

# Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities Using Louisiana's Special Education Playbook

LAFEPA



March 2025

# Agenda

- Playbook Overview
  - Best Practice 1
  - Best Practice 2
  - Best Practice 3
- Understanding Significant Disproportionality to Leverage CEIS Funds
- Q&A



# Objective

During this professional development, participants will obtain guidance on implementing the **three best instructional practices** for students with disabilities aimed at improving outcomes.

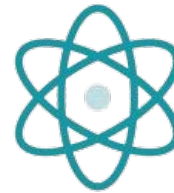
Participants will leave with a **deeper understanding** of the three best instructional practices, and ways to **begin implementing** these practices.



Focus on  
Core  
Instruction

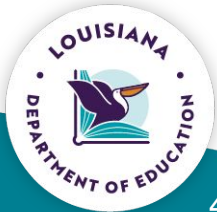


Extra Time to  
Learn



Content  
Strong  
Teachers





# Meet Your Presenter

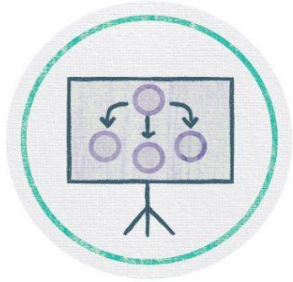


**Dr. Lauren Wells**

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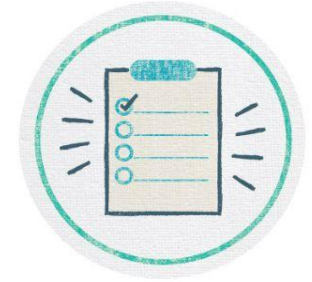
Diverse Learner **instructional strategies** ensure that Students with Disabilities and English Learners have access to inclusive, high quality teaching and learning.



Intentional **educator development** builds capacity to implement best practices for Students with Disabilities and English Learners.



Strong partnerships through **stakeholder engagement** aligns a broad range of supports to best serve children.



Clarity on **program compliance** through effective data collection, monitoring, and reporting provides all partners clarity on student support.

**Ensuring Louisiana's diverse learners have appropriate, individualized supports along the educational journey is critical.**

# State of Special Education in Louisiana

Our Why and How the Best Practices are Working



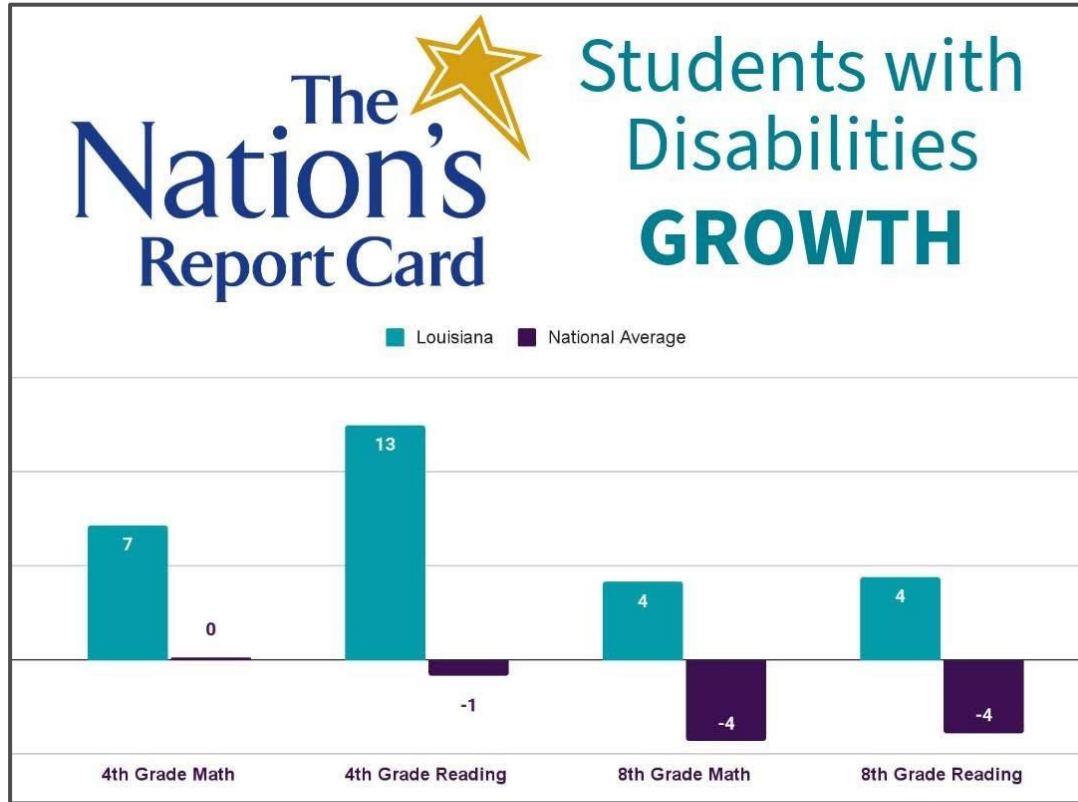
# Celebrating Your Growth!

