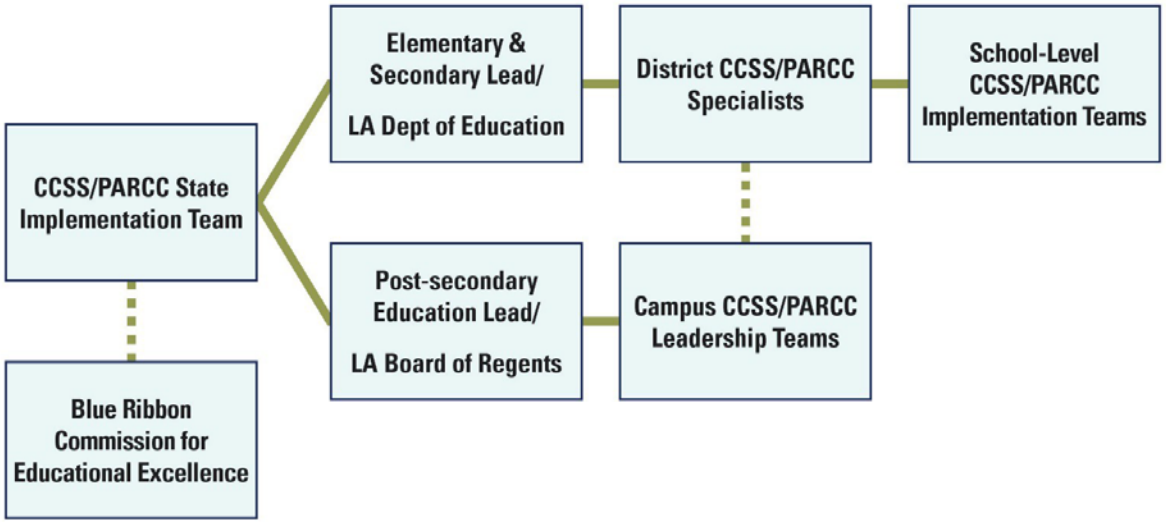


Figure 1.A. Louisiana's CCSS and PARCC Implementation Strategy

The Governor, the BOR, and BESE formed the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence in 1999 to improve teacher quality and educational leadership in Louisiana. The Commission's specific charge was to recommend policies that would lead to a cohesive PK-16+ system that would hold universities and school districts accountable for the aggressive recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of quality teachers and educational leaders. As noted previously, the Commission's charge in 2011 was to prepare students to be college and career ready as new CCSS and PARCC assessments are implemented in Louisiana. The Commission set out to answer the following questions through multiple day-long meetings in which national experts and consultants present research, best practices, guidance:

1. Should the cut-off scores on the new PARCC assessments for placement in entry-level credit- bearing courses in mathematics and English be the same for technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year post-secondary programs?

2. What options should be made available to high school students who attain readiness scores on the PARCC assessments for entry-level, credit bearing courses prior to their senior year in high school?

3. What options should be made available to high school students who attain passing grades in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry but do not attain readiness scores for entry-level, credit bearing courses prior to high school graduation?

4. What support should be provided to experienced teachers who lack the depth of content knowledge and necessary pedagogical knowledge/skills to prepare students to successfully address the Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments?

5. How will schools in Louisiana develop the necessary technological infrastructure for students to naturally apply knowledge through the use of technology when completing learning activities throughout the school year and when completing formal PARCC assessments?

This work further signified the commitment by Louisiana's entire education community to implement the

CCSS and PARCC assessments, to align elementary and secondary standards and assessments with college and university expectations, and to ensure a seamless PK-16+ education system aimed at preparing all students to be college and career ready – a commitment supported by Louisiana's recently- approved Race to the Top application. The 2011-2013 report was published in June 2012 and may be accessed here (http://regents.louisiana.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Final-2011-12-BRCYrThirteenReport6.18.12.pdf).

The State Implementation Team was charged with developing a plan for the effective implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments. Team members included:

- Dr. Scott Norton and Dr. Jeanne Burns as LDOE and BOR leads;
- LDOE Director of the Next Generation Assessment System and Louisiana's PARCC Coordinator;
- Project director for LDOE's Integration Project, which aims to integrate the implementation of CCSS and Louisiana's new teacher and school leader evaluations, known as Compass;
- Two district superintendents, one of whom is the President of the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents;
- Two district senior leaders in charge of curriculum, assessments, and accountability;
- Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs at BOR; and
- Directors of Public Affairs for LDOE and BOR.

The group made recommendations to the State Superintendent of Education and Commissioner of Higher Education, and other LDOE and BOR executive staff participated in meetings as necessary to ensure alignment and coordination of work across Louisiana's schools and post-secondary education institutions. Members traveled to CCSS/PARCC implementation meetings hosted by Achieve, which manages PARCC. (As mentioned previously, Achieve is an independent, bi-partisan non-profit organization with a 15-year track record of working with states to improve student achievement by aligning K-12 education policies with the expectations of employers and the postsecondary community.) The State Implementation Team led the development of the state's transition plan for PK-12, which addressed curricula, assessments, training, and professional development. This plan consists of a two-year calendar for CCSS general awareness training and professional development, a checklist for use by LEAs and school leaders to ensure adequate preparation and effective implementation of CCSS (See Appendix 1.A), and a clear delineation of state, local school district, and school roles and responsibilities for this effort (See Appendix 1.B). Further improvements to this plan were made, in order to ensure maximum integration and coordination with Compass, which assists educators in understanding the connections between rigorous standards and educator evaluation and supports (See Principle 3 for more information).

Upon the recommendation of the State Leadership Team, each local school district designated a District Implementation Team. Louisiana has since transitioned to a Teacher Leader strategy in which principal-selected educators receive training and ongoing support from LDOE and serve as the chief liaisons between the LDOE and School Implementation Teams. With training and ongoing support from the LDOE and Teacher Leaders, School Implementation Team members ensure effective implementation within their schools, not only through training and monitoring, but also through modeling lessons and instructional strategies and by encouraging data analysis to inform instruction. In response to feedback received from special education stakeholders and teachers of English language learners, Teacher Leaders, School Implementation Teams, and the LDOE District Support Networks will also target supports to district

and school-level personnel serving students with disabilities and limited English proficiency students to help all students achieve in the new curriculum.

Technology Readiness

Furthermore, the LDOE assigned a State Readiness Coordinator (SRC) to coordinate the roll out of the PARCC Technology Readiness Tool. This tool will support local LEA's as they transition to the new online assessments. This new tool will assess current capacity in four areas (i.e., devices, device to tester ratio, network infrastructure, and staff/personnel) and compare that to what will be needed to administer the assessments. The SRC team includes:

- Regularly communicate and support LEAs and their technology personnel with education technology initiatives and school/district technology infrastructure
- Conduct trainings for LEA technology personnel and others within the LEA who may need access to information and reports generated through the TRT
- Conduct trainings for LEA technology personnel and district staff relative to software, devices and infrastructure to support school/district educational and online assessment goals
- Answer questions from LEA personnel relative to education technology and technology readiness
- Communicate with vendors, participate in training(s) & coordinate with internal teams who support curriculum, assessments and technology
- Create bi-annual reports of technology readiness within schools and districts
- Assist districts in developing long- and short-term technology plans as well as serve as the approver of all school/district technology plans.

In February 2014, the Department released the fourth semi-annual Louisiana Technology Footprint report illustrating the dramatic increase in student access to devices and district and school internet readiness. The report includes an Executive Summary (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/technology-footprint/2014-technology-footprint-executive-summary.pdf?sfvrsn=2), District Snapshots (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/technology-footprint), School by School Analysis (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/technology-footprint).
The report indicates the number of technology-ready Louisiana school systems has increased nearly 25 percent since the last report in July 2013. Districts have dramatically increased student access to technology upgrading more than 41,300 devices and purchasing an additional 87,471 devices since July 2011. Because of these efforts, Louisiana now has 906 schools and 47 districts meeting the state's minimum technology device standards ratio of seven students for every one computing device (7:1). This is an increase from 798 schools and 38 districts in July 2013 and 337 schools and just 2 districts in July 2012.

The Department is committed to supporting districts in achieving technology readiness goals in all schools across the state by expanding technology support and services based on district needs and requests. One such expansion is the increased support and training to districts utilizing the federal E-Rate program to purchase hardware, software, and services. Through the E-Rate program, schools receive discounts on broadband internet, network infrastructure, and other telecommunication costs. Last year, Louisiana districts received more than $36.5 million in E-Rate reimbursement dollars as of January 2014. The Department's increased support will translate to even more reimbursements in the coming years. An example of E-rate program guidance to districts can be seen here (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/technology-footprint/2014-e-rate-

support.pdf?sfvrsn=2).

Additionally, the Department continues supporting districts through partnerships with technology vendors, providing access to technology at a reduced cost. The state has negotiated technology contracts for schools to purchase low-cost, high-quality hardware, software, and services. The initial contracts, focused on laptop, desktop, and tablet computers, has expanded to include computer software, peripherals, support, network hardware and support, technology services, and telecommunications products and services. Through these vendor contracts districts have saved more than $14 million in the upgrading and purchasing of computers and installation services over the last two years.

The Role of IHEs in Preparing Teachers and Leaders

Similar to implementation efforts underway by school districts, each Louisiana college and university has formed a campus leadership team to ensure effective implementation of the CCSS in educator and school administrator preparation programs and to align the CCSS with college-ready expectations. On August 30, 2011, BOR hosted college and university leaders at a leadership summit to discuss the state's transition to CCSS and PARCC. Attendees included college and university system leaders, chancellors and presidents, chief academic officers, deans of colleges of arts, sciences and humanities, and deans of colleges of education. The purpose of the meeting was to begin developing an implementation plan for the alignment of post-secondary education expectations, as well as educator and school administrator preparation program, with CCSS and PARCC standards.

Campus Leadership Teams were formed at each institution, consisting of the following members:

- College of Education Dean or Designee
- State Research Team Member
- College of Education – Mathematics Methodology Faculty Member
- College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities – Mathematics Faculty Member
- College of Education – English Language Arts Methodology Faculty
- College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities – English Faculty Member
- Two Other Representatives (e.g., K-12 Mathematics Teacher, K-12 English Language Arts Teacher, College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities Dean or Designee, Admissions Officer, etc.)

The teams were charged with carrying out the following responsibilities:

- Acquiring current information pertaining to the CCSS in mathematics and English Language Arts;
- Acquiring current information pertaining to the development of the PARCC assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts;
- Disseminating information about the CCSS and PARCC assessments to faculty within the College of Education, College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities, and other colleges;
- Providing feedback about the development and/or use of the CCSS and PARCC assessments;
- Integrating the CCSS and PARCC assessment expectations into the university curriculum;
- Preparing new teachers to address the CCSS in Mathematics and English Language Arts in order to successfully teach students; and
- Addressing other issues (e.g., Math Specialist courses).

The Campus Leadership Teams participated in a statewide webinar during July 2011 and in statewide meetings that were held during August 2011, September 2011, March 2012, June 2012, April 2013, and March 2014. Additional meetings are planned for fall 2014 and spring 2015. During the meetings, the teams have discussed their roles, CCSS and PARCC. They also identified dissemination strategies within their campuses and

expectations for high school graduates entering entry level Mathematics and English courses. Teams developed a deeper understanding of the CCSS, crosswalks, instructional tools, and PARCC assessments to be integrated into teacher education programs in order to prepare effective new teachers.

The Campus Leadership Teams provided input to PARCC regarding the development of the PARCC College- and Career-Ready Determination Policy and Policy-Level Performance Levels Descriptors. They also provided input into the development of the PARCC Grade- and Subject-Specific Performance Level Descriptors for English and Mathematics. University faculty have also volunteered to serve on teams to help develop items for the PARCC assessments.

The BOR also received a $600,000 "Core to College" grant through the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to support the work of the Campus Leadership Teams as they address the responsibilities identified above. This grant will support activities through the end of 2014. It aims to achieve successful implementation of CCSS and aligned assessments, and shared ownership of college readiness by the K-12 and post-secondary sectors. The following outcomes will be achieved by the end of the grant period:

- **Outcome 1**: Statewide definition of "college readiness"
- **Outcome 2**: K-12/postsecondary alignment to Common Core State Standards in:
    - Academic courses/sequences
    - Data and accountability
    - Teacher development
- **Outcome 3**: Postsecondary institutions use CCSS-aligned assessments to determine readiness for credit bearing course enrollment (2015 or later)

Specific progress indicators have been identified for completion by specific timelines. Louisiana has developed a Project Management Plan to identify the activities that will occur to address the goals. The funds are primarily being used for two- and four-year Campus Leadership Teams to convene additional college and school/district partners to implement the CCSS and PARCC activities. All teacher preparation programs in Louisiana have aligned their teacher preparation programs with CCSS and PARCC and began implementing the aligned curriculum during 2013-2014. Two- and four-year Campus Leadership Teams also developed Project Management Plans that clearly identify the activities that are occurring at the campus level to successfully address the goals and demonstrate the outcomes.

A "One Stop Shop for Common Core State Standards, PARCC, Compass Resources, and Teacher Preparation Transformation" was also created by the BOR during fall 2012 to help disseminate information to university campuses and the public. The purpose of the web site is to provide quick access to accurate national and state information about CCSS, PARCC, COMPASS, and Teacher Preparation Transformation. In addition, it has served as an important site to provide the public with access to communications being sent to campuses about CCSS/PARCC, information being disseminated at Campus Leadership Team meeting, feedback submitted to PARCC from Campus Leadership Teams, and other information that is specific to Louisiana. The BOR created a document entitled "Myths and Facts about CCSS and PARCC" and a document entitled "Higher Education Involvement in CCSS and PARCC (2010-2014)" for higher education to use when talking to the public and placed the information on the web site.

Through the Core to College grant, additional funds were obtained to pilot transitional courses developed by SREB in three school districts in Louisiana. The courses were aligned to the CCSS and designed to prepare students to be college ready in English and mathematics. The courses were delivered by district teachers to high school seniors who did not attain the necessary cut-off scores on the ACT at the end of their junior year to be admitted to entry level math and English courses once they started college. Data have been collected about the pilot and a report will be issued the fall of 2014.

In addition to this work, the BOR convened representatives from all two- and four-year institutions to develop Statewide Course Descriptions for Mathematics and English courses. Common descriptions now exist for all entry level college math and English courses that are taught at all two- and four-year colleges in Louisiana. These descriptions are being used to help ensure alignment between core competencies measured by state assessments, expectations in College Algebra/English I, and expectations in remedial education courses. BESE has currently identified the ACT and end-of-course assessments as state assessments for high school.

The BOR currently has a placement policy that identifies assessments and cut-off scores that must be used by all two-year and four-year public institutions in the State. The BOR has met with Campus Leadership Teams and university system representatives to identify language that can be used to add the PARCC assessments to the list of existing assessments once cut-off scores are identified and research exists to indicate that the cut-off scores identify students who are college ready. Although PARCC scores will not exist yet for high school students in Louisiana, they will exist for students from other states who plan to attend college in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has also worked closely with the BOR and delivered training during fall 2012 to university faculty pertaining to the implementation of the CCSS. The training occurred in three regions of the state for university faculty and provided teacher preparation faculty with the same information as was provided to K-12 teachers in the state in the areas of mathematics and literacy. In addition, the LDOE has invited universities to send representatives to training that has been planned for teacher leaders who are helping practicing teachers deliver the CCSS in their school districts.

The teacher preparation deans/directors in Louisiana also met during spring 2014 for development by national experts regarding strategies to integrate the CCSS at a deeper level within teacher preparation programs. Plans are being created to provide university faculty with opportunities to participate in development during 2014-15 to further deepen the integration of college and career ready standards into their teacher preparation curriculum.

Louisiana's Implementation Plan

In response to educators and educator organizations around the state, Louisiana's State Implementation Team developed an implementation plan to prepare students and teachers to transition to the more rigorous and more focused new standards and assessments. The plan utilized a phased-in approach to ensure maximum preparation and continuity as educators began to undergo more rigorous evaluations, described later in this section and in detail in Principle 3.

In the first year of this plan, 2011-2012, Louisiana implemented the Common Core standards in grades K-2, encouraging other grade levels to integrate CCSS alongside their Louisiana state GLEs using a standard/GLE cross walk document.

2011-2012: Development Year

During 2011-2012, as districts began phasing out the GLEs and introducing the Common Core State Standards in their classrooms, The LDOE developed new portions of the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum to align with the CCSS for grades K-1.

In preparation for 2013-14, new GLE-aligned math test items were field tested in 2011-2012 to enhance the

bank of test items. In ELA, new writing prompts were field tested in 2011-2012 that were more rigorous and reflective of the skills required in the CCSS. Instead of being asked to respond to a prompt that asked students to share their opinions or feelings, students were asked to read one or more passages and write a detailed response that incorporated ideas from those passages.

During the 2011-2012 school year, all state assessments for English Arts and Math were revised to ensure that students were prepared for the rigor of the CCSS and PARCC assessments. All content that was not aligned with the CCSS was removed from the assessments for the transition period. This ensured that only CCSS-aligned content remained on the tests. For math, the assessments focused on fewer content strands at a deeper level.

At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, the LDOE worked with educators across the state through Teacher Leader Advisor groups, Louisiana Believes advisory committees, and educator focus groups. Through these meetings, educators expressed their feedback on the use of the integrated CCSS and GLE tools (comprehensive curriculum, cross walk documents). Through these conversations the LDOE learned that the work to integrate the standards with the GLEs was proving more confusing than helping. Teachers reported having to teach significantly more content and they felt as if they could not simply focus on the content of the CCSS.

Additionally, districts began working with the LDOE to assess technology readiness and explore opportunities to upgrade in advance of new online assessments 2014-2015. The first *Louisiana Technology Footprint* was released in July 2012.

2012-2013: Transition Year

Given significant feedback from educators at the end of the 11-12 school year, the LDOE continued to simplify the focus on the CCSS in their assessments, tools, and curricular training and increased the support for educators. Given the need to simplify the focus of CCSS for teachers, the LDOE took out all references to the GLEs in all materials so that teachers could exclusively focus on learning the CCSS during the final year of transition. The state-wide assessments (LEAP, iLEAP, and high school End of Course Exams) included items that only aligned to the GLES common to the CCSS. Any final items that remained with low levels of rigor and GLE alignment only were removed and items from the 2011-2012 field test were added.

The LDOE revised resources to align with the new standards and assessments. Louisiana offered two major resources to aid educators and students in preparation for state standardized tests. The Practice Assessment/Strengthen Skills is an online practice test for students in grades 3-8, and the Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE) is a test item bank to assist educators in measuring student learning throughout the school year. Districts and schools also use EAGLE as a benchmarking tool. Additionally, the Educator Support Toolbox (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox) and video library (http://videolibrary.louisianabelieves.com/) were released.

Districts received support from Network Teams comprised of former Louisiana educators to assist with goal setting, curriculum and assessment, observation and feedback, and teacher collaboration opportunities. At least one Teacher Leader was selected from every public school in Louisiana and over 2,000 teachers were trained on CCSS implementation during 4-day summer workshops. (See Principle 2 for more information on the Network Teams and Teacher Leader Cadre).

During the 2012-2013 school year, all state assessments for English Arts and Math were revised to ensure that students were prepared for the rigor of the CCSS and PARCC assessments. All content that was not

aligned with the CCSS was removed from the assessments for the transition period. This ensured that only CCSS-aligned content remained on the tests. For math, the assessments focused on fewer content strands at a deeper level.

In October 2013, a webinar on the transition thus far was shared with educators, lawmakers and other stakeholders, and can be accessed here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/webinars/ccss-implementation---oct-2013-bese.pdf?sfvrsn=4

2013-2014: Full Implementation

During 2013-2014, Louisiana fully implemented the new standards. The LDOE continued to support local school systems with implementation, per the requests of educators and administrators across the state, through the identification of aligned curriculum and other instructional resources, training and professional development, and Network Team support.

The LDOE also began to offer a review service for local school systems, working with educators and content experts to review instructional materials for alignment to new state content standards (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews). Many local school systems used this guidance to inform their selection of curriculum, textbooks, and other instructional materials.

Ongoing training and support of Teacher Leaders continued through in-person meetings, webinars, and the dissemination of tools and guidance to assist in implementing the new standards. A summer Teacher Leader conference was held in June 2014 and was attended by nearly 4,000 educators representing nearly every public school in the state. Blended teacher training support for this group continued all year long including bi-weekly webinars, regional collaborations, and in-person trainings (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/collaboration-teacher-leadership).

Network Teams regularly met with local school superintendents and their staff to assist in monitoring progress, identify resources, and address any implementation challenges. In addition to supporting implementation of the new standards, the Network Teams assisted local school district leadership in aligning educator evaluation practices, budgeting, hiring and assigning key instructional leaders, and addressing a number of other needs to ensure the full integration of their instructional plan with other efforts underway.

2014-2015: Full Rigor

As required by state law, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Louisiana will implement standards-based assessments that are based on nationally recognized standards that represent the knowledge and skills needed for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace. BESE adopted those standards – the Common Core State Standards – in 2010. By law, state assessments must align to the state's academic content standards.

The 3-8 ELA and math Louisiana statewide assessments will contain only items developed through the PARCC consortium. In high school, Louisiana's End-of-Course tests will be aligned to CCSS, as they were in 2013-2014.

Science and Social Studies

In 2011, the LDOE convened committees of Social Studies educators who developed new Social Studies Grade-Level Expectations. The new GLEs were then reviewed by national experts identified through WestEd, who provided Likert scale ratings for each standard and its corresponding Grade-Level Expectation for rigor, relevance, clarity, determination that the content was essential, and degree to which the content would prepare students for more challenging work. The experts made specific recommendations that were incorporated regarding the alignment of historical thinking skills across grades, language complexity, the strengthening of financial literacy components in each grade level, and specific examples for educators' use and understanding. Following public review, the new standards were adopted by BESE in June 2011.

In summer 2013, the LDOE conducted a series of meetings with science teachers around the state to discuss the extent to which current science standards are meeting the needs of Louisiana students and preparing them for college and careers. Several strengths and limitations were noted, and teachers expressed strong interest in upgrading Louisiana's standards to improve pedagogy and incorporate recent scientific discoveries. The LDOE will continue working with science teachers and other stakeholders to determine the best options and timeframe for strengthening science standards and aligned assessments as more rigorous standards in other content areas are fully implemented.

Analyzing Alignment Between Former Standards and the Common Core

With support from WestEd and Louisiana educators, the LDOE conducted an alignment study to analyze the degree of match or overlap between Louisiana's current Grade-Level Expectations and the CCSS. The study included ELA and Mathematics at each grade level and served as the official "crosswalk" for determining transitional curriculum and blueprints for transitional assessments. The crosswalks were then used to create Grade-level Content Comparisons, which identified what content will remain the same, what content is to be added, and what content is to be deleted at each grade level. The Grade-Level Content Comparison documents also identified content that needs to be taught during the transition to avoid gaps in student learning. This information helped to determine the best way to phase in the CCSS over a two-year period and is being used to train curriculum supervisors and educators across the state. The alignment study resulted in detailed information, including:

- *Summary Reports* for each grade in each content area that provide more detailed findings about the ways in which the two sets of standards are linked;

- *Transition Plans* for adding content to each grade in each content area to allow for transitioning to the CCSS over time;

- *Content Comparisons Summaries* in each content area intended to provide state teachers with detailed information about (1) what content will remain the same at each grade (i.e., content in the CCSS that also appears in the GLEs at the corresponding grade); (2) what content has been added (i.e., content that appears in the CCSS but not in the pool of GLEs at the corresponding grade); and (3) what content has been removed or moved to another grade (i.e., content that appears in the GLEs but not in the CCSS standards for the corresponding grade); and

- *Two Crosswalks* for each content area using the CCSS (version A) and Louisiana's GLEs (version B) as the referents.

Table 1.B. below summarizes findings from Crosswalk Versions A and B, across all grades for ELA and mathematics. Columns 1 and 2 identify the percentage of CCSS standards, by content area and grade, found to align with a Louisiana Grade-Level Expectation at any grade level. Columns 3 and 4 identify the percentage of Grade-Level Expectations, by content area and grade, found to have a "match" in the CCSS at any grade.

Grade	1. Percentage of CCSS Math Standards to Which One or More GLEs Align	2. Percentage of CCSS ELA GSS to Which One or More GLEs Align	3. Percentage of Math GLEs Aligned to One or More CCSS Math Standards	4. Percentage of ELA GLEs Aligned to One or More CCSS ELA GSS
Kindergarten	65% (14/22)	85% (35/41)	58% (14/24)	62% (28/45)
Grade 1	90% (19/21)	90% (37/31)	47% (17/36)	60% (37/62)
Grade 2	96% (25/26)	93% (37/40)	47% (15/32)	70% (38/54)
Grade 3	92% (23/25)	88% (37/42)	53% (25/47)	69% (36/52)
Grade 4	79% (22/28)	86% (37/43)	30% (13/44)	72% (36/50)
Grade 5	81% (21/26)	81% (35/43)	36% (12/33)	67% (32/48)
Grade 6	97% (28/29)	80% (33/41)	39% (15/38)	71% (34/48)
Grade 7	79% (19/24)	80% (33/41)	32% (13/41)	70% (32/46)
Grade 8	89% (25/28)	76% (31/41)	25% (12/48)	64% (30/46)
High School	58% (90/156)	83% (68/82)	66% (63/96)	66% (86/130)
Overall	79% (286/363)	86% (383/445)	45% (199/439)	67% (389/581)

Table 1.B. GLE/CCSS Alignment Comparison

A detailed explanation of the protocol used by WestEd for the crosswalk is available upon request. However, this analysis shows that for ELA, 86 percent of the CCSS match one or more of Louisiana's Grade-Level Expectations, and 67 percent of Louisiana's Grade-Level Expectations match one or more CCSS. For mathematics, 79 percent of the CCSS match one or more of Louisiana's Grade-Level Expectations, and 49 percent of Louisiana's Grade-Level Expectations match one or more CCSS. In ELA, 2nd grade shows the greatest CCSS to Grade-Level Expectations match of 93 percent, and 8th grade has the lowest match of 76 percent. The greatest CCSS to Grade-Level Expectations match in mathematics was 97 percent in 6th grade and a low of 58 percent at the high school level (grades 9 – 12). It should be noted that the mathematics Grade-Level Expectations reviewed included more rigorous "math plus" standards beyond Algebra II, which are recommended for students who intend to pursue mathematics and science fields. This likely resulted in a lower percentage of alignment for high school mathematics. The analysis of Algebra II standards actually revealed substantial alignment, with 86 percent of Louisiana Grade-Level Expectations matching one or more CCSS standards. The Grade-Level Expectations-to-CCSS matches for Algebra I and Geometry were 76 percent and 65 percent, respectively. These percentages are based on matches between Grade-Level Expectations in current courses to the standards in the Traditional Pathway courses found in the Appendix to the CCSS for mathematics.

Louisiana has analyzed the factors necessary to offer students with disabilities the opportunity to learn the new standards (as discussed below in the section on students with disabilities). Additionally, Louisiana is currently analyzing the linguistic demands of students with limited English proficiency to inform the development of limited English proficiency standards aligned to the CCSS (as discussed below in the section about English learners).

Preparing Louisiana for Implementation: Public Outreach and Educator Support

Communicating Louisiana's Commitment to Reform

The LDOE and BOR have communicated extensively to education stakeholders and the general public about Louisiana's commitment to reform to improve student achievement. Rarely do Louisiana education officials speak publicly without mentioning the state's transition to college and career ready standards and assessments and improving educator supports and evaluations as primary strategies to improve student achievement, ensure the state's economic vitality, and enhance the quality of life for all Louisianans. To inform the general public and to serve as a foundation for delivering training on the Grade-Level Content Comparison documents to educators, the LDOE developed a General Awareness Webinar to introduce the content of the CCSS and to describe the state's transition plan. This webinar was delivered to local school district leaders and curriculum supervisors, who redelivered it to their principals and teachers; college system leaders, chancellors and presidents, and deans, who redelivered it to college faculty; education stakeholder organizations; and policymakers during public hearings. It was also posted to LDOE's website for public viewing. Not only did this webinar inform stakeholders about the state's transition to CCSS, but it also described the PARCC assessments and the integration of these efforts with new teacher and school leader evaluations, Compass.

To ensure information about the new standards and assessment are available to educators and families, the LDOE developed the Family Support Toolbox Library (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/family-support-toolbox-library) and the Classroom Support Toolbox (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox). Both serve as repositories of information regarding CCSS and Louisiana's implementation plan, webinars, crosswalk documents, training and modeling videos, brochures, and other related materials, which can be accessed by teachers, school leaders, parents and the general public. Grade-by-grade parent guides on the CCSS, published by the National Parent Teacher Association, are included on the site as well.

Priorities for spring and summer 2012 included the continuation of general awareness activities and extensive outreach and communications to educators (PK-16) about the new standards using crosswalk documents developed, as well as modeling effective instructional strategies to teach the new standards. The LDOE and BOR worked to develop an integrated communications strategy to convey Louisiana's education priorities and reforms in a manner that is clearly understood by educators at all levels and the general public. That message encompassed CCSS, Compass, Louisiana's strong accountability system for schools and districts, burden reduction efforts to support teachers and school leaders, and the state's commitment to provide high-quality educational options for all children – all of which are critical to ensure that students graduate prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Supporting Educators and School Leaders

As Louisiana works to support its educators and school leaders, both professional development and support materials are critical. As demonstrated in the text below, Louisiana is well-positioned to provide support in both capacities.

In September 2011, the LDOE made regional presentations to District CCSS/PARCC Specialists around the state using a second webinar developed especially for educators, focusing on the crosswalk and the Grade-Level Content Comparison documents (See http://www.louisianaschools.net/LDOE/uploads/18889.ppt). This webinar was also shared with Campus Leadership Teams for dissemination to college faculty. During summer 2012, LDOE hosted CCSS Summer Regional Institutes to provide intensive training and professional development to principals and School Training Teams, who redelivered the content to their educators. These meetings reviewed in detail the new standards and transitional curricula, demonstrated effective

teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of students to keep them engaged and to facilitate their mastery of the CCSS, and described how analysis of student data can inform instruction. The LDOE also worked to incorporate training on Compass into these same meetings.

Throughout the next year, principals received information, training, transition materials and support primarily from their District CCSS/PARCC Specialists, but also directly from the LDOE to the extent possible. In addition to including principals in LDOE-sponsored training events during summer 2012, the LDOE also engaged the Louisiana Association of Principals to assist in the dissemination of information of CCSS, PARCC, and Compass information, to offer feedback on effectively transitioning, and to help redeliver training and support to principals statewide through its regional network system.

A grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to integrate the state's transition to the CCSS and new educator evaluations provided strategic planning support for LDOE leaders as well as training for teachers in select school districts. The training included the use of the Shell Centre Math Tasks and the Literacy by Design tasks, which are aligned to the CCSS and have been shown through extensive research to be effective in improving instruction and student learning. The number of teachers trained to use these tasks will increase each year as professional development is provided. In addition, as educator evaluation policies and rubrics have been developed, input was sought from the state's CCSS State Implementation Team, which was not only concerned with the transition of standards and curriculum, but also deeply committed to the effective teaching of them.

In preparation for the 14-15 school year, the LDOE has released the most intensive and aligned resources yet. The support is focused on providing high-quality, aligned, and integrated resources, and direct training and support at every layer of the system (teachers, principals, and central offices). In preparation for and during the 14-15 school year, this support will include the following:

Districts

To help focus districts as they fully implement the CCSS, the LDOE is providing a series of tools and resources that help districts make key decisions on an efficient timeline and build the systems needed to empower and develop teachers. Specifically this includes:

Resources:

- **District planning guide:** This guide (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=16), housed in the district planning page for the 14-15 school year (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-planning-2014-2015) lays out all of the key decisions districts need to prepare for in order to effectively implement the CCSS. This guide focuses districts in a key set of areas (school and leader learning targets, assessment and curriculum, collaboration, observation and feedback, pathways to college and careers, and aligning resources). For each focus area, the guide describes what excellence looks like, outlines all key decisions, and aligns all support resources produced by the LDOE to help districts make these critical planning decisions.
- **Curricular guidance**: One of the most critical areas the LDOE helped districts prepare for in the lead up to full implementation during the 14-15 school year was curriculum and assessment. The selection of quality curricular tools is one of the most fundamental and critical decisions a district will make to support implementation of Common Core. To support quality decisions the LDOE released guidance (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/instructional-

package-recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=4) on a webpage that houses all curricular tools districts need (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2014-2015-curricular-package). This guidance includes a full review of curricular tools available for free and for purchase. Districts in Louisiana have the autonomy to purchase and use any instructional materials of their own choosing, as curriculum is a local decision. But, to support their efforts and in response for requests for guidance, the LDOE worked with educators to review and rate available curricula and interim assessments to support district decisions. The full reviews help districts consider how they will supplement any program that does not receive a tier 1 status (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2013-2014-math-and-english-language-arts-instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews).

- **Professional development guidance**: In addition to quality resources, districts need to offer quality professional development to support resource and standards implementation. The LDOE not only provided a substantial amount of professional development (see below), but also released guidance to support districts as they build their plans (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/2014-2015-professional-development-calendar.pdf?sfvrsn=6).
- **Parent Support**: Parents are critical stakeholders in the implementation of rigorous standards. To support districts as they communicate with parents about the new standards, the LDOE created a parent homepage (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/parents-students) that assists parents in supporting their children in each grade level and subject.
- **District Support Toolbox** (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox): This central resource hub houses all of the key resources districts need in a one stop shop. The resources include all of the key tools from above, along with other tools uploaded throughout the year to support districts with key initiatives.

Direct support: As always, resources are never enough. To help districts make meaningful planning decisions and build the systems to support educators, the LDOE put the following direct support in place:

- **District planning calls**: These bi-monthly calls began in January 2014. All district superintendents along with their key instructional staff join each call. The first call in January helped focus districts on the district planning guide and the key decisions they would need to make through the winter and spring to prepare for full standards implementation. During each call the LDOE addresses questions, illustrates new resources released to support districts with those decisions, and shares best practices from around the state. All 2014 calls can be found on the LDOE website (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-planning-2014-2015).
- **Network support**: The five LDOE Network Teams support every district in the state. The network teams provide in-person support to help districts with their locally developed implementation plans, supported by the district planning guide and other LDOE resources (See more information on Network Teams in Principle 2).
- **Superintendents' collaboration**: As a culmination to the school year planning process and in preparation for implementation of the CCSS, the statewide Superintendents' collaboration event is a space for districts to collaborate, share model programs and plans, and set up ongoing opportunities to share resources (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/statewide-collaboration).

Educators

The LDOE believes that those closest to students, educators and parents, are best positioned to support students and thus the implementation of the standards. Given this belief, the LDOE has invested a significant amount of support for educators directly. This support focuses on providing educators key resources and training so that they can make local, empowered decisions to support their unique students. This strategy also connects to the work at the district and principal layer. While districts are making strong curricular choices and building strong systems for educators to improve, the LDOE direct-to-teacher strategy is building capacity around strong ELA and math content knowledge to fill those structures.

Resources:

- **Teacher toolbox (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox):** This central resource hub houses all of the key resources teachers need in a one stop shop. This toolbox was created with the support of educators from across the state. It is built from the perspective of a teacher and the key steps they take to teach students. All resources and tools released from the LDOE are integrated and connect to help teachers take these key actions.
- **Curriculum guides (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/year-long-scope-sequence):** As the LDOE reviewed math and ELA curricula from vendors (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/2013-2014-math-and-english-language-arts-instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews) it was quickly apparent that the market was not meeting the needs of teachers as they worked to implement the CCSS. Thus, the LDOE created a robust set of instructional tools for math and ELA. The ELA guidebooks contain a full set of unit plans to build a complete curriculum for educators K-12. In math, the guidebooks are meant to be a supplement to any program. They support teachers as they work to provide students tasks and appropriately remediate.
- **Video library (http://videolibrary.louisianabelieves.com/)**: This library houses instructional videos that illustrate quality instruction connected to Louisiana's Compass instructional rubric and the CCSS. This library is regularly updated and includes guides to help teachers and principals use the videos for instructional improvement.
- **Assessment tools (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/end-of-year-assessments):** Assessment guides, sample tests, and other tools help teachers to understand how students will be assessed on the standards. These tools prepare teachers to set strong goals for student mastery of the standards and align their instruction accordingly.
- **Standards modules (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/standards):** This page in the Teacher Support Toolbox houses a series of tools to help teachers and principals explore the standards.
- **High School Students Planning Guidebook (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/2014-high-school-planning-guidebook-(web).pdf?sfvrsn=8**): This guidebook is a series of short documents showing administrators, counselors, and teachers how to use key policies, programs, and resources to help both students and schools achieve their goals.

