

# **LOUISIANA HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE**

## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

**9 April 2025**

Message from the Governor Below is a special message to Louisiana teachers from Governor Jeff Landry:

Dear Teachers, I write to you today, as your Governor, with the hopes of clearing the air. Two years ago, I made a promise to our citizens that I would work to improve the outcomes for Louisiana's students by prioritizing the two most important people in their education: the child's parent and you, the child's teacher. I know firsthand what you mean to our State. I was raised in a family of teachers who believed that the greatest gift they could give society was preparing their students for the challenges of tomorrow. My appreciation of them and you were the basis for the "Let Teachers Teach" project. This initiative invited teachers to share their ideas for improving the classroom environment. Only by listening to them did we begin to implement a set of policies that reduce paperwork, eliminate excessive trainings, respect your autonomy, and allow you to teach without behavior distractions. We are also committed to reducing state testing, because I am not a big fan of teaching to a test. The goal is to get back to the basics of education, and it is not possible without you. Our rankings are improving dramatically and that is a testament to our teachers. My belief in our teachers is why we worked to extend the \$2,000 stipend last year, despite a potential budget shortfall. Limited by constitutional constraints, we explored options to create a lasting solution and landed on a change – Amendment 2 – to our Constitution. It would have paid off retirement debt and increased your pay with those savings. Your retirement is designed to provide for you beyond your time in the classroom. Presently, 10% of Louisiana's K-12 education budget is allocated to address retirement debt, which is paid by school districts. This financial obligation severely limits available funds for essential areas like salary increases. Amendment 2 was designed to reduce that debt and direct savings towards a permanent teacher pay raise. Eliminating this high-interest retirement debt is akin to reducing personal debts, resulting in savings for our local schools. Just as one would eagerly accept a friend's offer to pay off their mortgage, Amendment 2 was designed to be that friend. It mandated a \$2,000 annual salary increase for every teacher and a \$1,000 increase for every support staff member. By eradicating nearly 25% of the total debt in the teacher retirement system, the Amendment not only bolstered the security of your retirement benefits but also saved taxpayers over \$1 billion in interest payments. Page 1 of 8 In times of fiscal instability, our current Constitution turns education and health care into political pawns. My goal was to end that political manipulation. Amendment 2 sought to shift the focus of sound fiscal practices toward benefitting teachers. Rather than sending these wasteful interest payments to Wall Street banks, we wanted to invest those dollars in you. Regrettably – with the setback faced by Amendment 2 – we are back to the drawing board, as no existing alternative recurring resources exist to fund the permanent salary increase you deserve. It is imperative that we work together toward sound financial budgeting that protects the taxpayer and properly compensates you. As always, my door is open to finding a solution that does not. For Louisiana, Jeff Landry Governor

**Early Childhood Conference:** The Louisiana Department of Education is excited to host the fourth annual Early Childhood Conference - *Early Foundations, Endless Possibilities!*

This year's conference will be held in two locations:

- Baton Rouge on September 13, 2025, at the Raising Cane's River Center
- Shreveport on October 11, 2025, at the Shreveport Convention Center

The Conference will provide opportunities for education and training for childcare providers, teachers, and administrators in all aspects of Early Childhood.

**Registration and Scheduling:** Registration is currently closed and will open on June 4, 2025. There will be no onsite registration. All registrations must be completed before attending the Conference.

Educators will use the same system, Whova, to register and build their schedules for the Conference. The LDOE strongly encourages that email addresses used for Whova are the participants' individual email address. Personal email addresses have a history of blocking emails from event platforms and/or marking them as SPAM; please be sure to check your SPAM folders after registering.

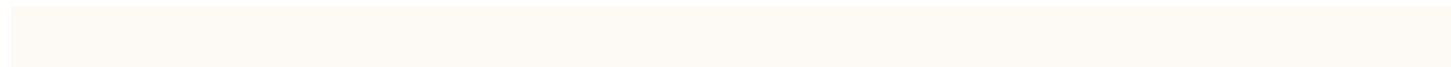
**Registration Fees:** To help offset the cost of running a high-quality, multi-day event for thousands of Louisiana educators, the LDOE charges a nominal registration fee. This fee will cover:

- Admission to conference, conference sessions, lunch and T-Shirt

All attendees will be provided with lunch on the day of the conference.

Early Bird Registration opens on June 4, 2025, Pricing: \$45

Regular Registration opens on June 26, 2025, Pricing: \$55



**Presenter Application:** We encourage you to review the [ECC 2025 Presenter Application Guidelines](#) and submit your [ECC 2025 Presenter Application](#) by May 30, 2025. All applicants must submit their complete presentation slides on the ECC 2025 template, available on the application when applying. Submissions that do not have the correct permissions may not be considered. Please verify your settings before submitting to avoid delays in the review process.

Want to learn more? Join our upcoming presenter webinar on April 15th or 17th to learn more and get answers to your questions. [RSVP today!](#)

**Contact:** Please contact [events@emergentmethod.com](mailto:events@emergentmethod.com) with questions regarding the Early Childhood Conference. Responses will be returned within 24-48 hours.

**REMINDER:** Teacher Leader Summit 2025 Registration Teacher Leader Summit (TLS) 2025 will be held June 10- 12 at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. • Early bird registration will take place from February 10 to March 14, and regular registration begins on March 15 and will close on April 18 or at sellout. There will be no on-site registration. All registrations must be completed before arriving at the event. • Educators can now complete their Early Bird Registration. For more information, please contact [ldoeevents@la.gov](mailto:ldoeevents@la.gov).

**Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Prospective Payments:** Later this spring, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) will transition to paying providers prospectively in accordance with new federal regulations. This change, in which the LDOE will make child care payments in advance of services, will help to support better provider stability. The LDOE will share more specifics about the transition in coming monthly webinars and e-mail blasts to providers. For more information, please contact the CCAP Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

**Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) KinderConnect Attendance Tracking:** Providers caring for CCAP-certified families are required to track daily attendance in the KinderConnect Attendance Tracking System: • Providers must check the KinderConnect portal daily to observe whether there are successful check-in/check-outs for all certified children in attendance. ○ The LDOE suggests that providers review the portal after the morning check-in and at the end of the day. • Providers must also ensure that daily check-in/check-outs in the KinderConnect portal match the physical Attendance log. Providers who use a Child Care Management System (CCMS) different from CenterTrack must ensure that their system is connected to the KinderConnect System via KinderBridge (API). Note that CenterTrack is a free CCMS offered by KinderSystems that certified providers may obtain to track attendance. Providers may contact KinderSystems by e-mail at [supportLA@kindersystems.com](mailto:supportLA@kindersystems.com) or by calling 1-888-829-9258. For LDOE assistance, please contact the CCAP Provider Help Desk at 225-250-7635 or 225-614-5917.

**Requested CCCBC Corrections:** Providers are notified about needed corrections to a CCCBC application in two ways: 1. Via e-mail notification 2. Through the CCCBC System Notification Log When corrections are needed, the notification e-mail will specify exactly what needs to be fixed, such as the following: • Missing attachments that need to be uploaded

- Applicant's information that needs to be updated Follow the correction instructions provided in the notification e-mail and resubmit the application. The CCCBC application will remain in "Corrections Requested" status until all requested changes are completed and the application is successfully resubmitted. To avoid processing delays, carefully review the correction requests to ensure all items that need attention are addressed. Please contact [ldcccbbcprocessing@la.gov](mailto:ldcccbbcprocessing@la.gov) with questions.

**Locating an IDEMIA Fingerprinting Site:** To find a nearby IDEMIA fingerprinting location, visit [identogo.com/locations](http://identogo.com/locations) and input a zip code or city name into the search field. From the results displayed, select a location identified as "IdentoGO-State Agency Enrollment" to ensure an authorized service center is chosen. Only electronic digital fingerprint submissions are accepted unless the LDOE specifies otherwise. If an applicant has a condition that may cause fingerprinting issues, please notify the LDOE CCCBC Section by emailing [LDECCBCprocessing@la.gov](mailto:LDECCBCprocessing@la.gov) before the scheduled fingerprinting appointment. Please contact [LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov](mailto:LDECCBCprocesing@la.gov) with any questions or for assistance

Talking points for staff to communicate with parents/guardians and families

On Tuesday April 1, we learned that five regional offices were closed across the country, including the Region [Insert Number] office located in [Insert geographic area]. We understand that [Insert number] of our team members at our regional office in [insert location] were dismissed.

This decision is part of broader changes at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services aimed at reshaping and restructuring the federal government.

A Regional Head Start Office oversees and supports Head Start and Early Head Start programs within a specific geographic area. These offices operate under the Office of Head Start (OHS), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Their main responsibilities include grant oversight and funding distribution, program monitoring and compliance, and providing training and technical assistance. These staff are an essential part of ensuring that children and families are able to access reliable, high-quality, and fiscally sound support.

At this time, we don't know details as to how this will impact our programs. With fewer regional offices, some administrative processes may be streamlined or adjusted. This could lead to changes in how programs receive guidance and oversight. Also, fewer regional offices may mean longer response times for certain administrative matters, such as grant approvals and technical assistance, which could impact how quickly programs can adapt to challenges.

Despite the downsizing of regional offices, our program remains committed to providing high-quality early childhood education, family support, and health services to children and families in our community. We will do everything in our power to ensure that this restructuring should not impact the direct services your child receives.

Head Start has been an essential resource for children and families in [Insert your state/community] for [Insert number] of years. We sincerely appreciate the trust and partnership you have granted us and we are committed to maintaining that for decades to come.

**LCLPPP Quarterly Advisory Committee Meeting:** Advisory Committee Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, at 11 AM. We completed breakout sessions with two workgroups, policy and outreach.

### **Policy Workgroup**

#### **Key Topics:**

- Strengthening lead testing and reporting
- Enforcement and compliance with lead hazard regulations (Revised Statute 40:1285.7)
- Funding and resources for lead abatement (HUD grant, CHIP)
- Integrating lead prevention into housing and health policies (Heathy Homes Ordinance, Rental Registry)
- Coordination with Medicaid and WIC for testing and intervention

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What policy gaps exist in Louisiana regarding lead testing, remediation, and reporting?
2. How can we improve enforcement of existing lead hazard regulations?
3. What funding or legislative efforts should we prioritize to support lead prevention?
4. How can we better align with housing, environmental, and healthcare policies?
5. What role can local agencies play in ensuring lead-safe environments?

### **Outreach Workgroup**

#### **Key Topics:**

- Public awareness campaigns on lead poisoning prevention
- Culturally appropriate messaging for diverse communities
- Engaging healthcare providers, landlords, and schools in prevention efforts
- Improving accessibility of lead testing and prevention resources
- Partnering with community organizations to reach high-risk families

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What are the biggest barriers preventing families from accessing lead testing and prevention resources?
2. How can we improve messaging to increase awareness and action among providers, parents and caregivers?
3. What community groups or stakeholders should we collaborate with to enhance outreach?
4. How can we make lead poisoning prevention information more accessible and actionable?
5. What strategies have worked in other programs that we could adapt?