- 2024 Nation's Report Card revealed that students with disabilities outperformed students with disabilities across the nation!
- Students with disabilities have shown increased mastery on LEAP for the past three years in a row.
- In 2024, students with disabilities' growth surpassed their nondisabled peers by 1%.
- Louisiana's most recent cohort graduation rate increased for students with disabilities.



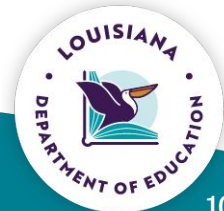
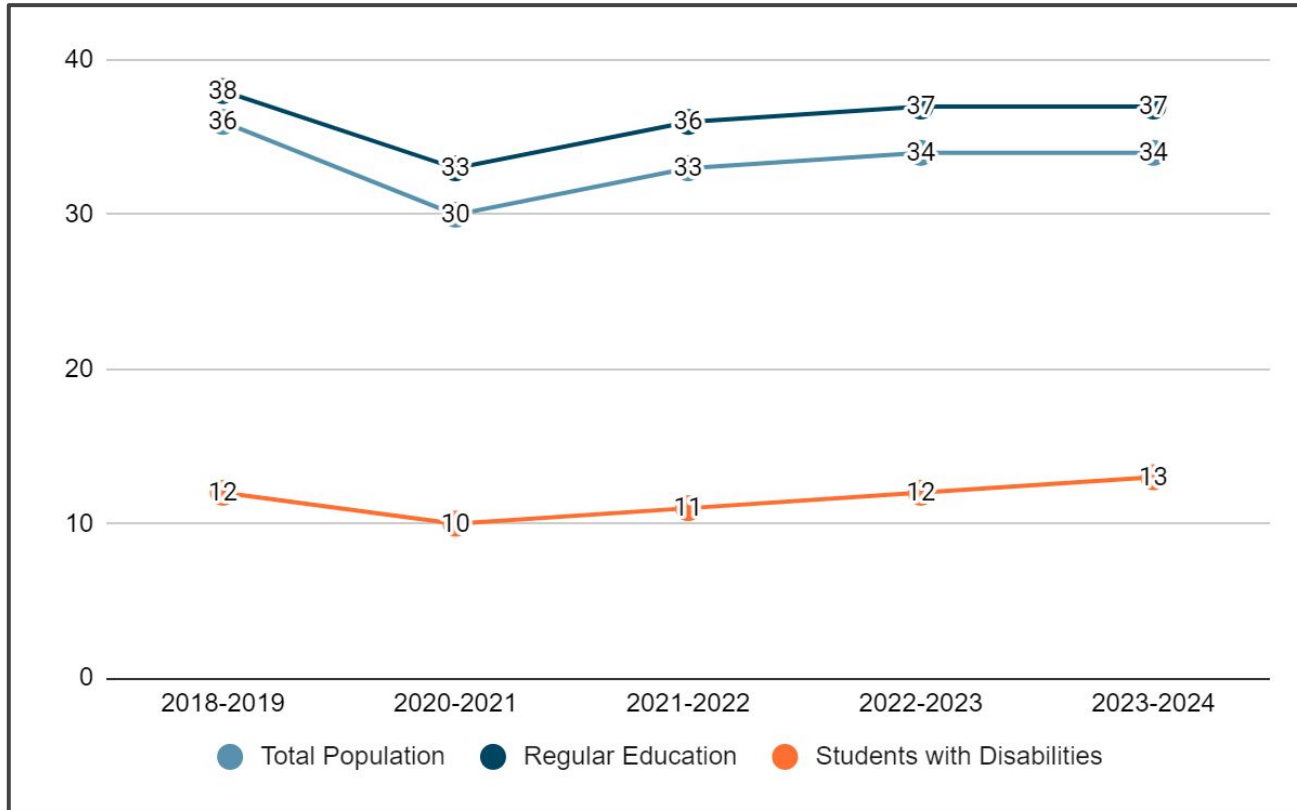