Direct support: Just as with every level, direct support ensures that teachers are able to use the quality resources and implement the standards successfully in their classroom. In Louisiana, our direct support goes

directly to the teacher level. While districts and principals take on a significant amount of teacher training and support, the LDOE provides an intense amount of direct training and support.

- **Teacher Leaders (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/collaboration-teacher-leadership)**: This cadre of over 4,000 teachers represents every district and school in the state. This cadre ensures that every school has a series of experts on the standards and curricular tools. This provides principals and districts capacity. These Teacher Leaders support districts and schools as they work to train and support teachers in their districts. All training noted below is directed towards this group of educators. All materials are posted publicly so that teacher leaders and others are able to use all training materials for other teachers in their schools and districts.
- **Blended training**: Louisiana Teacher Leaders receive a significant amount of training throughout the year. The LDOE has learned that teachers need different types of training to support their varied needs. Thus, the LDOE provides intensive, blended training throughout the entire school year. Each layer of training provides support in a different area of need for educators.
    - *Content training (in person):* As teachers make the instructional shifts demanded with the CCSS, many need ongoing content training. Rich content-based training often requires deep and intense practice. Thus, in person is often the most effective forum for content based training. To support Teacher Leaders, the LDOE hosts over 10,000 seats of training during the year. In June the entire 4,000 cadre came together for a two day ELA and math training. This is followed by content institutes throughout the year.
    - *Resource/curricula use (virtual):* In addition to content development, teachers need support to use the curriculum and tools. High quality, CCSS-aligned instructional tools are complex. Teachers require support to ensure they are prepared to use these materials. Thus, the LDOE hosts grade specific math and ELA bi-monthly webinars. These webinars break down upcoming weeks of lessons, help teachers adjust plans based on student needs, and share resources among other teachers.
    - *Ongoing improvement (collaboration):* Finally, as teachers work to implement the standards, they need space to reflect and grow. Thus, the LDOE hosts in-person regional collaborations led by expert and trained teacher advisors. These regional collaborations provide space throughout the year for teachers to reflect on student work, identify areas for improvement, and share resources.
- **Ed modo collaboration**: Finally, teachers need an immediate place to go to find and share resources across the state. The LDOE state-wide educator EdModo site provides this space. Thousands of teachers use this site weekly to share resources, ask teacher questions, and support others. The LDOE monitors this site and pulls high quality resources to key folders to ensure quality for others.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Only fifty percent of Louisiana's students with disabilities are scoring on grade level on the fourth grade assessments and fewer than half of students with disabilities entering Louisiana high schools graduate with a diploma. The resources and support provided by the LDOE described above will enable districts and educators to better serve all students, however, to achieve significant gains with this specific population we must execute meaningful college and career readiness initiatives targeted to our students with

disabilities.

Recognizing the need to elevate Louisiana's focus on the achievement of students with disabilities and increase district capacity to serve the needs of such children, the LDOE's organizational restructuring in 2010 included the dispersing of special education professionals throughout the agency. No longer was special education housed within the federal program compliance office; special education also became part of the content-centered "goal" offices that are focused on Louisiana's achievement of goals related to literacy, STEM, and college and career readiness. As a result, the agency is delivering more effective support to districts and schools with regard to IDEA compliance and increasing academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The work has shifted to not only helping students access the new standards, but also to increasing the rate at which they make academic progress, meet IEP goals, and earn diplomas and career credentials within the regular education setting. To work specifically on these initiatives and enhance collaboration within the agency, the LDOE hired a new Special Education Policy Director who started in the summer of 2014. The special education policy office will concentrate on improving the LDE monitoring system with a focus on target setting, increase the prominence of special education specific reporting, work closely with the network teams to deliver targeted support to local school districts and high-need schools, and conduct an analysis of special education data, specifically student outcome data, to frame the development of new targets and improvement activities in the State Performance Plan. To assist in meeting district needs, the LDOE also provides funding to eight regional centers to offer support and training in the area of technology for students with disabilities, students on 504 plans, and Universal Design for Learning and to 11 Families Helping Families centers across the state to provide services and training to families and educators.

One of the most significant initiatives is the implementation of Act 833 of the 2014 Louisiana Legislative Session which allows students with disabilities who have had persistent academic challenges to demonstrate proficiency for promotion and for high school graduation through alternate performance criteria. The new law permits IEP teams to identify students meeting eligibility criteria established in the law, and, if appropriate, identify alternate ways to demonstrate proficiency of performance targets the students must meet in order to be promoted or to graduate. Implemented thoughtfully with extensive stakeholder engagement, this law can focus educators on the best means of assessing skills and progress among students who have IEPs and are struggling with more conventional measures. To ensure this is the case, the LDOE is working with stakeholders, including our Special Education Advisory Panel and the Louisiana State University-Health Science Center, to develop guidance to build IEP team capacity and support the creation of strong IEP goals aligned to the state's college and career ready standards and the use of meaningful assessments for measuring achievement.

As stated in the policy approved by the state board, the state academic content standards shall apply to all public school students in the state. Instruction shall include the same knowledge and skills expected of all students and the same level of achievement expected of all students. Only diplomas earned by students who have pursued the regular academic state standards and who have earned all state-required Carnegie credits shall be considered regular diplomas in the state and district accountability system, pursuant to federal laws and regulations. The IEP team may not lower promotion or graduation requirements for a student with a disability if doing so means the student will not be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum based on Louisiana's general academic content standards.

While the majority of students with disabilities will continue their education beyond high school, meaningful career education in high school provides an important opportunity for students working toward goals of successful competitive and non-competitive employment. The recently enacted Jump Start Career Education program, described in detail later in this document, provides career-focused courses and workplace experiences to all high school students, allowing them to continue their education after high school and earn industry-based certifications. The LDOE convened a workgroup of educators with

experience in providing career education to students with disabilities and industry representatives with experience hiring individuals with disabilities to determine how the traditional Jump Start pathways can specifically benefit students with disabilities.

The LDOE has also committed to developing a proposal to recognize the achievements of students with significant cognitive disabilities within the state, district, and school accountability formula. Department staff has begun working with special education advocates and educators to define successful high school completion for students accessing the alternate achievement standards. Any resulting proposals will be submitted to USDOE for review.

The LDOE offers a number of opportunities for communication, feedback, and assistance in implementing Act 833 and collaborating on special education policy matters. Department staff regularly facilitate informational webinars for district personnel and educators to provide special education-focused updates on LDOE initiatives, in addition to information disseminated in the weekly district newsletter. As Act 833 is implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, the LDOE has used the webinars and newsletters to provide guidance to special education directors on how to accurately identify students eligible for the alternate pathways, set rigorous IEP goals aligned to grade level standards, evaluate student achievement, and plan for post secondary success. Extensive guidance, including implementation of Act 833 as new Jump Start program pathways are available for high school students, will be released later this spring.

The Louisiana State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), awarded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, is enabling the LDOE to develop a system of professional development and support based on state, district, and school needs to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and create sustainable, evidence-based practices. Funding for this five-year, $6 million grant will provides aid to high-need districts throughout the state. The project has four focus areas related to the use and effectiveness of data-based decision making, inclusive practices, family engagement, and culturally responsive practices. These areas will be addressed through the use of blended professional development, data collection and analysis, implementation measures, and collaboration with state efforts. The grant provides and links districts to professional development that connects special needs instruction to the Common Core State Standards; collaborative initiatives that link regular education and special education teachers; and provides training on the effective utilization of data to make informed decisions. As support is provided to participating districts, the LDOE continues to develop and disseminate materials and resources statewide and enhance LDOE initiatives based on strategies found to be most effective. Currently available resources include the Louisiana Co-Teaching Guide, ParaPros Make the Difference, Equitable Classroom Practices Checklist, and Professional Development Planning Guide for Culturally Responsive Practices. Partnerships with Louisiana State University and Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center, are supporting the achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

Louisiana is supporting the achievement of students with disabilities through rigorous formal evaluations of general and special education professionals who serve them, with such evaluations based in part on evidence of student growth. All certificated school personnel are subject to Compass, the state's new evaluation and supports system for educators and school leaders, and the LDOE worked with special education professionals to identify appropriate measures of student growth. As part of a Special Populations workgroup for non-tested grades and subjects, special education professionals representing inclusion, gifted and talented, and profound disabilities recommended the use of common assessments and other measures of student growth for the new evaluation system. Those assessments and measures included but were not limited to state standardized tests, progress in achieving goals set forth in Individualized Education Plans, the Brigance for Special Education assessment, and student work samples.

The LDOE will continue to partner with special education professionals, advocates, and families to

support students with disabilities in reaching their highest potential.

Supporting English Language Learners

To support limited English proficient students, Louisiana is an active participant in the Chief State School Officers' State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) for English language learners (ELL). The ELL SCASS articulated the need for common or collaborative English language proficiency expectations and standards in order to ensure alignment with the CCSS and PARCC assessments. The Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC) and the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC), which provide technical assistance to states and have capacity relevant to English language proficiency standards and assessments, have agreed to work with interested states to analyze current standards, develop common English proficiency expectations that correspond to the CCSS, and provide guidance regarding needed revisions. Thirteen states have formed a collaborative to support the Centers' development of common English language proficiency standards that they may adopt. (See Appendix 1.C for a copy of Louisiana's letter of support for this collaborative). The LDOE will develop and/or adopt instructional materials to align with the common English language proficiency standards when they are completed.

Louisiana has already been heavily engaged in this work through participation in an 18-month study that systematically examined the four language modalities (listening, speaking, reading, writing) assessed under Title III. The study, titled "An Examination of the Relative Contributions of the Four Language Modalities to English Language Proficiency: Implications for Assessment and Instruction Across Grade Spans and Proficiency Levels," included six states – Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, and Utah – in partnership with WestEd and Pacific Metrics. It examined the four language modalities in terms of (1) their relative contribution toward determining English language proficiency, (2) their interrelationships vis-à-vis English language proficiency, and (3) whether and how their relative contributions toward determining English language proficiency and their interrelationships change across grade levels, language proficiency levels, and English learner student subgroups.

The study analyzed data from participating states related to students' English language development focusing on the interactions of the language domains and attainment of English language proficiency. Louisiana provided the students' suppressed item level data on the English language proficiency test and the English Language Arts content assessments, which enabled the researchers to provide more detailed analysis of the relationship between performance on the language domains and performance on the English Language Arts assessments. Louisiana and other states benefitted from the project in terms of knowledge related to improving measurement of student development and attainment of English language proficiency, guidance related to creating systems of support for English language learners, and professional development that builds educator capacity related to supporting the development of English language proficiency.

Recently, the NCLB and IDEA Support Division of the LDOE has entered into a partnership with the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma to develop and implement an outreach plan to better serve families receiving ELL services. T**he first and immediate phase of the partnership will focus on distributing existing SC3 resources to classroom educators and district staff involved with Title III services and academic programs.** The SC3 English Language Learner KnowledgeBases are housed on the SC3 website and breakdown ELL specific topics into an outline format with guidance at each level. The SC3 KnowledgeBases will help practitioners in the field meet compliance requirements and serve the ELL community more effectively. The KnowledgeBase has components targeted specifically to the roles of administrators, teachers, parent advocates, and educators of migrant students and includes topics such as *"Communicating with and Involving Parents"* and *"Understanding the US School System."* The ELL portal,

developed by SC3 and accessed here: http://sc3ta.org/topics/ELL.html, provides a central point of access for a variety of ELL-related resources, including:

- Common Core for ELLs (including teachers' resources for the classroom through video clips, examples of mini-lessons, and best practices to provide professional learning to teachers in the implementation of the Common Core)
- Education on the Web (a human-indexed database of ELL-related web links organized into a series of hierarchical categories)
- Hot Topics for ELL Practitioners (quick digests of research and other resources on important topics such as motivation, creating a culture of universal achievement, personalized learning, formative assessment, and others)
- Data Sources (links to ELL data sources and demographic information)
- Related Organizations (links to ELL-related organizations and state resources)
- Event and Webinar Archive (recorded webinars and materials on previous technical assistance events focused on ELL topics including family and community involvement, the impact of culture, academic language, differentiated instruction, and gifted and talented)

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Department will use its website, weekly newsletter distributed to educators, administrators, district staff, and stakeholders, and ongoing communication with Title III coordinators to share the existing resources, Concurrently, SC3 will provide a series of professional trainings related to ELL education to build the capacity of LDOE staff members who have direct contact with LEAs and schools.

The SC3 materials will provide a useful service for Louisiana schools, however, the LDOE knows that information created by and for Louisiana educators is the most valuable resource that can be provided. **The second phase of the partnership with the LDOE and the SC3 will center on creating Louisiana-specific ELL supports for use by Title III district coordinators, administrators, ELL teachers, and regular education teachers.** LDOE staff members from the Content, District Support and Operations are meeting with SC3 consultants and ELL stakeholders now to determine the resources, LEA professional development opportunities, and family outreach that would be most helpful. Phase 2 of the outreach strategy will be completed in time for the 2015-2016 school year.

The LDOE will also evaluate available curricular resources for English learners for quality and alignment to the CCSS. The LDOE will take advantage of work done by other states and organizations to make the best tools available for teachers of English learners.

- Starting in 2014-2015, Louisiana will offer math assessments in grades 3-8 in Spanish for eligible students.
- To help families prepare for the transition to new assessments, the Family Support Toolbox Library (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/family-support-toolbox-library) includes the CCSS parent guides developed by the National PTA in Spanish for all grades.
- The library also includes LDOE developed parent guides in Arabic, Spanish, and Vietnamese, Louisiana's three most spoken languages after English, for the English Language Development Assessment.

Both content teachers of English language learners and English as a Second Language (ESL), teachers are subject to Compass. Like the Special Populations workgroup convened for special education professionals and teachers in other non-tested grades and subjects, a workgroup was convened to develop possible measures of effectiveness for ESL teachers. The group recommended the use of the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), a pre-ELDA to establish baseline data, and student portfolios demonstrating language learning. Ongoing collaboration with ESL professionals around the state and the

Louisiana chapter of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., will inform evaluations and supports for educators who teach English language learners.

Louisiana has also implemented changes specific to the struggles faced by children of migrant workers. These students are faced with very unique challenges, including frequent language barriers, that potentially endanger their academic success and ability to achieve the high academic standards that all children are expected to meet. The weaknesses in the old structure of the Louisiana's migrant education program were limiting availability of support services that could be provided to migrant children to help them overcome these challenges. To address the concerns, the LDOE has utilized a portion of its Title I Part C (Migrant Program) Administrative funding to establish an Identification and Recruitment (ID&R) Coordination Center that will provide centralized and coordinated efforts to achieve more effective and efficient statewide ID&R. Key players include the MEP Director/Representative, ID&R Center Coordinator, regional recruiters, Local Operating Agency recruiters, lead implementation consultant, and the Union Community Action Association (UCAA). Although UCAA will take the lead regarding this effort, there will be seven other Local Operating Agencies across the state involved.

While the South Central Comprehensive Center is working with the LDOE to build a strategy for supporting ELL students statewide, the Recovery School District (RSD) is implementing immediate targeted initiatives in New Orleans where the majority of Louisiana's ELL population is educated. New Orleans public schools have seen a 40 percent increase in the number of English language learners enrolling in schools over the last three years and an estimated 500 new non-English speaking students have enrolled in schools in 2014-2015 so far. The RSD is committed to ensuring all English language learners in the New Orleans area receive a high quality education and their families feel supported and engaged.

In order to support these students, their families, and our schools, the RSD is focusing its efforts on (1) ensuring a smooth enrollment process for students and families, (2) providing financial resources for schools as they build their programs to serve non-English speaking students, and (3) partnering with organizations around New Orleans to build support for these families.

Enrollment

All students who reside in Orleans Parish are welcome to enroll in RSD schools regardless of their prior schooling, resident status, or primary language. English language learners and recent immigrants can enroll in schools at the Family Resource Centers. The centers are staffed with Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters and a staff member who can communicate using American Sign Language. Staff members are available to assist families in their native language as they enroll in school, transfer between schools, or seek information on school availability. The RSD is also in the process of translating the enrollment website into Spanish and Vietnamese.

Financial Support for Schools

The Recovery School District recognizes that schools will have to build programs to support the influx of English language learners. In 2014, the RSD will announce a competitive grant process for schools to build these programs and share their strategies with schools around the city. Additionally, the RSD is investigating options for increasing the per pupil dollar amount schools receive for each English language learner enrolled in their school as soon as the 2015-16 school year.

Working with Partners

In addition to the efforts of the RSD, partner organizations and charter school operators are also working to

build staff and school capacity to serve English language learners. This fall, the Choice Foundation, Orleans Parish School Board, and Catholic Charities will jointly host the first of a number of events to provide teacher and administrator training in ESL teaching strategies. The Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools (LAPCS), the Eastbank Collaborative of Charter Schools (ECCS), TNTP-Teach NOLA, and Teach for America (TFA) are also all placing specific emphasis on recruiting and hiring teachers certified in or interested in teaching ESL. Lastly, the RSD has developed a partnership with Puentes New Orleans, an advocacy group focused on building assets and creating access for and with Latinos of Greater New Orleans, to provide supports for Spanish speaking students and their families.

While the majority of Louisiana's English Language Learners are concentrated in New Orleans, the remainder of the southeastern region of the state has also experienced an influx of Spanish speaking students and LDOE is working closely with the school system most affected to assist in offering support to the educators and families. An inventory was taken to assess the financial impact on districts and the LDOE is working with districts with the greatest costs to allocate their resources in the most beneficial way for students, including the identification of federal support and funding.

Since New Orleans and the surrounding area serve an overwhelming majority of the English Language Learners, the development of an outreach strategy, support structure, and LDOE technical assistance have been focused there. As resources and best practices are established in the southeast during the 2014-2015 school year, Louisiana will determine, as part of the phase 2 strategy described above, how the work there can most effectively be applied to the smaller ELL populations across the state.

Enhancing Louisiana's State Assessments to Ensure College and Career Readiness

PARCC Assessments

As a governing state in PARCC, Louisiana is an active participant in the development of new, rigorous assessments aligned with the CCSS. Louisiana committed to administering the PARCC assessments as part of its successful Race to the Top application, beginning in 2014-2015. The PARCC assessments will reflect students' readiness for postsecondary education and professional careers in a much stronger way than current assessments, primarily because they will be based on internationally-benchmarked standards developed by experts and supported by post-secondary education, business and industry leaders. The PARCC assessments will reflect the rigor of the CCSS and will provide timely information to educators about student performance in order to inform instruction and provide supports. The new PARCC assessments will serve as the basis for determining whether Louisiana students are truly on track to be college and career ready.

All of Louisiana's public two- and four-year colleges and universities have committed to participate in PARCC, to help develop the college-ready assessments, and, ultimately, to use those assessments as one indicator of students' readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing college courses.

Louisiana administers state assessments in the four core content areas in grades 3-8 and End-of-Course tests in high school. High stakes policies are in effect for grades 4 and 8, requiring students who score below proficient on these assessments to be retained or to receive intensive remediation and catch up with their peers. Louisiana also has 10th graders take the PLAN, which is ACT's college and career readiness test for 10th graders. New PARCC assessments will begin to be administered in 2014-2015 in grades 3-8. All high school students will continue to participate in an administration of the Algebra I and English II EOCs by the end of their third year in high school and must score proficient on a math, English, and either science or social studies EOC to meet graduation requirements. Louisiana's End of Course exams are aligned to the state's approved academic standards. In Science and Social Students, these are referred to as the Louisiana Grade Level Expectations. In

English and Math, Louisiana has adopted the Common Core State Standards. Furthermore, as an additional indicator of college and career readiness and a measurement of the quality of Louisiana high schools, all Louisiana students will participate in the entire ACT series (i.e., EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, and WorkKeys), which began statewide in 2013.[1] For high school students with disabilities, the IEP team will determine whether the student will participate in the ACT series or Louisiana's alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities – the Louisiana Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1).

Grade	Current/Transitional Assessment (current through 2013-2014)	Permanent Assessment (2014-2015 and beyond)
Incoming K	Developing Skills Checklist	Developing Skills Checklist
K-3	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
2	Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	LEAP: PARCC assessments EOCs EXPLORE PLAN ACT
3, 5, 6, 7	Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (*i*LEAP)	
4	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP)	
8	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP)	
9-12	End-of-Course Tests PLAN (10th grade students)	

Table 1.C. Louisiana's Statewide Assessments

Alternate Assessments

Louisiana also administers an alternative assessment for students with the significant cognitive disabilities – the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1).

Louisiana joined the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC), a project led by five centers and 19 states to build an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. In addition to the development of an alternate assessment, NCSC is developing curriculum, instruction, and professional development support for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The project also involves identifying effective communication strategies for students, the development of material at varying levels of complexity to meet students' unique learning needs, and accommodation policies appropriate for this population. Louisiana has established a Community of Practice comprised of teachers and district and school administrators who work with this population of students. The group reviews materials and provides feedback as they are developed. The goal of the NCSC project is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options.

How has Louisiana transitioned students with disabilities previously taking an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards to Louisiana's new, high-quality assessments?

As reiterated in the ESEA Flexibility guidance (FAQ C-15), the USDOE will no longer allow modified assessments. Therefore, Louisiana phased out its LAA 2 assessment by the 2014-2015 school year.-During this process, the LDOE committed to deep engagement with district leaders, teachers, parents, special education advocates, policymakers, and students in order to ensure adequate supports for students and educators. The implementation of the new special education law (Act 833) will impact the promotion and graduation requirements of students with disabilities, specifically the student population that previously participated in the LAA 2 assessment. The LDOE will be working closely with local superintendents, special

[1] ACT has committed to continuing the administration of EXPLORE and PLAN in Louisiana for the 2014-2015 school year.

education directors, and advocates to ensure the implementation of these new laws does not diminish the expectations of students with disabilities.

PARCC is supporting this transition with a focus on wide accessibility. Specifically, PARCC has engaged in the following strategies:

- Made a commitment to Universal Design to guide the assessment development;
- Made a commitment to include embedded supports in the assessments;
- Established both a State Operational Working Group and a Technical Working Group to focus on accessibility, accommodations, and fairness issues;
- Created a Senior Advisor position to facilitate the work of the OWG, TWG, and consultants (this job search is currently underway); and
- Participated in CCSSO, NGA, NCEO, and other organizational strategy meetings to stay informed and connected to key stakeholders and to remain vigilant on AAF issues.

Specifics of Louisiana's Transition Timeline:

- At the high school level, students who were previously eligible for the LAA 2 assessment participated in the first statewide administration of the ACT beginning in Spring 2013.
- Students in 3-8 will transition to non-alternate, PARCC assessments by the 2014-2015 school year.

Preparing Students for Post-Secondary Work

Louisiana strives to provide all students with early access to post-secondary education courses and courses that will enhance their preparation for rigorous post-secondary work. The TOPS Tech Early Start fund provides tuition assistance to eligible 11th and 12th grade students that enroll in eligible postsecondary courses leading to an Industry Based Certification in top demand occupations. Some local school districts also have agreements with their local post-secondary institutions for dual enrollment courses and/or have attained approval of their own educators to teach college-level courses for which post-secondary credit can be given. Total dual enrollment courses have grown steadily over the past four academic years as demonstrated by the chart below.

Academic Year	Non-Duplicated Dual Enrollment (Number of Students)	Duplicated Dual Enrollment (Number of Courses Taken)
2007-2008	6,403	12,320
2008-2009	10,578	14,859
2009-2010	14,648	20,007
2010-2011	17,572	25,856
2011-2012	17,033	27,645
2012-2013	20,610	33,476
2013-2014 (prelim)	20,368	33,730

Table 1.D. Dual Enrollment

Going forward, Louisiana will integrate all dual enrollment efforts into a single strategy whereby education funds allocated through the state's funding formula for K-12 education will be used to support students' enrollment in courses that provide both secondary and post-secondary education credit. In fact, beginning with the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the state's funding formula for K-12 education includes additional funding to support students who elect to take courses, including many dual enrollment

courses, offered by state-approved course providers. These providers include the state's public postsecondary education institutions. This cohesive strategy and consolidated funding stream, combined with dual enrollment incentives in the state's accountability formula (discussed in Principle 2) will maintain a strong emphasis on dual enrollment and allow state education leaders and policymakers to more effectively measure its effectiveness.

Louisiana has also taken recent steps to increase student access to Advanced Placement courses through state education policy. Four percent of Louisiana students passed at least one Advanced Placement exam in 2009, putting the state ahead of only Mississippi. LDOE has set a goal to reach the national average — 16.9 percent — by 2017. In 2011-2012, 33 of Louisiana's 70 school districts offered at least one Advanced Placement course. Beginning in 2012-2013, each LEA was required to offer students access to at least one Advanced Placement course. The LDOE worked with local school districts and external course providers greatly expand Advanced Placement course offerings over the next two years. As a result, for all Louisiana high school students in grades 9-12, the number of college credits earned has increased by more than 1,000 from 2012 to 2013 – the greatest individual increase in state history. The number of students earning a qualifying score of 3 or higher rose from 4,112 in 2012 to 5,144 in 2013, representing a 25 percent increase. Likewise, the number of students taking an AP exam increased from 6,645 in 2012 to 10,553 in 2013, an increase of nearly 4,000 students or 59 percent. The number of AP exams those students took also increased, from 9,644 in 2012 to 15,070 in 2013, for an increase of 56 percent. Enrollment in AP courses has also grown. In, 2013, Louisiana students took approximately 6,000 more AP courses. There were 23,435 students enrolled in AP courses in 2013, compared to 17,496 in 2012, representing a 33 percent increase. With more students than ever before participating in AP, Louisiana is on track to being a leader in expanding college access to all students.

Further, the number of seniors scoring a qualifying score of 3 or higher increased from 1,531 in 2012 to 1,911 in 2013, representing a 25 percent increase, ranking Louisiana first in the nation. Nationwide, the increase from 2012 to 2013 was six percent. Additionally, Louisiana ranks third in the nation for the increase in the percentage of graduates taking an AP exam during high school, increasing 4.1 percentage points from 11.1 to 15.2 percent, representing an increase of more than 1,500 high school seniors taking an AP exam from 3,931 in 2012 to 5,516 in 2013. Likewise, the number of AP exams taken by high school seniors increased by 42 percent from 2012 to 2013, ranking Louisiana first in the nation.

In fall 2013, Louisiana announced Jump Start, the state's new program for school districts, colleges, and businesses and industry to collaborate in providing career-focused courses and workplace experiences to high school students, allowing them to continue their education after high school and earn industry-based certifications in fields most likely to lead to high-wage jobs. 100 percent of Louisiana school districts are participating in this new program, preparing to offer these new experiences to their high school students. More information on the Jump Start career education program can be accessed here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/jump-start-career-education.

While in high school, participating students will be provided more time in the school day and school year to achieve industry certificates or college credentials in addition to their high school diplomas. These credentials will qualify graduates to continue their studies after high school or to launch a career upon graduating. Jump Start credentials will be state-approved and valued by Louisiana employers.

To support this goal, Jump Start includes several key shifts in state policy. For example, Jump Start seeks to end the long-standing stigma against career education by ceasing to label students as either "career-bound" or "college-bound," and restricting career education to only students who are academically behind. To ensure the students have access to industry-certified instructors and state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, Jump Start's collaboration of business and industry, higher education and school systems will

facilitate public-private partnerships rather than asking cash-strapped high schools to go it alone. Jump Start will also recognize achievements in career education through significant accountability rewards for schools and school districts (see Principle 2 for more information).

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	**Option B**	**Option C**
☒ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)	☐ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

For over a decade, Louisiana has been a national leader in school and district accountability. State leaders formulated a rigorous, motivating system to drive improvement in schools across Louisiana. This nationally-recognized accountability system unquestionably contributed to the unprecedented gains made over the last ten years, particularly the progress Louisiana made in closing the achievement gaps between races and socio-economic classes. However, when No Child Left Behind was passed, instead of complementing Louisiana's state-developed system, it added another layer of bureaucracy. This resulted in more reporting requirements, more red tape, inadequate interventions, and confusion among Louisiana educators and parents. Additionally, to successfully implement Common Core standards and rigorous educator evaluations, Louisiana's current system must do more to reflect, expect, and support higher standards for students and educators (See Principles 1 and 3 for more information).

Through this flexibility waiver, Louisiana is proposing the elimination of those federal barriers so that Louisiana's model – which has proven to be the more effective driver of increased student achievement – may serve as the single statewide school accountability system moving forward. As this shift occurs, Louisiana is committed to refining and further enhancing its own system in order to more effectively reward progress against nationally-normed standards, incentivize gap closures, support teacher effectiveness through clear and rigorous expectations, and report data in easily understandable terms that are focused on Louisiana's primary goal – ensuring that all Louisiana students graduate college- and career-ready.

History and Context

In 1997, the Louisiana Legislature passed a framework to guide the creation of a statewide school and district accountability system and charged the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) with the responsibility of fully developing and implementing a strong statewide system of accountability for public education. The Louisiana School and District Accountability System that resulted was based on the concept of continuous growth. It aimed to encourage and support schools' improvement by:

(1) clearly establishing the state's goals for schools and students;
(2) easily communicating school performance to schools and the public;
(3) recognizing schools growth in student achievement; and

(4) focusing attention and resources on schools in need of improvement.

The accountability system, initially launched in 1999, focused specifically on improving student achievement, attendance, and dropout rates, as depicted in the chart below. Each year, schools earned a School Performance Score and were required to meet growth targets. Growth targets represented the amount of progress a school would have to make every year in order to reach the state's SPS goal of 120, or 100% proficiency, by the year 2014. As required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the state, as well as each district and school, were required to show Adequate Yearly Progress in student outcomes in English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for ESEA-created subgroups of students, including racial/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students who were eligible for free or reduced price meals (additional information on the LDOE's State and District Accountability System can be found on LDOE's website, http://www.doe.state.la.us/).

School Grade Level	Achievement	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index
K-5	90%	10%	--
K-8, 7-8	90%	5%	5% (Dropout only)
9-12	70%	--	30%

Table 2.A. Pre-Waiver Accountability Formula Structure

In the first year of the state-led accountability system, schools that received School Performance Scores lower than 30 were deemed to be Academically Unacceptable. In 2003, Louisiana increased the minimum standard to 45, and it was raised once again to 60 in 2005. In 2011, schools that had a School Performance Score below 65 earned the Academically Unacceptable School label, and in the 2011-12 school year, the bar was raised so that schools were required to earn a 75 or above to be considered Academically Acceptable. The historic strengthening of minimum standards in Louisiana reveals the state's commitment to improving the quality of schools, while also maintaining the capacity of the LDOE and local districts to support failing schools.

Schools that receive an Academically Unacceptable School label face a variety of interventions and supports, depending upon the number of years that the school has been labeled Academically Unacceptable. Each consecutive year a school is labeled as an Academically Unacceptable School (AUS), it moves to a higher level, ranging from AUS 1 to AUS 6+, and for each additional year that the school remains in an Academically Unacceptable Schools category, it is required to implement additional strategies aimed at improving academic achievement. Although federal NCLB regulations required reporting, limited public school choice, and Supplemental Education Services (SES), Louisiana's system has been far more aggressive in that it includes the complete takeover of persistently failing schools and their placement in a state-run Recovery School District.

What is the Recovery School District?

In 2003, Louisiana was the first state in the nation to create a separate statewide entity dedicated solely to taking over and turning around schools that consistently performed at unacceptable levels. The Recovery School District (RSD) was created by the Louisiana Legislature in 2003 with the passage of Revised Statute 17:1990 (See http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=211794) and R.S. 17:10.5 (See

http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=206926)**.** These statutes give the state, through the RSD, power to remove from local control any school that has remained in an Academically Unacceptable School status for four consecutive years and has not been corrected during that period by local authorities.

The RSD uses a unique governance model designed to support autonomy, flexibility, and innovation. When the state brings a school into the RSD, it removes full governance authority over the school from the district and assumes full per-pupil funding levels for the school as well. This direct authority has enabled the LDOE to intervene in more than 5 percent of the state's public schools, including more than 90 percent of the schools in New Orleans.

Once in the RSD, the state retains jurisdiction over the school for at least five years, at which point it may make a recommendation to return the school to the LEA with stipulations and conditions, continue operations under the RSD, or close the school and reassign students to higher-performing schools. Schools may choose to return to their former LEA by meeting certain performance criteria, including demonstrating that the school will be able to maintain and improve student success once out of the Recovery School District. BESE must approve the decision to return any school to its former LEA. Since the decision about the funding and return of the school to the LEA rests completely in the state's hands, the state gains enormous leverage to intervene in LEAs by demanding that they change in ways that make them suitable to sustain growth after schools have been turned around. If LEAs are unwilling to make such changes, the state is fully empowered to retain the school in the Recovery School District, as well as its per-pupil revenues. Finally, the Recovery School District's presence incentivizes LEAs with low-performing schools to pursue aggressive intervention strategies to prevent state takeover.

Louisiana's exercise of its takeover authority began in 2004, when RSD assumed control of five schools in Orleans Parish (New Orleans). After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, an additional 107 schools were transferred to the RSD. This aggressive injection of bold action and innovation led to the creation of an environment in New Orleans that provides the greatest amount of choice of any urban district in America, where families may choose from 59 RSD charter schools. All schools in the RSD retain, promote, and dismiss staff based on performance, implement longer school days and/or a longer school year, and use data-driven instructional models that provide real-time feedback on student learning.

In 2008, the RSD expanded outside of New Orleans through the takeover of five schools in the Baton Rouge area. In 2009, the RSD added an additional four schools in Baton Rouge and two schools in Shreveport. For the 14-15 school year, the RSD will oversee six RSD charter schools in Baton Rouge and one RSD school in Shreveport. The RSD, in collaboration with the LDOE, has also worked with several – mostly rural – LEAs pursuant to detailed agreements that allow the LEAs to continue to operate the schools upon the condition that such districts work collaboratively with the RSD regarding critical aspects of school accountability and/or school operations.

As an example of the power of this turnaround mechanism, from 2008 to 2011, schools in the RSD demonstrated academic growth rates that more than tripled the state's average academic growth during the same period. (See chart below for more detailed performance over the past three years.)

2008-2011 Performance of RSD New Orleans Public Schools (Direct-Run and Charter)							
Assessment and Grade Level	School Type	2008 ELA: *Basic* and Above	2011 ELA: *Basic* and Above	'08 to '11 Growth	2008 Math: *Basic* and Above	2011 Math: *Basic* and Above	'08 to '11 Growth
LEAP: 4th Grade	RSD Charter	51%	62%	11%	47%	60%	13%
	RSD Direct-Run	36%	54%	18%	34%	44%	10%
	RNO	44%	59%	15%	41%	56%	15%
	Louisiana Average	71%	76%	5%	69%	73%	4%
LEAP: 8th Grade	RSD Charter	42%	60%	18%	37%	59%	22%
	RSD Direct-Run	19%	34%	15%	23%	36%	13%
	RNO	28%	52%	24%	29%	52%	23%
	Louisiana Average	60%	68%	8%	60%	63%	3%
GEE: 10th Grade	RSD Charter	29%	54%	25%	36%	69%	33%
	RSD Direct-Run	12%	23%	11%	17%	33%	16%
	RNO	16%	39%	23%	21%	51%	30%
	Louisiana Average	58%	60%	2%	65%	69%	4%

Table 2.B. Performance of RSD New Orleans Public Schools (2008-2011)
NOTE: "RNO" represents all RSD-New Orleans schools combined.

