

**Approved State Policy Waiver Requests
for Hurricane Relief Efforts
Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
September 2005**

High School Diplomas for Displaced Students

For 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, students who were displaced due to Hurricane Katrina and are attending high school out-of-state may earn a Louisiana high school diploma if they meet the Louisiana requirements for high school graduation (i.e., 23 Carnegie units and pass the GEE). For 2005-2006, the signature of a district-level official may substitute for the signature of the school principal when submitting diploma information.

The Department has also been given the authority to allow substitutions for required courses if students are not able to take required courses at the out-of-state high schools.

For displaced students wishing to earn a Louisiana high school diploma, the Department will develop procedures to provide the GEE, evaluate the transcripts, and issue diplomas. The Superintendent will establish contact with other states through their respective chief state school officers.

The students' "home" school will evaluate the transcripts and submit these to the Department. If the students' "home" school is unable to evaluate the transcripts, the Department staff will conduct the evaluation. On a case-by-case basis, substitute coursework will be allowed if the required courses were not offered in the out-of-state school.

Students will be given the standard number of opportunities to pass the GEE (three during the senior year) through an online version of the test. Pending approval, the current assessment contract will be amended to make the online testing possible.

Instructional Time

BESE has granted authority to the LDE, through the Superintendent, to approve revised school calendars for 2005-2006. However, that authority is contingent upon suspension of Louisiana Revised Statute 17:154.1, which requires 63,720 minutes of instruction per year.

Several districts were out of school for a short duration, and some of these districts have already made arrangements to make up the lost days. If the recommendation is accepted, the LDE will work with the remaining districts to adopt revised school calendars that make up a reasonable number of lost days.

The districts that have longer-term impact may not be able to make up lost days; however, the students from those districts should be attending school elsewhere during that time.

High Stakes Testing

For 2005-2006, the high stakes testing policy has been suspended, allowing 4th and 8th grade students to be promoted according to local policy.

Districts will be given additional flexibility in determining which students should be enrolled in the LEAP tutoring program and in the summer remediation program.

Because many students have been severely impacted due to the effects of the hurricane, the high stakes testing policy has been suspended for the 2005-2006 school year. Student promotion will be locally determined.

However:

- Spring LEAP and GEE will occur as scheduled.
- The new tests – *i*LEAP and LAA 2 – will be implemented as scheduled.
- Students will be informed of their spring scores and be given the opportunity for summer remediation if they score lower than the passing level.
- Districts can use the funds for LEAP summer school in the manner which meets their own needs.

School and District Accountability

BESE authorized the Department of Education to prepare a letter to the US Department of Education. The letter will request that Louisiana be allowed to include in the SPS and Subgroup Component calculations for 2005-2006 only those students who were enrolled in the school or district for two (academic) years (October 1, 2004, and date of test, Spring 2006) and that no schools or districts be moved to a higher level of School Improvement or have any additional sanctions applied based on these calculations.

The current policy states that all students enrolled in a school or district on both October 1 of the school year and the date of testing for that school year are considered to have met the Full Academic Year requirement for the school or district. All students who meet the Full Academic Year definition are included in the SPS and Subgroup components of the accountability system (*Bulletin 111*).

Additionally, department staff will need to review and revise the transition plan for the changes to the accountability system that were to start in 2006 and 2007 based on the addition of *iLEAP* and the Graduation Index. Due to the displacement of large numbers of students for an extended period of time and the movement of these students from shelters to more permanent living arrangements which may include changes in school enrollment, there will be tremendous impact on attendance, dropout, graduation rate, and graduation index calculations. The revised transition plan will be presented to BESE in October 2005.

Class Size

BESE granted authority to the LDE, through the Superintendent, to approve waivers of the maximum class size requirement, *up to* the following levels:

- **For LA 4 and other early childhood programs, a student to lead teacher ratio of no more than twenty-two to one and a student to adult staff member ratio of no more than eleven to one**
- **For grade K-3, up to 28 students per class**
- **For grades 4-12, up to 35 students class**

However, this waiver is contingent on suspension of Louisiana Revised Statutes 17: 151, R.S. 17:174, and R.S. 17:24.10, which stipulate maximum class size requirements.

Nonpublic School Policies

BESE granted authority to the LDE, through the Superintendent, to approve revised nonpublic school calendars.

BESE approved a waiver of the October 15th deadline for submission of the nonpublic annual school report. Furthermore, school approval classifications for the 2004-2005 school year will be extended to the 2005-2006 school year.

Health Screening

BESE waived the 30-day timeline for health screening upon entry into school for first grade students. However, the screening should be done during the first semester for the 2005-2006 year. This waiver is contingent on suspension of Louisiana Revised Statute R.S. 17:2112, which requires this timeline.

The current policy states that during the first semester of the school year or within 30 days after the admission of any students entering the school, the LEA shall test the sight, including color screening, for all first grade students, and hearing of all students except those students whose parent objects to the examination. (*Bulletin 741*, §1119)

Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program (LaTAAP)

Current BESE policy requires that all new teachers in Louisiana public schools complete the two-year Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program, beginning in the first year of their teaching assignments.