# We Know What Works

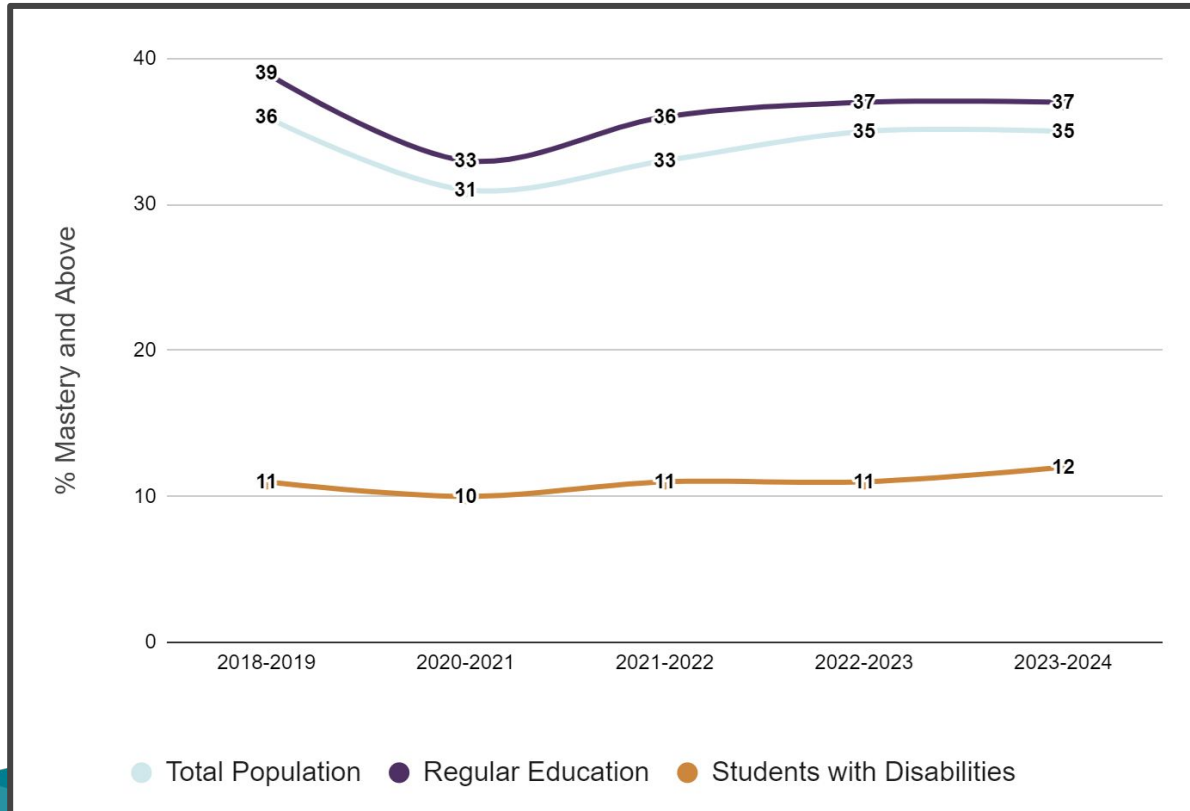


# SWD Performance in Grades 3-8

WE  
STILL  
HAVE  
MORE  
WORK  
TO DO!



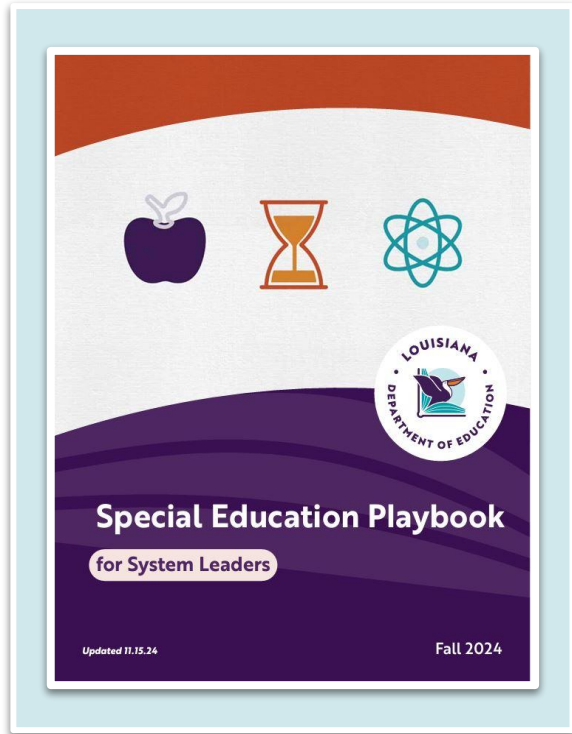
# LEAP 2024 Shows Progress for Students with Disabilities: Grades 3-HS Mastery



# Statewide Strategy to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: There is a way!



# Special Education Playbook for System Leaders



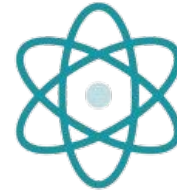
highlighting  
three best instructional practices



Focus on  
Core  
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Extra Time to  
Learn



Content  
Strong  
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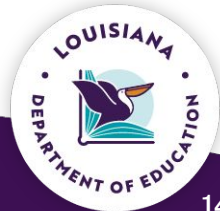
aimed at **accelerating learning**  
and **improving outcomes** for  
students with disabilities.





## Instructional Best Practice 1

How can we ensure all students with disabilities receive **high-quality core** reading and math instruction?