Equally impressive, the RSD's passage rates for all statewide assessments were greater than all of the four largest districts within the state. From 2007 to 2011, the RSD in New Orleans more than doubled the percentage of all tests passed by its students—from 23 percent to 48 percent, a total of 25 points—while the state grew six points over the same period of time. The percentage of RSD New Orleans students passing all tests increased to 51% and 57% in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

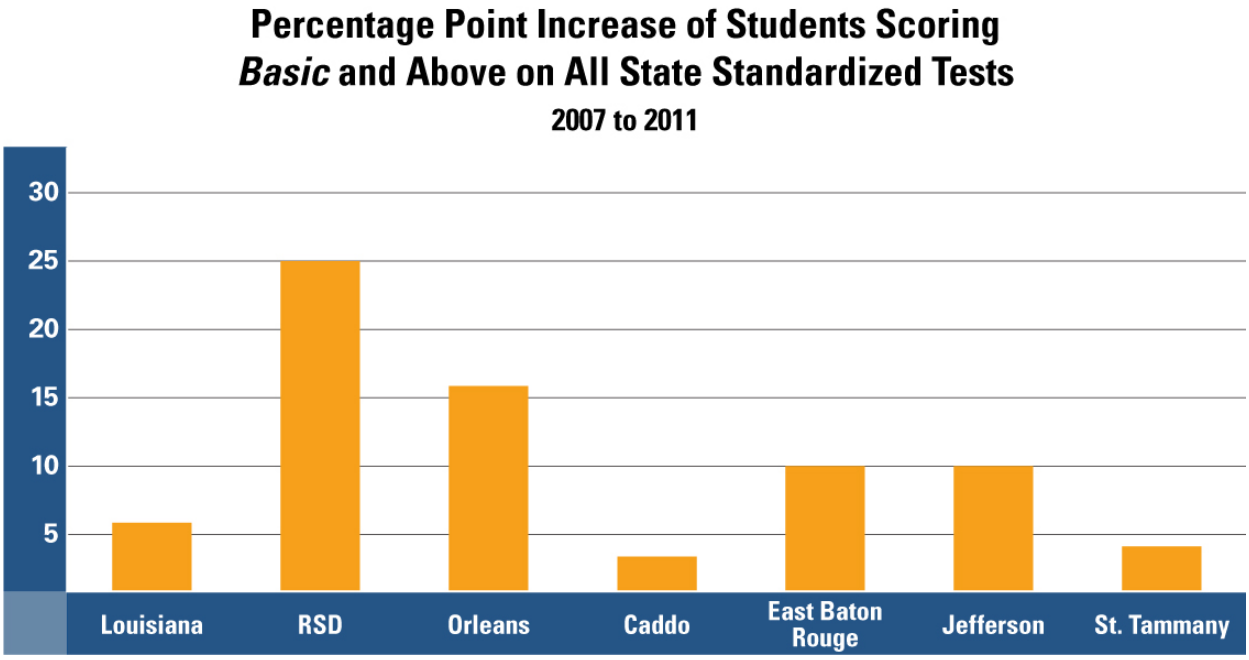


Figure 2.A. Percentage Point Increase of Students Scoring Basic and Above on All State Standardized Tests (2007 to 2011)

Statewide Performance Under the Pre-Waiver System

Louisiana's accountability system and the presence of the RSD have undoubtedly been the primary motivator of steady school improvement for both subgroups and entire student populations, as evidenced by the average state School Performance Score increasing 23 points over 12 years of statewide school and district accountability, representing an increase in proficiency rates from 50 percent to 68 percent in ELA and from 40 percent to 60 percent in Mathematics (See graphs below).

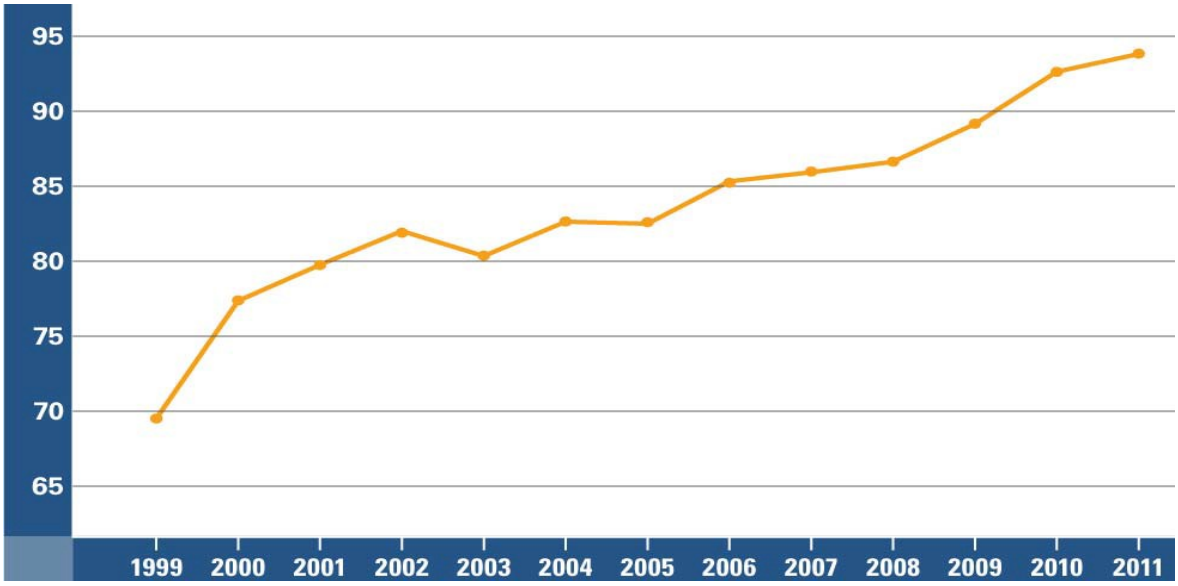


Figure 2.B. Statewide Performance Scores (1999 – 2011)

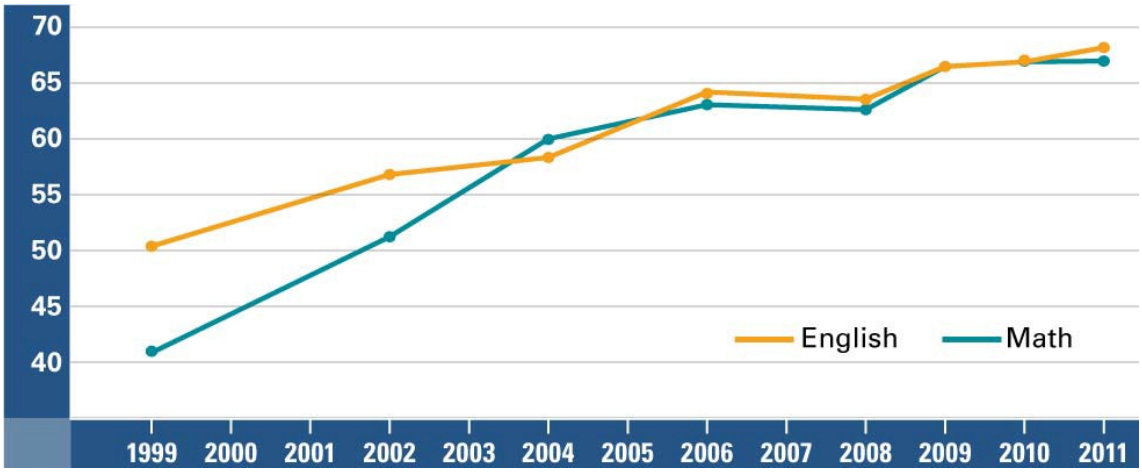


Figure 2.C. Percent of Students Proficient Statewide (1999 – 2011)

Still, as mentioned in Principle 1, more than 200,000 Louisiana children remained below proficient levels. This realization necessitated further improvements to achieve faster, more dramatic results for those children and generations to come.

Theory of Action

As the state reflected on its progress and continued driving toward college-and career-readiness for all

Louisiana students, it was important to re-evaluate the next phase of Louisiana's accountability system, including supports and interventions for struggling schools and incentives for growth. Louisiana's current system provided a strong starting point for school accountability but the time for additional enhancements and refinements had arrived.

Despite Louisiana's initial focus on proficiency and strong accountability, the state's education community has continually developed and refined the current system to reflect various priorities and to award maximum School Performance Score points to LEAs and schools. These efforts represented a genuine commitment to drive good behavior – focusing schools and educators on graduation, rigorous diploma pathways, and student achievement in college-preparatory work. However, the inclusion of multiple measures became a strategy on which Louisiana over-relied. As a result, the reported School Performance Score became less clear for parents, community members, and other stakeholders. The calculations became confusing and navigating the system became a critical skill that consumed significant time from Louisiana's LEAs. This led to much frustration by those outside the education community, as well as some distrust of the complex formulas that were used in School Performance Score calculations. This complicated system needed to be addressed to ensure Louisiana's accountability system remains effective in improving student achievement and relied upon as a key strategy for reform.

A strong, effective accountability system must be easy to understand, emphasize the outcomes most important for student success (i.e., proficiency and graduation), and stimulate performance. Therefore, if Louisiana simplifies and strengthens the accountability formula, reports on other important measures of school performance, and implements stronger, choice-centered interventions, then the accountability system will better reflect student outcomes, have greater clarity for educators, parents, and communities, and continue to drive student achievement statewide. The LDOE is achieving these aims by: (1) maintaining rigorous school and district letter grades, (2) focusing the state accountability system on rigorous student work indicative of college and career readiness, (3) simplifying the calculation of School and District Performance Scores, and (4) enhancing the public reporting of essential metrics, such as subgroup performance, to drive schools' plans to improve overall and to address the needs of their most struggling students.

While Louisiana is strengthening its nationally-acclaimed accountability system, it must also enable LEAs to focus more attention and resources on improving their struggling schools. State leaders must get rid of both federal- and state-created red tape for Louisiana educators. As explained in Section 2F, the LDOE is fully committed to this end.

As Louisiana continues its efforts to peel away the ineffective elements and unleash the most effective components of the state-developed system, it is important to note that Louisiana's philosophy for distinguishing effective and ineffective components of accountability is rooted in its beliefs about the roles of different levels of government, with the U.S. Department of Education, Louisiana Department of Education and State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, local school governing authorities playing very different, but critical roles. The U.S. Department of Education, as directed by Congress, sets rigorous expectations that states will offer equitable, high-quality educational opportunities for all students. State education officials, in response to federal and state law, set expectations for schools, motivate high performance, publicly report on school performance, and hold schools accountable for student outcomes. Local school governing authorities ultimately carry the responsibility for achieving student growth through personnel, curriculum, and targeted interventions. These clearly-defined roles will directly inform the performance measures used, as well as the supports and interventions provided.

Creating Rigorous School and District Letter Grades

In an attempt to clarify the meaning of School Performance Scores and to more effectively communicate with stakeholders, the Louisiana Legislature enacted a letter grade policy that was implemented for the first time at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year. Schools are now assigned letter grades based on their School Performance Scores.

Letter Grade*	Baseline SPS Range
A	120.0-200.0
B	105.0-119.9
C	90.0-104.9
D	65.0-89.9 (in 2011) 75.0-89.9 (in 2012 and beyond)
F	0-64.9 (in 2011) 0-74.9 (in 2012 and beyond)

Table 2.C. Pre-Waiver Letter Grade Scale

The implementation of the letter grade system assures clarity for various stakeholders and creates a sense of urgency in addressing schools that are failing. In the 2010-2011 school year, 44% of Louisiana schools scored D's and F's – an alarming and informative fact that further served to create a sense of urgency in the education community.

After Letter Grades, What is the Next Critical Step?

Though school and district letter grades added clarity to a somewhat confusing system, thereby enhancing the system's power to motivate change, they were only a first step. As Louisiana seeks to strengthen the most effective components of its accountability system, two primary, additional improvements were needed. First, Louisiana needed to address the diversity of indicators that detract attention from proficiency and result in more complex school and district performance score calculations. Second, Louisiana needed to return to a focus on proficiency for all students in all schools and districts, with strong school- and district-wide supports, interventions, and incentives that have been shown to be effective in rapidly raising student achievement – particularly for subgroups. Louisiana implemented the refined system (described below) starting in the 2012-2013 school year.

Simplifying School and District Performance Scores

Louisiana's pre-waiver accountability system represented a strong set of expectations for schools and districts that used a number of mechanisms to promote student achievement. In order to make Louisiana's accountability system even stronger, the LDOE sought to focus and to simplify the current accountability system by removing all but the core measures from the formula – assessment performance and graduation indicators. This shift in the formula prompts schools and districts to operate with a laser-like focus on college- and career-readiness, strategizing on how to prepare each student to graduate having demonstrated proficiency in all core subjects. Additionally, this simplification allows the underpinnings and results of the accountability system to be more clearly communicated using the state's rigorous letter grade system, as stakeholders have a more clear understanding of the calculations through which the letter grades are assigned. Although some supplemental metrics are not included in the calculation of School and District Performance Scores, the state proposed to publicly report other metrics that provide an indication of school and district performance (See Reporting Important Metrics for more information).

Standardized Assessments

(1) Content Assessments

Louisiana will continue to employ a testing system to assess student content knowledge across the four core content areas – ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science, with as a governing assessments replacing ELA and Mathematics assessments beginning with the 2014-2015 school year (please refer to Principle 1 for more information on assessments and the transition to PARCC).

Assessment	Grade	Subjects
*i*LEAP	3, 5, 6, 7	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
LEAP	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
End-of-Course Tests	9, 10, 11, 12	English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and American History
LAA 1	3, 5, 6, 7, 10	ELA, Mathematics
	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Science
	11	Science
LAA 2	5, 6, 7, 10	ELA, Mathematics
	4, 8	ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science
	11	Social Studies, Science

Table 2.D. Content Assessments Prior to 14-15

Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, beginning in 3rd grade, students took the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP) or the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), a series of statewide criterion-referenced standardized assessments. These assessments continued through the 8th grade. In high school, End-of-Course Tests are offered in English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and American History, and students are required to pass at least three End-of-Course Tests – in English, Math, and Biology or American History – in order to graduate. Additionally, alternate assessments are offered in a variety of grades and subjects for students meeting specific, rigorous eligibility criteria.

(2) Nationally-based Assessments

In 2009-2010, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted a statewide College- and Career-Readiness Policy within which it committed the state to administer the ACT to all 11th graders in Louisiana. According to BESE's plan, statewide adoption of the ACT provides "students, teachers, parents, and the education community a picture of overall student achievement in two areas – competency over subject matter presented and readiness for college and career." (See Appendix 2.B) Additionally, BESE supported the continuance of the PLAN and the EXPLORE – two ACT-created assessments that serve as indicators of college- and career-readiness prior to the ACT.

Though statewide adoption of the ACT was delayed due to financial difficulties, because of Louisiana's commitment to college- and career-readiness, Louisiana began administering a statewide ACT assessment for Louisiana's 11th grade students in 2012-2013. The ACT is a strong indicator of readiness for Common Core State Standards because ACT assessments are substantially aligned with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, mathematics, and reading. Therefore, the ACT allows Louisiana to begin assessing its students against these more rigorous standards immediately, rather than waiting for the 2014-2015 implementation of PARCC assessments. (For more information on the

alignment between ACT and CCSS, see http://www.act.org/commoncore/pdf/CommonCoreAlignment.pdf; for more information on the value of ACT assessment, see http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/coil_benefits.pdf.)

This shift was a critical step to support Louisiana's transition to standards and curricula aligned with the Common Core Standards (as described in Principle 1), but it is also important to the continued refinement and rollout of Louisiana's new educator evaluation system – Compass (as described in Principle 3). The expectations for student work will dramatically increase with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which equates to an increase in expectations for educator and school performance. Thus, it is imperative that Louisiana provide its educators with useful data and feedback immediately and the ACT assessments were Louisiana's best opportunity to do that during the 2012-2013 school year.

With statewide implementation of the ACT starting in 2012-2013, assessment results were used to inform School Performance Scores immediately (See Refining the High School Accountability Formula (i.e., schools with grade 12) for additional information). Additionally, the LDOE funds the EXPLORE assessment in 8th and 9th grade and the PLAN assessment in 10th grade. This additional EXPLORE assessment provides a critical indicator to high school educational leaders.

Simplifying Louisiana's Accountability Scale

Initially, the Louisiana system is was set against a scale of 200 with a score of 120 roughly equating with 100 percent proficiency for students. As stated frequently by stakeholders, this scale was not intuitive to parents or educators and complicated the accountability system. Far too many parents incorrectly assumed throughout the years that their child's school was performing satisfactorily based on a 100- point scale, not realizing that the school's performance score was in fact based on a 200-point scale.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved policy revisions in June 2012 to re-scale the accountability formulas so that a score of 100 approximates 100 percent proficiency for all students and a score of 150 represents all students demonstrating advance performance (See Appendix 2.B). A School Performance Score of 100 serves as the lowest score for an "A," thereby reinforcing Louisiana's commitment to statewide proficiency through communication that parents and educators can easily understand – a change welcomed by stakeholders throughout the comment period.

Louisiana extended the scale past 100 percent proficiency (i.e., 100 points) in order to incentivize and recognize higher levels of achievement (i.e., Above Proficient scores). For schools and districts outperforming expectations, it is critical that Louisiana incentivize, recognize, and reward above-par performance. As demonstrated in the formula proposals below, proficiency aligns with a score of 100, and performance above proficiency yields incentive points (i.e., 101-150) for schools, and ultimately, districts.

Pre-Waiver System

Letter Grade*	Baseline SPS Range
A	120.0-200.0
B	105.0-119.9
C	90.0-104.9
D	65.0-89.9 (in 2011) 75.0-89.9 (in 2012 and beyond)
F	0-64.9 (in 2011) 0-74.9 (in 2012 and beyond)

Table 2.E. Initial Letter Grade Scale

Current System

Letter Grade	Baseline SPS Range
A	100 – 150
B	85 – 99.9
C	70 – 84.9
D	50 – 69.9
F	0 – 49.9

Table 2.F. Current Letter Grade Scale

NOTE: In order to incentivize whole school turnaround efforts across the state, the State Board of Education approved a policy to allow the awarding of a "T" letter grade only when a turnaround operator takes over an entire school that was labeled "F" in the previous school year, including all previous grade levels and all former students of the "F" school. In such an instance, the school's grade shall be reported as "T" for the first two years of operation under the new governance model. However, all metrics of the School Performance Report (e.g., SPS, subgroup performance) will still be reported for use by parents, districts, and the LDOE in its efforts to support low performing schools.

Refining the K-8 Accountability Formula

For the status-based measurements, the LDOE proposed an elementary and middle school accountability formula that relies primarily on the proficiency of students as measured by the iLEAP and LEAP as approved by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in June 2012 (see Appendix 2.B). Whereas previously assessment results were used for 90 percent of School Performance Scores, with as much as 10 percent devoted to student attendance, the new system bases scores on student performance and dropout/credit accumulation rates.

For every child scoring proficient or higher on each subject-specific assessment, schools earn School Performance Score points. The average of these points at the school level across all tested grade levels and all subjects determines the School's Performance Score and letter grade. For schools with an 8th grade, five percent of the calculation is based on the dropout/credit accumulation rate indicator – as was repeatedly requested throughout the comment period.

Initial System

School Grade Level	Achievement	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index	Bonus
K-5	90%	10%	--	--
K-8, 7-8	90%	5%	5% (Dropout Index)	--

Table 2.G. Pre-Waiver K-8 Formula

Current System

School Grade Level	Achievement (as measured by *i*LEAP and LEAP)	Attendance Index	Graduation/Dropout Index	Progress Points
K-5	100%	--	--	Yes
K-8, 7-8	95%	--	5% (Dropout/Credit Accumulation Index)	Yes

Table 2.H. Current K-8 Formula

NOTE: In the old and the new system, 100% participation is required; schools receive a zero for non-participants. Also, because ELA and Mathematics are core competencies, student performance in these subjects will receive double the weight given to Social Studies and Science performance.

Is Test Participation Considered Separately from the Index Score? Might This Lead to Unintended Consequences, Such as Schools Not Testing Certain Students?

Because it is critically important that all students participate in testing for accountability, the Louisiana accountability system will continue two policies that have assured high participation rates in previous years. First, the participation rate test for subgroups will continue to be calculated and reported as it has been. For any school to make AYP, each subgroup within the school meeting the minimum "n" requirement must have the 95% required participation rate and meet the annual measurable objective, or "safe harbor." Second, a zero is assigned to the assessment index of a school for every test and subject for students who do not test. The zeros are included in the calculation of the school performance score and directly, negatively affect the school's letter grade.

Since the inception of Louisiana's accountability system, it has been possible for schools and districts to earn points for students performing below proficiency. While initially intended to motivate very low-performing schools to improve as the state's accountability system was being phased in, this was misaligned with Louisiana's state goals and sent a mixed message to students, parents, communities, and educators. **Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, Louisiana no longer awards points for performance below proficiency.** Schools earn 100 points for every student scoring proficient and, to incentivize progression above and beyond proficiency, schools earn additional points for students scoring in the "Above Proficient" category (i.e., 125 for Mastery and 150 for Advanced).

Performance Level	Points Awarded
Advanced	150
Mastery	125
Basic (Proficient)	100
Approaching Basic	0
Unsatisfactory	0

Table 2.I. LEAP and iLEAP Performance Scale

For additional information regarding the inclusion of growth-based metrics, please refer to the section on Subgroup calculations.

Why Use "Basic" Rather Than "Mastery" as Demonstration of Student Proficiency?

The state has definitions that are consistent with basic, proficient, and advanced for assessments. The Louisiana labels differ slightly from those detailed in NCLB, although the definitions are similar. Current achievement levels are: Advanced, Mastery (Exceeding the Standard), Basic (Meeting the Standard), Approaching Basic (Approaching the Standard), and Unsatisfactory. These standards have been shown to be high; for example, equipercentile equating of the standards has shown that Louisiana's "Basic" is somewhat more rigorous than NAEP's "Basic." In addition, representatives from Louisiana's business community and higher education have validated the use of "Basic" as the state's proficiency goal.

NOTE: As Louisiana transitions to higher standards and better assessments, Louisiana will raise the expectation from "Basic" to "Mastery" gradually so that, in order to earn an "A" letter grade in 2025, the average student performance needs to be "Mastery" or higher. For more information on Louisiana's transition policies, see http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards/louisiana's-transition-to-higher-expectations.

Refining the High School Accountability Formula (i.e., schools with grade 12)

The high school formula was dramatically simplified in order to focus schools and school leaders on measures that matter most – assessments of college- and career-readiness and high school graduation. Specifically, School Performance Score calculations for high schools consist of the schools cohort graduation rate, performance on End-of-Course Tests, performance on the ACT, and a simplified, more rigorous Graduation Index. The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the revisions to the high school accountability formula described below in June 2012 (see Appendix 2.B).

The formula no longer includes illogically-weighted indices that disguise the measures with which Louisiana is most concerned. Instead, the formula is a simple combination of the measures mentioned earlier. Cohort graduation rate is critical to the formula because it reflects an honest assessment of how many students are graduating and on what timeline. As suggested by stakeholders, the simplified graduation index complements the cohort graduation rate by assessing the rigor of diplomas awarded and outcomes achieved. Similarly, the ACT composite score serves as a nationally- normed assessment of the rigor behind a student's diploma. Finally, as requested by stakeholders, including the End-of-Course tests maintains content assessment (as compared to skills assessment, measured by ACT) in Louisiana's accountability system and ensures alignment with student graduation requirements (See Appendix 2.C) and Compass (See Principle 3 for more information on Compass).

Pre-Waiver System

School Grade Level	Achievement	Graduation/Dropout Index	Cohort Graduation Rate	Progress
9-12	70%	30% (Graduation Index)*	--	--

Table 2.J. Pre-Waiver High School Formula

* *The graduation index is a calculation based on the progress of students over four years in high school. Points are assigned based on the type of outcome earned by students and averaged across the graduating class The current index includes academic endorsements, technical endorsements, state-funded college scholarships, IBCs, dual enrollment, articulated credit, diplomas, the high school equivalency tests, skills certificates, certificates of achievement, attendees, and dropouts.*

School Grade Level	Achievement (as measured by *i*LEAP and LEAP)	Graduation Index	Cohort Graduation Rate	Progress Points
9-12	25% - EOC 25% - ACT	25%	25%	Yes

Table 2.K. Current High School Formula

High School Formula Component #1 – EOCs (25%)

As mentioned previously, End-of-Course Tests (EOCs) are offered in English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and American History. EOC performance informs both educator evaluation (See Principle 3) and student graduation requirements (See Appendix 2.C). Like Louisiana's LEAP and iLEAP assessments for grades 3-8, Louisiana will continue to administer its state-created high school assessments or EOCs during the 3-8 transition to PARCC. As noted in Principle 1, the EOCs were aligned fully with the new state standards in 13-14.

In order to support transition to Common Core – and higher standards for educators and students – Louisiana raised the performance bar on these important assessments. Unless a student scores "Good" (i.e., proficient) on the EOCs, no SPS points will be awarded. This is a significant improvement over the current system, which awarded points for below proficient scores.

Proficiency (EOC)	SPS Points
Excellent	150
Good	100
Needs Improvement, Fair	0

Table 2.L. EOC Performance Scale

High School Formula Component #2 – ACT (25%)

The chart below illustrates the ACT performance and participation rates of public school students in Louisiana over a three-year period.

Year	Total Graduates	Graduates with an ACT Score	Percent of Graduates with an ACT Score
2008-2009	36233	25290	69.8%
2009-2010	36943	26369	71.4%
2010-2011	35445	26583	75%

Table 2.M. ACT Performance and Participation (2008-2011)

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
English	19.7	19.4	19.6
Math	19.2	19.1	19.3
Reading	19.6	19.6	19.7
Science	19.7	19.9	19.8
Composite	19.7	19.6	19.7

Table 2.N. ACT Composite and Subtest State Averages (public schools only)

Evidence indicates that students' ACT performance in Louisiana is gradually increasing. However, as with all student achievement measures, ACT performance must continue to improve. To support such improvement, Louisiana's Board of Regents set standards for admission to tiered higher education institutions, including ACT composite score requirements for admission into institutions at each tier.

Institution Tier	Required ACT Composite
Flagship	25
Statewide	23
Regional	20
Standards for entry into university non-remedial coursework (English)	18

Table 2.O. Institution Tier Standards for Admission (ACT)

Therefore, when developing the proposed ACT SPS points scale (see below), Louisiana targeted a score of 18 as the lowest level of proficiency – based on the Louisiana Board of Regents standard for entry into university non-remedial coursework in English, the standard of entry for some Louisiana technical colleges, and the nationally-normed ACT College Readiness Benchmark for English Composition (See http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarks.pdf for more information). Using that benchmark, a composite ACT score of 18 equates to an SPS score of 100. From 100 to 150, the ACT scale is spread proportionally. For each ACT point increase, there is an SPS point increase of 2.8 points (18 = 100, 19 = 102.8, etc).

ACT Composite Range	Accountability Formula Points Awarded
0-17	0
18	100
19	102.8
20	105.6
21	108.4
22	111.2
23	114
24	116.8
25	119.6
26	122.4
27	125.2
28	128
29	130.8
30	133.6
31	136.4
32	139.2
33	142
34	144.8
35	147.6
36	150.4

Table 2.P. ACT Performance Scale

Why Should "18" Serve as the ACT Benchmark?

As mentioned above, the Board of Regents – the overseer of higher education in Louisiana – guides postsecondary educational policy. In 2003, the Statewide Council of Chief Academic Officers recommended that the Board of Regents adopt an ACT score of 18 as the non-remedial entry criteria for higher education institutions statewide. This recommendation was built off of ACT's national research which demonstrated that a score of 18 on the English component of the ACT ensures that students have a 50% chance of earning a B or better and a 75% chance of earning a C or better in related entry-level college courses.

As a follow up to the initial policy, starting in 2014, no student shall be admitted to an institution of higher education in Louisiana without an "18." Remediation will no longer be offered at four-year institutions. Therefore, it is as critical as ever that students are prepared to meet this benchmark so that they are meeting the entry requirements for various technical and community colleges throughout the state. Thus, the LDOE set a score of 18 as the minimal benchmark for awarding points within the K-12 accountability system.

While the state-funded administration of the ACT will occur in the 11th grade to maximize usefulness for students, we will count the highest score a student earns through the 12th grade to maximize the opportunity for growth and provide the most accurate representation of a school's impact on a student's achievement. Starting in the 2015-16 school year, student performance on the WorkKeys assessment will be included within the ACT index, when a student takes both assessments but achieves a higher

score on the WorkKeys than on the ACT. The state will produce a concordance table comparing ACT scores with WorkKeys scores at the conclusion of the 2014-15 school year and the table shall be used to award points in the 2015-16 school performance score results.

High School Formula Component #3 – Cohort Graduation Rate (25%)

The cohort graduation rate provides a clear indication of the students graduating from a high school within four years. Therefore, the cohort graduation rate – calculated in a manner consistent with federal requirements – will serve as a strong indicator of overall school performance.

In 2009, Louisiana set a state goal of 80% graduation by the end of the 2013-2014 school year through Act 257 of the 2009 Legislative Session. The points awarded are centered around the state goal of 80%.

Target Range	Relation to State Target	Formula for Index Points
If grad rate is between 81 and 100	Exceeds state target	(Grad Rate * 2) - 50
If grad rate is between 61 and 80	Meets or within range of target of 80%	(Grad Rate * 2) – 50
If grad rate is between 0 and 60	Below state target	(Grad Rate * 1.166667)

2.Q. Cohort Graduation

High School Formula Component #4 – Graduation Index (25%)

Louisiana's refined graduation index offers a comprehensible, rigorous assessment of ultimate student outcomes or the quality of the diploma received. The maximum points will only be awarded for validated outcomes that demonstrate a strong readiness for college or career. At the same time, the graduation index ensures that schools are incentivized to support all students with multiple, rigorous educational experiences aimed to preparing them for success beyond high school.

For the 2012-2013 school year only, Louisiana awarded 135 points for academic endorsements and 120 points for TOPS Opportunity (state funded scholarship) recipients. The students captured within the 2012-2013 graduation index were the seniors that graduated in the Spring of 2012. Louisiana schools worked diligently to achieve the high bar previously set and it was important to honor that performance.

To recognize the expansion of high-quality career pathways through Jump Start, the Department will gradually incorporate career measures into the graduation index. The Jump Start policy implementation timeline can be seen here (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/blueprint---appendix-6.pdf?sfvrsn=2), which includes the integration of career credentials into graduation index. The revised graduation index rewards schools for graduates exiting high school with progress toward their postsecondary secondary goals - regardless of whether the goal is college or career focused. A standard high school diploma will earn 100 points; however, passage of an AP or IB course (with test participation) or achievement of a basic statewide approved industry based credential earns 110 points. A high school diploma plus college credit or an advanced statewide industry based credential earns 150 points.

Student Result	SPS Points
Diploma plus: (a) AP score of 3 or higher, IB Score of 4 or higher, or CLEP score of 50 or higher	150

OR (b) Advanced statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 160 points.	
Diploma plus: (a) At least one passing course grade of the following type: AP**, college credit, dual enrollment, or IB** OR (b) Basic statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 115 points, if the passing course grade for (a) is earned in a TOPS core curriculum course. **Students must take the AP/IB exam and pass the course to earn 110 points.	110
Diploma (Four year graduate)	100
Diploma (Five year graduate) *Five-year graduates who earn an AP score of 3 or higher, an IB score of 4 or higher, or a CLEP score of 50 or higher will generate 140 points.	75
Diploma (Six year graduate)	50
HiSet	25
Dropout	0

Table 2.R. 2014-2015 Graduation Index Approved in 2014

In Addition to the Graduation Index and the Cohort Graduation Rate Calculation, How Will Louisiana Hold Schools and LEAs Accountable for Improving Graduation Rates of ESEA Subgroups?

The policy approved in the *Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook* for holding schools and LEAs accountable for improving the graduation rates of ESEA subgroups will remain in effect as outlined below.

Using a Graduation Rate in the Subgroup Component

A. As required by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Louisiana shall calculate a graduation rate based on a cohort of students beginning in 2007.

B. The definition of a cohort for this calculation is the same as that used in §603.

C. The additional academic indicator (AAI) calculation shall comply with High School Graduation Rate:
Non-Regulatory Guidance (December 22, 2008) published by the U. S. Department of Education.

1. For subgroup accountability purposes, Louisiana high schools shall use an increasing target for the additional academic indicator.

2. For subgroup accountability purposes, Louisiana's high school annual targets shall increase annually as shown in the following table.

Louisiana Annual Graduation Rate Targets						
2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
63.0%	64.3%	65.6%	66.9%	68.2%	69.5%	70.8%
2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
72.2%	73.5%	74.8%	76.1%	77.4%	78.7%	80.0%

3. For subgroup accountability purposes, each Louisiana school that enrolls students in ninth grade or higher and offers at least a regular diploma shall have annual targets calculated by the LDOE that begin with the school's 2007 graduation rate and increase by equal increments (rounded to 1 decimal place) to reach 80.0 percent in 2022.

4. The increment each school must improve each year to maintain its progress toward the 2022 goal is the "annual improvement step."

D. Confidence intervals shall not be applied to any graduation rate considerations beginning with the 2010 accountability decisions.

E. Determining if a school or subgroup within a school has made AYP as it relates specifically to graduation rate is accomplished by answering a series of Yes/No questions. When an answer is "yes," a school or subgroup has made AYP (related to graduation rate) and no further answers are required for the specific school or subgroup.

1. Does the cohort have fewer than 40 members?
2. Has the cohort met or exceeded an 80.0 percent graduation rate?
3. Has the cohort met or exceeded the state annual target?
4. Has the cohort met or exceeded the school annual target?
5. Has the cohort met or exceeded 110 percent of the annual improvement step (defined in Paragraph C.4).

F. If at the end of the series of 5 questions a "yes" is not provided, the cohort has failed AYP.

G. A school (or subgroup) that exceeds the state's target with its 2009 graduation rate shall use the state targets as school targets. New schools shall have targets based on their second year graduation rates and the number of years remaining until 2022.

H. In 2010 and 2011, the "whole school" graduation rate shall be evaluated using the steps delineated in this Section

J. In 2010 and 2011, any school or subgroup in the school that must use the safe harbor provisions and grad rate as an AAI will use the steps delineated in this Subsection.

K. In 2012 and future years, all subgroups and the whole school shall be evaluated using the steps delineated in this Subsection regardless of safe harbor considerations.

Calculating a Final Letter Grade

All of the revised and refined measures described above are rolled up in to the composite School Performance Scores and school and district Letter Grades, as described earlier in this section. Together, these measures reinforce the importance of college- and career-readiness for all students – as measured by rigorous measures of student achievement.

Again, the revised letter grade scale is:

Letter Grade	Baseline SPS Range
A	100 – 150
B	85 – 99.9
C	70 – 84.9
D	50 – 69.9
F	0 – 49.9

2.R. Current Letter Grade Scale

In the first letter grade publication, the letter grades were accompanied by "+" and "-" symbols for many schools. The "+" indicated that the school achieved its growth target (i.e., movement toward the state AMO; usually 10 points of SPS growth) and the "-" indicated that the school had declined. While well-intentioned, in practice, these symbols resulted in confusion and numerous complaints from stakeholders. For example, a "B" school scoring 106 (or bottom of the previous "B" range) could achieve its growth target and be labeled a B+ while a "B" school scoring 119 (or top of the previous "B" range) could decline .1 points overall and receive a B-. For reporting purposes, the higher performing school would appear lower than the lower performing school because the symbols were not used in the traditional way.

To alleviate this problem, Louisiana changed these symbols to descriptors. Schools achieving growth AMOs (as described in Section 2.B) will receive a label of "Top Gains." Schools that decline will receive a label of "Declining." These descriptors will continue to provide this critical assessment of progress year-to-year without confusing or misleading parents or educators.

Reporting Important Metrics

In order to effectively communicate schools' performance to administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, the LDOE released a School Performance Report for each school during the 2010-2011 academic year. This report included information about the school's letter grade, students' proficiency, the school's performance trajectory, and demographic information about the school (see Figure 2.D).

Louisiana Middle School **2010 - 2011**

Louisiana Parish School Performance Report

2010 - 2011 Performance	
Letter Grade	B
Baseline School Performance Score	115.4
Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level (Based on Number of Tests Administered)	83.3%

Student Enrollment (Enrollment Based on October 1, 2010)	
Total	1,035
Eligible for Federal Free/ Reduced Meal Program	38.0%
Minority	23.2%
Students with Disabilities	15.0%

UNDERSTANDING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grade	SPS Range
A	120.0 - 200.0
B	105.0 - 119.9
C	90.0 - 104.9
D	65.0 - 89.9
F	0.0 - 64.9

+ School met state-established growth target

- School performance score declined by 0.1 point or more

BASELINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORE

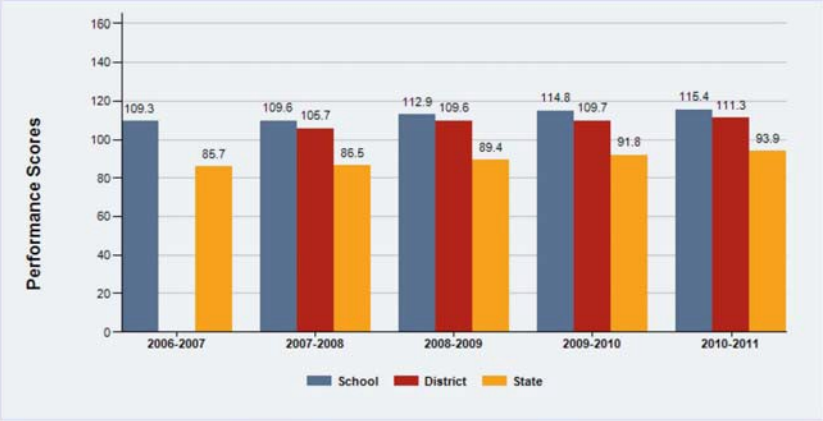


Figure 2.D. 2010-2011 School Performance Report

This school reporting method was well-received, and the LDOE continued the distribution of School Performance Reports. However, as suggested by the Louisiana chapter of the NAACP Louisiana State Conference, the Committee of Practitioners, and other stakeholders, adjustments were made to further enhance this valuable tool for the benefit of parents and communities.

