

Louisiana Believes

**Federal Spending and Planning for Educator
Empowerment**

Louisiana Believes

Louisiana Believes: Louisiana's plan to ensure every student is on track to a college degree or a professional career

Belief that Louisiana students can compete on a level playing field

- Early childhood through postsecondary standards, assessment, and accountability

Belief that Louisiana educators can make choices to help students compete

- Educator goal setting, planning, accountability, and reflection

Belief that Louisiana families can choose paths that connect students to life after high school

- Course and credential pathways to participation in the middle class workforce
- Alternatives and rapid improvement for long-struggling schools

Problem: The federal grants framework creates a maze of directives that rob decision makers close to children of their authority, providing a crutch in lieu of the hard decisions that come with making choices

Educator Choice on Behalf of Students

Given standards that allow Louisiana students to compete with peers across America, educators will need to assume both accountability for specific outcomes and autonomy in making choices on behalf of students. Absent both accountability and autonomy, educators will be inclined to focus more on the 'how' of prescribed directives and less on the 'what' of student work.

Louisiana's classroom support focuses on three processes:

- Every educator setting measurable student achievement goals
- Planning anchored in assessment aligned to new expectations
- Actionable feedback on student work and classroom practice

Louisiana uses three vehicles to support local leaders and educators in conducting these processes:

- Classroom Support Toolbox: Goal setting, planning, assessment, delivery
- Louisiana Teacher Leaders: Cadre of 2,000 educators trained in the use of the Toolbox and feedback practices at school level
- Network Support Teams: Field-based teams to assist districts with goals, assessment, planning, and feedback

Educator Choice on Behalf of Students

Pre-existing regulatory frameworks limited educators' responsibility for outcomes and empowerment in making decisions on behalf of students rather than receiving directives. Louisiana has tried to address these barriers.

Curriculum and Textbooks

- Ended Comprehensive Curriculum so as to anchor planning in assessment
- Rejected textbook approval applications, moving toward recommended content items as part of Toolbox

Labor and Workforce

- Removed school board from personnel decisions by law
- Connected student learning to evaluation; gradually releasing autonomy in evaluation design and in rating
- Connected district compensation and personnel action to evaluation

Planning

- Eliminated School Improvement Plans and HQT Corrective Action Plans

Time and scheduling

- Maintained legal instructional minutes but ended prescriptions

Federal Spending

- Unified application federal process to align with educator choice

Barriers to Making Choices

Federal program requirements generate activity rather than focus. They often provide a crutch rather than a prompt toward responsibility.

1. Title I, Part A
2. Title II, Part A
3. Title III, Part A LEP
4. Title X, Homeless Children and Youth
5. Title III, Part A LEP
6. Title III, Part A Immigrant
7. Title VI B (REAP)
8. Title I, Part D - Neglected or Delinquent
9. Carl Perkins
10. Title I, Part C Migrant Education
11. IDEA Part B 611
12. IDEA Part B 619 - Preschool
13. Positive Behavior Intervention Support
14. Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative
15. Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Teacher Incentive Fund
16. Believe and Succeed - 1003a
17. High Risk Pool
18. High Priority Schools Initiative
19. 1003(g)
20. Extended School Year Services (ESYS)
21. Believe and Include
22. Assistive Technology
23. Jobs for Americas Graduates (TANF)
24. Jobs for Americas Graduates (IDEA)

Moving toward Coherence

In 2013, Louisiana began using four structures to support coherent LEA choices on behalf of students.

- Programmatic Support Structure: Aligning federal staff with Network Teams
- Unified Application: Requesting transparent alignment of all federal spending with academic priorities in one process
- Fiscal Flexibility: Providing guidance on all grants that supports coherent local choices on behalf of students
- Coordinated Monitoring: Streamlining monitoring so as to support coherent choices rather than distract from them

Programmatic Support Structure

One No Child Left Behind and one Individuals with Disabilities Education Act point-of-contact per district. The contact answers all programmatic questions, reviews applications, and approves applications.

- LEA Benefits
 - The Department is accountable for supporting LEA needs
 - Point-of-Contact support is determined by district needs as articulated by the district
- SEA Benefits
 - Clear management structure for program administration
 - Clear expectations for program staff

Unified Application

The Unified Application is the consolidation of 24 grant application processes into one linear planning process. Network Teams plan with LEAs, connecting the application to the Classroom Support Toolbox and to Teacher Leaders.

- LEA Benefits

- Reduced focus on compliance means more time spent on performance
- Ensures alignment between academic goals and financial resources
- Increases opportunity to braid funding sources
- Eliminates time-consuming application components

- SEA Benefits

- More efficient oversight and management

Fiscal Flexibility

Fiscal flexibility allows districts to use federal and state funds to support their plans to increase student achievement. Schoolwide Guidance has been updated to reflect increased flexibility so districts can budget funds based upon student needs over compliance concerns.

- LEA Benefits
 - Supplement not supplant does not apply in a Title I Schoolwide Program
 - Promotes opportunities for alignment between a district plans and funds
 - Increased collaboration between program staff and academic support teams
 - Clear guidance to achieve maximum flexibility
- SEA Benefits
 - Defined role for program staff

Coordinated Monitoring

Coordinated monitoring prevents districts from being monitored more than once per year other than instances requiring significant intervention.

- LEA Benefits

- Provides districts with a bill of rights for department monitoring
- One programmatic review process for all programs
- Increases efficiency and allows district staff to spend less time on compliance

- SEA Benefits

- Clear communication lines with LEAs through Monitoring Leads
- Allows for clarity and simplicity, enabling substantive monitoring reforms to come

Looking Forward

This approach to federal spending and planning allows a platform for further changes to allow greater responsibility and agency from local educators.

- One unified planning process for state and federal dollars
- Expansion of statewide priority areas within this planning process, including early childhood programs and post-secondary pathways, to expand local responsibility and agency framework
- A similar framework for empowered decision making and coherent planning at the school level
- Rational use of IDEA monitoring authority to promote student learning