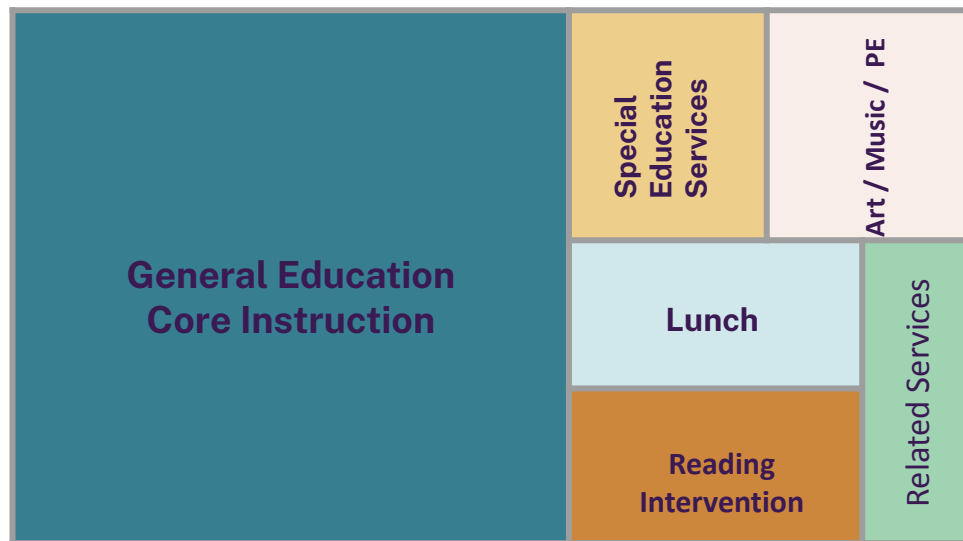


# Protect Core Instructional Time

Ensuring high-quality core instruction is fundamental to addressing academic challenges. While extra instructional time, intervention, and special education services are important, they are not a replacement for core instruction.

Students with disabilities access to high-quality core instruction can be impeded when:

- students are pulled from core for extra help
- scheduled into lower-level classes
- pulled from core instruction for related services or other supports