Metrics given priority reporting include overall student proficiency (students performing at grade level), subgroup performance, the cohort graduation rate, and college- and career-readiness (participation and performance on ACT assessments, and AP participation and performance).

The purpose of including these additional metrics in School Report Cards is twofold. First, the inclusion of additional supplemental metrics, such as individual subgroup performance and college- and career-readiness provides important facets of school performance that are not included in the calculation of School Performance Scores. The inclusion of these metrics on a public report card ensures that the accountability system continues to drive improvements in performance and to motivate schools to address metrics beyond those included in the calculation of School Performance Scores. Second, the inclusion of additional metrics on the school report card provides schools, the public, and the LDOE with comprehensive data to inform more focused interventions and rewards. For example, schools that have high participation in AP courses but low performance know to shift their focus from enrolling students in AP courses to improving the quality of their AP instruction. This provides a more focused goal for intervention than a general intervention model. Report cards have continued to be improved over time based on feedback and can be accessed here (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/).

To ensure stability of results during Louisiana's transition to higher standards and better assessments, school and district letter grades will be aligned to the 2012-2013 distribution or better to ensure simplicity, consistency, and fairness between now and the new baseline year, 2015-2016. For example, if 10 percent of schools earned an "A" in 2012-2013, the top 10 percent of schools would earn an "A" in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015. While schools may improve on their own, this guarantees that there cannot be fewer A-rated schools or fewer A + B-rated schools in 2014, for example, than in 2013. Of the 1,335 schools statewide, only 21 (1.6 percent) had letter grades adjusted as a result of this policy for 2013-2014.

More information about all of Louisiana's transition policies can be found here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards/louisiana's-transition-to-higher-expectations

Closing Achievement Gaps – Subgroup Analyses and Interventions

Louisiana remains committed to the success of all students and a system that holds schools and school systems accountable for every child's performance. Of the ESEA-defined subgroup categories, Louisiana has a high proportion of public school students in each. In 2010-2011, approximately 52 percent of Louisiana students were racial/ethnic minorities, and 10.6 percent of students in Louisiana were reported as having a disability. The percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is 66.2 percent, making Louisiana the state with the sixth-highest level of poverty in the country. Given the relatively high number of students in Louisiana who belong to different subgroups, the state is firmly committed to closing the achievement gaps between students who are subgroup members and students who are not.

Population	Percentage of Population
White	47.8%
African-American	45.3%
Hispanic	3.7%
Asian	1.4%
American Indian/Alaskan	0.8%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
Multiracial	1.0%
ELL	1.9%
Free and Reduced Lunch	66.2%
Students with Disabilities	10.6%

Table 2.S. Subgroup Breakdown of Public School Students (2010 – 2011)

Louisiana's accountability system has been an important driver for analyzing and addressing subgroup performance. Since the state implemented its accountability system in 1999, the performance gap between African-American and White students on state assessments has narrowed by 11.6 percentage points in ELA and 11.2 percentage points in mathematics. At the same time, from 1999 to 2011, the gap between economically disadvantaged students and their peers also narrowed by 4.4 percentage points in ELA and 5.5 percentage points in mathematics.

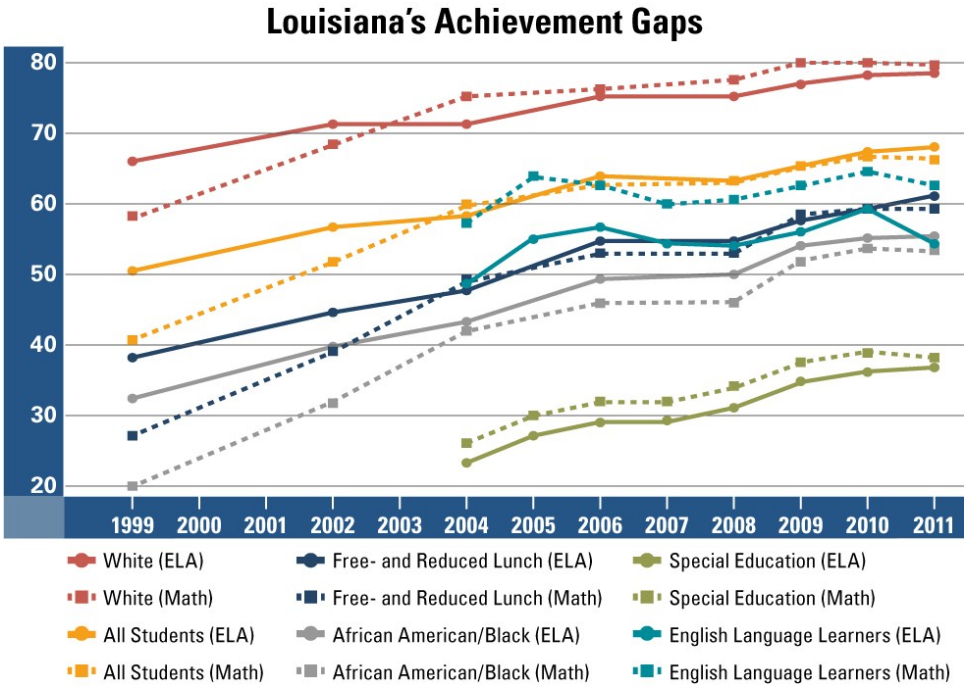


Figure 2.F. Louisiana's Achievement Gaps (1999 – 2011)

Moving Forward

In 2012, approximately one-third of Louisiana public school students were Below Proficient in ELA and Mathematics – an unacceptable figure. Therefore, Louisiana committed to aggressively pursuing closure of this critical gap through the creation of a new super subgroup to focus specifically on these non-proficient students. Though discussed in greater detail in the AMO section (See Section 2.B), the super subgroup focuses on the one-third of below proficient students and achievement of the AMO relates directly to receipt of Reward School status, including SPS progress points, public recognition, and possible monetary rewards.

Closing this achievement gap is particularly critical because, of these 200,000+ students, approximately one-third are also in traditional ESEA subgroups, with extremely high representation of specific non-traditional subgroups (i.e., African-American, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency). By creating the additional super subgroup as a compliment to the traditional subgroup performance assessments and reporting, Louisiana more effectively incentivizes achievement for its non-proficient students within those traditional subgroups. The chart below provides additional information on the overlap of these critical populations.

Subgroup	Subject	Number of Non-proficient	Total Tested	Percent of traditional subgroup represented in non-proficient subgroup
American Indian	ELA	769	2658	28.9
American Indian	MTH	757	2656	28.5
Asian	ELA	819	4928	16.6
Asian	MTH	640	4924	13.0
Black	ELA	66400	152934	43.4
Black	MTH	71733	152979	46.9
Hispanic	ELA	3996	11790	33.9
Hispanic	MTH	3614	11796	30.6
White	ELA	35259	165795	21.3
White	MTH	33533	165811	20.2
Pacific Islander	ELA	4	14	28.6
Pacific Islander	MTH	3	14	21.4
Two or More Races	ELA	704	2875	24.5
Two or More Races	MTH	714	2877	24.8
Free/Reduced Lunch	ELA	89030	228253	39.0
Free/Reduced Lunch	MTH	92031	228286	40.3
Limited English Prof	ELA	3336	5757	57.9
Limited English Prof	MTH	2775	5756	48.2
Students W Disabilities	ELA	23809	37637	63.3
Students W Disabilities	MTH	23159	37660	61.5
ALL	ELA	107952	340995	31.7
ALL	MTH	110995	341058	32.5

Table 2.T. Traditional Subgroups and Proposed Non-proficient Super Subgroup Overlap (2011-2012)

Again, higher performance for students within traditional ESEA subgroups continues to be emphasized, assessed, reported, and used to inform supports and interventions. However, the new super subgroup measure allows the LDOE to assess over 95% of its schools through the traditional subgroup performance, but also performance of schools' non-proficient students. This additional measure ensures greater accountability, recognition, and support for Louisiana's statewide effort to close achievement gaps for all subgroups of students, including traditional subgroups (e.g., ELL, students with disabilities) and Louisiana's expansive subgroup of non-proficient youngsters.

How Does Louisiana's Value-Added Model Support Traditional Subgroups and Non-Proficient Students?

Maintaining Louisiana's growth model[2] is critical as Louisiana works to protect the rights and opportunities of its underserved children. The model – focused on past student achievement – is used to ensure teachers continuously improve their effectiveness with all students, but particularly non- proficient students and subgroups statewide.

Key Facts about Louisiana's Value-Added Growth Model:

(1) **Louisiana's Accountability Formula Remains Focused on Student Performance Status**

The growth measure is not part of Louisiana's core accountability formula. Instead, the state's primary question remains – what is the status of student performance, equally considered among all students?

(2) **The Growth Model Protects Kids' Interests as Louisiana Continues to Raise the Bar**

As described throughout Principle 2, Louisiana's accountability proposal removes points for performance below proficiency (i.e., Approaching Basic on LEAP/iLEAP, Fair on EOCs). This is a dramatic, but critical shift for the state. The LDOE is committed to continuously raising the bar in order to support college- and career-readiness for all students.

However, because Louisiana is removing points for performance below proficiency, the state is left with the question: How will Louisiana protect the needs of kids who are below proficient right now? To protect low-performing students who need more attention, not less, Louisiana's accountability system must incentivize teachers and school leaders to provide additional supports and interventions. Louisiana's answer: A growth-based progress point system. Louisiana ensures that schools and educators maintain and increase supports for all low performing kids – including struggling students with disabilities or underperforming English language learners – by meaningfully rewarding schools and districts that dramatically exceed student achievement expectations. Louisiana's reward system calls out students with high levels of need and protects their interests by demanding that only those schools with more than 50% of non-proficient students exceeding expectations in grades 3 to 8 and at least 30% of non-proficient students exceeding expectations in grades 9 to 12 receive rewards and recognition.

Timeline for Implementing the New System

The proposed changes to Louisiana's already rigorous accountability system ensure that the system will be easily understood by all stakeholders, that it will retain the support, trust and confidence of Louisiana families and taxpayers, and that it will focus on student outcomes. Though the core of the simplified formula is already in place, the timeline for implementation actions is outlined below. All accountability

[2] The value-added model used for accountability purposes will not include student background characteristics.

policies described in this section have been approved by the state board.

Task	Date Completed
Board approval of revised accountability concepts and policies	Spring/Summer 2012
Board final approval of revised accountability policies	June 2012
Full implementation of formula, interventions, and rewards for all relevant schools (ie., priority, focus, reward)	2012-2013 academic year

Table 2.U. Implementation Timeline

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	Option B
☐ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☒ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: a. provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
ELA	58.3	61.3	63.9	62.3	63.5	66.8	67.4	68.3	68.5	71	69.5
Math	59.8	60.6	63.1	61.7	62.7	67.0	67.6	67.4	67.4	66.8	68.2
Science	54.5	56.6	53.9	56.5	55.6	60.0	61.0	61.9	63	64.4	65.1
Social Studies	57.8	57.6	59.6	60.7	59.6	63.5	65.3	64.6	64.1	65.7	66.2

Table 2.V. "All Students" Subgroup Proficiency on Most Recent State Assessment Administration

The chart above depicts a roll-up of assessment performance on LEAP, iLEAP, the Graduation Exit Examination (administered prior to the phase-in of End-of-Course Tests), End-of-Course tests (after phase out of GEE), and state alternate assessments LAA 1 and LAA 2.

As Louisiana moves forward with the enhanced accountability system, it will ensure college- and career- readiness for all students through its extensive scope of assessments (See Section 2.A for greater detail). Louisiana continued LEAP and iLEAP assessments for grades 3 – 8 in all subjects (i.e., ELA, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) through 2013-2014 in ELA and math, and have continued the administration of the assessment beyond 2013-2014 in science and social studies. The state also continues administration of End-of-Course Tests for key high school subjects, including English II and III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and American History and alternate assessments for students with disabilities. Additionally, Louisiana instituted the nationally-normed ACT assessment series statewide, including EXPLORE in 8th and 9th grade, PLAN in 10th grade, and ACT in 11th grade in the 2012-2013 school year. All of these assessments offer valuable information about student performance and college- or career-readiness.

To further support improvement among these assessments, Louisiana simplified how various subjects are incorporated into the formula. Rather than continuing to use half weights, single weights, and double weights across various subjects and grades, Louisiana uses an easily comprehensible and calculable system that reflects and reinforces the importance of Common Core Standards (See Principle 1 for more information). Mathematics and ELA assessments are weighted double for every grade level; science and social studies receive a single weight.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	**Option B**	**Option C**
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 201-2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

Overview

Under Louisiana's enhanced state accountability system, three AMOs are measured, reported and used to inform supports, interventions, and rewards in various ways. AMOs relate to the following:

(1) Growth Among Non-Proficient Students;
(2) Overall School Performance Improvement; and
(3) Overall Proficiency by 2014.

Supports, Interventions, and Rewards

AMO performance is used in multiple capacities. First, a school's AMO achievement is assessed and publicly reported using the School Performance Report. As discussed extensively in Section 2.A, this report provides easy-to-understand, easily comparable data for use by parents and educational leaders. Second, a school's AMO achievement is used to inform network supports for all schools and, in particular, Louisiana's Focus and Priority Schools. For example, LDOE network staff, superintendents, and school leaders analyze AMO performance, within the context of broader school and district outcome reviews, during needs assessment processes and use the analysis to directly inform targeted supports. Third, achievement of certain AMOs results in a school receiving the coveted Top Gains label, as well as the meaningful monetary rewards available to all such schools when available.

For those schools failing to achieve AMOs and meaningfully progress across the accountability metrics, multiple consequences or interventions are used. These include: (a) state takeover through the Recovery School District (See Section 2.A for more information); (b) school choice; and (c) network support.

Specific AMOs

(1) Newly-Created Super Subgroup-Focused AMOs

Louisiana is focusing its schools and districts on overall substantial progress, but also on progress specifically with non-proficient students (i.e., students performing below grade level). (See earlier "Subgroup" section in Principle 2 for additional information.)

As requested by stakeholders, Louisiana's nationally-acclaimed Value-Added Model, used for several years to measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and soon to be used to inform new educator evaluations, will project the expected academic growth for all super-subgroup non-proficient students in both ELA and mathematics for students in grades 3 to 8.[3] In high school, student growth is determined using the ACT predictive model on the ACT series of assessments (EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT) which are taken by all students, with the exception of those with significant cognitive disabilities.

The AMO for each school and district will be "Previously non-proficient super subgroup students will exceed expected growth in the current year."

Because the specific amount of growth targeted by each AMO is directly tied to the students within a certain super-subgroup, each school and district works against unique AMOs specific to their individual students.

[3] The value-added model used for accountability purposes will not include student background characteristics.

Calculation

For schools without a graduation cohort (e.g., grades 3 to 8), student value-added academic measures are summed for groups with at least ten members in the ELA or mathematics non-proficient groups. If more than 50% of students in the English language arts and/or the mathematics super subgroups exceed expected growth on LEAP and iLEAP assessments, then the school will achieve its super subgroup AMO. Points will be awarded based on the higher of percent or number of students exceeding expectations within the super subgroup ((.05 points for every number or percent of the super subgroup exceeding expectations, . 1 points for all students in the supersubgroup who scored at the lowest performance levels during the prior year (i.e. Unsatisfactory for LEAP/iLEAP) but who exceed expectations in the current year) and the schools overall performance score (i.e., SPS) will be updated to reflect the progress. After the super subgroup methodology is applied and relevant School Performance Points are awarded, the School Letter Grade will be calculated.

For schools with a graduation cohort (e.g., grades 9 to 12) and as requested by numerous superintendents, Louisiana utilizes the ACT series (EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT) to recognize progress with previously non-proficient students in the high school grades. If at least 30% of previously non-proficient students (as determined by the most recent ELA or math tests within the prior two years of state testing) exceed expectations on the ACT series (i.e. score at the top of the range or higher from one test to the next (EXPLORE to PLAN or PLAN to ACT), then schools will earn .1 point for every number or percent of students exceeding expectations and .2 point for all students who scored at the lowest performance levels during the prior two years (i.e. Unsatisfactory on LEAP or Needs Improvement on EOC).

Impact

Schools and districts are impacted by super subgroup AMO achievement in two ways. First, outcomes for traditional subgroups as well as the newly-created super subgroup are reported publicly at the school, district, and state levels. Since the inception of NCLB, Louisiana has reported on these metrics in order to inform parents, communities and educators about progress and areas for improvement. This valuable practice must continue.

However, the LDOE must also do more to draw the attention of schools and districts to students most in need of assistance. Therefore, Louisiana offers rewards to all schools and districts making meaningful progress with their super subgroup through School Performance Score progress points. This recommendation – initially proposed by local school superintendents – has received widespread support by principals, educators, local school district accountability directors, and stakeholder organizations.

Given Louisiana's newly re-aligned rewards and consequences structure (See Sections 2.C – 2.G for more information about rewards, supports, and interventions), the addition of School Performance Score points for successful progress with super-subgroup performance is a strong incentive. All schools will work harder to achieve School Performance Score progress points, especially those nearing the next highest school letter grade. For "F" schools approaching a school letter grade of "D," earning the super-subgroup incentive points could increase their Letter Grade and could potentially allow them to avoid facing the strongest sanction in Louisiana and the nation, the Recovery School District, by boosting their scores out of the "F" category. This will serve as an extremely powerful motivator to help all struggling students achieve proficiency.

Scope

The new super subgroup challenges Louisiana's schools and educators to focus supports and interventions on the 101,325 ELA students and 102,538 math students who are non-proficient or below grade level.[4] At the same time, Louisiana is continuing to calculate and analyze traditional ESEA subgroups in order to guide supports and interventions (e.g., loss of Reward Status for Subgroup AYP failure, network strategy development in supporting districts in eliminating achievement gaps). In 2011-2012, traditional ESEA subgroups were calculable for 1,284 schools in Louisiana. Of those 1,284 schools, Louisiana was able to calculate a non-proficient super subgroup result for 998 of those same schools thereby providing a more expansive, inclusive data set for use in interventions, supports, and rewards.

(2) Overall School Performance Score Growth AMO

In addition to assessing overall school proficiency, the LDOE assesses a school's overall growth on an annual basis.

Calculation

The overall growth score AMO will be:

- **For "A" schools: Improve five SPS points or reach 150 (for schools within five points of 150).**
- **For all other schools: Improve ten points on the SPS scale.**

Impact

If a school achieves the AMO articulated above, it will qualify as a Reward or Top Gains school. Reward status makes the school eligible for significant monetary rewards, as well as public recognition of its achievement.

NOTE: A school's progress points awarded for progress with the super subgroup shall apply to the composite SPS growth of a school in a given year. For example, if a school improved its SPS five points prior to the progress points, but also earned five progress points, then the school would meet the SPS Growth AMO and would be eligible for monetary rewards, as available.

(3) Retaining Louisiana's Long-term Aspirational Goal of 100% Proficiency in 2014

Louisiana's dedication to excellence and equity are central to its accountability system. For this reason, Louisiana remains committed to the AMOs established several years ago, which set yearly growth targets aimed towards 100 percent of children in the state attaining proficiency by 2014. Educational leaders believe firmly that Louisiana must not falter from its high expectations for all schools and districts.

A goal of 100 percent proficiency ensures that there is no variation across the end-points for districts, schools, and subgroups. Because all districts, schools, and subgroups must end at the same point, this AMO requires that districts, schools, and subgroups that are further behind must make progress more quickly.

[4] Numbers from 2010-2011 Student Data

School Year	English Language Arts AMO (Percent Proficient)	Mathematics AMO (Percent Proficient)
2002-2003	36.9%	30.1%
2003-2004	36.9%	30.1%
2004-2005	47.4%	41.8%
2005-2006	47.4%	41.8%
2006-2007	47.4%	41.8%
2007-2008	57.9%	53.5%
2008-2009	57.9%	53.5%
2009-2010	57.9%	53.5%
2010-2011	68.4%	65.2%
2011-2012	78.9%	76.9%
2012-2013	89.4%	88.6%
2013-2014	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2.W. Current ELA and Mathematics AMO

Calculation

Louisiana reports the percentage of students who earn a proficient score in English and mathematics for all students in grades 3 through 8 and high school for all schools that meet the minimum *N* for full academic year students. Proficient is defined as Basic, Mastery, or Advanced on the iLEAP at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, and the LEAP at grades 4 and 8. For school years, 2011-12 through 2013-2014, high school proficiency as determined by the achievement levels Excellent and Good on the Algebra I and English II End-of-Course Tests. Proficient scores on the alternate assessments, LAA 1 and LAA 2, are included at the appropriate grade levels. Percentages are calculated at the elementary, middle, and high school level as the number of proficient scores from all tests divided by the total number of tests.

How Does Louisiana Calculate Full Academic Year?
Full academic year is defined for an LEA as enrolled on October 1 and for testing. A student is considered full academic year at the school in the LEA where they are enrolled on February 1.

Impact

Performance against these AMOs is reported publicly. These performance measures are also used to inform supports for Priority and Focus schools (See Sections 2.D and 2.F for more information). The overall performance of students, as well as the performance of specific, traditional subgroups provide useful, informative indications of strong or weak areas within a given school or district. Thus, this data will be critical to solving the specific struggles of a Focus or Priority school.

Post-2014

At the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year, the LDOE will reassess performance against this AMO in order to continue assessment of and progress toward this critical measure. The LDOE will work closely with the USDOE and education stakeholders throughout this continuation and reassessment process, after final 13-14 letter grades and AYP are calculated.

Will Louisiana Provide AMOs for the State, LEAs, and Schools That Are Ambitious, But Achievable, Set Separately for ELA and Mathematics, and Applied to Each Subgroup?

To further clarify the language included in Section 2.B of Louisiana's ESEA Flexibility Request, the LDOE will provide AMOs for the state as a whole, each LEA, and all schools. These AMOs are ambitious, achievable, set separately for ELA and mathematics, and apply to each traditional ESEA subgroup.

Specifically, for the state, each LEA, each school and each subgroup within those entities, the LDOE will set, measure, report on and respond to the following AMOs:

(1) Non-proficient students will exceed expected growth at the state-, district- and school-level;
(2) Growth AMO
    a. "A" schools and districts will (a) improve five SPS/DPS points or reach 150 (for schools/districts within five points of 150 possible points)
    b. All other schools and districts, as well as the state, will improve ten points on the SPS/DPS scale.
(3) The state, districts, and schools – including ESEA subgroups – will continue to be measured against the 2014 100% proficiency goal.

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Louisiana's letter grade system is an effective tool for communicating school and district performance. However, the newly-created progress point measure is also highly informative about a given school's performance and growth over time. Thus, the combination of performance as determined by Letter Grades and progress point growth produces information that the state can use to drive interventions and rewards. The LDOE intends to capitalize on this information in order to identify Reward Schools and districts.

Specifically, Reward Schools shall be:

(1) High Performing Schools – "A" schools demonstrating continued meaningful growth on the Letter Grade Scale (i.e., increased 5 points on the SPS scale); and
(2) High Progress Schools – Schools that achieve their Super Subgroup AMO or non-A schools demonstrating meaningful overall growth on the Letter Grade Scale (i.e., 10 points).

Table 2.X provides an overview of Reward Schools, as well as their relation to Focus and Priority Schools (described in greater detail in later sections).

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice

* Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.X. System Overview – Reward Schools

How Does Louisiana's Definition of Reward Schools Align with the USDOE's Requirements for Reward Schools?

Highest- performing schools:

- Demonstrate the highest overall student performance in the state as measured by the school performance score and attain a letter grade of A
- Earn at least five points of growth on the school performance score in one year

USED Criteria	LA Definition	2010-2011 LA **Results**
Highest-performing schools must have the highest absolute performance in the state for all students.	Schools that are highest performers earn a School Performance Score (SPS) of 100 or greater and are identified as A schools.	There are 108 schools (8% of total schools) with an SPS of 100 or greater and letter grade of A.
Highest- performing schools must also continue to demonstrate yearly achievement gains with all students.	Highest performing schools must demonstrate five points or more of growth in one year.	There were 37 highest-performing schools with letter grade A and five points of growth.
Highest performing schools must not be in school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring.	Louisiana used the approved definition in the Consolidated Application for meeting SPS and Subgroup AYP for 2010-2011 determinations.	Schools in this category cannot be in school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring.

High-progress schools:

- Demonstrate that at least 35% of the students in the non-proficient super subgroup exceed expected growth in English/language arts and/or mathematics,
- Earn 10 or more points of growth on the school performance score in one year (for schools with letter grade B, C, D, or F).

USED Criteria	LA Definition	2010-2011 LA Result
High progress schools are recognized for making the most improvement in the performance of students in the non-proficient super subgroup.	A school meets the definition of high progress if at least 35% of the non-proficient students in the super subgroup for English/language arts and/or mathematicsmeet or exceed theirexpected growth. Students are assigned to the super subgroup if they score at a level on the state tests that is defined as non-proficient. If a school has at least 10 students in the super subgroup, then the school will receive a determination of subgroup growth.	There are 261 schools (88% are Title I schools) that had at least 35% of the students in their non-proficient super subgroup meet or exceed value-added growth in English/language arts and/or mathematics.
High progress schools are recognized for making the most improvement in the performance of all students.	High progress schools are expected to earn 10 points or more of growth on the school performance score in one year if they receive letter grade B, C, D, or F.	There are 94 schools with letter grade B through F that grew 10 or more points on the school performance score. The group average growth is 12.2 points, as compared to the statewide average growth of 2.0 points.

Demonstrate That High-Progress Schools are Making Significant Academic Progress:

In 2011-2012, Louisiana's high progress reward schools included 261 schools (88% are Title 1 schools) that had at least 35% of their non-proficient students outperform value-added growth modeling predictions in English/language arts and/or mathematics. These schools are dramatically surpassing state average performance around increasing proficiency rates.

Louisiana's high progress reward schools also included 94 schools that increased their SPS 10 or more points. The average growth of these reward schools was 12.2 points (i.e., 10.2 points above the state average growth).

How Will Louisiana's Proposed Accountability System – Particularly Reward Criteria – Ensure Sufficient Accountability for Traditional Subgroups?

Louisiana continues to report traditional ESEA subgroup AYP and provide determinations based on established AMOs. Any school that fails to meet AYP in the same subject or in the Additional Academic Indicator for two consecutive years will not be eligible for Reward school status.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

The list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years can be viewed at this link: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/accountability

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

Achieving the criteria enumerated above is a truly commendable feat. To this end, Louisiana intends to provide Reward Schools with the following:

(1) **Financial Rewards** – Reward schools that achieve substantial SPS growth (10+ points for B, C, D, F schools; 5+ points for A schools) should receive financial rewards for their success, as available. In addition, if the LDOE receives an increased Title I allocation, it is committed to using the Title I Rewards funds to support high performing and high progress schools.

(2) **Public Recognition –** All Reward schools receive public recognition through press releases, statewide celebrations, and public reporting that clearly illustrates their accomplishments and "Top Gains" status.

(3) **SPS Points –** High progress rewards schools receive progress points for achieving the LDOE's aggressive annual goals for previously non-proficient students.

Various Louisiana stakeholder groups, such as the Committee of Practitioners and LEA leaders (e.g., school superintendents) have suggested that financial rewards for good performance and flexibility with funds would be important motivators for improved performance.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

The LDOE intends to capitalize on its existing letter grade system in order to identify Priority schools, which are persistently failing schools transferred to the Recovery School District (RSD) (NOTE: For an

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice

* Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.Y. System Overview – Priority Schools

How Does a School Become Eligible for the Recovery School District?

According to state law and State Board policy, a school is eligible for the RSD after four consecutive years of unacceptable (F) performance. When a school reaches this level of continued failure, the State Superintendent may recommend to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that the school be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Recovery School District.

When the Board approves a school's transfer to the RSD, the State Superintendent of Education may then choose the best method of bringing the school to an acceptable level of performance. In addition to proposing performance objectives that the failed school must meet, the State Superintendent also recommends an operating structure for the school. The failed school may be operated:

(1) as a direct-run RSD school;
(2) as a charter school;
(3) as a university partnership; or
(4) through a management agreement with a service provider.

As of the 2011-2012 school year, the RSD operated 7.9 percent of the Title I schools statewide (i.e., 77 out of 969) thereby meeting the USDOE's size requirement (i.e., 5% of Title I schools).

How Does Louisiana's Definition of Priority Schools Align With the USDOE's Requirements for Priority Schools?

Priority schools are among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability and support system, combined and has demonstrated a lack of progress on the assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. Can also include schools with graduation rates less than 60% and Tier I or Tier II schools.

Louisiana is required to have 49 Priority Schools: 969 Title I schools * 5%=48.5. It exceeded that number based solely on its Title I eligible high schools that have grad rate below 60 (45) and or Tier I or Tier II funded schools (7). Louisiana also designated 68 schools as Priority Schools that are under the authority of the Recovery School District.

USED Criterion	LA Definition	2010-2011 LA Result

A priority school is among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability and support system, combined and has demonstrated a lack of progress on the assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group.	Priority schools are schools that are assigned to the Recovery School District when they have demonstrated a lack of progress on assessments over a number of years. The Recovery School District serves as the Local Education Agency (LEA) for a group of schools across the state operated by direct-run, charter, university partnership, or management agreement.	• There were 68 priority schools. Of this total, 58 schools had letter grades of D or F, and 31 are in some form of AYP school improvement, corrective actions, or restructuring. • The ten high schools with graduation rates less than 60% that were not assigned to the RSD were identified as focus schools. Some of these school s improved their performance while in the Recovery School District.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

The list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years can be viewed at this link http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/accountability.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Overall, the RSD's turnaround philosophy closely mirrors and aligns with the turnaround principles emphasized by the USDOE. During the 2013-14 school year, the RSD managed direct-run schools on a day-to-day basis. However, beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the RSD will no longer directly manage any schools. All RSD schools will be charter schools (Type 5 charter schools). The relationship between the RSD and charter schools is governed by accountability through the charter school contract, providing system-wide supports to support equity, and broad oversight rather than direct management. Therefore, system wide supports (e.g., enrollment, expulsion policy, etc.) described below impact direct-run schools and charter schools. However, school management practices described below apply exclusively to direct-run RSD schools for the 2013-14 school year.

(1) Providing Strong Leadership

The RSD provides operational flexibility to each of its charter schools by giving each school leader the authority to make all scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget decisions at the school level, with the oversight and guidance of their charter boards. Principals at RSD direct-run schools also have the authority to make all personnel and staff decisions at the school-level, and receive oversight and support in other areas through the RSD's Office of Achievement staff that are accountable for the achievement outcomes of all of the direct-run schools throughout the state. The Achievement team assists direct-run schools in setting goals, assessing teacher and student performance, giving teachers and principals feedback, managing and providing professional development, and creating ongoing cycles of improvement that link goals, data, and coaching.

The Achievement team enables critical decisions around school management and accountability to

remain close to the students at the school level. This structure ensures that resources are focused on student achievement and that the RSD supports schools to achieve goals with students. The Achievement team sets goals with each school, partners with the school to determine how best to meet those goals, and flexibly supports the school to achieve their goals.

Achievement team staff members spend the bulk of their time working at each school, partnering with principals to set goals for their school around student achievement, attendance, and teacher performance. In partnership with the school, network staff then determine how best to support each school in achieving those goals. The teams provide support in several critical areas, including teacher evaluation and coaching, student assessments, RTI (Response to Intervention) appraisal, student discipline, risk management, and special education services. They also monitor compliance with federal IDEA regulations and ensuring that schools are improving the quality of services special education students receive.

The Deputy Superintendent of Achievement and Executive Director of Achievement conduct quarterly reviews of each direct-run school principal and school progress towards goals. During these reviews, Achievement staff and principals review all important school data in order to determine progress in achieving the school's goals, any areas of deficiency, and determine next steps for improvement. At two of these quarterly reviews, principals are reviewed using the Compass Leader Rubric, an evaluation and development system, to ensure that they are allocating the time and resources necessary to identify areas of needed improvement for teachers, create the structures for teachers to learn together and receive useful feedback, align the school to Common Core, and create school cultures that retain and support effective teachers. Principal evaluations are based on evaluations by the Deputy Superintendent of Achievement and Executive Director of Achievement focusing on progress toward meeting goals outlined with the network leader earlier in the year. Based on the results of these principal evaluations, the RSD may choose to replace or provide intensive support to struggling principals who are not meeting performance goals or facilitating significant student achievement.

The Achievement Team is evaluated based on whether the direct-run schools achieve their goals and whether leaders and staff believe that working with the team benefits their students' achievement.

(2) Ensuring Effective Teachers

RSD direct-run school principals and charter school principals have autonomy to make personnel decisions directly, based solely on teacher performance, need and effectiveness. The RSD direct-run schools do not participate in a collective bargaining agreement, and RSD charters may choose individually whether or not to participate in a collective bargaining agreement. Further, RSD schools are not bound by teacher tenure laws.

The Pathways to Instructional Excellence, a teacher evaluation and professional development tool, was instituted by the RSD during the 2010-2011 school year and helps put teachers and instructional leaders on a new path to instructional excellence. All teachers are observed a minimum of four times per year and evaluated based on the Pathways rubric. Evaluation results and feedback on areas for development are entered into a web-based portal that teachers access to remain updated on review feedback. During principal quarterly reviews, Achievement Team members and the principal review all teacher evaluations and professional development activities to discuss personnel decisions and additional support and professional development for struggling teachers. The RSD collects feedback from teachers on the system frequently throughout the year.

Professional learning for direct-run schools in the Recovery School District is designed to enable teachers, administrators, and staff members enhance their knowledge, skills, and behaviors to maximize high levels of student achievement. Professional learning activities are provided through "direct service delivery" of training by staff, consultants, contracted personnel, and the "training of trainers" model. The latter model calls for the training of key personnel who then deliver the training they receive to colleagues at their schools. School-site and district-wide professional learning activities, which support the RSD initiatives, are provided during the entire year. These activities include workshops, support meetings, and classroom demonstration lessons for teachers.

(3) Redesigning Learning Time

By law, each public school in Louisiana must provide for 167 days of instruction, with 360 minutes of instructional time each day. RSD direct-run schools meet for 168 – 179 (depending on the parish) school days, with a longer school day of at least 400 minutes. In addition, students who do not demonstrate mastery on state-standardized tests attend an additional three weeks for LEAP and two weeks for EOC of class during the summer to participate in an accelerated instructional program to move these students to grade-level and prepare for summer re-tests.

Additionally, RSD charter school leaders have autonomy to set their school calendars, as long as they meet the compulsory attendance requirements in law. RSD charter schools provide additional instructional time by having an extended learning day, Saturday school programs, utilizing a year-round calendar, providing for shortened holiday and summer breaks to provide intensive remediation, requiring mandatory after-school tutoring, and additional instructional days in order to allow opportunities for off-campus internships and career preparation programs during the school day.

(4) Strengthening Instructional Programming

The Recovery School District is committed to preparing all students to be successful in post-secondary education and beyond. RSD charter schools are held to high accountability standards for student performance results, in conjunction with increased freedom for school leaders to develop or choose curriculum that best meets the particular needs of their students. Similarly, RSD charter school leaders may select or develop school-specific curriculum that aligns to the Common Core State Standards and all charter schools are evaluated for extension and renewal based on student growth and performance on exams aligned to the standards.

For direct-run RSD schools, in past years, the RSD implemented a managed curriculum for each core grade level and subject, based on the Common Core State Standards. For more information please see http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards.