1. BESE will allow all Louisiana school districts to select one of the following three options for implementing the LaTAAP during the 2005-2006 school year.

Option 1: Full implementation of LaTAAP activities during 2005-06 school year

Districts selecting this option will continue all LaTAAP activities. A revised calendar of activities for 2005-06 will be forthcoming.

Option 2: Partial delay of LaTAAP during 2005-2006 school year

Districts selecting this option will suspend all LaTAAP activities for new teachers who would enter semester 1 in school year 2005-2006. However, LaTAAP activities for new teachers in semesters 2, 3, 4 will continue as planned. LaTAAP activities for those new

teachers in semester 1 will begin in Fall 2006.

Option 3: One-year delay of LaTAAP during 2005-2006 school year

Districts selecting this option will suspend all LaTAAP activities for new teachers in semesters 1, 2, 3, and 4. In Fall 2006, new teachers shall enter the semester of LaTAAP that they were scheduled to enter in Fall 2005.

Special Exclusions

In addition, on a case-by case basis, special exclusions will be considered for those who have experienced significant hardship and/or displacement as a result of Hurricane Katrina and whose districts elected either Option 1 or Option 2. Requests for such exclusions must be made by the district in which the teacher is currently employed to the Louisiana Department of Education.

Louisiana Principal Induction Program

Current BESE policy requires that all newly appointed principals and assistant principals participate in the Principal/Assistant Principal Induction Program.

BESE will allow a three-tiered approach to be implemented for the Louisiana Principal Induction Program.

Tier 1: Districts Significantly Impacted by Katrina (City of Bogalusa, Jefferson Parish, Orleans Parish, Plaquemines Parish, St. Bernard Parish, St. Tammany Parish, Washington Parish)

In recognition of the severe damage sustained and the difficulties faced to restore communities, Tier 1 districts will select one of the following options for participation in the LPI Program for the 2005-2006 school year. The option selected by the district will apply to all eligible principals and assistant principals in that district.

Option 1: Full participation in the LPI program as scheduled for all principals, assistant principals, and administrative assistants.

Option 2: Partial participation in the LPI program which would allow those principals enrolled in Year 2 LPI program who completed Year 1 in 2004-2005 to complete the Year 2 program in 2005-2006. However, participation in the LPI program for first-year principals, assistant principals, and administrative assistants would be delayed until 2006-2007.

Option 3: Full Delay of participation in the LPI program for all new and second-year principals, all new assistant principals, and all new administrative assistants.

Tier 1 districts will need to report their newly assigned Principals, Assistant Principals and Administrative Assistants for the 2005-2006 school year to LDE staff. This registration information will be held and registration will occur at the beginning 2006-2007 school year.

Tier 2: All Districts Not identified as a Tier 1 District

In recognition of the challenges faced as student populations shift due to evacuations and districts restructure their resources to accommodate population surges, the following modifications will be made to the LPI Program.

1. The LPI Registration Deadline will be extended from October 1, 2005 to October 15, 2005. The program calendar will be modified to account for this extension.
2. The Regional Orientation Meetings will be modified:
 - a. Previously scheduled Regional Orientation Meetings will be cancelled. These were 1 day meetings at a Regional location which required principals to be out of their schools and on travel for 1 day.
 - b. Team Orientation Meetings will be scheduled which will allow for delivery of the Orientation Meeting at a local level. This will take less time, will not require extensive travel, and can occur

outside the school day.

3. Due to personal and professional needs resulting from the storm, the Online Course will be modified. The essential activities aligned to the Standards for School Principals in Louisiana will be required, but enrichment activities which expand on the Standards for School Principals will be optional for this program year.

Tier 3: Special Exclusions

On a case-by-case basis, special exclusions will be considered for those administrators who are being temporarily assigned to “temporary schools” – that is, schools designed specifically for displaced students on a temporary basis. Requests for such exclusions must be made by the district to the Louisiana Department of Education.

Type C and Level 1 Teaching Certificates

Current BESE policy allows an individual to hold a Type C or Level 1 Teaching Certificate for three years, with an option to renew once for an additional three years. Policy also requires that in order for a teacher to move from a Type C or Level 1 teaching certificate to the next level (Type B or Level 2), the teacher must have completed LaTAAP and have three years of successful teaching experience.

As a result of displacement due to the hurricane, there may be isolated cases of an individual’s not being able to complete the requirements to move to the next level and thus have an expired certificate.

BESE will allow for a one-year extension of the teaching certificate to a teacher who has not met the requirements to move to a higher level certificate due to Hurricane Katrina.

Louisiana Virtual School

Current LVS policy requires that a student enrolled in an LVS course have an LVS-trained, on-site facilitator. BESE will allow that in disaster areas or in the case of temporary out of state residence, students may take LVS courses without having an on-site facilitator present. Instead, an adult monitor/contact person at the students’ current school site will be allowed.

Current LVS policy restricts participation in the LVS to those students currently enrolled in a Louisiana state-approved school. BESE will allow students who have taken temporary residence out-of-state to continue their LVS course(s) even though they will enroll in traditional out-of-state schools.