# Instructional Best Practice 1: Provide and Ensure Access to High-Quality Core Instruction



Students with disabilities benefit when:

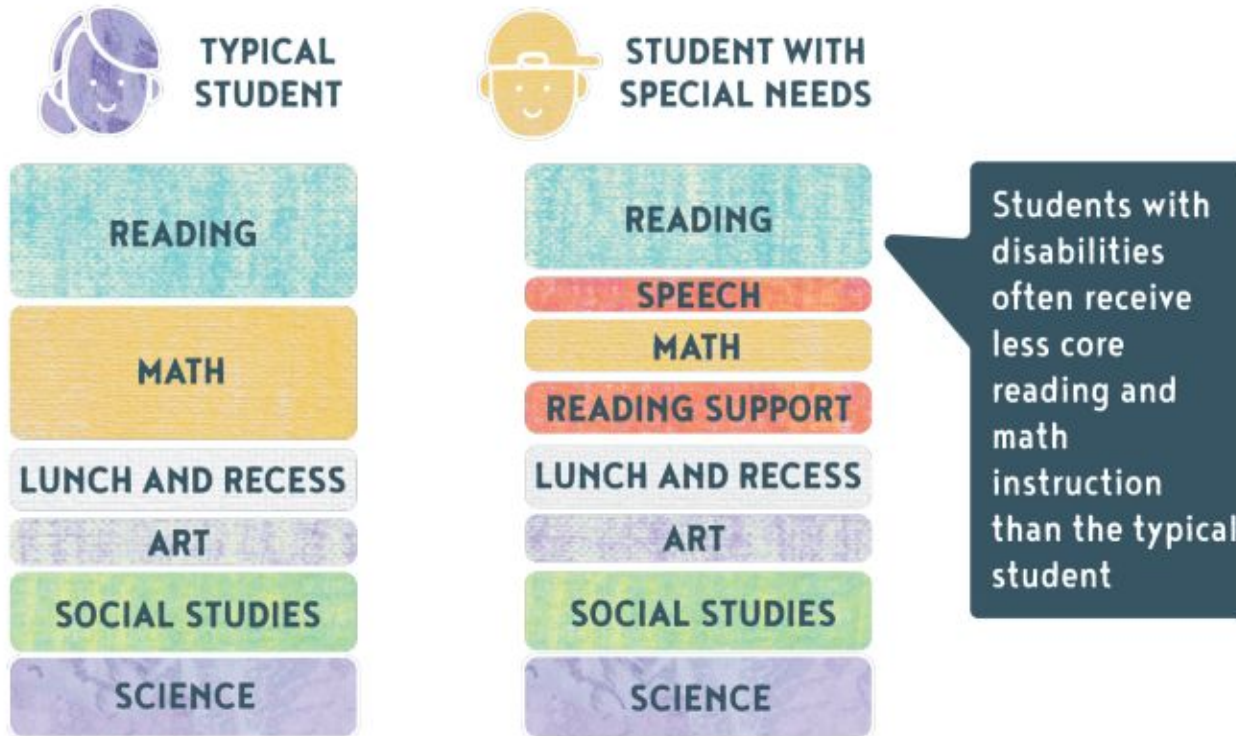
- instructed from a high-quality curriculum
- provided proper instructional supports
- adults uphold a culture of achievement and inclusion
- staff recognize the potential of each student
- adults are collectively responsible for achievement of **EVERY** student
- there is a shared responsibility and collaboration among educators to ensure that–