The Recovery School District direct-run schools also use Response to Intervention (RTI), a tiered process that provides high-quality, research-based instruction and interventions matched to a student's academic and behavioral needs. Other essential components of RTI are monitoring academic and/or behavioral student progress and making data-driven decisions about student curriculum based on a review of that progress. Highly structured, research-based interventions are provided district-wide according to the needs of the student. The student's academic progress is monitored frequently to determine if the interventions are sufficient to help the student reach the instructional level of his or her grade. In addition, many RSD schools offer specialized programs of curriculum, including language, business, technology, and healthcare.

(5) Using Data to Inform Instruction and Continuous Improvement

The RSD provides support in this area through the Office of Analytics, which provides data analysis for the RSD on a system-wide and individual school basis in order to inform RSD school support and transformation decisions. The Achievement Team works with direct-run principals to review student data to inform personnel and instructional decisions. In direct-run schools, staff also participates frequently in each school's cluster meetings of teachers to review student data to analyze progress in achieving student performance goals, and interpret this data to inform instructional decisions inside the classroom. Cluster teams are groups of teachers in the same grade level for elementary school, and groups of teachers in the same subject-area for high schools.

Using analyses from the Office of Analytics, in Spring 2012, the RSD released its first annual "Equity Report," which shines a light on the successes of schools in the areas described below and allows for honest discussion of the differences among schools around issues of equity. The majority of the RSD schools operate in New Orleans, which is subject to a city-wide choice program, meaning that any student in the city may apply to attend any school in the city, regardless of geographic location. This city-wide choice program, coupled with a high-need student population that is currently 99% minority, and 90% free- or reduced-lunch eligible, necessitate a focus on equity for all students. The Equity Report provided statistics in each category for all RSD schools:

a. Student achievement on tests;

b. Student progress from one year to the next on tests;

c. School admissions of students with special needs;

d. Academic progress of students with special needs;

e. Student attendance rates; and

f. Ability to retain students rather than expelling, suspending, or having students drop out.

A detailed report for each school was provided to each RSD school, with information comparing the school's performance in each area to other RSD schools and statewide performance. The Equity Report served as a useful tool to provide a more thorough context for student achievement results, help schools compare themselves to other schools in areas critical to student equity, and provide information that will support school leaders in making strategic decisions to improve student achievement. To view the equity report, please visit http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/19330.pdf.

Because the majority of RSD schools currently operate in Orleans Parish, the report is focused on New Orleans. However, the data analysis and critical reporting are highly relevant to all of Louisiana's persistently low-performing, Priority Schools.

(6) Establishing Positive, Safe, and Supportive Schools

All schools within the Recovery School District are actively participating in school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is an approach to creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments in schools. Designed to improve behavior and academic performance by teaching and reinforcing positive behavior, it uses data as a basis for determining the reasons for problem behavior and providing appropriate levels of support to address

those behaviors.

The RSD's RTI program evaluates student behavioral, emotional, and health needs, in addition to academic needs, in order to create a tiered process that provides high-quality, research-based instruction and interventions to facilitate student achievement. Each RSD direct-run school has staff members dedicated to implementing the RTI process, and the Achievement Team provides intensive support and training in this area.

Achievement team staff are also involved in all disciplinary proceedings, ensuring that all possible interventions have been exhausted and appropriate due process procedures have been followed before a student is suspended or expelled. Achievement staff also work with the RSD hearing office to develop recommendations for students subject to disciplinary proceedings. The RSD provides a central disciplinary hearing officer to ensure that all disciplinary hearings are conducted in accordance with state and federal law.

Each RSD direct-run school and parent-center have staff that receive training in student homelessness, and are equipped to direct students and parents to appropriate resources to meet their needs. In addition, many RSD charter and direct-run schools develop partnerships with organizations to provide mentoring and conflict resolution, including Restorative Justice programs, mentoring provided by City Year volunteers, and Saturday school parent and student programs as an alternative to expulsion.

In addition, the RSD is currently working collaboratively with the Orleans Parish School Board to open a citywide Student Opportunity Center in the 2014-15 school year to support all students in New Orleans who are chronically absent, truant, or court-involved to transition back into schools. This center will be a "one stop shop" community-based model that will create a framework for schools to respond to chronic absenteeism and will provide coordinated resources for effective intervention. The center staff will include case managers, attendance coaches, court liaisons and School Resource Officers. In order to connect students and families with the resources they need, the Student Opportunity Center will also partner with various groups and organizations such as behavioral health providers, social service agencies, etc.

(7) Providing Mechanisms for Engagement of Families and Communities

The RSD operates four parent-family resource centers throughout New Orleans where parents can obtain language translation services, student enrollment information, transcript and records requests, conflict resolution services, up-to-date information on all RSD schools, parenting skills literature, and community resource literature. The RSD also holds frequent community discussions in locations throughout New Orleans on topics and issues that are most important to parents and community members. The RSD also utilizes various community engagement processes for any major change or initiative the RSD undertakes, including building new schools, moving school locations, and school closures.

As more schools outside of New Orleans are transferred to the RSD, community engagement activities are being implemented across the state. These activities include regular meetings at RSD schools for parents and community members, and the creation of special task forces and advisory boards for any school that is being transferred into the RSD.

In addition, the Recovery School District hosts quarterly meetings in New Orleans for the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, where the agenda is dedicated solely to RSD matters and

gathering feedback and input from the public.

The RSD also hosts numerous subject-specific family and community engagement events. For example, the launch of RSD's universal enrollment system provided many opportunities to educate the community on the importance and logistics of the new process. In partnership with the Urban League, the RSD hosted over 25 community and family events to teach parents how to complete the One App application, the single form to apply to all RSD schools.

Statewide Engagement

Community partnerships are the cornerstone of RSD's transformation efforts throughout the state, not just those in New Orleans. As an example, in April 2012, the RSD launched the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone (BRAZ) - an innovative reform model to address the needs of children currently attending low-performing schools in the North Baton Rouge area by working collaboratively with parents and engaging community and business partners. The BRAZ, which will impact a minimum of seven local schools, will have a significant impact on turning around student learning and achievement.

The Baton Rouge Achievement Zone is focused on addressing the needs of students in North Baton Rouge to ensure their overall success and to guarantee that every child will be college and/or career ready upon graduation. The BRAZ will focus on three core principles – **engaging partnerships to anchor strategic school reform** in Greater Baton Rouge, building the demand from parents, community, and government for higher school accountability and better school choices; **accelerating the launch of excellent new schools** through smart philanthropy and collaboration with government to meet transformation and innovation needs; and **creating a reform marketplace** that fosters competition, builds entrepreneurial capacity, and provides high quality options for school support organizations and services.

In addition to schools in the Baton Rouge area, the RSD is responsible for the transformation of schools throughout rural parts of the state. Although these schools are not part of the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, similar principles of partnership and community engagement are being integrated into their transformation strategy. In addition to shared principles of partnership and community, rural districts present their own, unique challenges that must be taken into account. Geographic isolation leads to challenges recruiting and retaining teachers, providing and receiving professional development, and accessing the most modern and current technology in the classroom. Transformation strategies for rural districts must leverage lessons learned from New Orleans and other urban parts of the state within the context and realities of a rural environment. The RSD is creating and executing transformation solutions that address unique rural challenges such as geographic isolation, lack of competition, and lack of opportunity.

As with the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, in rural areas with Priority Schools, the RSD will work to build awareness of and support for more and better educational options among the media, legislators, local public officials and parents. The RSD will facilitate conversations among the community on quality educational options and bring community voice and input back into decision-making about the future of schools. The RSD will also engage local business not only on how to operate schools, but also on how they can be a part of goods and services provided. The RSD experiences in New Orleans provided critical information on what works and what doesn't in creating a high quality education system. These lessons allow for best practices to be shared statewide.

Building awareness of and support for more and better educational options among the media, legislators,

local public officials and parents is important. The RSD will facilitate conversations among the community on quality educational options and bring community voice and input back into decision- making about the future of schools. The RSD will also engage local business not only on how to operate schools but also on how they can be a part of goods and services provided. The RSD experiences in New Orleans provided critical information on what works and what doesn't in creating a high quality education system. These lessons allow for best practices to be shared statewide.

How will the RSD build community awareness and investment?

1. Meet with community leaders, local pastors, politicians, government leaders, and parents;
2. Create a community advisory board for the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone along with a community task force for each school;
3. Create an entity to combine the efforts of all parties and provide focus and dedication on the Children First Zone, the primary group for philanthropy;
4. Create connections with successful support and advocacy groups including but not limited to Stand For Children!, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, Advanced Innovations in Education, and Baton Rouge Area Foundation
5. Utilize newspapers, television media, and social media networks to communicate the message and purpose of the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone.
6. Conduct "State of Our Schools Meetings" in which the RSD asks students, parents and community members what they want their school to provide and achieve.
7. Conduct workshops for parents, teachers and community members to voice their concerns and cultivate a dialogue within the community about the achievement zone.
8. Conduct house meetings and church meetings to build personal relationships with the community.
9. Cultivate community leadership and boards made up of people who want to see dramatic change in education among their community. Set up regular times to get input, and enlist help in communicating back to other parents and community members about the change process.
10. Create a sense of urgency related to making needed changes.

How Will the RSD Help Schools Address the Needs of ELL Students and Students With Exceptionalities?

RSD English Language Learning Program

Like ELL students nationwide, RSD students who are limited English proficient move through the 5 levels of English listening proficiency from phonemic awareness to understanding short utterances and simple directions to understanding standard speech (both in social and academic settings) to understanding the main ideas and relevant details of extended discussions or presentations. The RSD supports this development spectrum through a number of interventions and supports with the following goal – ELL students will develop the necessary English listening skills to fully access the general education curriculum and achieve at the same academic levels as their native English-speaking peers.

Resources

The RSD employs a team of ELL experts – both instructors and interpreters – who are responsible for a cadre of Priority or RSD schools. In order to influence meaningful growth and increased proficiency, RSD staff follow a centrally-created, highly-effective protocol which focuses on:

- Identification
- Screenings (i.e., ELDA and other supportive data)
- Development of Individual Student Success Plans Based on Student-Specific Data

- Monitoring

The RSD expert ELL staff monitors quarterly all students that have exited the ELL program and visit all schools – regardless of whether ELL students are identified – to ensure that all students needing services receive such services in a timely manner. Additionally, the RSD ELL staff conducts progress monitoring meetings to review growth and performance of exited ELL students and to make recommendations as indicated regarding revision of the instructional programs, at least quarterly. Finally, RSD ELL staff offer additional support services, including face-to-face professional development conducted annually or as needed for school site personnel for the purposes of apprising them of ELL Program, service protocols, and referral procedures.

RSD Supports for Students with Exceptionalities

At the outset of the RSD, schools were structurally and academically in shambles – including lack of adequate records. Thus, the RSD rebuilt special education programming, supports and interventions from scratch. Within a short period of time students had IEPs, and an RtI/Appraisal system was in place (the first 2 yrs. (2006-07-08) were contractual and then the process was internalized) to identify students with disabilities, as well as students who were gifted and/or talented (Visual Arts, Music, Theater).

Since that time, the RSD's emphasis has been on building a system that embraces all students. Pre-Katrina, the Orleans Parish school system was under a corrective action plan for serving students with disabilities in more segregated settings.

Specific Guidance Regarding Special Education Services from RSD Staff to Priority Schools

- **Staffing –** The RSD providers staffing guidance for proper student-to-teacher ratios and special education paraprofessionals are staffed based on the student population of all RSD schools. To support staffing needs on an ongoing basis, new or changed staffing needs are highlighted weekly and principals are supported in their hiring needs.
- **Support Structures**
    - From 2007-2011, the Department of Intervention Services built a cadre of special education "Cluster Leaders" which were assigned to a "cluster" of 5-7 schools. The cluster leaders supported schools in all areas of special education, providing individual student support as well as school based and district based professional development. In addition, support structures to provide related services, gifted, talented, assistive technology, etc. were established.
    - In 2011-12, RSD made a conscious decision to transition from a support/service organization to an oversight entity. The RSD's direct-run schools are under the purview of the Achievement team that includes RtI/Appraisal personnel, and personnel with expertise in school improvement and student services. These experts are responsible for ensuring direct-run schools provide an excellent education and produce student achievement at rates surpassing typical districts and/or the state. Under the leadership of the Deputy Superintendent of Achievement, the Achievement staff meets quarterly to review school level data with school leadership teams. These meetings are used to focus schools on student achievement (in particular, students with exceptionalities).
    - In 2011-2012, the RSD also established the Office of School Performance (OSP) to develop oversight of the Type 5 Charter Schools. The OSP developed processes, including special education oversight, to monitor Type 5 Charter schools to ensure compliance

with their contractual obligations and proper intervention, as needed.

- At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the RSD's Office of School Performance merged with the Louisiana Department of Education's Portfolio team to unite all oversight of Board and Elementary and Secondary Education authorized charter schools under one entity. Each charter school has one designated point of contact that provides support directly to schools and leaders. During this year the Department also introduced the Charter School Performance Compact. The compact provides charter schools and boards with clear expectations, fact-based oversight, and timely feedback while ensuring charter school autonomy. The Compact features academic, financial, and organizational performance frameworks and an intervention ladder.

- **Nursing/Health Services**
  - School Nursing/Health Services plays a large part in keeping students with disabilities healthy and safe. The School Nurse completes Individual Health Plans (IHPs) for students with health related needs to guide school personnel in appropriate procedures for students with health needs. The Health Services Department is also responsible for training school based staff in the required health related needs of individual students (e.g., noncomplex health procedures, CPR, medication administration, tracheotomy and gastro/tube feeding).
- **Additional Services**
  - The RSD also provides assistive technology supports, as well as mental health and counseling services.

Citywide Support for Students with Special Needs

For a number of years, the Recovery School District has implemented a differentiated funding formula to ensure that funding is distributed equitably among all RSD direct-run and charter schools in order to ensure schools have the funds necessary to support students with special needs. Differentiated funding allocates money based on student needs – to ensure the right amount of money follows each student.

The RSD applies a differentiated funding formula based on individual student needs and services to the total amount of MFP funding received by all RSD schools in New Orleans. This funding formula adjusts the amount of per pupil MFP funds received by schools up or down based on the needs of each individual student. The differentiated funding formula is equitable, transparent, and efficient – it rewards schools for serving the neediest students. During the Spring of 2014, the RSD worked with school leaders and special education experts to further refine this formula from a three-tiered approach based solely on exceptionality type to a five-tier model based on exceptionality type and total weekly service minutes. This new model are part of the RSD's commitment to ensuring the success of the neediest students in Orleans Parish and supports the RSD's core values of excellence and equity by providing for a more fair and accurate distribution of funding.

In addition, the RSD is working collaboratively with the Orleans Parish School Board to provide a number of citywide supports for students with the most severe needs.

There are approximately 4,700 students in New Orleans with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Charter schools are helping to meet these needs in a number of ways, such as general education programming, and specialized school based programs for intensive cognitive and therapeutic needs (classrooms with a special focus on social or life skills). However, a small percentage of students need a level of therapeutic support during the school day beyond what the traditional school environment can provide.

RSD and the school board are working together to launch a citywide medically informed therapeutic day setting to help better serve these students in summer 2015. RSD and the school board will work with a local medical partner to administer the program where teachers, therapists, social workers, and health professionals will provide therapy, counseling, and necessary medical supports. After the program, the student, family, and school participate in a step-down transition process in order to ensure that the student is fully supported and successful in a traditional classroom setting.

The RSD and OPSB will also begin to administer a citywide Exceptional Needs Fund for Students with Disabilities to ensure that all public schools in New Orleans have access to sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with serving students with significant disabilities. The Exceptional Needs Fund is a special purpose fund administered by OPSB and funded through local revenues to help ensure that all public schools in New Orleans meet the needs of their students with disabilities. Beginning in fall 2014, any public school in New Orleans may apply to the Exceptional Needs Fund to cover student-specific costs for students with disabilities, such as individual paraprofessionals and special equipment. A committee of practitioners will review applications and recommend allocations. Eligibility, evaluation criteria, and process rules are currently being developed by OPSB, RSD, and school representatives.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

As mentioned previously, the RSD has been in existence since 2003. It will continue to operate in alignment with the enumerated turnaround principles in future years. Therefore, Louisiana already meets the obligated 2014-2015 deadline for implementation.

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Bulletin 129, Section 505 (See Appendix 2.D) explains the current criteria for transfer out of the RSD and consequently out of Priority school status. The policy accomplishes the following:

(1) Ensuring that a school's autonomy and flexibility are retained in order to support continued substantial improvement and high standards of accountability;
(2) Ensuring that recipient governing authorities are well-prepared to receive and support the school moving forward;
(3) Ensuring that schools do not leave the RSD unless the school demonstrated meaningful, multi-year success before exiting.

All schools transferred to the RSD must remain in the RSD for a minimum of five years. After five years, a school may be eligible to choose to return to its former LEA or remain with the RSD. Schools are eligible to choose when they have demonstrated the ability to operate as a stable, non-failing school by earning a School Performance Score of 54.0 or above for the past two consecutive years. For reference, all schools statewide are recognized as academically acceptable by earning a score of 50.0 or higher. By earning an SPS at least 4 points above the minimum score of 50.0 for two consecutive years, a school demonstrates that it will be able to maintain its academic performance in the future and is not in danger of becoming a failing school, and therefore no longer needs to be considered a Priority school. Allowing schools to

choose whether to exit or remain in the RSD allows parents and local communities, through their charter governing boards, to determine which setting will most adequately provide the conditions necessary for success and student achievement.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

In Louisiana, Focus schools are defined as any Pre-RSD "F" school meaning schools earning an "F" Letter Grade that are not already overseen by the RSD. Additionally, any high school with a cohort graduation rate below 60 percent that is not already overseen by the RSD will be classified as a Focus school. Finally, any school that was an "F" remains a Focus school until they are no longer an "F" for two consecutive years.

Using letter grades (i.e., F's) to drive the identification of Focus schools allow Louisiana to easily identify those schools that are demonstrating a serious lack of achievement or gap closure progress over a number of years, particularly with all or certain subgroups. (NOTE: A school's progress toward the super subgroup AMO also provides critical information regarding gap closures in a given school.) Using letter grades to identify Focus schools also facilitate communication to the public about Focus schools' status.

	Meet Subgroup AMO OR Substantial SPS Growth	All Other Schools
A	Rewards	Network Support
B		Network Support
C		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
D		Network support, scholarship choice, and Course Choice
Pre-RSD F* (focus)		Comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice
RSD F (priority)		Recovery School District, comprehensive data review, needs assessment, and support in effectively implementing CCSS and COMPASS through the Network support structure, public school choice, scholarship choice, Course Choice

* Any high school with a graduation rate below 60% - which is not otherwise labeled as a Priority or Focus School – shall also be included in the Focus School category.

Table 2.Z. System Overview – Focus Schools

How Does Louisiana's Definition of Focus Schools Align with the USDOE's Requirements for Focus Schools?

Focus schools: • Demonstrate the lowest overall student performance in the state based on school performance scores • Have the lowest cohort graduation rates in the state • Have not yet been assigned to the Recovery School District (RSD)		
USED Criteria	**LA Definition**	**2010-2011 LA Result**
Focus schools have the lowest overall student achievement.	Schools are identified as having the lowest overall achievement based on a school performance score that is less than 50 with letter grade F, and the schools are not assigned to the Recovery School District (RSD).	• There were 130 schools not assigned to the RSD that had an SPS of less than 50 and letter grade F. On average, a school with an SPS below 50 had a non-proficiency rate of about 72% for the all students group. • The focus groups schools had a composition that includes 89% socioeconomically disadvantaged students, 12% students with disabilities, and 84% African American students.
Focus schools have the lowest cohort graduation rates.	Louisiana included all schools with cohort graduation rates less than 60% as focus schools regardless of letter grade or school performance score unless they were assigned to the RSD.	• There were 10 schools not assigned to the RSD with school performance scores greater than 50 (letter grade D) and cohort graduation rates less than 60%.

For additional information about the alignment of Louisiana's Focus Schools and the USDOE requirements, please refer to Additional Appendix #4.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

Simulations conducted based upon the 2010-2011 School Performance Scores indicated that more than 10 percent of Title I schools in Louisiana would be identified as Focus schools. Specifically, simulations showed that 120 Title I schools (and 142 schools total) would likely qualify for Focus school status under the new accountability system. This equated to 12.38% of Louisiana's Title I schools and included any high school with a graduation rate below 60% thereby meeting the USDOE definition of Focus schools.

The list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years can be viewed at this link: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/accountability.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Because Louisiana's Focus schools are determined using the statewide accountability system, the list of Focus Schools will be released on annual basis concurrent with the release of accountability scores.

Process for Focus School Supports

(a) Identification and Provision of Data

When Focus schools are identified, the LDOE will immediately notify the impacted LEAs (i.e., prior to public release). The LDOE will provide the LEA with extensive data, including student subgroup performance, student subgroup graduation rates, and educator effectiveness data, so that the LEA can immediately implement measures to correct the specific failures of the school (e.g., failure to adequately support academic growth for students with disabilities). Starting with the 2014 release, all principals received a detailed principal report card to assist in analyzing the details of the accountability results – student performance and educator performance – for their school, as compared to the prior year, their district, the state, and schools with the same letter grade. An example of the principal report card for a high school can be seen here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/principalreportcard_hs.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

Louisiana's accountability system and state policies strongly incentivize targeted support for nonproficient students at the educator, school, and district level.

Educators. Through the Compass system, every educator sets goals for their students. Because of accountability incentives, teachers are particularly focused on the attainment of previously low-achieving students. Additionally, the value-added model (VAM) data provides educators with information on the performance of their students as compared to similarly situated peers across the state.

Schools. Louisiana raised the bar on behalf of low-achieving students by demanding a higher level of performance (Basic) for schools to earn points as a part of their school performance score (SPS). Previously, below-grade-level achievement (e.g., Approaching Basic) earned schools points. This shift emphasizes the need to help Louisiana's struggling students improve at a faster pace. Additionally, progress points are awarded to only those schools making exceptional academic growth with

nonproficient student population on statewide assessments. Inclusion of the progress point metric ensures that all schools are focused on their lowest achievers and recognized when schools achieve growth.

Districts. As part of Louisiana's systemic plan for school turnaround and student choice, the Louisiana Legislature and Governor Bobby Jindal enacted a package of true school choice legislation in 2012 which impacted statewide educational change for years to come. Act 2 – signed into law in April 2012 – dramatically increased student choice with key provisions such as the proliferation of highly-effective charters statewide, course choice for all kids, and parent voice through parent triggers. Students in focus schools have access to course- and school-level choice that must be funded by the district thereby incentivizing rapid improvement by the district and opportunities for students.

In 2014, the Louisiana legislature enacted Act 853, which expands public school choice for all children enrolled in a school with a letter grade of D or F. For many years, Louisiana has required public school choice to students attending F letter grade schools, per NCLB and Louisiana's ESEA Waiver. The LDOE continues to work with superintendents and districts across the state to craft guidance related to these choice initiatives.

These dramatic statewide reforms influence the reform efforts of every school in Louisiana – in particular, Louisiana's Focus and Priority Schools (i.e., "F" schools). Because of these bold reforms, schools are incentivized to improve at record-breaking rates and to demonstrate growth and performance in order to influence the greatest intervention – student and parent choice.

(b) Needs Assessments

After the LDOE notifies the LEA of their scores and interventions required by state law and BESE policy and provides the relevant data, the LDOE, through the District Network team structure described later in this section, supports the LEA in its ongoing turnaround efforts by providing and analyzing extensive data and supplying tools, such as the principal's report card and the results of the Compass evaluation system, to complete a thorough needs assessment of the districts' student and educator needs. The needs assessment helps the LEA and the LDOE to understand what resources and supports the school students and teachers require from the LEA. Focus schools, by nature of their definition, have significant academic deficiencies. Therefore, the needs assessment emphases the performance of the super subgroup and the gaps between the school, district, and state average performance. Networks use this information to help the LEA develop targeted strategies and plans for improvement.

(c) Coordinated LDOE Supports

Once the needs assessment is completed, the LEA and the LDOE will communicate to discuss how the LDOE can best support the LEA as it works to address the specific needs and challenges of the Focus school. Like most state education agencies, the LDOE's capacity to provide the intensive services required of each Focus school is extremely limited. Therefore, in order to turnaround and maintain the gains of all of the low-performing schools in the state, the LDOE must help build district capacity to take on these efforts themselves and ensure their success. Principals in Focus school must spend significant time with Network staff observing teachers in the classroom, reviewing the school's academic program (i.e. curriculum, interim assessments, collaboration structures), and developing strategies with a deep focus on increasing student achievement of struggling students.

District Network Teams

As referenced above, a large part of the Focus school strategy depends on the District Network teams. In order to maximize the support capacity, the LDOE has clustered school districts into several network teams (see map of district networks here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/final-network-structure-map.pdf?sfvrsn=4). Districts are grouped according to similarities in needs and challenges by school level. Each network team is led by a top former superintendent or principal from Louisiana who supervises and coordinates the work of two deputy leaders, one data specialist, one workflow specialist, and 5-8 district coaches.

- Data and workflow specialists are responsible for providing on the ground technical support on use of the Compass Information System used to collect and analyze educator evaluation data. They also support districts and schools with accessing, understanding, and utilizing district- and school-level student data to inform supports and district planning.
- Workflow specialists are tasked with getting consistent, clear answers to district questions. They also serve a role in organizing the communication between networks and the central SEA offices. Each network organizes workload and assignments for the rest of the team based on their districts' needs.
- Deputies and coaches support specific districts across the state through personalized supports, including school-level coaching at struggling schools where needed (e.g., Focus schools).

Their work with these districts not only focuses on unique district needs and challenges, but also incorporates intensive technical assistance on effectively implementing the Common Core State Standards and Compass– in general and specifically for the benefit of children in subgroups, including students with disabilities, English language learners, minority students, and non- proficient students. This includes the identification of promising strategies described in Principle I to meet their students' unique needs such that school leaders will be successful in achieving the standards and that performance gaps will be dramatically reduced (e.g., strong standards-aligned curricula). Additionally, differentiated supports are provided across content areas and school configurations, such as literacy needs and strategies for elementary schools and drop-out prevention strategies for high schools.

As described throughout Louisiana's ESEA waiver request, Louisiana will use the Network strategy to target supports and interventions focused on the state's focus areas in order to drive a system of continuous improvement for students. These focus areas stem from the LDE's belief that Common Core State Standards and the Compass system will serves as guides for student performance expectations and instructional expectations. Also captured in these focus areas is the belief that educating students starts at birth and should provide opportunities for students throughout high school to prepare students for post-secondary success.

The focus areas include:

1) School Leader & Teacher Learning Targets
2) Assessment & Curriculum
3) School & Teacher Collaboration
4) Compass Observation & Feedback
5) Pathway to College and Career
6) Aligned Resources

See the District Planning Guide (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=18) for more information.

To support this process, the Network teams will work collaboratively with districts to (a) analyze student performance data, summarized and broken out into specific sub-group performance (particularly those subgroups for which significant achievement gaps exist) and educator effectiveness data, (b) support cross-district planning, and (c) strategically support capacity-building in schools and classrooms focused on specific focus areas. All of these actions will be done in concert with district leadership teams to ensure districts take the role in driving district and school level change efforts.

Obviously – by the very definition of a Focus school – such schools will be high priority for the LDOE. Effectively overseeing implementation of the state focus areas, as well as any additional school-specific, data-determined interventions is of the highest priority to the LDOE.

Network Teams Adaptation to District Needs

District Network Teams support local decision making, provide resources, training and clear information, and help districts understand and respond to accountability.

Through the district network teams, the LDOE is able to ensure:

- policy supports local decision making;
- effective accountability mechanisms are in place;
- resources reflect quality practices and align to the state standards for learning;
- training is available on how to use the resources to improve student learning;
- communication reaches the multiple layers of the education system; and
- data are available that are understandable and easily accessed.

The district network team structure is built to adapt to the changing needs of the Louisiana's educators, schools and districts. The focus of the network teams is reevaluated and altered at the end of every school year based on feedback from the district staff and reflections by the district team members.

2012-2013:

Networks were created in 2012 with an almost singular focus on implementation of Compass and the Common Core State Standards. Networks trained all Compass evaluators, supported use of the Compass Information System, and ensured educators were aware of the assessment shifts aligned to Common Core State Standards. Networks also played a critical role in supporting communications, training, and district planning.

During the school year 2012-2013, networks focused on supporting districts in planning and implementing the focus areas as they related to Compass and Common Core (Goal Setting, Assessment and Content, Feedback, Collaboration, and Identifying leaders). Networks' key activities were supporting districts in setting goals and planning for priorities, fostering collaboration opportunities between districts, and working with district level staff to conduct school level visits for monitoring implementation and student success.

2013-2014:

Louisiana learned critical lessons that informed the focus for 2013-2014:

- planning with districts should start in the late winter/early spring,
- districts needed additional support with implementation and structures for systems (collaboration and feedback) necessary to drive improvements,

- and Teacher Leaders from each school would be critical for supporting implementation of Common Core State Standards.

In 2013-2014, each network team targeted its efforts on supporting two specific focus areas: collaboration and feedback. These areas were identified as essential systems that drive educator improvement and student learning. Louisiana developed a statewide Teacher Leader Cadre of more than 2,000 teachers – one from every school – to support school level communication and use of resources to plan for instruction in support of the shift to CCSS.

Each network team began the year working with district level staff, school leaders, and educators to analyze student-level data from the previous school and set goals for the upcoming school year. This was followed by planning meetings to create a strategy for achieving each goal. This process was completed with every Focus school and Focus Monitor schools (schools are considered Focus Monitor schools for two years after leaving Focus status). Throughout the school year, these meeting continue to monitor and trouble-shoot during implementation. An example of the record of the goal setting, planning, and implementation meetings for one of the networks can be seen here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/network-4-tracker.xlsx?sfvrsn=2

Networks continued to have the same structure as in the years prior, including the specialized data and workflow roles. Another specialized role was added to networks: Early Childhood coach. These coaches support the development of local early childhood networks.

2014-2015:

Networks continue to be a critical component for maintaining effective communication with districts, and the collaboration/feedback work is leading to the implementation of strong organizational structures in more schools and districts. The greatest success is seen when networks have specific entry points into district work (data specialists, early childhood coaches, workflow specialists). This year, networks will be more specific with the entry points they use to engage districts. Networks will become extensions of priority work areas of the department to ensure effective support of implementation is occurring in those areas through partnership with districts and other stakeholders.

The tight alignment between network entry points and LDOE priorities will greatly enhance Louisiana's efforts to improve student outcomes. Focus schools will benefit directly from this through the Teacher Leader and principal collaboration. For 2014-2015, districts have an opportunity to select at least two Teacher Leaders for each school as well as increase district and principal representation in the Teacher Leader groups. This means that focus schools will be able to have more than one teacher represented at the Teacher Leader events. Focus schools will also be impacted by the work across the other priority areas (district planning, early childhood, and high school programs).

During the 2014-2015 school year, networks will focus on supporting five priority areas with related network goals/accountability for each area:

District Planning: Networks ensure districts have an articulated set of priorities and an aligned budget by supporting districts through a cycle of data analysis, planning and budgeting.

Early Childhood: Networks ensure all children enter kindergarten with critical academic and social skills. Networks will increase the number of at-risk young children that will be served for fall 2016

by ensuring all districts are participating in a pilot by fall 2015. Networks support new and existing pilots to a) make progress on building a common enrollment system; b) build the assessment/reflection cycle for teachers; and c) establish and strengthen the leadership structure. More information about the early childhood pilots can be accessed at this link: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2014/11/18/all-louisiana-school-districts-apply-to-join-early-childhood-network).

High School: Networks ensure all high school students have a personalized plan for achieving either a TOPS Tech diploma or a TOPS University diploma by expanding student opportunities in all districts. Networks will help districts: a) build student career counseling support that allows for individualized student planning; b) implement transitional 9th grade programs that help students graduate with an age-appropriate cohort; c) expand student participation in advanced college credit coursework; and d) create and implement basic and advanced Jumpstart pathways.

Principals: Networks prioritize the key student and teacher shifts through ensuring principals set meaningful SLTs, use Compass data routinely, and leverage Teacher Leaders.

Teacher Leaders: Networks ensure Teacher Leaders are familiar with the tools relevant to assessing, planning, and instructing.

Why use the Network process to determine specific intervention?

This process, which focuses at every level of the education system (district, school, principal, and teacher), enables alignment and focus across educators. Targets for student improvements will be defined through work with district staff, principal staff, and teachers using the data and tools available. This will create a set of common expectations for students and educators in each district. The network approach is necessary as it enables tailored support for each district based on district capacity and needs. The Network structure allows the LDOE to build relationships with educators and administrators that enable the trust needed to honestly analyze current practices and plan for student success. By dividing districts into teams, the LDOE is able to provide the support and facetime that would not be possible using a one-size-fits-all statewide support model.

In addition to implementing the district network team strategy, the SEA also provides supports for Focus schools in the following areas:

- **Believe and Succeed grant:** The LDOE leveraged its 1003a funds to develop a competitive grant program to provide funding for districts to turn around Focus schools. Districts with Focus schools may apply for Believe and Succeed grants to:
    - Develop new schools leaders to turn around Focus schools; or,
    - Recruit and set up a district or school turnaround organization that would institutionalize positive leadership behaviors both at the school and the district level.

  More about the Believe and Succeed initiative can be found here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/schools/louisiana's-call-to-action/district-believe-and-succeed-initiatives.

- **Leverage existence of RSD:** The LDOE coordinates its services to Focus schools with the RSD to ensure there are consistent, well-planned supports for all schools. The LDOE also highlights successful turnaround strategies used by the RSD to help other schools and districts avoid state takeover through bold reforms.

- **Tiered supports and thoughtful resource allocation:** Because the LDOE lacks the capacity to

provide intensive support to all qualifying schools and districts, the LDOE provides different levels of service to districts with low-performing schools in an effort to strategically deploy scarce resources to impact the most students possible. Both LDOE programs and additional discretionary funding (e.g., Race to the Top-like funding competitions) are awarded to districts and schools based upon a thoughtful assessment of both their will and skill to make the bold changes required to turn around Focus schools.

- **Increase common resources:** The LDOE continues to develop toolkits, webinars, and other resources for all districts to utilize in their school turnaround strategies, including targeted information and supports for the effective implementation of CCSS and Compass. The development of these resources is tied to the results of the Focus schools' needs assessments and network support conversations statewide.

- **Thoughtful use of external providers:** In areas where districts and/or the LDOE have low capacity, the LDOE will create a robust and comprehensive approach to attract, evaluate, and match external providers in a number of key areas of turnaround. This may include charter management organizations that will assume the operations of entire schools, private providers that offer a targeted set of services, and community-based partners that help to extend learning time, engage students through creative activities, and increase family engagement. The LDOE will provide information and assure quality regarding external providers for LEAs and Focus schools to be able to select the external providers that best target the Focus schools' needs.

- **Additional supports:** The SEA will improve supports in a number of different other areas that emphasize capacity building, including data tracking and management, policy development, and budget planning.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Schools should only exit Focus school status after improving on accountability dimensions and maintaining those improvements over a period of time. As leading indicators demonstrate that a school is improving, the resources for that school can be adjusted. However, the Focus schools should continue to be monitored as a Focus school until gains are sustained over a period of at least two years. The gains must be sufficient enough to increase the Focus schools' letter grade by at least one letter grade (i.e., an SPS of 50+) thereby demonstrating increased proficiency for all students, including traditional subgroups.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

The list of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years can be viewed at this link: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/accountability.

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Over the 12+ years of Louisiana's accountability system and particularly throughout the course of RSD oversight and implementation, the LDOE has continually refined and enhanced its district and school support models. Moving forward, the LDOE will continue to actively create and refine incentives and supports to improve student achievement in schools and districts. Many of these ideas are highlighted and described below.

(1) Supporting Families and Schools and Incentivizing Improvement Through the Accountability System

As discussed at length in earlier sections, Louisiana annually publishes School and District Performance Reports. Starting in 2012, the School Performance Report included school and district progress on a number of key metrics (See Section 2.A for more information), additions which are likely to incentivize higher performance while also providing helpful, specific information on areas for improvement.

Because the reports are easily understandable and include only the most relevant information, parents can use the information to determine how to support their child's school, advocate for improvements in performance, and learn about other educational options. School leaders can use the information to identify areas of strength and weakness, target professional development, identify high school curriculum needs, make personnel decisions, and develop improvement strategies. Report cards have continued to be improved over time based on feedback and can be accessed here (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/).

