



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Date: January 5, 2014

To: Members of the House and Senate Committees on Education

From: John White, State Superintendent of Education

Re: Follow-up questions from Joint Education Committee hearing

Thank you for the opportunity to present at the Joint Education Committee hearing on December 17, 2014. In response to your questions and requests, below please find information regarding early childhood care and education, student data, and special education. I look forward to the continued dialogue and thank you for your support of these very important initiatives.

Early Childhood Care and Education

1. How will coordinated enrollment work in Orleans Parish?

The Orleans Community Network has been working intensely for more than a year to integrate coordinated early childhood enrollment into OneApp. Currently, families are using OneApp to enroll their children for prekindergarten (LA 4 and the Non-public School Early Childhood Development program) for the 2015-2016 school year. That enrollment involves all Recovery School District schools, most Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) schools, and many non-public schools and child care centers participating in NSECD. Additionally:

- Inclusion of all OPSB schools: Like with K-12 OneApp, the remaining OPSB schools will be included on a rolling basis as their charters are renewed.
- Inclusion of younger children and child care: The Community Network is preparing to have enrollment for all publicly-funded early childhood programs in OneApp for the 2016-2017 school year.

2. What do we know about the extent to which students whose early childhood care and education is not financed by the state (students not eligible for free or reduced price meals or child care assistance) are prepared to enter kindergarten? What do we know about children's progress from prekindergarten to third grade?

Most children coming from low-income households attend publicly funded programs that fall under Act 3 of 2012 and other recently enacted early childhood laws. For these programs, the state collects information about children's progress, and going forward, will do even more to measure the extent to which programs are meeting expectations for child outcomes. The Department does not currently have reliable data on prekindergarten student outcomes for children who do not participate in publicly funded programs; however, it may be useful to review results from the Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) assessment that is taken by all

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- other instructional materials;
- c) To fund exemplary programs in elementary and secondary schools designed to improve elementary or secondary student academic achievement or vocational-technical skill;
 - d) To fund carefully defined research efforts, including pilot programs, designed to improve elementary and secondary student academic achievement;
 - e) To fund school remediation programs and preschool programs;
 - f) To fund the teaching of foreign languages in elementary and secondary schools; and
 - g) To fund an adequate supply of teachers by providing scholarships or stipends to prospective teachers in academic or vocational-technical areas where there is a critical teacher shortage.

In Act 15 (House Bill 1) of the 2014 Regular Session, the legislature appropriated funds from the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund to support the development of the unique student identification number system:

Payable out of the State General Fund by Interagency Transfers from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund Program to the Administrative Support Program for the Globally Unique Identifier (GUID) system, in the event House Bill No. 1076 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature is enacted into law.

The unique student identification number system will strengthen student privacy protections while improving the alignment and quality of data. This enhanced security and quality of student data will improve student achievement by:

- Improving the ability of LEAs to transfer student records, which will help them better meet individual students' individual needs;
- Improving the Department's ability to better measure progress toward academic achievement goals and gauge student progress over time; and
- Increasing the Department's capacity to support assessments, school and district accountability, teacher accountability, funding, and other program administration responsibilities, all of which are aimed at increasing student achievement.

3. Does Act 837 of the 2014 Regular Session prevent schools from posting student work throughout the school building, publishing student names and photos in school yearbooks, and printing student names in school event programs?

Act 837 permits local education agencies (LEAs) to share personally identifiable information about students with external entities after June 1, 2015 as long as the data sharing meets one of the law's limited exceptions:

- The parent has given written consent to share such information; or
- The data are required by a person authorized by the state to conduct audits, such as audits of student enrollment counts tied to state funding.

LEAs may also contract for student and other education services that include specific terms outlined in the law. Act 837 does not specifically address the use of student information in

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participated in the Developmental Disabilities Council steering committee on Act 833. A summary of these activities is attached for your review.

6. What more can be done to inform parents of students with disabilities about the opportunities available through Act 833?

The Department has provided school systems with a number of guidance documents and other resources about Act 833 that may be shared with parents of students with disabilities. Still, both the Department and local school systems can do more to inform parents about the new law. This Department contracts with Families Helping Families and Parent Training and Information Centers to offer assistance and training for families of children with disabilities. Department staff is in the process of partnering with them to focus on Act 833 communications, developing materials for families that can be distributed by these centers and by school staff. The Department will also post a parent brochure on its website regarding opportunities available through Act 833.

7. Please provide the number of students in Louisiana with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), excluding gifted and talented. Approximately how many of these do we expect will need to have IEPs revised to take advantage of Act 833?

As of October 2014, there were 83,074 students with IEPs in Louisiana (excluding gifted and talented). In order to establish eligibility for an alternate pathway and to determine if such a decision is necessary and appropriate for the student based on individual needs, the IEP team will need to review the student's academic record and deliberate. Eligibility for an alternate pathway must be considered during the IEP development process for all students going forward and will be documented in the Department's Special Education Reporting system.

8. Please identify the Department's special education staff and describe their support of local school systems.

Historically, the Department has been organized into a fragmented system of divisions in which various elementary and secondary school sectors have been isolated – not only special education, but also career and technical education, curriculum, educator support, assessments, accountability, federal programs, early childhood education, and more. This structure did not foster planning or collaboration among divisions, nor did it reflect the real-world environments of public schools where all of these needs must be addressed every day in the same schools, even in the same classrooms. The isolation of special education staff, in particular, ran contrary to the goals of inclusion for students to be able to participate in and benefit from the total educational experience just as their non-disabled peers.

Because special education is a service for students who need it, and because *all* Department of Education staff and local school system staff are obligated to providing that service, not just

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