**ALL STUDENTS RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY CORE INSTRUCTION.**





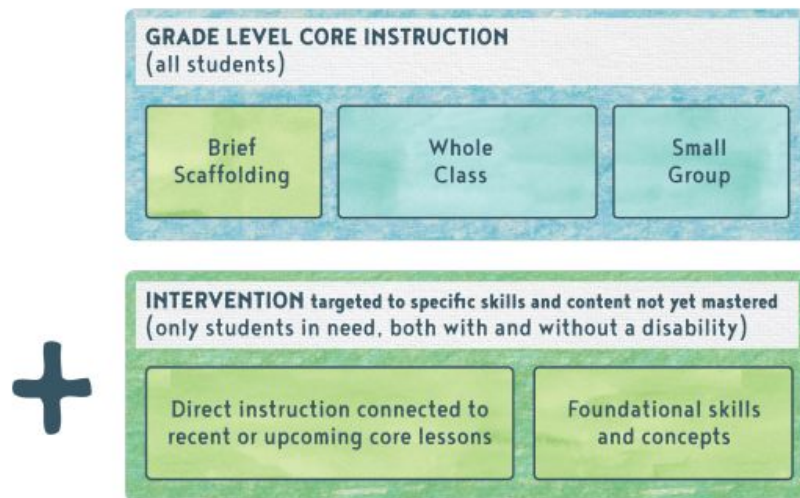
# Protect Core Instructional Time



# Core Instruction Must be on Grade Level, Always Rigorous, and Provided in the Least Restrictive Environment

Accelerated learning is both a mindset and an approach to teaching and learning rather than a service, place, or time. Accelerated learning is the prioritization of access to high-quality, grade level instruction for all students.

## ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK



# Time in Class with Core Instruction

FAPE ensures that students have access to the general education curriculum — the same curriculum that is used with students who do not have disabilities — alongside their same-age peers in the school they would attend if they did not have a disability. FAPE is delivered through the development and implementation of an individualized education program (IEP). This written plan is developed by the IEP team — a team of professionals, the student’s family, and the student (when applicable) — and must be designed to enable the student to:

Make progress toward individualized academic and/or functional goals (e.g., social skills, communication, daily living skills)

Access and make progress in the general education curriculum, as well as to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities

Take part in these activities with other students, both with and without disabilities

# What is the Least Restrictive Environment?

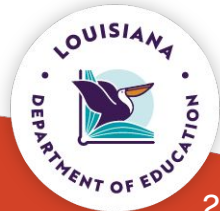
Least restrictive environment (LRE) is a guiding principle in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). LRE plays a critical role in determining not only *where* a student will spend her time in school but also *how* special education services will be provided. Specifically, the LRE requirement within IDEA necessitates that:

- Students with disabilities receive their education alongside their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Students should not be removed from the core instruction unless learning cannot be achieved even with the use of supplementary aids and services.



## Instructional Practice 2

How can we ensure that all students with disabilities are provided with **extra time to learn** and how will this improve student outcomes?



# What does this statement look like in your school?

Students who have not mastered grade-level content need **more than core instruction**; they need additional structured intervention.

How do **current scheduling practices** prioritize ensuring **extra time instruction** is provided? What is currently **going well** and what could be **improved**?