The school and district letter grades provide additional incentives for continuous improvement, in addition to public awareness. As mentioned in the Focus school section above, letter grades in Louisiana are tied some of the most significant education reform policies and laws in nation. Students in C, D, and F schools have access to school-level and course-level choice, funded by the district. Public school choice is required for any student attending a D or F school. Lastly, charter applicants wishing to open schools in districts with a D or F letter grade may bypass the local application process and apply directly to the state board.

(2) Supporting Schools and Districts through a Burden Reduction Initiative and Structural Changes

Louisiana recognizes the importance of building local capacity to improve student performance. In particular, the state acknowledges that it should be more diligent in removing bureaucratic burdens placed upon districts. To that end, the LDOE is committed to eliminating unnecessary paperwork burdens and streamlining processes for LEAs so that the full extent of their attention may be placed on improving student performance. The LDOE designed and executed a Burden Reduction Initiative, an agency-wide effort to reduce administrative burdens placed upon local districts and to enable districts to access money more easily, and use it more effectively, and efficiently. This enhanced autonomy served to free up additional district resources to concentrate on student performance, rather than compliance

measures.

The goals of the Burden Reduction Initiative are as follows:

- Streamline federal and state application, monitoring, and reporting requirements for school districts as much as legally permissible.
- Develop templates for plans and budgets that guide school districts through the process of using multiple funding sources to support proven education initiatives.
- Develop tools using existing federal and state flexibilities to assist school districts in utilizing funds for maximum effectiveness through the coordination of multiple funding sources to support single initiatives.

In order to streamline communication, the LDOE also made structural changes. As referenced above, Network Teams were created; the team consists of LDOE staff that function as a liaison between districts and the LDOE. The Network Teams serve every region of the state by providing resources, support and expertise on the ground. In addition to adding Network Teams, the LDOE assigned Points of Contact (POC) to each team. The POCS serve as a single point of contact who can provide technical assistance on federal grant programs. All POCs have a deep knowledge about how to best use federal dollars to serve the school and district strategic plans. This allows districts to know the name of one person whom they can call for support, rather than calling a different person for every grant program. Finally, efforts to increase collaboration within the agency were enhanced to better streamline communication to districts.

Communication

Organizing the LDOE in a more cohesive way facilitated better communication with districts. All communication to districts goes through the Network Teams or the weekly Department Newsletter. No longer are individuals communicating on a single topic to school leaders. Instead, announcements, policy changes, resources and information are provided through one of the two methods mentioned above and through an organized, coordinated rollout.

Data Reporting

To better streamline data reporting, the LDOE implemented a year-long Red Tape Reduction Initiative. This project required a heavy internal lift by every office in the building; constant communication and collaboration were essential to the success of the project. Results from this initiative produced the following: reduction of duplicative collections of data elements, a single district-facing calendar listing all data reporting deadlines, regular technical assistance webinars and in-person trainings for data collection systems, and a greater reliance on existing data systems to generate reports protecting districts from unnecessarily reporting duplicative information.

Monitoring

Prior to 2013, the LDOE monitored each federal grant program at least once-a-year and at various times throughout the year. This process was administratively burdensome and resulted in the LDOE interrupting schools multiple times a year taking time away from school leaders performing their most important job. After a year of planning and consolidating, the LDOE now monitors districts one time per year for all federal grant programs. Furthermore, the LDOE has developed a risk-based monitoring approach that identifies districts most at-risk. This project resulted in a Coordinated Monitoring Calendar that is produced once a year and lists all LEAs in the state, their expected monitoring date and

programs that will be monitored. This new process has enabled school leaders to focus on educating Louisiana's children, rather than preparing to demonstrate grant compliance numerous times a year.

(3) Supporting Schools and Districts through Planning and Budgeting Tools

In order to effectively build local capacity to improve student performance, the LDOE must offer guidance and tools to LEAs so that the full extent of their attention may be placed on improving student performance. The combination of several funding sources so they work together to achieve one objective or implement one strategy/program can be a challenge. The LDOE has been focused on serving LEAs in this manner since 2010 with the development of templates and tools for program planning and budgets that guide school districts through the process of using multiple funding sources to support proven education initiatives. The District Planning Guide catalogs the most recent tools and resources, along with an outline of all the major decisions districts must annually make. The 2014-2015 guide can be accessed here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teacher-toolbox-resources/district-planning-guide-for-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=4

The first set of planning tools developed, *Tools for Integrating Education Funds*, commonly referred to as the "Fiscal Model," was the first of its kind in the nation. This toolset offered LEAs straightforward guidance on the integration of federal dollars to support research-based initiatives, including those targeting students in traditional subgroups. A team of leaders from each LEA across the state, including both fiscal and program staff, was trained on the use of these tools. The training centered not only on the use of the tools but the creation of a cohesive team so that budgeting and planning tasks were addressed from a comprehensive approach. The LDOE continues to provide more one-on-one technical assistance to LEAs as they implement this theory of action.

Are Louisiana's AMOs, Along with Other Measures, Used to Identify Other Title 1 Schools that are Not Making Progress or Closing Achievement Gaps and to Provide Incentives and Supports for Those Schools?

As discussed extensively in the AMO section and throughout Principle 2, there are three primary measures of student performance that are aligned to Louisiana's accountability formula and system of incentives.

- First, schools must improve their overall performance by increasing their school performance score by at least ten points if their letter grade is B through F.
- Second, Louisiana's use of a non-proficient subgroup will identify those schools that have less than 35% of the non-proficient students exceeding expected growth, and these schools will not be eligible for any reward status. Coveted progress points are added to a school's SPS for growth achieved by nonproficient students on statewide assessments.
- Finally, the use of traditional ESEA subgroup public reporting will provide to the public, schools, districts, and the state the data necessary to 1) identify the gaps in academic achievement and/or lack of progress, and 2) craft targeted interventions, supports, and technical assistance that will positively impact the performance of the students in specific subgroups through the Network support structure.

Also, as described earlier overview of Act 2, the overall Letter Grade performance is used to inform and support Louisiana's statewide system of choice, as well the LDOE's Network support for LEAs and schools. The existence of the RSD to provide support for Priority schools uniquely allows the District Network teams to spend significant time and resources on improvement in Focus schools and other Title 1 schools with large gaps in student growth and achievement.

What Instructional Practices Will Be Employed to Address the Needs of ELL Students and Students With Exceptionalities in Other Title 1 Schools?

As noted during Louisiana's peer review feedback conference, network leaders look at data with district and school leaders in order to determine needs and gaps both school-wide and in specific subgroups. Then, they use the LDOE-created planning tools to target supports as needed. Overall, the LDOE network leaders differentiate supports based on specific needs of districts and schools.

Additionally, as described previously, targeted supports and interventions maintain focus on the focus areas which drive a system of continuous improvement for students through the network structure. These focus areas stem from Louisiana's belief that Common Core State Standards and the Compass evaluation system serve as guides for student performance expectations and instructional expectations. Also captured in these focus areas is the belief that educating students starts at birth and should provide opportunities for students throughout high school to prepare them for post-secondary success.

The focus areas include:

1) School Leader & Teacher Learning Targets
2) Assessment & Curriculum
3) School & Teacher Collaboration
4) Compass Observation & Feedback
5) Pathway to College and Career
6) Aligned Resources

The cyclical process these elements seek directly lines up the relationship between student performance and instructional practices driving towards a clear vision of higher expectations. As these core elements are mastered at the school level, this process will lead directly to improvements for students. Inherently, this process represents a continuous improvement cycle which defines improvement in terms of student skill acquisition. To support this process, the LDOE Network teams will work collaboratively with districts to set goals using student performance data summarized for all students and broken out into specific sub-group performance; support cross-district planning; and strategically support capacity-building in schools and classrooms focused on specific core elements.

Students with Disabilities and English Language Learner Supports

Decisions regarding instructional needs of students with disabilities, ELL, or any other special population should be determined through concrete understanding of student performance against specific objectives. The core elements not only help schools focus on the routines for ensuring continuous improvement, but also align with ensuring teachers and schools adequately plan and prepare to meet the needs of diverse learners. Each network team includes unique specialists with backgrounds in serving special populations of students. A key element to improving instructional practices with these students includes not only effective planning but tailored feedback on instructional practices with collaborative teaming to identify specific improvements in classroom practice. Collaborating with school and district leaders to ensure effective implementation of these elements will lead to improvements for all students. The value in having a Network Team Member with a background in serving special populations will be demonstrated through their support of effective feedback and collaborative teaming sessions.

How Will Louisiana Ensure Consistent Diagnostics and Improvement Planning Based on the Needs of All Students and All Subgroups and Focused on Closing Achievement Gaps?

As mentioned previously, the goal setting based on a deep data analysis, assessment and content,

feedback, collaboration, and identifying leaders is a key focus for Louisiana Network teams. Implementation of these core elements in every school will lead to dramatic improvements for all of our students. These core elements represent the key systems and routines schools need to engage in to achieve the necessary higher expectations for students set by CCSS and the corresponding required systematic changes in instructional practice. Achieving this shift in every school requires a collaborative, strategic partnership with LEAs focused on diagnostics and improvement planning.

The three key focus points for this interaction include (1) goal setting and reviews with LEAs (3 times a year), (2) facilitated cross-district planning and sharing focused on how to implement the core elements (at least 5 times per year), and (3) capacity building in schools and classrooms on specific core elements (ongoing in targeted schools). The first two activities embody how the LDOE will ensure consistent diagnostics and improvement planning. It is important to consider what consistencies the LDOE seeks to achieve vs. natural and relevant discriminating points necessary to ensure each district crafts a plan both tailored to their student needs and representative of LEA ownership in decision making.

- **Consistency** – Consistency will be achieved through routine frequency and process for every district around diagnostics and planning; routine data points and analyses on goals, subgroup performance/gaps, and SPS; consistency in key behaviors the LDOE seeks to drive effective implementation of in schools (core elements); and consistency in supports received from the LDOE, both with regard to specific contacts at the agency and specific engagement activities.
- **Differentiation** – Discriminating points between districts should be represented in how they approach achieving solid implementation of the core elements, setting of unique goals determined by areas of weaknesses in their student population, and any relevant decision making at the LEA level that achieves ownership and empowerment to motivate change.

Starting with the 2013-2014 school year, each school leader receives a principal's report card with information on how their school performed on the metrics that lead to student achievement and postsecondary success, as well as educator effectiveness. The report card compares a school to the district and state and allows school leaders and superintendents, in consultation with the District Network staff, to identify areas with the largest gaps and develop and prioritize strategies that will lead to significant impacts on student achievement.

By setting specific frequencies for goal setting/data review and planning, the LDOE not only embeds a routine structure for having the necessary conversations regarding challenges to continuous improvement but also a natural cycle for plan, do, review, and adapt will begin to take place at every level of the educational system. These are the key steps necessary for making the behavioral shifts required for continuous improvement. In such, as districts plan to tackle key achievement gaps in their districts through targeting based on understanding their data, implementing their plans, reporting to their peers on progress and problem solving barriers, the districts will receive extensive support in understanding their leading and lagging indicators through routine goal review.

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

Increasing LEA Capacity

Louisiana has developed a strong reform plan and made significant progress toward implementation; however to continuing moving this work forward, the LDOE recognizes the importance and critical need for increased LEA capacity. To advance the capacity of LEAs, Louisiana has identified four components of capacity that drive improved performance in districts and schools:

1. **Governance and Leadership**

The LDOE recognizes the need to inform and empower parents and the general public to actively participate in the governance of their local schools. This is why the LDOE has developed clear, transparent School Performance Reports containing a wealth of easily understood information about school performance and has implemented a number of student assessments to inform parents whether their child is on track academically. The use of the charter school model as turnaround and choice strategies has also increased parental and community engagement and shared decision-making, giving local stakeholders greater input into the direction of their schools and holding local school governing boards more accountable for performance. The LDOE has also begun to proactively reach out to existing and newly elected local school board members and charter governing board members to develop relationships, familiarize them with the state's key education reforms, and offer support as they strive to increase student achievement in their communities.

Likewise, Louisiana must empower and support local school leaders in effectively managing their schools so that student growth can be achieved. The Louisiana Legislature, through passage of legislation, has taken bold steps to empower local school superintendents and CEOs to effectively manage their school districts without inappropriate interference from governing board members in daily school management decisions. In support of this autonomy, the LDOE regularly communicates with local school district superintendents and charter school leaders to communicate expectations for growth and to offer supports for them and their staff in achieving those expectations. This is done through one-on-one

meetings with local school district leaders, but also through regular conference calls with LDOE's executive team and bi-weekly, streamlined emails from the State Superintendent of Education that contain all information to be communicated to local school districts by the LDOE staff. These streamlined communications were in direct response to local superintendents' requests for more coordinated communication between the LDOE and local school districts, eliminating the hundreds of emails, letters, and notices regularly sent by LDOE to local school leaders statewide. An annual superintendents' meeting is also hosted to facilitate the sharing of best practices, identify common challenges and available supports, and to solicit feedback on key statewide education initiatives.

2. Mission, Vision, and Strategy

The vision of the LDOE is to create a world-class education for all Louisiana students. Its mission is to ensure higher academic achievement for all students, eliminate all achievement gaps, and prepare students to be effective citizens in a global market. In 2010, the LDOE and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted nine critical goals to focus its efforts on improving student achievement. The state's critical goals are:

i. Students enter Kindergarten ready to learn.
ii. Students are literate by third grade.
iii. Students will enter the fourth grade on time.
iv. Students perform at or above grade level in ELA by 8th grade.
v. Students perform at or above grade level in Mathematics by 8th grade.
vi. Students graduate from high school on time.
vii. Students will enroll in post-secondary education within two years of graduation.
viii. Students will complete at least one year of college successfully.
ix. Students will achieve all eight goals, regardless of race or class.

Each goal has accompanying targets with ultimate and immediate goals, measured by a percentage of students achieving that goal by a given year. The LDOE regularly examines state and district progress in achieving the goals, evaluates state-led initiatives through research and student achievement data to determine if they are indeed helping districts to meet the goals, and makes district and state progress reports available to school leaders, policymakers, and the general public. Districts have been able to use the LDOE's critical goals as a model for the creation of district-level critical goals. This data, combined with the new School Performance Reports, will provide valuable information to all stakeholders so that districts and schools can assess their overall progress and implement proven strategies and interventions.

3. Strategic Relationships

The LDOE recognizes that local investment is essential to the success of its key initiatives and the achievement of the state's critical education goals. Thus, the LDOE has developed all of its current initiatives with input from local educators and the general public through many regional educator meetings, community presentations and workshops, webinars, printed materials, and stakeholder gatherings. In addition, as described earlier in this section, the LDOE has sought to establish strategic relationships with district school leaders that ensure streamlined communication and frequent feedback. The District Network teams are one example of the development of strategic relationships (See below). Furthermore, the State Superintendent of Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education have disseminated information and statewide education data to state policymakers in order to advance and garner support for the state's critical goals and the key reforms needed to achieve them.

Specific examples of the ways in which LDOE is enhancing district capacity are described below.

Transition Supports

As discussed in Principles 1 and 3 of this request, Louisiana is providing intensive supports to schools and districts in a number of key areas, including school turnaround, serving students with special needs, and transitioning to more rigorous standards and evaluations. Going forward, the LDOE will work to more effectively target these supports, improve coordination and alignment to maximize their impact, and clearly communicate how these supports will lead educators and students to be successful in teaching and learning the Common Core State Standards. Existing supports have been enhanced with the addition of specific trainings, professional development, resources, and transition activities related to the new standards and evaluations, including:

- Crosswalks and content comparison documents clearly outlining the changes from current Grade-Level Expectations to Common Core State Standards;
- Multiple trainings and professional development opportunities for district and school leaders;
- A transitional curriculum incorporating both existing state Grade-Level Expectations and Common Core State Standards;
- A new state-developed curriculum guide aligned with CCSS that includes a full set of ELA units plans to build a complete curriculum and a robust set of instructional tools for math;
- Curriculum and assessment resources for regular education students, limited English proficient students, and students with disabilities aligned to the Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/instructional-materials-review/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews);
- Professional development on the use of research-based performance tasks in ELA and Mathematics aligned with the Common Core State Standards;
- Model personnel evaluation frameworks for LEA use;
- Intensive, comprehensive, ongoing professional development on setting student learning targets and using evaluations to inform supports to educators in need of improvement; and
- A geographically-diverse pilot of COMPASS;
- Targeted support for a cadre of over 4,000 teachers representing every district and school in the state to ensure that every school has a series of experts on the standards and curricular tools (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/collaboration-teacher-leadership);
- A one-stop-shop Teacher Support Toolbox with resources for setting goals, planning, teaching, and evaluating student results through the year (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox);
- Network support for district personnel including planning guidance and month planning calls (http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/district-support-toolbox/district-network-support-structure);
- Regular communication, technical assistance, and trainings to support technology enhancements necessary for online assessments; and
- A library of instructional videos that illustrate quality instruction connected to Louisiana's Compass instructional rubric and the CCSS.

Chartering

The state's charter authorizing process consists of a rigorous independent review that is conducted in

accordance with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) *Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of their proposed educational, financial, and organizational plans, in-person interviews with governing board and principal candidates, and their track record of performance. Less than half of all applicants are approved annually. Those who are authorized to operate a charter school are monitored annually for academic, financial, and operational performance and must demonstrate meaningful growth in student achievement in order to receive a renewal contract. In addition, even before a charter school is eligible for renewal, the state may revoke its contract for failure to meet expectations. The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has not hesitated to close charter schools that fail to meet standards, evidenced by nearly 20 state-authorized charter schools closing since 1996, most facing non- renewal or revocation.

This strong system of charter authorizing has earned Louisiana the reputation of having one of the highest-performing charter systems in the nation. A 2009 report by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) gave high marks to Louisiana's charter schools when compared to the state's traditional schools and to charter schools in 14 other states and Washington, D.C. The report revealed that Louisiana charter school students showed greater gains in ELA and Mathematics following students' second year of enrollment. Similarly, a review of the 2010-2011 School Performance Scores for Louisiana charter schools revealed that charter schools, particularly those in New Orleans, continue to outperform the rest of the state. The state's average increase in School Performance Scores was 2.2 points from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011. The average increase in charter school scores nearly tripled state gains, with state charters increasing their scores by 6.3 points during the same time period.

In 2011, the state approved its first two virtual charter schools following extensive research, stakeholder engagement, and consultation with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning on best practices in quality virtual charter school authorizing. This work culminated in the development of a detailed addendum to the state's charter school application for virtual charter applicants, as well as state policy to address expectations for virtual charter providers and the unique needs of students enrolled in such schools and programs. During this time, the state also took steps to enhance Louisiana's charter school policies to address the performance of for-profit education management organizations who partner with non-profit charter operators, including required performance-based contracts. The LDOE will use these performance-based contracts as models to assist local school districts in forming partnerships with charter and other external providers.

In requesting flexibility through this waiver, it should be noted that Louisiana will not weaken current flexibilities and autonomies afforded to charter operators, nor will it weaken the ability of authorizers to non-renew or revoke charter contracts for failure to meet established performance expectations.

Expanded Learning Service Providers

Community-based partners and other external providers can greatly support districts and schools in increasing student achievement. Such partnerships enable schools to extend learning time, engage students in activities aligned to the school's curriculum, involve families in their children's education, and expose students to diverse learning opportunities. While these partnerships are capable of producing many positive student outcomes, they ultimately must lead to improved student achievement outcomes. In 2008, Louisiana instituted performance standards for expanded learning service providers, basing one-third of evaluations on academic performance, one-third on program compliance, and one-third on parental satisfaction. In an effort to further increase expectations and enhance accountability, Louisiana will begin to base providers' evaluations predominately on evidence

of raising student achievement, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. This new achievement-focused evaluation system will be used to enhance Louisiana's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, and while districts and schools will no longer be required to contract with an external provider for Supplemental Education Services as a remedy under the federal accountability system, the LDOE will continue to facilitate and promote school partnerships with providers that have demonstrated effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Expanded learning service providers' effectiveness data will be published online for review by education leaders seeking to partner with high-quality providers and parents seeking to enroll their children in effective programs. Additionally, Louisiana will require providers to demonstrate the degree to which their programs are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Moving Forward

The state can play an important role in ensuring that only the most effective providers make their services available to children and families and supplement the traditional school system. To that end, the LDOE will identify high-quality providers that can serve students and also leverage its scale and influence to provide support to districts, while respecting local autonomy. The LDOE will develop a rigorous central process for the approval and continued operation of external providers who deliver charter, virtual, and industry-based programs to Louisiana students and partner with local school districts. At the heart of that process will be the provider's ability to increase student achievement, demonstrating capacity, a track record of performance, alignment with the Common Core Standards, and the use of effective educators. Like the state's rigorous performance expectations for charter schools, other external providers will be subject to a thorough initial evaluation, regular performance reviews, public reporting of performance data, and possible termination or non-renewal as an approved provider in Louisiana.

How Will Louisiana Monitor the Implementation of Interventions in Priority and Focus Schools?

Implementation fidelity is the key variable that leads to continuous and sustainable change. Without clearly defining the change the LDOE seeks and embedding systematic routines to assess the extent to which this happens, success will only be achieved incrementally. Thus, the LDOE has stated clearly the core elements that will lead to improvements for our students and these elements should be happening in every school. As stated previously, the core elements are goal setting, assessment and content, feedback, collaboration, and identifying leaders.

For Priority schools, the RSD provides support in this area through the Office of Analytics, which provides data analysis for the RSD on a system-wide and individual school basis in order to inform RSD school support and transformation decisions. The Achievement Team works with direct-run principals to review student data to inform personnel and instructional decisions. In direct-run schools, staff also participate frequently in each school's cluster meetings of teachers to review student data to analyze progress in achieving student performance goals, and interpret this data to inform instructional decisions inside the classroom. Cluster teams are groups of teachers in the same grade level for elementary school, and groups of teachers in the same subject-area for high schools.

Additionally, the state reports publicly on metrics of student achievement and college and career readiness and BESE will use this data to make school closure, charter approval, and turnaround decisions to ensure students continue to have access to high quality education options.

Achieving implementation fidelity is a process of data collection, review, and adaptation of actions in

response to areas of implementation weakness. The relationship between the District Networks Teams and the Focus schools lends itself naturally toward strategic routine implementation, data collection, and conversation . As stated previously, these key points of interaction include goal setting, cross-district planning, and capacity building in schools and classrooms. Through school level interactions, the LDOE will partner with LEA leaders to observe implementation of the core elements in classrooms, specifically in Focus schools. This activity represents a direct data collection of implementation information. The LDOE and LEA will work together on reviewing the information and problem solving necessary adjustments to achieve improvements in implementation. More information on the role of District Networks teams can be found in section 2.E and records of the meetings used to monitor implementation can be seen here: http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/network-focus-schools.zip?sfvrsn=2

Another key metric that will be used statewide for assessing fidelity of instructional shifts aligned to CCSS will be the use of the teacher observation rubric. Louisiana has selected a modified version of the Danielson Rubric which has evidence of validity and reliability for assessing behaviors that drive student improvements. Implementation of this tool is crucial to ensuring success of our strategic plan. Thus, the LDOE is focused on achieving aligned understanding and use of the rubric throughout the state as it works with LEAS and schools. Through the process of frequently shared planning and data review, routine opportunities to discuss and problem solve issues around data collection of fidelity information and use of this data will emerge. Districts will have opportunities to learn from each other best practices and hold each other accountable for reporting and sharing this information.

While the activities stated above speak to the intent of building LEA capacity for understanding and collecting fidelity of implementation information, it is important to note that the LDOE will continue to maintain a focus on this issue. The LDOE is laying the groundwork for a clear vision and strategic plan in how the LDOE engages with districts and schools. The delivery unit will continue to support data collection and analysis on implementation information to ensure the LDOE strategic plan is achieving consistency and efficacy in its implementation and riving the changes the LDOE seeks to occur in classrooms. The most relevant information will be assessment of this classroom level change in instruction – the same metric directly relevant to LEAs. Thus, the partnership between the LDOE and LEAs around this key variable will be a turning point for understanding the extent to which Louisiana is achieving sustainable change.

What is Louisiana's Process for the Rigorous Review and Approval of External Providers Used to Support Interventions in Priority and Focus Schools? Will Louisiana Leverage Funds from ESEA 1116(B)(10) TO Support School Interventions?

Louisiana has strong systems in place for the rigorous review and approval of external providers, including charter school operators, expanded learning providers, and other educational service providers. As described previously in this section, the Louisiana Department of Education and all local school districts are required by law to use rigorous independent evaluations of charter school applications that are in accordance with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. These evaluations include a review of the applicant's proposed educational, financial, and organizational plans, consideration of organization's track record of success, and an in-person interview. Charter contract renewals are based primarily on the school's academic performance and student growth, as well as its financial health, governance, and compliance with laws and regulations. This process has enabled Louisiana to grow one of the strongest charter school systems in the country, as evidenced by independent research and Louisiana's own comparison of student growth in charters versus traditional public schools. The use of this rigorous process for the selection of charter operators for Recovery School

District (Priority) schools has been and will continue to be a successful strategy for rapidly turning around persistently failing schools.

Additionally, as described in Section 2.G., Louisiana has increased performance standards for expanded learning providers by basing evaluations primarily on student growth. Beginning in summer 2013, 21st Century Community Learning Center providers must show a positive effect on academic achievement as measured by the state identified assessment. The same evaluation framework will be used for expanded learning providers that apply to offer before or after school programs and summer programs in Louisiana public schools, including Priority and Focus schools. Priority and Focus schools have the opportunity to select providers from a list of approved providers that have demonstrated success through this rigorous evaluation process, if they wish to utilize such services.

In addition to charter and expanded learning providers, Louisiana has developed a high-quality course provider program, authorized by legislation passed and signed into law during the 2012 Legislative Session and described earlier in Principle 2. This program, which attracted many virtual education providers, will offer courses to all Louisiana students with an emphasis on low-performing schools and schools that do not offer the courses available through the program. Providers may apply to the Louisiana Department of Education for initial approval and undergo a rigorous external evaluation. They must achieve aggressive performance targets in order to remain authorized as an approved course provider. More information on the Louisiana Supplemental Course Academy can be access here: http://lacourses.net/.

The Louisiana Department of Education's network structure for district support includes guidance to districts with focus schools on effectively using these resources to improve student achievement, and the Recovery School District engages in the same processes with focus schools.

How Will Louisiana Hold LEAs, in Addition to Schools, Accountable For Improving School and Student Performance?

As described throughout the waiver, Louisiana has a long-standing, rigorous, state-created accountability system which holds both schools and LEAs accountable. LEAs, just like schools, receive Letter Grades. These Letter Grades represent the overall performance of the schools and students within a district. In the past and moving forward, district (or LEA) letter grades will be reported using the refined Performance Report format. As a result, parents and community members will have access to overall district performance, but also district performance against key metrics – participation in advanced courses, ACT performance, graduation rates, etc. Given the new statewide system of choice (described previously), parents and communities may use this information to make critical student placement and school governance decisions.

In addition to Louisiana's rigorous accountability system through which parents and communities hold districts accountable, the LDOE's Network structure will also be used to hold LEAs accountable. The key points of interaction between the LDOE and LEAs discussed in this document represent routine systems of accountability for the LEAs. Because the LDOE intends to review and discuss data, planning, and school level change with LEAs regularly, a pressure point will be created to motivate LEA ownership of change. Through goal setting and data review (three times a year) LEA and LDOE leadership will have an opportunity to engage in targeted conversations around specific change and impact on student results. This relationship and routine will serve as an intimate pressure point for districts to take action against the key facts of student weaknesses. Through cross-district planning and sharing (at least five times a year), peer accountability will be established where districts will both challenge and support each others' plans and progress against implementing the core elements in schools. Through activities of on- going

capacity building in schools and classrooms, the LDOE and LEA will experience firsthand the progress being made in classrooms towards changes in instructional practices. This will serve as an immediate reality check against effectiveness of the LEA's plan to drive change, which will serve as a pressure point for ensuring routine self-monitoring and self-accountability. All these factors taken together create frequent accountability pressures for LEAs to take control of driving sustainable change into their classrooms and schools.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☐ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).	☒ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

Please refer to Section 3.B, Stakeholder Engagement for a description of the process Louisiana used to meaningfully involve teachers and school leaders in the development of these guidelines.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

Louisiana's Approach to Student Achievement: Educator Effectiveness

The rigorous standards and strong accountability system that Louisiana has put into place are only meaningful if accompanied by efforts to support high-quality instruction and continuous improvement of Louisiana's educators. LDOE's teacher and leader evaluation and support system, known as Compass, will provide educators with important information about their instructional practice and impacts on student performance. Compass has clear guidelines designed with high-quality evaluation and continual improvement of instruction and leadership in mind, and is aligned with Louisiana's Race to the Top application.

In 2010, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 54, in an effort to improve teaching and learning across the state and to establish within each LEA an effective system for support and evaluation of certified and other professional personnel. Act 54's aim was to (See Attachment 11a):

- Support teachers, schools, LEAs and education leaders in raising student achievement by providing tools and information to drive improvement;
- Provide clear performance expectations and timely feedback to all teachers and leaders;
- Provide a framework and more opportunities for professional growth and development through a comprehensive performance management approach that begins at the beginning of the school year and ends at the end of the school year; and
- Establish professional development as an integral part of a career in education.

§3881(A) and (B)(3-4)	
Evaluation Requirements	Act 54
§3885(A) and (B)	Act 54
Supporting continuous improvement	§3881(A) and (B)(3-4) §3885(A) and (B) §3902(B)(2)
Meaningful differentiation	§3902(C)(2)
Multiple, valid measures	§3902(B)(5)
Regular evaluations	§3902(A)

Table 3.A. Act 54's Alignment with USDOE Guidelines

Louisiana believes that, in order to achieve its mission of providing a world-class education to all students, Louisiana must ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective educational leader in every school. To achieve that end, all educators will be evaluated annually with fifty-percent of their evaluation based on measures of student growth, including non-tested grades and subjects (NTGS) and fifty-percent based on other measures of effectiveness beginning in 2012-2013. Compass is thus a marked improvement over past systems of evaluation that have traditionally only measured teacher performance in the classroom using a binary scoring system and have not tied this input to the most crucial output: student achievement. The evaluation formula, as defined in Act 54, demonstrates Louisiana's commitment to improving student achievement and educator effectiveness by tying an educator's evaluation directly to their students' outcomes thus ensuring educators have meaningful data to facilitate ongoing professional development. To effectively and meaningfully differentiate levels of teacher and leader effectiveness, a four-point rating scale will be used. This scale allows for increased and targeted differentiation of educator performance and more precisely informs and guides the

accompanying support and development.

Compass will provide rigorous tools and a model for educator and leader support and evaluation statewide but also allows for evaluation, approval and implementation of rigorous local tools aligned with the requirements of Act 54 (e.g. The System for Teacher & Student Advancement-TAP®). Through Compass, educators set meaningful and ambitious professional and student achievement goals and leverage a comprehensive system of observation, evaluation, and feedback to guide professional development specific to their needs and goals.

Compass provides a balance of support and strict accountability for student achievement, including consequences for those educators not meeting expectations. This ensures that Louisiana educators are held accountable to increasing student achievement while also receiving the support needed to grow and develop as professionals.

Stakeholder Engagement

Sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines

A critical component in the development of Compass has been and continues to be input and recommendations from stakeholders. Beginning in October 2010, teachers, principals, LEA administrators, board members, legislators, parents, students, community advocates and representatives of education organizations participated in workgroups, focus groups, webinars, surveys, pilots, and/or served on the Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation (ACEE) (See Table 3.B). To effectively reach as many stakeholders as possible, Louisiana implemented an aggressive communication campaign via the web (e.g., LDOE and Act 54 webpages), monthly superintendents' conference calls, and educator and professional organization list serves. To ensure accessibility and representation across the state, events were held locally, regionally, and via webinar.

These stakeholder engagement sessions were organized to gather input on the following topics:

- Teacher and leader competencies and performance standards
- Educators' perspective on identifying effective teaching practices in the classroom
- Measures of student growth using the value-added model and for non-tested-grades and subjects
- Policy development
- Parent and community feedback on educator effectiveness reforms
- Compass Pilot

Stakeholders at various levels provided input on these topics. These stakeholders included:

An Educator-Driven Process

- Nearly **10,000** educators participated in Act 54 briefings;
- More than **2,600** educators participated in online surveys to inform design and development;
- About **250** teachers have been involved in workgroups and focus groups;
- More than **15,000** teachers have participated in three value-added pilots; and
- Over half of ACEE is made up of practicing teachers.

- National experts on educator effectiveness and evaluation
- Superintendents
- Deans and professors of colleges of education
- Teachers
- Exceptional Student Services representatives, included Inclusion, English Language Learners (ELL), Gifted & Talented, and Profound Disabilities
- Central office supervisors
- Professional organizations
- Parents and students

Under Act 54, the law required a statewide advisory panel (ACEE) be formed to engage key members of the education community in the development of Louisiana's new teacher and leader support and evaluation system. ACEE acts in an advisory capacity to provide the LDOE and the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) input on specific, key elements of the new educator support and evaluation system. Beginning in September 2010, Act 54 charged ACEE with the three following responsibilities:

Charge 1: To make recommendations on the development of a value-added assessment model to be used in educator evaluations.

Charge 2: To make recommendations on the identification of student growth measures for grades and subjects for which value-added data is not available, as well as for personnel for whom value-added data is not available.

Charge 3: To make recommendations on the adoption of standards of effectiveness.

Many resources were provided to the ACEE committee to support development of recommendations for each charge. On the first charge, regarding development of Louisiana's value-added model, committee members worked closely with value-added expert and developer of Louisiana's statistical value-added model, Dr. George Noell. In addition to this support, ACEE members also had the opportunity to participate in a discussion with national experts on value-added, including Dr. Jane Hannaway, the founding Director of the Education Policy Center at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. ACEE members also learned from and engaged with a panel of Louisiana teachers and administrators representing school districts who participated in the value-added pilot.

On the second charge, regarding identification of NTGS growth measure, committee members participated in discussion with national NTGS experts from Denver, CO; Hillsborough County, FL; the Tennessee Department of Education; and the Kentucky Department of Education. In response to these presentations, ACEE devised a process to construct specific NTGS recommendation which included:

- Breaking NTGS courses into manageable groups;
- Establishing NTGS Educator Workgroups; and
- Creating tools and guidance for NTGS Educator Workgroups.

The ACEE committee drew upon the expertise and analysis provided by the NTGS Educator Workgroups in making recommendations related to measures of student growth in NTGS.

On the third charge, regarding the adoption of standards of effectiveness, committee members participated in mini-workshops designed to explore the meaning of highly effective, effective, and

ineffective educator performance. As a result of these workshops, the committee made recommendations regarding these definitions for educator performance with respect to student growth measures (value-added, NTGS) and qualitative observation rubrics and overall evaluation calculation methods.

In addition to the resources outlined above, over the course of the committee, the Hope Street Group, in coordination with the LDOE, provided a private online workspace for committee members to continuously communicate and discuss pertinent issues related to the charges of the committee (See Appendix 3.H for the ACEE Committee Summary Report).

In addition to ACCE, stakeholder input was crucial to the development and adoption of Louisiana's support and evaluation system. Because of that, Louisiana created multiple venues and channels for educator and community participation. Stakeholder engagement remains a priority for gathering technical and general feedback throughout Louisiana's ongoing Compass pilot and statewide implementation and the LDOE is continuing to explore other avenues to ensure accessibility and participation of all stakeholders.