# Students Who Struggle Need Extra Time



# Increase Student Achievement

## How can extra time be utilized to increase student achievement?

- intentional grouping of students with similar needs
- training of teacher
- length of extra time
- type of instruction



# Creating Schedules to Intentionally Group Students

School and staff **schedules** should be **intentionally designed** to facilitate the implementation of recommended strategies.

If the **whole school** has intervention at the **same time**, then a large number of students need extra help at once and there typically **aren't enough staff** with **content expertise** to work with **all students** who need support during **at the same time**.

Staffing and Scheduling Guidance

[Elementary School](#)

[Middle School](#)

[High School](#)



# Providing Content Strong Teachers for Extra Instructional Time

When an entire elementary **grade** has **intervention at the same time, grouping by area of need is easier.**

- Imagine a special education teacher forming a group of five struggling students with phonics. These five students are likely to be distributed across three or four different first grade classrooms. This highly focused group is only possible if first grade interventions occur simultaneously.

# Stagger Intervention Time by Grade Level

## STAGGERED ACCELERATION



ACCELERATION SPECIALISTS

KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE	SECOND GRADE
READING	READING	READING
<b>ACCELERATION</b>	MATH	MATH
LUNCH & RECESS	LUNCH & RECESS	LUNCH & RECESS
MATH	<b>ACCELERATION</b>	ART
ART	ART	<b>ACCELERATION</b>
SCIENCE	SCIENCE	SCIENCE
SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES

# Effective Grouping Strategies

## SMALL GROUP



Olivia struggles  
in **comprehension**



Denzel struggles  
in **phonics**



Jose struggles in  
**Fluency**

OR

## SLIGHTLY BIGGER "SMALL GROUP"



Denzel struggles  
in **phonics**



John struggles  
in **phonics**



Emma struggles  
in **phonics**



Latoya struggles  
in **phonics**



Diego struggles  
in **phonics**

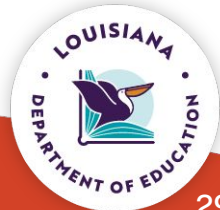
# Scheduling for Extra Time to Learn

This time must include targeted, intentional, scheduled interventions.

Extra time to learn **DOES NOT** mean extra time to sit and struggle.

Extra time **DOES** mean:

- targeted time to remediate
- IEP goal specific supports and interventions
- time to frontload material
- time to review
- time to complete a task



# Grouping Students with Similar Needs

**Groupings should not be static and should be modified and updated on a regular basis as students move through content and develop additional needs.**

## Elementary Grouping

An extra instructional time group can be created for students who need additional support in phonics while another group may be created for students who need additional support in fluency.

## Secondary Grouping

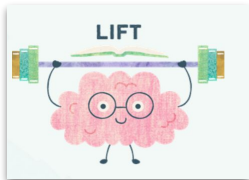
An extra instructional time group/course in math might include students who need support with basic algebraic functions. While a separate group serves students who need support with fractions, number sense, and other more foundational concepts.

[Staffing and Scheduling Guidance](#)

# Instruction During Extra Time to Learn

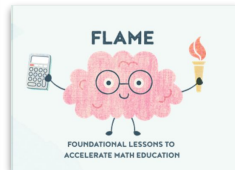
The extra instructional time can come in many forms:

- during an elementary school's **intervention period** or **What I Need (WIN) time**,
- a **course** at the secondary level, like “extra help math 10,” taken in addition to a core math class,
- **reading intervention**, or
- **pull-out with a special educator** outside of the core reading block.



Literacy Interventions and Foundational Tools (LIFT) Toolkit resources for foundational reading skills including diagnostic tools and activities/lessons around phonemic and phonological awareness.

Foundational Lessons to Accelerate Math (FLAME) tools to build, track, and support the development of grade-level math fluency for students in grades K-5.





## **Instructional Practice 3**

How would students with disabilities benefit from being taught by content strong teachers?