Phase	Events	Stakeholder Engagement	# of Participants
Tool Development	Task Force and Development Workshops	• LCET Task Force meeting 1 • LCET Task Force meeting 2 • Teacher Standards Workshop 1 • Teacher Standards Workshop 2 • Leader Standards Workshop 1 • Leader Standards Workshop 2 • Superintendent Tiger[2] Team 1 • Superintendent Tiger Team 2 • NTGS Workgroup Meetings • Educator Policy Workgroup	343[1]
	Focus Groups – Feedback on Effective Teaching Practices and Measures of Student Growth	• LCET District Focus Groups • NTGS Focus Groups	47
	Online Surveys	• LCET Online Survey Completed • Leader Competency Model Online Survey • Supplemental Task Force Online Survey • NTGS Survey Respondents	2,955
	Webinars	• LCET Webinar for Colleges and Universities • Leadership Standards Kickoff Webinar Overview • Superintendent Policy Webinar	37
	Oversight Meetings	• Technical Advisory Meetings • Superintendent Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation	60%
	Parent & Student Engagement	• NAACP panel discussion and work session on educator effectiveness and school turnaround reform	34%

[1] Counts may be duplicates as some participants attended more than one workshop.
[2] LEA Superintendents who served on the State Superintendent's Advisory Team on Act 54 implementation

Phase	Events	Stakeholder Engagement	# of Participants
Policy	ACEE Committee	• 50% of practicing classroom educators • 1 appointee from Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana Department of Education • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Educators • 1 appointee from Louisiana Federation of Teachers • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of School Superintendents • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Principals • 1 appointee from Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools • 2 members of the Senate Committee on Education, appointed by the chairman thereof • 2 members of the House Committee on Education, appointed by the chairman thereof • 1 members appointed by each member of Louisiana's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education • 2 parents of public school students	34
Pilot	Value-added Model	Participating in the 2010 pilot was: 19 LEA's, which included 2 charters, 270 schools, and 3,019 teachers who received value added scores. Participating in the 2011 pilot are all LEA's and schools who have data, which equaled: 107 LEA's, 1,074 schools, and 12,273 teachers received value added scores.	15,292
Policy	Qualitative Measures & NTGS	In 2010, one school district participated in a pilot of qualitative measures. In 2011, nine school districts and one charter school are participating in the pilot of NTGS and qualitative measures. These LEAs were selected based on such factors as demographics, number of students, and region. There are several data collection points throughout this pilot that are planned to measure efficacy of the systems, processes, tools, and capacity of schools and districts to implement NTGS and the qualitative evaluation process. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and district leaders will be provided opportunities to share feedback via face-to-face interactions and surveys. Data will also be collected on usage of HCIS to drive the performance management process. In addition to these formalized opportunities for pilot participants to provide the LDE feedback, each district participating in the pilot is assigned an LDE liaison and performance management coach whose purpose is to become embedded in their assigned district to provide technical support, build district capacity, and gain feedback.	~1,500
	Local Policy Development	• Human Resources Directors from LEAs across Louisiana • Deans from various Louisiana teacher preparation programs	~45

Table 3.B. Compass Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Continuous Improvement of Instruction and Leadership

Comprehensive Performance Management Approach to Educator Support & Evaluation

Measuring and reporting performance metrics alone has rarely led to dramatic organizational improvement and outcomes. Act 54 calls for implementation of an educator support and evaluation model that incorporates qualitative and student growth measures as part of a fair and rigorous

comprehensive performance management process. Performance management is a systematic approach to using educator effectiveness data as well as other tools (e.g., observations, goal planning) to facilitate learning, continuous improvement, and a relentless focus on results (e.g., student achievement). It differentiates between educators' effectiveness in a way that informs all human capital decisions (e.g., tenure, compensation, promotion, release), improves teaching and learning over time, and ensures all students are college and career ready. The Compass performance management process includes the following phases:

- Performance Management Planning
- Ongoing Discussions
- Performance Evaluations
- Professional Development & Recognition

Beginning in fall of 2012, the evaluation process will commence at the beginning of each academic year with educators setting goals and creating professional growth plans informed through pre-assessments of their prior performance and student achievement. These plans are designed to assist each educator and administrator with clearly defining the goals, instructional and leadership strategies they intend to use to attain these goals, and the benchmarks by which their performance will be measured. Educators and administrators will discuss these plans with their supervisor. Throughout the year, there will be ongoing observations and evaluations against state-approved standards and goals, self-reflection, and discussions regarding teacher and leader performance.

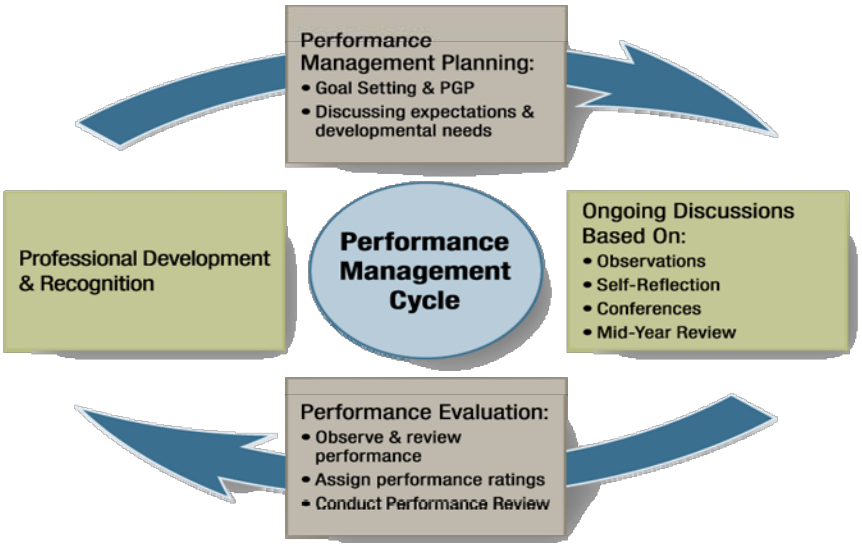


Figure 3.A. Compass Performance Management Cycle

The final performance evaluation will be a combination of the qualitative assessment of performance (Observations and Other Measures of Effectiveness) and measures of student growth (Value-Added, NTGS) resulting in a composite score used to distinguish levels of overall effectiveness for teachers and administrators. Through a comprehensive performance management approach, LEAs and schools provide multiple opportunities for teachers and leaders to receive feedback, reflect on practice, receive rewards for exceptional practices, and consider opportunities for improvement. This process also enables LEAs and schools to identify areas of high need and provide strategic, targeted, differentiated, and job-embedded support to those educators to more effectively enhance and sustain exceptional teaching and learning environments.

Clear, Timely, and Purposeful Feedback to Drive Instructional Improvement

Key Support Tools/Processes for Educators and Leaders
• Teacher and leader rubrics •Evaluator training and certification • Self-assessment/reflection templates • Classroom and school walkthrough forms • Video library linked to rubric • Pre- and post conference observation guides • Required feedback after each observation • Additional resources and training materials

Compass, in its entirety, provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to continuous support and improvement. Observations of educator performance are an essential component of Compass. Act 54 requires that each evaluation at a minimum include at least one formal observation (for teachers) or site visit (for school leaders) and at least one informal observation or site visit along with feedback after each observation is complete. In addition to these observations, leaders, master teachers, and/or peers are encouraged to conduct observations, walkthroughs, and other observations that aid in the development and support of educators. The move from one annual observation every three years to multiple, annual observations, represents a paradigm shift in the way that leaders support and evaluate teachers as research shows the reliability of ratings increases with multiple observations. More observations will dramatically increase the amount of time school leaders will be able to observe classrooms and to provide timely feedback to teachers than ever before. In addition to observation, Compass also provides resources relating to professional growth plans, self-assessment tools, and analytics from the Human Capital Information System to strategically support teachers at the classroom, school, and district level. The LDOE will provide guidance to LEAs on how to best utilize the tools and processes available to support the ongoing professional development of teachers and leaders. The state's guidelines require that LEAs provide professional development to teachers and leaders based on their individual areas of need, as identified by the evaluation process. A Human Capital Information System (HCIS) platform will provide teachers, leaders, and administrators with the individual and aggregate data needed to make informed decisions about teacher, leader, student, and school performance to drive instructional improvement.

Anyone observing a teacher, whether using Louisiana's Compass rubric or a state-approved rubric, will be required to demonstrate accuracy on their tool before they begin evaluations. As research has shown, this will also increase the quality of observations.

Compass for School Leaders

School leaders undergo the same evaluation process as teachers each year. In addition to the site visits and evaluations against state-approved standards, the school leaders' educators and support staff complete a confidential survey on their leaders' performance. Also, the school's overall measures of student growth (NTGS and value-added) will account for 50% of the leader's overall evaluation. With this data at hand, LEAs can more efficiently and thoughtfully identify the strengths of their school leaders and prioritize areas for professional development. Professional learning communities, monthly principal meetings, principal mentorships, and other support structures can then be refined based on the school leader effectiveness data that Compass provides to drive school-level student achievement.

Additional Information on Principal Evaluation and Support:

The support and evaluation process for Louisiana leaders is nearly identical to the process for Louisiana teachers, as described extensively throughout Principle 3. The leader will be assigned an evaluator who will be responsible for helping the leader develop a Professional Growth Plan and conducting site visits

to gather evidence and assign ratings to determine a final evaluation score, as well as providing ongoing feedback throughout the year in support of helping the leader reach her/his goals and targeted areas of development. This process was piloted along with the teacher evaluation and support process during the 2011-2012 school year.

Also, the Compass leader rubric has been designed to align with the teacher rubric. Comparing the two rubrics, one will see that the teacher rubric requires teachers to think about those components of effective teaching most impactful to increasing student achievement while the leader rubric requires leaders to think about what a principal needs to do to support teachers in those efforts while being able to effectively manage a school.

Observation and Other Measures of Professional Practice

For the fifty percent of the evaluation based on qualitative data, Louisiana piloted a set of standards for both teachers and leaders (See Appendix 3.A) that fall under the competencies listed below. Over 200 Louisiana educators used the guidance of multiple national experts to identify those teacher and leader standards and competencies believed to contribute to improved student achievement. Teachers in the pilot were observed according to 11 revised teaching standards that fall under four competencies. Administrators were evaluated using 17 standards that fall under five competencies. Pilot participants were evaluated on the standards using a preponderance of evidence, gathered over time, through both classroom observations and site visits and through a critique of submitted materials (i.e. lesson plans, assessments, and professional development certifications) as part of the comprehensive performance management process.

Teacher Competencies	Leader Competencies
Planning Instruction Environment Professionalism [Appendix 3F]	Ethics/Integrity Instructional Leadership Strategic Thinking Resource Management Educational Advocacy [Appendix 3G]

Table 3.C. Louisiana's Pilot Teacher & Leader Competencies

The LDOE is incredibly grateful for the participation and feedback from over 1200 educators in the 2011-2012 pilot. Through feedback informed by the pilot, the LDOE followed through on its commitment to make revisions to the rubric and evaluation process in preparation for 2012-2013 implementation.

One clear takeaway from the Compass pilot was the need for a rubric that is clearer, more concise, and more directly aligned to Common Core. To meet this need, the LDOE decided to adopt a modified version of Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* as the Compass teacher rubric. The modified framework consists of three domains and five components (See Table 3.D.) Changes were made to eliminate redundancies within the standards and descriptors, to make it easier for evaluators to distinguish between each level of effectiveness, and to ensure core competencies focused on supporting more rigorous instruction of common core. This rubric not only addresses the concerns of educators from the pilot, but will also allow educators to leverage resources available nationally as it has been implemented in over 15 states.

Feedback from the pilot efforts reinforced the LDOE's commitment to continue to work with educators and national experts over the coming years to make refinements, when necessary, so that educators receive high impact support and evaluations from their leaders. The LDOE is also working to make revisions to the Compass leader rubric, based on feedback from the pilot and is preparing to release the updated tool by July, 2012.

Domain	Component
I. Planning and Preparation	1c. Setting Instructional Outcomes
II. The Classroom Environment	2c. Managing Classroom Procedures
III. Instruction	3b. Questioning and Discussion Techniques 3c. Engaging Students in Learning 3d. Using Assessment in Instruction

Table 3.D. Louisiana's Revised Teacher Domains and Components

Each teacher and leader standard includes a recommended model performance rubric and descriptors clearly summarizing observable and tangible instructional and leadership behaviors. They are provided to increase reliability among evaluators and to help educators focus on practices that enhance teaching and learning. Evaluators use these performance rubrics to assess how well a standard is performed. In addition to validating Louisiana's educator evaluation tools through the evaluator training and certification and pilot implementation, LDOE created the following supports for LEAs to implement these tools:

- Implementation guides;
- Inter-rater reliability trainings and resources;
- Video-based resources to train teachers, principals and districts staff on new evaluation measures.

Through an Integration Grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the LDOE will validate the State's educator competency models and validation tool against student outcomes and assess the reliability of raters using the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Validation Engine, when available. The state will explore the use of the MET Validation Engine as an evaluation tool as part of its statewide implementation following the spring testing.

The LDOE will allow districts the flexibility to adopt alternate tools for measuring qualitative performance, provided they are reviewed and approved by the LDOE prior to implementation to ensure that they are aligned to the core competencies defined by the state, that they measure performance across multiple levels of proficiency, and that the LEA has demonstrated how the tool is valid, reliable, and supportive of student performance goals.

For statewide implementation, all evaluators will be certified annually by LDOE or its designee through a process which will include an assessment to ensure inter-rater reliability and accuracy of ratings, based on the use of the teacher and leader observational rubric. Evaluators who fail to pass the inter-rater reliability exam will be provided additional support focused on norming activities to ensure they are scoring teacher competencies consistently.

Consideration for Educators of ELL and Students with Disabilities

Another benefit of adopting a modified version of Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is the applicability of the rubric to different educational settings. The rubric is inclusive enough to be applicable to all settings while the components that Louisiana has adopted will reinforce support and development for critical focus areas, such as engaging all students in learning and using assessment in instruction. In many cases, educators of English Language Learners and students with disabilities want additional support in these areas. The rubric, along with an evaluator who understands the context of the classroom in which that educator is working with students, will assist evaluators in determining the appropriateness of instruction for all students, regardless of classroom size or the diversity within the classroom.

In addition, specific guidance for teachers of students with special needs, including teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs), will be provided relative to the student learning target process. The LDOE will publish an initial library of student learning target exemplars in May 2012, which will include exemplars developed by workgroups of educators and experts in the areas of mild/moderate disabilities, significant disabilities, gifted/talented, speech, and ELL. These exemplars, as well as specific guidance for teachers of students with special needs and their evaluators will be provided as part of the Compass evaluator trainings, taking place in July and August, 2012.

How Will Louisiana Ensure Inter-rater Reliability?

Certification is required for all evaluators on an annual basis. The evaluator certification assessment will require all prospective evaluators to demonstrate accuracy and reliability in their ratings. The LDOE will provide resources to assist LEAs with further development of evaluator skills throughout each academic year.

Meaningfully Differentiates Performance Using at Least Three Performance Levels

Educator evaluation systems should meaningfully differentiate levels of educator effectiveness. This differentiation allows for increased and targeted educator support with the long-term goal of improving the educational outcomes of students in Louisiana. This more rigorous measurement of teacher and leader effectiveness will provide LEAs and schools with the information needed to more objectively identify highly effective and persistently ineffective educators to inform human capital decision making. Louisiana's multiple measures will be rated on a scale of one to four, with four equating to *Highly Effective* and one equating to *Ineffective*.[5] The average of the two will determine the overall composite score which will then translate into one's overall effectiveness rating. As a final check on evaluator bias and assurance that no educator in need of assistance is overlooked, educators receiving an *Ineffective* rating in either measure will be rated overall as *Ineffective* and provided intensive support.

[5] It is important to note that the piloted version of the evaluation system consisted of a 5-point scale. Based on feedback provided by pilot participants and by adopting the Danielson Framework, all components of Compass will now be calculated on a 4-point scale as described above.

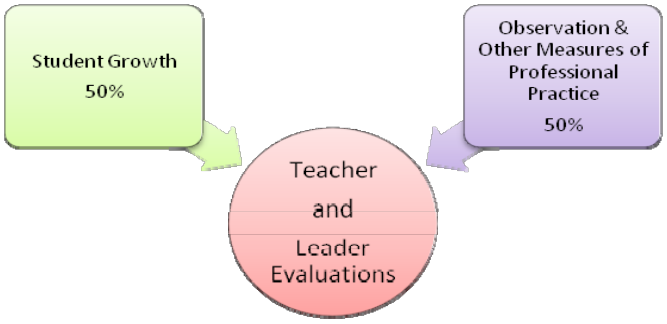


Figure 3.E. Calculating Overall Effectiveness Rating

The two performance levels that fall between *Highly Effective* and *Ineffective* are Effective: *Proficient*,- and Effective: *Emerging*. These four rating levels are a major improvement from the three-point scale most LEAs previously used to evaluate educators. The additional performance level was designed to distinguish between multiple levels of educator performance and to provide educators more opportunities for growth as part of the comprehensive performance management process.

With the revised rating system, tools, and performance management process, educators and leaders will have access to a more comprehensive, nuanced, and detailed views of their performance data to more accurately understand their individual impact on students achievement. In 2009-2010, 98% of educators were rated Effective despite the fact that more than one-third of Louisiana's students scored below proficiency on the annual state assessments. With the revised rating system, Louisiana expects to see a more even distribution of educators across the various performance levels and better understand the distribution of effective to ineffective educators across and within LEAs and schools.

These distinct levels of educator proficiency allow school and district leaders to more strategically base all human capital decisions on educators' demonstrated effectiveness, such as differentiated support and professional development; recognizing educators with exemplary performance; ensuring equitable distribution of effective educators; and hiring, compensation, promotion, and release.

Effectiveness Rating	Composite Score Range
Highly Effective	5.0-4.1
Effective: Accomplished	4.0-3.4
Effective: Proficient	3.3-2.7
Effective: Emerging	2.6-2.0
Ineffective	1.9-1.0

Table 3.F. Pilot Composite Score Scale

Effectiveness Rating	Composite Score Range
Ineffective	x<1.5
Effective: Emerging	1.5≤x<2.5
Effective: Proficient	2.5≤x<3.5
Highly Effective	3.5≤x

Table 3.G. Revised Composite Score Scale

A Human Capital Information System (HCIS) platform will allow educators and leaders to access individual and aggregate ratings at a school-, LEA-, and state-level. This will allow educational leaders to more strategically prioritize professional development resources and learning opportunities for educators at scale to improve teaching and learning. The HCIS will also provide information on performance to teachers on an ongoing basis, including timely feedback linked to performance standards following observations, opportunities to respond to evaluator comments, and a mid-year checkpoint. The HCIS will also be a central place where educators and school leaders can establish and review annual goals, student learning targets, and professional growth plans. With professional development planning documents and opportunities integrated into the system, teachers and leaders will be empowered to immediately seek supports and/or enrichment opportunities to align with their areas of need and professional interest.

Do Louisiana's Performance Categories Adequately Differentiate?

Louisiana's levels of effectiveness are based on research and Charlotte Danielson's nationally recognized *Framework for Teaching*. These levels offer language that is clear, concise, and aligned to Common Core. Combined with Louisiana's value-added system and student learning target process to measure educators' impact on student learning, evaluators will have multiple measures upon which to differentiate teacher performance across different levels of effectiveness, from Ineffective to Highly Effective.

Measure of Growth in Student Learning

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, evidence of student growth will comprise fifty percent of an educator's evaluation.

Value-Added Assessment Model

LDOE will use a statistical covariate value-added model to measure student growth for teachers and administrators, where available. The value-added model is applied to grades and subjects that participate in state-wide standardized tests and for which appropriate prior testing is available. However, the value-added model will not be used for evaluations where there are fewer than ten students with value-added results assigned to an educator. Overall, Louisiana's value-added model links academic growth of students and takes into account the following student-level variables:

- prior achievement data (up to three years);
- gifted status;
- section 504 status;

- attendance;
- disability status;
- eligibility for free or reduced priced meals; and
- prior discipline history.

Classroom composition variables are also included in the state's model.

The value-added model was developed and validate for state use through the following process:

1. Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluations (ACEE): ACEE made recommendations on the development and use of a value-added assessment model to be used in educator evaluations.
2. Development, Testing, and Deployment of Curriculum Verification Record (CVR): The LDOE developed a secure web-based portal through which teachers and educational leaders verify the accuracy of class rosters prior to their use in the value added analysis, and access their value added reports.
3. Field Testing: Over a two-year period, the state conducted pilot and validation activities of the value-added model for teachers and educational leaders. Additional studies have been conducted and show moderate stability of educator performance across multiple years. Educators have been provided with ongoing professional development and resources to support effective use of the value-added model.

4. Establishing Measures of Effectiveness: For teachers where value added data is available, the composite percentile is converted to a 1.0-5.0 scale to use in the teacher's final evaluation. Teachers and leaders (school-wide) whose value added, composite percentile fall within the bottom 10% will receive an ineffective rating. Teachers in the middle 20-80% range will receive a rating of effective. The top 10% of teachers will receive a rating of highly effective.

Effectiveness Level	Total Score	Composite Percentile
Ineffective	1.0 - 1.9	1-10
Effective: Emerging	2.0 - 2.6	11-25
Effective: Proficient	2.7 - 3.3	26-75
Effective: Accomplished	3.4 - 4.0	76-90
Highly Effective	4.1 - 5.0	91-99

Table. 3.H. Value-Added Measures of Effectiveness for Compass Pilot

What is the Rationale for Louisiana's Value-Added N-size?

The n-size for receipt of value-added educator evaluation scores was set through advice from Louisiana's value-added model creators, as well as Louisiana's expert educator advisory panel, based on statistical modeling. In Louisiana, teacher results are moderately correlated across years when requiring only 5 students for calculation of results. The correlation is only slightly increased, but remains a moderate correlation, when requiring more than 10 students for calculation of results. By increasing the number of students required for calculation up to 20 students – as suggested by a peer reviewer - the

correlation is increased by less than .1, leaving the correlation in the moderate range. At the same time, increasing the number of students required for calculations would result in the loss of the number of teachers who could receive value-added results. In some cases up to 3,000 teachers would no longer be eligible to receive highly-valued, unbiased, statistically-relevant value-added scores.

Correlation of Scores Across Years 2008-2009 with 2009-2010

Students	Mathematics Teachers	ELA Teachers
1	.495	.389
5	.505	.404
10	.509	.406
20	.528	.425

Non-Tested Grades & Subjects

When the value-added model is not applicable, the state will employ the following strategies for measuring student growth in non-tested grades and subjects:

1. Expand value-added measures as valid state assessments are adopted for more grades and subjects.
2. Until valid state assessments are approved for the expansion of value-added measurement, (e.g., AP Exams, Developmental Skills Checklist to determine Kindergarten readiness, state-approved benchmarking systems) to measure student achievement and growth. This process will include establishing Student Learning Targets (SLTs) during goal planning and measuring goal attainment utilizing the NTGS rubric and state-approved assessment.
3. As an alternative to common assessments, rigorous Student Learning Targets (SLTs) supported with a strong body of evidence (e.g., portfolios, IAP) can be utilized as a measure of student growth in NTGS.

Creating SLTs involves the collaboration of the evaluator and the educator in order to set measurable and meaningful student learning goals tailored to the specific context of the educator. SLTs allow educators to create the most meaningful goals for their students by taking into consideration course content, student population, and baseline performance data. The goal-setting practices on which Louisiana bases its NTGS process has been shown to increase effectiveness. Teachers in Denver, for example, identified setting these types of objectives as “creating more focused efforts” (Locke and Latham, 2002). Furthermore, the differentiation inherent in Louisiana’s SLT process allows for greater personalization of goals and demands specificity, two factors which have been shown to increase the likelihood of goal attainment (Community Training and Assistance Center, 2008). Louisiana’s NTGS process exceeds the requirements of ESEA §1111(b)(3), by requiring Student Learning Targets alongside state-approved common assessments. In order to ensure rigor and consistency, Louisiana will provide LEAs with lists of common assessments that meet state standards of rigor. These lists include assessment tools identified by educator work groups and from surveying districts statewide. Furthermore, LDOE’s evaluator certification process will include training on assessing the validity and rigor of assessments and SLTs as well as resources and reference points for comparison. Requiring the collaborative SLT process further assures that goals are equally rigorous for all teachers whether using common assessment, value-added measures, or bodies of evidence.

To develop the NTGS strategy, educators (teachers and principals) from across the state are working with national experts on teacher evaluation and were guided through options for structuring NTGS measures, integration of rigor into these measures, and ensuring consistency in collecting the bodies of evidence which support the assessment of student learning. Workgroup recommendations and discussions were presented for the following groups:

- Elementary NTGS
- Secondary NTGS
- Creative Arts
- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Physical Education & Health
- World Languages
- Special Populations (includes Mild/Moderate, English Language Learners (ELL), Gifted & Talented, and Significant Disabilities)
- Instructional Coaches and Academic Interventionists
- Library Media Specialists.

To support statewide implementation, each workgroup provided formal recommendations regarding the type(s) of assessment that best measured student learning, as well as sample exemplars and non-exemplars (validated against the NTGS rubric). The work groups also provided guidance on assembling bodies of student work that adequately demonstrate rigorous student achievement and identified and proposed solutions to mitigate challenges to implementing SLTs.

To ensure consistency across the state and that all goals are meaningful and rigorous, the NTGS rubric was piloted during the 2011-2012 school year. Pilot participants included in the NTGS portion of the pilot were evaluated both on the Quality of the SLT and Goal Attainment (Appendix 3.C). Through feedback from pilot participants, the state has streamlined the evaluation process for student learning targets by eliminating the evaluation of the quality of the student learning target from the scoring process. To ensure that student learning targets being set are rigorous, the modified NTGS rubric now requires educators to establish scoring categories for each performance level during the goal-setting process (Additional Appendix #3).

The state has also launched an ambitious strategy to measure student outcomes in non-tested grades and subjects. The first strategy is expansion of state assessments to 2nd Grade (scheduled to begin in Spring 2012) additional high school End-of-Course Tests as available funding permits, which will reduce the grades and subjects categorized as NTGS.

The state is also leveraging funds from phase three of Race to the Top to expand the state's benchmarking system, the Enhanced Assessment of Grade Level Expectations [EAGLE], to cover STEM NTGS. By producing a secure testing platform layer in EAGLE, Louisiana can develop state-level common assessments and ensure consistency across the state. These pre- and post-tests could then yield a value score for teachers, thereby removing them from the NTGS group. Seventeen currently NTGS courses are covered in EAGLE. Thus, if implemented as described, using EAGLE would increase the portion of teachers with a value-added score for the student-growth component of their evaluation to approximately 2/3 of all Louisiana teachers.

The state also piloted several measures of student learning in NTGS in small-scale pilots in 2011, followed by the large-scale pilot currently underway. These pilot activities are helping Louisiana refine and enhance its NTGS strategy and statewide implementation approach. Extensive professional

development and ongoing guidance in establishing valid SLTs will continue to be provided to districts along with ongoing monitoring of educator progress on establishing goals and measures. LDOE will pay special attention to teachers of English Language Learners and special education teachers to assure that they are able to create SLTs that accurately reflect their impact on student achievement. Workgroups have already produced exemplar SLTs for these teachers and have continued to meet through the 2011-2012 while the LDOE continues to seek and incorporate feedback from focus groups during the pilot. Concurrently, district personnel will provide campuses with guidance, support, and training in selecting assessments and SLTs.

These Louisiana value-added and NTGS models will ensure that all teachers in Louisiana receive an evaluation score based the demonstrated growth of the students on their rosters. Ensuring all grades and subjects have a valid method by which to measure student growth allows educators to hold themselves accountable for their students' achievement. The overall success of Compass depends largely on the engagement of educators along with intensive support to districts and a feedback loop that allows the state to enhance both tools and supports.

Compass Drives All Human Capital Decisions

Research has shown that teacher effectiveness is the greatest determinant of student outcomes followed closely by principal effectiveness. More than 80% of all education funding is spent on personnel and traditionally little was done to build systems to support educators. Through creation of Louisiana's high-quality performance management approach to educator support and evaluation (Compass), rigorous policies and tools, support resources, and training materials aligned to support CCSS implementation, Louisiana is poised to dramatically improve the effectiveness of its educators. The state will further create conditions for enhanced teaching and learning by:

- Further strengthening professional development opportunities to improve teaching and leadership over time;
- Implementing systems to base all human capital decisions on educators' demonstrated effectiveness; and
- Strengthening certification and training pipelines and placement practices for teachers and leaders.

Figure 3.C. Opportunities for Impact

Compass Drives Professional Support & Development Growth

Louisiana is confident that there will be clear differentiation among teachers and leaders who are making significantly different contributions to student growth under the new evaluation system. Ensuring differentiation of teacher and leader performance was a priority for Louisiana and the many educators who played a central role in the design of Compass. Through the ACEE committee, educators endorsed an evaluation system with a scale that adequately addresses areas of strength while discerning specific areas for professional development.

The rigorous standards and strong accountability system that Louisiana put into place can only be meaningful if accompanied by efforts to support high-quality instruction and continuous improvement of Louisiana's educators. Louisiana will strengthen professional development opportunities to improve teaching and leadership over time through the following Compass-aligned professional development centered on CCSS and Common Assessments which includes:

- Creating training and tools to make CCSS accessible to teachers through formative assessment and assignment tools;

- Implementing CCSS-aligned enhancements to Louisiana's existing Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE), an instructional improvement system to provide teachers with rapid access to rich formative assessment data to monitor students' progress toward meeting grade-level expectations;
- Giving teachers and administrators access to teacher performance data through the HCIS platform;
- Supporting districts in implementing strong job-embedded coaching models and professional development tools which allow teachers and principals to access performance data and curriculum supports to improve performance; and
- Building districts and schools capacity to use data well, LDOE will help LEAs and schools implement strong data structures and data use-practices; and
- Build evaluators' and central offices' skills at evaluating educator performance and providing student outcome-aligned feedback that drives enhanced practice.

Critical to Louisiana's plan to drive student achievement is the alignment and integration of CCSS with Compass and other key opportunities along the human capital continuum. The implementation of CCSS paired with advancement of human capital reforms will facilitate strong educator effectiveness practices in every district, school, and classroom. This integrated approach, coupled with the implementation of strong, aligned assessments, will ensure that every student in Louisiana is taught by an effective teacher and every teacher is supported by an effective leader.

Compass Drives Compensation, Promotion, Tenure, Retention, and Release

Louisiana is performing a comprehensive review of its human capital practices at the state and local level to improve and align educator preparation, certification, support, and evaluation. Educator effectiveness information can be used when awarding promotions, prioritizing retention and release, as well as to inform tenure decisions.

All LEAs in Louisiana are required by law to dismiss teachers and administrators who chronically under-perform despite receiving substantial assistance and support. Act 54 requires LEAs to implement intensive assistance programs for any educator rated ineffective even for a single year, and to initiate dismissal proceedings for all teachers and administrators who, after undergoing IAPs, are still ineffective. This plan must be created collaboratively with the educator and must also include specific steps that should to be taken to improve, identify the assistance, support, and resources that are to be provided by the local board, establish an expected time line for achieving the objectives of the plan, and the procedures for monitoring progress including observations and conferences. If after three years of ineffectiveness the educator is still rated ineffective and they are within an initial certification or renewal cycle, Act 54 calls for that educator's certification to be not granted. To encourage principals to take this action, all principals will be held accountable for the effectiveness of the teachers in their schools. Compass will require that one principle measure of principal effectiveness is the number of effective teachers in their building.

Educators who earn ratings of *Effective* or higher will be eligible for recognition and rewards. Forms of recognition and reward may include merit pay or bonuses, enhanced career ladders, promotions, awards or distinguished titles, extra planning time, and/or opportunities to mentor other teachers. Ultimately, the role that annual evaluation will play in informing personnel decisions was designed to ensure that Louisiana has the most effective teachers and leaders working with its students. Compass encourages districts to take measures to ensure that the best teachers remain in their schools and expand their impact.

Compass Drives Certification and Training Pipelines and Placement Practices for Teachers and Leaders

The ability to predict future effectiveness is critical to making strong, sound human capital decisions that are in the best interest of students. This includes conducting analyses, building systems, and implementing policy that enable school and LEA leaders to reveal the knowledge, skills, and abilities that applicants possess that will lead them to be effective in the classroom early in an educator's career. Louisiana plans to overhaul the current certifications structure and base certification decisions on educator effectiveness rather than extraneous information that has little ability to predict future performance. Certificates will thus be rendered meaningful representations of capacity and past accomplishments thereby indicating true effectiveness.

The state will no longer grant or renew certification without evidence of effectiveness during a three-year period, and it will revoke certification from individuals who demonstrate persistent ineffectiveness over time. Certification renewal decisions will be considered on an annual, rolling basis, allowing the state to leverage the most up-to-date information on educators' performance in making certification decisions. Certification requirements will be streamlined and simplified to ensure that there is one common process for all educators and ancillary personnel.

Louisiana has also taken a significant step toward building a quality pool of certified teachers by evaluating teacher preparation programs in the state based on student achievement (value-added) in the graduates' classrooms. Louisiana was the first state in the nation to develop and pilot a statewide value-added model to measure the impact Louisiana teacher preparation program graduates impact student achievement in grades 4-9. Teacher preparation programs have responded positively to this available data. With this new and informative system in place, the LDOE is now partnering with Louisiana's teacher preparation programs to determine what it is that makes these programs effective or ineffective.

With information from Compass about what increases teachers' and leaders' effectiveness, Louisiana will continue to:

- Transform the certification and training pipelines by strengthening the Louisiana Teacher Preparation Accountability System and completing the Educational Leadership Accountability System to inform rewards, replication or sanctions;
- Use data about effectiveness to ensure that the lowest-performing students and those in greatest need are served by highly effective teachers and leaders through the staffing utilizing the statewide database of pre-screened high-quality candidates (Educator Pipeline) ;
- Expand Centralized Staffing Services and Model Staffing Initiatives (MSI) to provide technical assistance in effective hiring and staffing; and
- Continue expansion of Teach For America (TFA) and the New Teacher Project (TNTP) into regions of Louisiana currently lacking high quality alternative teacher providers will continue to fuel ability to make targeted educator effectiveness reforms.

New student standards and assessments combined with new measures of effectiveness for educators will require significant shifts in educator preparation. To further integrate CCSS and educator effectiveness reform efforts, changes in educator preparation programs must incorporate both educator effectiveness and CCSS readiness reforms. To facilitate this process, the LDOE will work collaboratively with the Board of Regents to develop and implement a plan to align degree, coursework, and certification requirements. Louisiana will embed its new common standards, newly aligned Comprehensive Curriculum and new educator effectiveness data and tools in the undergraduate and alternative teacher preparation

curriculum. Pre-service teachers must be ready to deliver the common core and to be evaluated using the new measures and changes to the teacher preparation curriculum are critical to accomplishing this. For a rise in student achievement to materialize and for educator effectiveness and CCSS reforms to succeed, new educators must be prepared to use these new tools. LDOE and the Board of Regents will work closely with teacher and leader preparation programs to ensure that teachers and leaders graduate with a deep understanding of and practical experience needed to drive effective instructional practice.

In preparation for Compass, a number of activities are already underway in partnership with Board of Regents and Educator Preparation Providers to more effectively align teacher and leader preparation requirements with the Louisiana Teacher and Leader Competencies and Performance Standards.

How Does the Compass System Influence Teachers Outside of the "Ineffective" Category?

A key accomplishment of Compass will be the availability and application of data to inform human capital decisions and to strategically support all teachers and leaders in their continuum of development.

Act 54 outlines specific consequences for those rated Ineffective and guidelines for providing recognition of those rated Highly Effective. While no specific positive or negative consequences are stated within Act 54 for those teachers and leaders who are identified as Effective, one of the main purposes of Louisiana's support and evaluation system is to establish professional development as an integral and expected part of a professional career in education. Annual evaluation data will provide schools and districts the information they need to make informed decisions on strategic professional development planning for all educators, retention strategies, promotions and career ladders, intensive assistance plans for educators who are struggling, and dismissal proceedings for educators who continue to receive Ineffective ratings, despite support to improve. The LDOE will provide guidance to districts on how to effectively use this data.

Act 1, signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal in April, 2012, will also serve to support districts in their ability to tie educator performance data to human capital decisions. This new legislation requires local school boards to include performance targets in employment contracts and submit copies of contracts to the State Superintendent of Education. The law requires local school boards to delegate authority for personnel decisions to the school superintendent; requires the local superintendent to delegate the hiring and placement of teachers and other school personnel to the school principal; requires that all school personnel employment decisions be based upon performance, effectiveness, and qualifications, and prohibits the use of seniority when making any personnel decisions. All reduction in force policies for teachers and certified school personnel would be based solely upon demand, performance, and effectiveness, as determined by the BESE-adopted educator evaluation model. The governing authority of each public school would be required to establish salary schedules for teachers and school employees based upon effectiveness, demand by subject area or area of certification, and experience. No teacher or administrator rated Ineffective would be eligible to receive an increase in salary. The law calls for a teacher to receive a rating of Highly Effective for five consecutive years to be eligible for tenure. The legislation also allows a superintendent to terminate the employment of a tenured teacher upon providing the teacher with written charges of poor performance, willful neglect of duty, incompetency, dishonesty, immorality, or of being a member of an entity prohibited from operating in the state. However, the law would give a teacher the opportunity to respond. This legislation also consolidates tenure laws for all certified school employees. As a teacher professionalism package, this ground-breaking legislation provides consequences – both positive and negative – to educators at all levels.

Compass Pilot Overview

The Compass pilot began in 2009-2010 with the design of the value-added model. Compass is currently being piloted during the 2011-2012 school year as an integrated system which includes the comprehensive performance management cycle, measures of student growth (value-added, NTGS), observations and other measures of effectiveness. The results of this year's pilot will be critical to ensuring that Louisiana's evaluation and support systems are valid, meaningful measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA. The timeline below provides an overview of how components of Compass were piloted over time to prepare for statewide implementation.

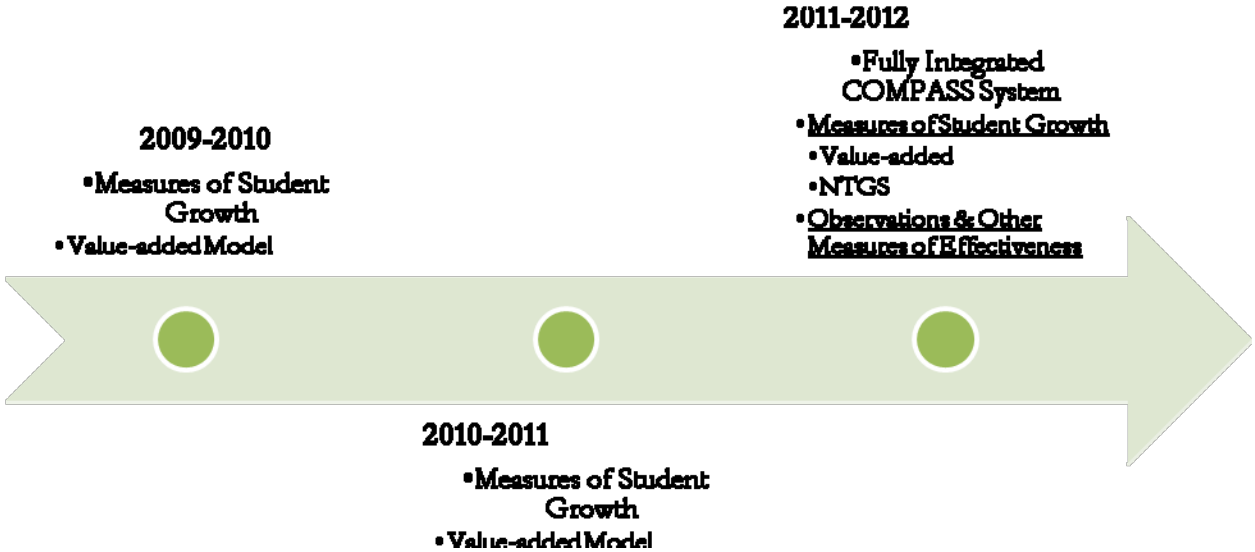


Figure 3.D. Compass Pilot Timeline

2009-2010

The Compass pilot began in 2009 with a pilot of the value-added model in 24 schools across Louisiana. The goal for this pilot year was to create and test the Curriculum Verification and Results (CVR) portal. CVR is what VAM educators and principals use to verify their student rosters and to receive their annual ratings (Appendix 3.D). Within CVR, teachers are able to verify the students they taught to ensure that their students' academic achievement data is tied directly to the teacher.

The LDE created a report on the development of the VAM as specified in Act 54 and this report can be reviewed in (See Appendix 3.E). This report reviews the processes supporting the development of the value-added model as well as the technical processes and findings from the initial 2009-2010 Compass pilot. Of note is that the value-added model system was able to identify groups of teachers who were consistently in either the lowest performing (i.e., bottom 10%) or the highest performing group (i.e., top 10%) of teachers across years. This data is critical in targeting strategic support for low-performing teachers and in targeting retention efforts for those teachers who are high-performing.

2010-2011

The value-added component of the Compass pilot continued in 19 districts in 2010-2011. Updates to CVR were made to enhance security of information, based on educator feedback. Efforts were made to

shorten the turn-around time by which school leaders and teachers received value-added data results.

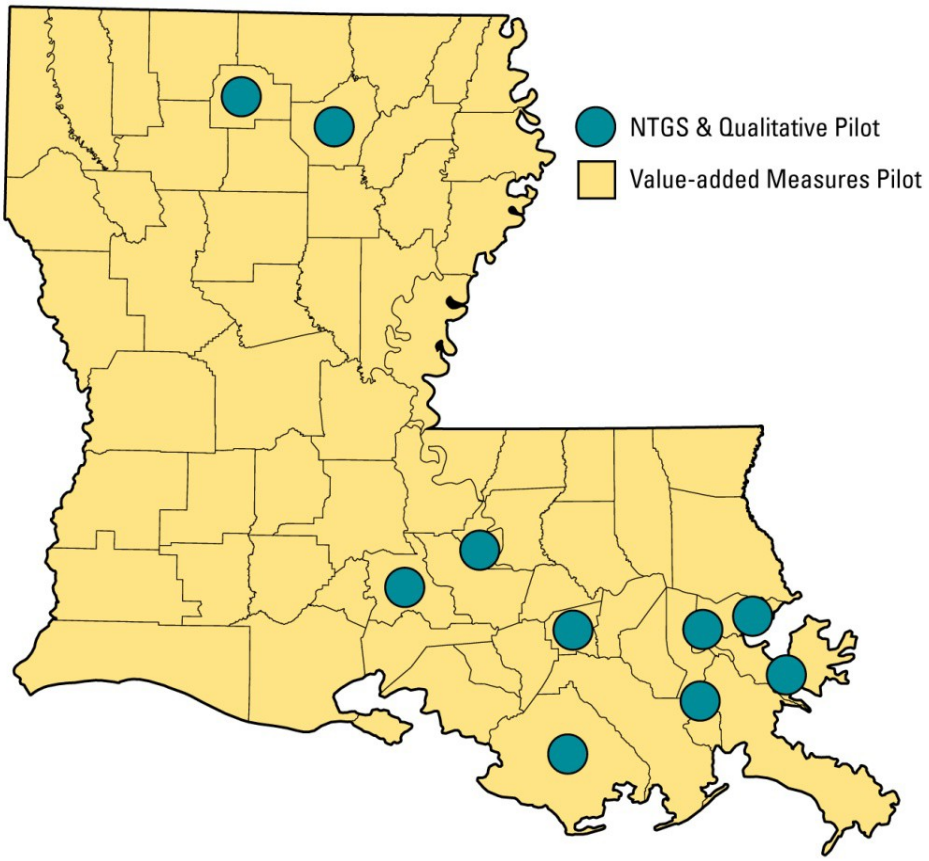


Figure 3.E. Compass Pilot Districts and Schools

2011-2012

Compass is being piloted throughout Louisiana in 2011-2012. A fully integrated Compass pilot is underway in 10 LEAs, including over 1,200 educators and 117 schools (See map below). All schools in Louisiana are participating in using the VAM this year, when available, as part of the Compass pilot. Pilot districts were selected through a rigorous application process due to their capacity, commitment, and conditions for pilot participation. LEAs participating in the fully integrated pilot were selected from a diverse geographic representation of LEAs across the state in order to receive a diverse range of stakeholder feedback and to validate Compass effectiveness and reliability as the state educator support and evaluation model. The pilot will also confirm systems and processes that drive student achievement regardless of teacher and student demographics and ensure that Compass can improve leader and teacher effectiveness regardless of the size of the LEA. The LEAs participating in the fully integrated pilot are described in the chart below. In addition to participation in the Compass pilot, 80% of the districts are also partnering with the state on other human capital (e.g. Model Staffing Initiative, Educator Pipeline, Teach For America) and school turnaround (e.g. Turnaround, Transformation) reforms. In addition to the Compass validation, the pilot is providing feedback and insight into local policy and district-wide best practices that can be leveraged statewide to accelerate implementation of a comprehensive and consolidated approach to human capital decision making.

	2010-2011 Data				COMPASS Pilot Schools				
Pilot LEA	Total Enroll-ment	% of Free/ Reduced Lunch	% of Minority (Non-White) Students	Atten-dance Rate	Elem	MS	HS	Alt.	Total
Jefferson	45,253	76.00%	70.10%	92.70%	0	2	3	0	5
City of Monroe	8,818	78.90%	87.50%	94.00%	1	1	0	0	2
International School of Louisiana	525	52.40%	71.80%	96.90%	5	3	8	0	16
Lincoln	6,663	59.60%	52.50%	94.80%	4	0	1	0	5
Orleans	10,493	66.30%	84.00%	95.50%	3	0	3	1	7
St. Bernard	5,916	73.20%	41.10%	94.90%	5	3	1	0	9
St. James	3,825	70.80%	67.90%	94.60%	7	0	3	1	11
St. Martin	8,503	72.10%	50.30%	94.90%	9	4	3	1	17
Terrebonne	18,722	65.80%	43.00%	93.80%	20	11	5	4	40
West Baton Rouge	3,810	70.30%	55.00%	94.70%	1	1	0	0	2
State Profile	696,558	66.20%	52.20%	93.90%					117

Table 3.F. Compass Pilot Schools

Compass Pilot: Tools & Resources, Support, Implementation, Evaluation

The LDOE has a dedicated Compass team responsible for the design, implementation, communications, and evaluation of each component of Compass. Please refer to Appendix 3.F to review the logic models for each of the Compass functional teams. This team is working directly with pilot LEAs during the 2011-

2012 year to build capacity, provide technical assistance, and evaluate the effectiveness and satisfaction of the Compass tools, processes, and support structures. The intensive assistance structure provided to pilot LEAs is in the diagram below.

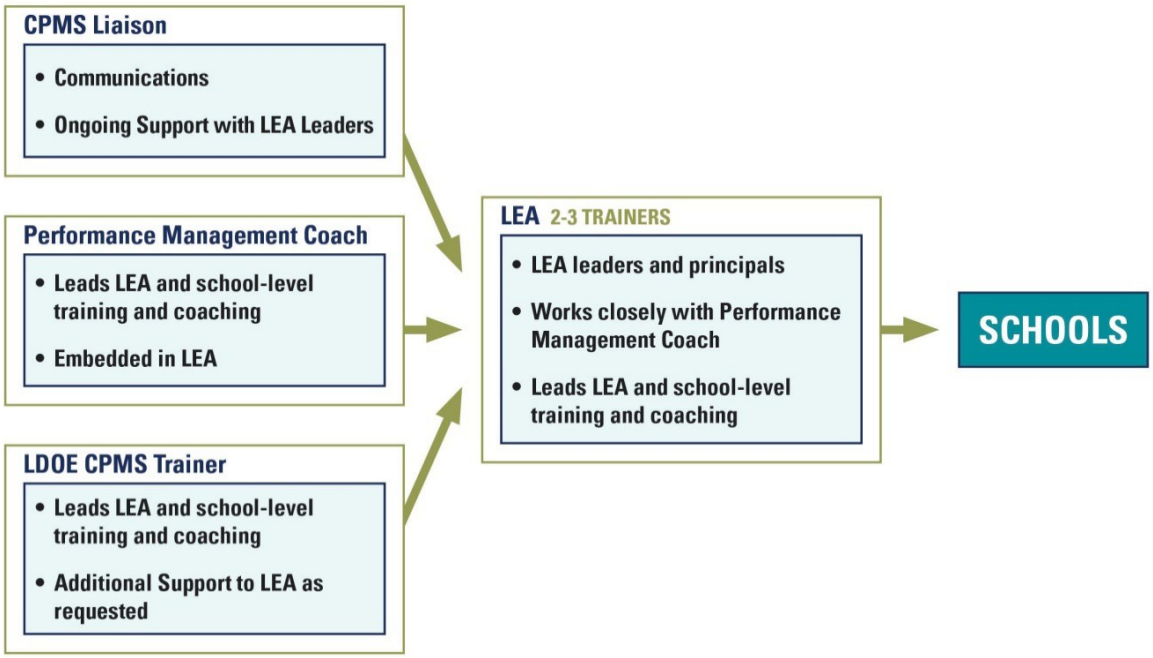


Figure 3.F. LDOE Support Structure

The major goal of this year's pilot is to validate all components of Compass, revise tools and resources based on feedback from the field and codify statewide implementation strategy by identifying challenges districts will face in statewide implementation and creating the support structures necessary to ensure that by 2012-2013, all Louisiana teachers and leaders will be able to benefit from the comprehensive evaluation and support systems (Compass).

With these goals in mind, Louisiana recognizes that successful statewide implementation of Compass relies heavily on the reliability and validity of Compass and the ability of LEAs to utilize the evaluation and support processes, tools and resources developed by the LDOE and various stakeholder workgroups. In addition to evaluating the pilot process, the LDOE is also evaluating the relationship between the qualitative and quantitative metrics to ensure that the measures that go into teachers' and leaders' final evaluation ratings are aligned. Therefore, during this year's pilot, the LDOE is working to ensure that Compass tools and instruments will, over time, consistently and meaningfully capture the impact teachers and leaders are making on their students and inform future work.

The 2011-2012 Compass pilot is being implemented in four-periods (See Figure 3.A) as indicated in the performance management cycle in an earlier section. The LDOE is collecting feedback and data systematically during each period to inform how the LDOE, LEAs, and local schools can make additional improvements to more effectively support statewide implementation of the evaluation and support process to ensure evaluations and educator support are done in a consistent and high-quality manner. Table 3.G provides a high level overview of the key components as well as the timeline for the pilot. Note that the timeline is condensed and models the full school year implementation cycle to be used in once the system goes live. The Compass process is also modified and adapted based on input and

feedback from regular progress reports, a mid-year report, summative report, focus groups, surveys, and direct lines of contact that each pilot LEA has with a member of the Compass team

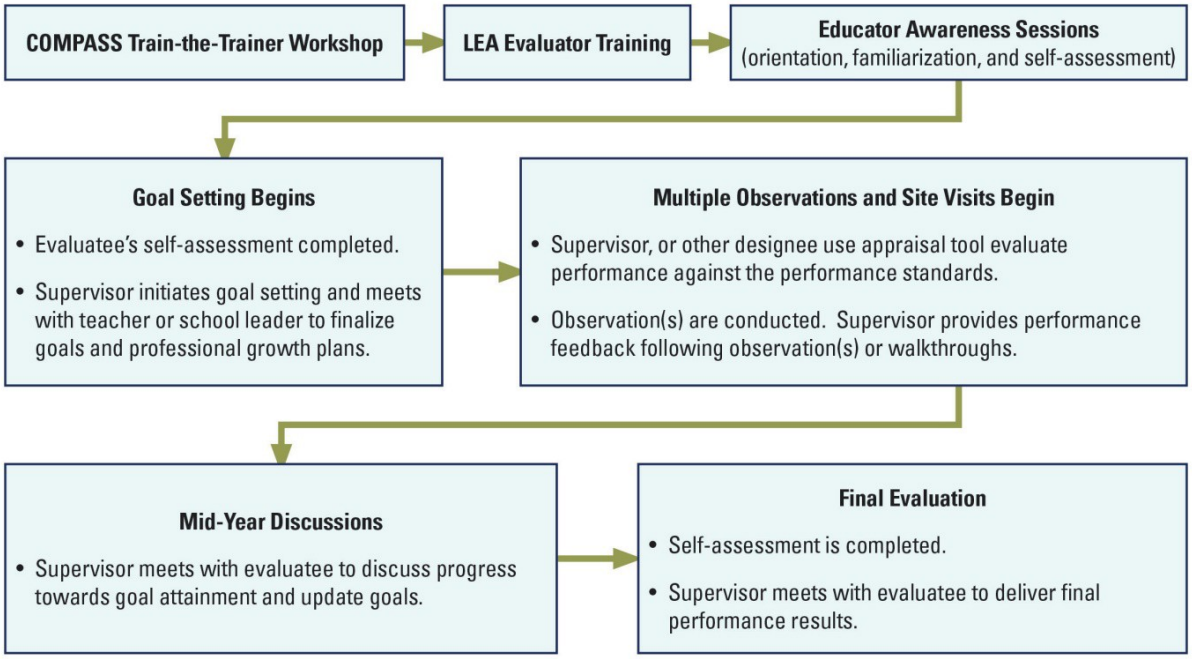


Figure 3.G. Pilot Implementation Framework

Period 1: Goal Setting (January 1, 2012-February 3, 2012)

Process Preparation for the 2011-2012 Compass pilot began prior to Period 1 with train-the-trainer workshops for key LDOE and LEA leaders who are responsible for delivering training and providing support to evaluators, leaders, and teachers participating in the pilot. More than 400 LEA leaders were trained in Compass before January 2012 in advance of the launch of Period 1. During Period 1, teachers and leaders as well as school-level leaders and their supervisors set goals and create professional growth plans. This is a collaborative process that ends with goals and professional growth plans being entered into the Human Capital Information System (HCIS) platform. Also during this time, teachers create goals/SLTs and match these SLTs to specific, observable indications of meeting each of the targets. This will collectively be called the Body of Evidence of student achievement. Collaboration between the teacher and school leader also occurs, in which the teacher's self-designed Student Learning Targets and their corresponding Body of Evidence are reviewed and revised to ensure rigor, based upon NTGS rubric. It is the responsibility of the school leader during Period 1 to ensure that a teacher's SLT meets the effective criteria prior to Period 2. This support occurs after the evaluation of the first three criteria on the SLT rubric.
Evaluation Methods and Data During this period it will be crucial to solicit feedback from pilot participants on the training they received to ensure that Compass training materials enable pilot participants to implement the pilot, including its resources, tools, processes, and instruments, with fidelity. HCIS data will also be collected at this time to determine user satisfaction with entering goals and professional growth plans into the system. The below methods will be used to collect and analyze data: • Progress monitoring along with LEA support (e.g. additional training, tools, resources) • Teacher and Leader Surveys/Feedback • Campus-level Student Demographic Data

Period 2: Observation (February 3, 2012-March 4, 2012)

Process
Period 2 marks the formal beginning of when evaluators work with teachers and leaders to gather evidence for determining ratings on the LTCPS and LLCPS rubrics. Evaluators are required to conduct at least one formal observation and one unannounced observation during this time as well as collect other sources of evidence as necessary. HCIS will also be used during this time to enter evidence for each standard. Because the final evaluation for the 50% based on other measures of effectiveness is based on a preponderance of evidence gathered over time, the final rating is determined by averaging the rating assigned to each standard, where applicable. As such, in addition to the two required observations, evaluators should provide feedback within five days of the observations, conduct walkthroughs to assist in gathering additional evidence, and meet with their evaluatees in both a pre- and post-conference to aid in reflection of observation.
Evaluation Methods and Data
The observation period will be a great opportunity for the LDOE Compass team to become more closely embedded in schools to monitor implementation of the pilot and to support LEA leaders, school leaders, and teachers in utilizing observation tools and instruments. To that end, the following methods will be used to gather feedback: • Progress monitoring along with LEA support (e.g. additional training, tools, resources) • Inter-rater reliability on the LTCPS and LLCPS rubrics • Focus Groups • Teacher and Leader Surveys/Feedback

Period 3: Mid-Year Discussion: (March 5, 2012-April 1, 2012)

Process
By mid-year, evaluators should have enough evidence on each standard to review current ratings with respect to the LTCPS and LLCPS rubrics. These ratings should inform a conversation with their teachers and leaders regarding the status of their goals and professional growth plan, current performance, and any modifications that might need to be made to further impact student achievement and/or professional growth. School leaders and NTGS teachers will also conduct a mid-year review of their SLTs, at which time teachers provide evidence of progress towards student achievement. Teachers are provided with the opportunity to modify SLTs established at the beginning of the school year. Principals are also required to arrange for professional development for those teachers who are not on-track to meeting established goals. The HCIS will enable those being evaluated to complete a self-evaluation and to use current student data and new circumstances to make informed revisions to goals.
Evaluation Methods and Data
The LDOE will review HCIS data to determine the number of modifications made to the initial goal setting process. In addition, Compass evaluators will continue to meet regularly with pilot participants to gather feedback on the process and instruments. The instruments listed below will be used during this period to gather and analyze feedback: • State-led random checks of progress • Perception surveys • Progress monitoring along with LEA support (e.g. additional training, tools, resources) • Teacher and Leader Surveys/Feedback • LTCPS and LLCPS rubric scores

Period 4: Final Evaluation (April 2, 2012-June 1, 2012)

Process The final period in the Compass pilot allows for final evaluations to be completed. During this period, evaluators will use HCIS to complete their final ratings on the other measures of effectiveness while also evaluating NTGS teachers' SLTs using the NTGS rubric. A meeting will be held in late spring between the teacher and the school leader, in which the school leader will determine the extent to which the teacher met the SLTs. A teacher's evaluation will be based upon the framework of competencies established by the LDOE Compass team which includes measuring rigor of the goals set by each teacher and the teacher's success in meeting those goals. Value-added data will be released by the end of May so that the summative evaluation score will be determined by combining the 50% measures of student growth with the 50% other measures of effectiveness. Prior to the final evaluation and to ensure the validity of the VAM data, teachers will review their rosters in CVR to make any corrections needed based on the criteria described earlier.
Evaluation Methods and Data This period will be critical in calibrating the evaluation ratings of the LDOE trainers and checking inter- rater reliability between trained trainers and administrators who will implement the teacher evaluation system in pilot schools. The LDOE will examine the correlations between overall Compass observation/documentation scores and student growth percentile (SGP) scores. The LDOE will also conduct qualitative analysis by administering teacher/administrator surveys and conducting focus groups to understand the pilot participants' perceptions about Compass. The key questions that can be explored include: • Do the teachers and administrators perceive the system to be useful and fair? • What is the perceived impact of the LTCPS on teacher practice? • What factors in the system have worked well and what factors are impeding the system from functioning effectively and efficiently? Methods used to conduct these analyses include: • Focus Groups • Progress monitoring along with LEA support (e.g. additional training, tools, resources) • Teacher and Leader Surveys/Feedback • VAM • Compass documentation • CPMS Rubric Scores • Reliability Study Teacher Personnel Data • Compass rubric scores • Inter-rater reliability between measures of student growth and other measures of effectiveness • SLT Analysis (See below)

Table 3.G Pilot Implementation Timeline

Evaluation of Student Learning Targets (NTGS)

Among the many audits and checks the LDOE has incorporated into the pilot is a deeper evaluation of NTGS Student-Learning Targets – a component critical to Compass success and one

where additional support will likely be necessary. The purpose of the evaluation of the NTGS component is to provide ongoing, formative feedback used to make modifications and improvements. The evaluation assesses the validity and reliability of all individual teacher's and campus goals and evidence of learning and multiple stakeholder perceptions as to:
(1) the understanding, applicability, and fairness of the rubrics, processes, and overall scoring of educator quality;
(2) accuracy and fairness of the measurement of student learning expectations;
(3) whether the Student Learning Target and its associated Body of Evidence accurately and fairly measure what students learned over the course of the year; and
(4) the extent to which the Student Learning Targets and their associated Body of Evidence accurately and fairly attributed student growth to the contributions of individual teachers.
Finally, the LDOE will gain rater consistency with the SLTs through HCIS (and the leader's assessment of the SLT) to perform inter-rater reliability tests in a triangulated manner, using outside experts, the LDOE Implementation team, and the NTGS workgroups. The LDOE will then be able to use information from the evaluations to anticipate and plan for challenges in statewide implementation and identify critical attributes of instances of success on these four fronts so that the LDOE is sure to highlight those as it educates other districts.

Statewide Implementation Plan

During the 2011-2012 Compass pilot, processes to collect, analyze, and implement feedback will be used to prepare for state-wide implementation. Concurrently, the LDOE will continue engaging stakeholders in the pilot and in the public on feedback and support aimed at strengthening the LDOE's systems. The LDOE will provide differentiated support to non-pilot LEAs that include face-to-face trainings, online courses, webinars, planning guides, student learning target workshops, and exemplar tools. To launch this phase of the work, the LDOE will partner closely with LEA personnel directors to strengthen their understanding of Act 54, state policy, and the performance management process as well as to identify additional needs that will aid districts in implementation via district readiness assessment. Please refer to Appendix 3.G to review the Compass implementation plan.

Key to the LDOE's implementation plan is its attention to providing differentiated assistance to districts. The LDOE will leverage current district support structures and will expand these structures as the new evaluation and support system is implemented statewide based on district need, including in-person trainings and technical assistance; online courses and resources; and professional learning communities with other districts LEAs. These efforts will be integrated with Common Core State Standards supports to the extent possible.

Updates to Implementation Plan Post-Waiver Submission (5.1.2012)

Network team support began in mid-March. These teams, composed of key staff at the LDOE, provide districts with strategic support in their implementation of Compass and Common Core State Standards. Ongoing webinars for teachers and leaders on Compass instruments, supports, and processes have also occurred throughout April and will continue through full implementation. The purpose of these webinars is to provide a more in-depth look at the different components of Compass and how educators can begin planning for implementation next year. With the support of network teams, districts are in the process of either preparing waivers for teacher observation tools or are working closely with the LDOE to implement the state's Compass observation tool.

By June, districts will have drafted their strategy for implementing measures for non-tested grades and subjects (NTGS), as NTGS guidance and common assessments will be released by the LDOE in May.

Technical trainings for evaluators will begin in mid-July and continue through mid-August. These trainings will prepare evaluators to accurately assess educator performance using the Compass rubrics, to develop and evaluate student learning targets, and to interpret value-added data. Follow-up trainings will be provided in September and October to ensure evaluators remain calibrated on these tools and processes.

Additionally, to ensure that all districts understand what is expected for 2012-2013, the LDOE has employed numerous communication strategies including LEA Superintendent newsletters, teacher newsletters, websites, videos, and face to face meetings with the State Superintendent.

Timeline for Implementation

The LDOE is currently working to ensure that all stakeholders are ready for statewide implementation of Compass in 2012-2013. The table below displays a timeline of the key milestones and activities necessary for full implementation. A more detailed plan can be reviewed in Appendix 3.I.

	Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsibilities	Evidence (Attachment)	Resources (e.g., staff time, additional funding)	Significant Obstacles
Stakeholder Awareness Efforts Throughout Entire Process	Value-added model pilot underway in Louisiana (state-wide pilot in 2011-2012)	August 2009 to Present	All LEAs and the Louisiana Department of Education	Appendix 3.E.	The LDOE has a value-added model team responsible for developing communication, executive trainings, and building LDOE capacity to support LEAs in value-added model analysis.	None Identified
	Development of NTGS and Other Measures of Effectiveness Model	December 2010 to Present	ACCE committee, Innovation Office, Human Capital Office, Louisiana Educators, NTGS workgroups	Appendix 3.A to Appendix 3.C	NTGS Inter-departmental Steering Committee Compass Technical Advisory Committee NTGS Workgroups NTGS Workgroup Independent Review Committees NTGS Contract Trainers NTGS Statistical Consultant and Technical Design Team State Collaborative	None Identified
	Qualitative measures training underway for	November 2011 to December	10 LEAs, Louisiana Department of Education,	Appendix 3.G	The LDOE COMPASS team has begun the trainer workshops, district trainings, and teacher awareness sessions on value-	None Identified

	pilot LEAs	2011	external trainers		added, NTGS, and other measures of effectiveness pilot.	
	LDOE presents ACEE recommendations to BESE	December 2011	ACEE committee, LDOE and BESE	Appendix 3.H	ACEE committee members, NTGS workgroups, Office of Innovation	None Identified
	Qualitative measures and NTGS pilots underway	January 2012 to June 2012	10 LEAs with support from LDOE	http://www.louisianaschools.net/compass/	By this time, LDOE will have built capacity at LEA central office to support leaders and teachers in CPMS. LDE trainers will be imbedded in those LEAs to provide additional assistance, as needed.	None Identified
	Evaluation of pilot and adjustments	Spring 2012	LDOE and external experts	http://www.louisianaschools.net/compass/	Feedback from the pilot will be assessed and incorporated into state-wide implementation preparations	None Identified

Table 3.H. Statewide Implementation Timeline

Louisiana will have High-Quality Evaluation Systems by 2012-2013

The LDOE will ensure that all LEAs measure teachers and leaders using similar standards and quantitative measures, as required by Act 54, by 2012-2013. The LDOE will allow districts the flexibility to adopt alternate tools for measuring qualitative performance, provided they are reviewed and approved by the LDOE prior to implementation to ensure that they are aligned to the core competencies defined by the state, that they measure performance across multiple levels of proficiency on a four- point scale, and that the LEA has demonstrated how the tool is valid, reliable, and supportive of student performance goals. This flexibility will allow LEAs to continue using qualitative evaluation methods that have proven to be successful in providing educators with meaningful feedback to drive student achievement. For example, the Teacher and Student Advancement Program (TAP) has demonstrated incredible success in Louisiana. Schools that are participating in TAP will continue to use the TAP instructional rubric as the qualitative measure of performance for teachers, but will now incorporate the state's measures of student growth into their evaluations as well.

One intended outcome of the LDOE providing intensive support to districts participating in the pilot will be to leverage those LEA leaders, school leaders, and teachers in helping neighboring LEAs in the state- wide implementation process through virtual and in-person networking opportunities as well as informal contacts. This will be achieved as part of Louisiana's Race to the Top Plan and Trailblazers Professional Learning Communities framework. Louisiana will also use regional trainers as part of a support team (See Figure 3.F LDE Support Structure), all of whom are either current or former teachers, principals, and district leaders, to assist in pilot training and eventual rollout of the state-wide evaluation system. These trainers and pilot leaders will not only be able to provide information about Compass to educators across the state, they will be able to share recommendations and best practices for how to involve and invest educators in the process. For

example, several pilot districts have convened educators in non-tested grades and subject areas to draft common student learning targets for specific content areas that will be piloted district-wide. All trainers and members of district support teams will under evaluator certification, CCSS training and are paired strategically with district team to ensure that Compass rollout is integrated with ongoing district support (i.e., guidance documents, tools, online training and video library, sample policy) and integrated with statewide incorporation of Common Core.

Louisiana is not waiting for the conclusion of the pilot to begin supporting implementation of Compass across the state. Over the course of the winter and spring of 2012, the LDOE will provide Compass awareness sessions (regional, local, and web-based) to build a common understanding of the system and the corresponding policy requirements. These awareness sessions will be followed by individualized district readiness assessments, which will allow district and state leaders to determine where the greatest needs for implementation support lie and how to plan for training and support accordingly.

As the previous example demonstrates, LEAs will have some flexibility in how Compass is implemented at the local level to ensure that the performance management process is beneficial to all teachers and leaders given the differentiated needs of LEAs. Alternative plans and/or evaluation instruments that an LEA wishes to use will need to be first approved by the LDOE prior to use. Such flexibility includes:

- Selecting an alternate observation rubric for the purposes of measuring the qualitative portion of the evaluation, provided the alternate rubric is approved by LDOE;
- Using existing local common assessments to measure student growth in NTGS, provided assessments are approved by the LDOE; and
- Standardizing Student Learning Targets (SLTs) for teachers in common NTGS grade levels and subject areas, if they choose to do so.

Preparing for Successful Implementation through Integration of Services, Support, and Structure

It is clear that Compass alone will not drive the rigorous instruction needed to dramatically increase student achievement. The successful design of Compass and the ongoing pilot and future implementation can be largely attributed to the high priority LDOE has placed on integrated cross-functional work. The Louisiana Integration Project is a three-year, $8.2 million grant (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) to raise the quality of standards (CCSS) and assessments (PARCC), enhance measures and support for educator effectiveness to ensure that instruction is strong and focused on what students need to know to be successful, and ensure there is an effective teacher in every classroom supported by an effective principal. This work allows Louisiana to effectively integrate two critical strategies for dramatically raising student achievement by increasing the effectiveness of Louisiana educators implementing Compass and CCSS.

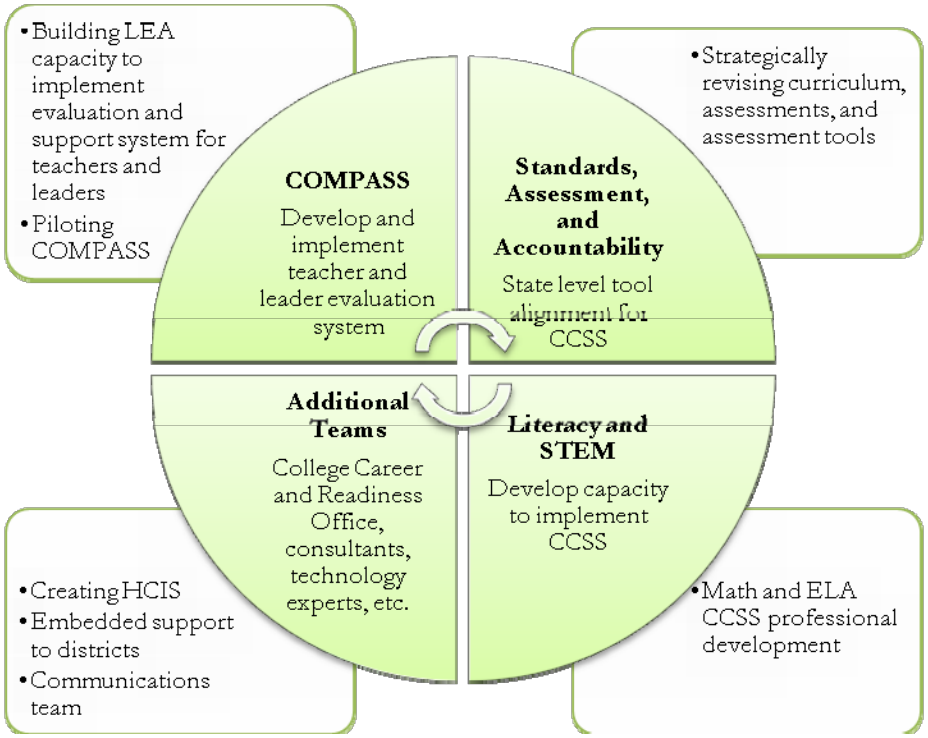


Figure 3.H. Louisiana Integration Project Overview

CCSS-aligned Literacy and Math instructional strategies known as performance tasks that have been shown to be effective in improving instruction are being assessed to ensure they are aligned with the Louisiana Teacher Competencies and Performance Standards (LTCPS) rubric and piloted alongside Compass in Louisiana's pilot districts. The LDOE has engaged in an agency-wide campaign to streamline and reduce duplicative and conflicting delivery, reporting, planning and support systems to more effectively align services to build effective and sustainable statewide capacity to implement Compass and CCSS. A cross-functional team from LDOE Offices of Standards, Assessments, & Accountability, Human Capital, Literacy, STEM, and College & Career Readiness has worked closely together to support integration and alignment of Compass and CCSS. This Integration Team will continue to work together to develop and/or identify additional high-quality guidance documents, professional development modules, and tools to build capacity of district support teams to support CCSS implementation. This collaborative approach is ongoing through the Compass pilot and will be key in preparation for state- wide implementation.

Additional Information on Louisiana's Ongoing Compass-Related Supports for LEAs

As described extensively throughout Principle 2, Louisiana will use the Network strategy to target supports and interventions focused on the five core elements which will drive a system of continuous improvement for students. These five core elements stem from our belief that Common Core State Standards and the Compass system will serves as guides for student performance expectations and instructional expectations.

The five core elements include:

1) Goal Setting: Setting quantifiable achievement goals for students
2) Assessment and Content: Selecting assessments and curricular materials that align with skills students are expected to demonstrate
3) Feedback: Observing all educators and providing feedback on a Common-core aligned rubric
4) Collaboration: Working with teams of educators to examine student work and to articulate specific changes in instructional practice that will align student performance to common core standards
5) Identifying Leaders: Using Compass effectiveness ratings to identify teacher leaders who can take on new responsibilities to support these core elements in their schools

For more information on the Network structure, please refer to Sections 2.F and 2.G.

Communications Plan

The LDOE has a robust plan for engaging stakeholders from the education, private, and non-profit sectors as well as parents, students, the legislature, community leaders, and other interested parties. The purpose of the communications plan is to establish the framework for strategic stakeholder engagement and to identify the stakeholders with whom the LDOE will directly communicate with along with the strategies and tactics that will be used in order to do so. This plan includes results from an in- depth stakeholder analysis, feedback from social media listening tours, and leverages resources across the agency including Legislative Affairs, Public Affairs, the Superintendent's Office, the Literacy Office, and the Office of Innovation to internally and externally utilize the support needed to raise awareness about Compass and CCSS and the 2012-2013 implementation. Please refer to Appendix 3.J to review the stakeholder engagement plan.