*“Who provides core instruction and extra instructional time matters as much as how much core instruction and extra instructional time is provided. It is not sufficient to simply have the right number of full-time equivalents (FTE) in these critical roles, or the right number of minutes. It is important that they have the appropriate skills.”*

Jim Collins, 2001

# Instructional Best Practice 3: Core and Extra Time Instruction is More Impactful When Provided by Content Strong Staff

*Who provides instruction matters. The content expertise of a teacher has significant bearing on students' learning.*

CORE INSTRUCTION AND EXTRA INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ARE MORE IMPACTFUL WHEN PROVIDED BY CONTENT STRONG STAFF	
WHY	HOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have formal training in the content they teach</li><li>• possess a love and aptitude for the subject matter</li><li>• able to see a mistake and infer the misconception</li><li>• can teach a concept three or more ways</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• believe that all students, with the appropriate supports, can achieve</li><li>• participate in teacher collaboration structures</li><li>• attend professional development on high-quality curriculum</li><li>• ongoing feedback cycles</li></ul>



# Content Strong Educators

“Content strong staff can teach concepts multiple ways, identify missing skills, correct misconceptions, and break down complex ideas in ways that are more accessible for students with learning disabilities. Because students with academic challenges have been taught a concept in the past but haven’t yet mastered it, the teacher will need multiple means of reteaching the concept. Reteaching material in the same manner may not be beneficial to the students.” ~ Special Education Playbook for System Leaders



# The Best Indicator of a Content Strong Teacher is Past Student Growth

Teaching students who struggle to read and comprehend well is a skill.

**Elementary teachers of reading:** effective teachers of reading may possess -

- different types of certifications, but
- most have specific training in the science of reading and
- past success in helping students who struggle to read.

Training in the science of reading and related best practices are beneficial to all struggling students, including most students with dyslexia and other disabilities that impact reading.

**Secondary teachers of reading:** Unfortunately, many middle and high school students across the country and the state struggle to read and comprehend. Teaching these students requires specialized training, but the skills needed to teach older students to read differ from those required to teach younger readers. While all students who struggle to read benefit from increasing their background knowledge, this is doubly true for students at the secondary level.

- [Content Literacy in the Secondary Classroom](#)



# Teacher Collaboration Can Supercharge the Effectiveness of Core Instruction

Teacher Collaboration (TC) is a research-based school improvement best practice that emphasizes teacher development through weekly, job-embedded learning and is facilitated by a skilled educator serving within the building.

Teachers collaborate with peers to discuss:

- the **implementation of high-quality instructional materials**;
- relevant, current student and teacher needs as **evidenced by data/work samples**; and
- the best **strategies** to use in meeting students' needs throughout instructional settings and groupings (whole group, small group, or individual) and intervention



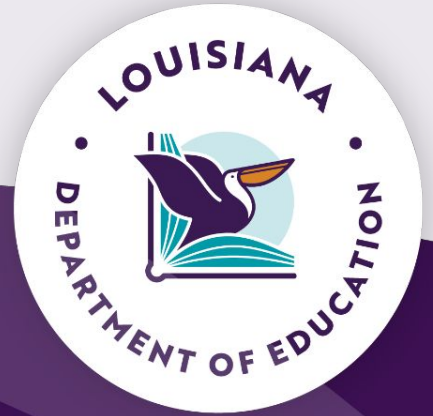
# Small Group Intensive Tutoring Also Requires Content Strong Tutors

When staffing tutoring, the following hierarchy can best ensure skilled staff members are supporting students with disabilities or academic challenges:

1. Content strong certified teachers
2. LDOE approved vendors
3. College graduates with specific, relevant expertise
4. Current college students with specific, relevant expertise
5. Well trained and closely supervised paraprofessionals (although, their impact may be marginal compared to options 1, 2, 3, and 4)



# Understanding Significant Disproportionality to Leverage CEIS Funds



# CEIS Requirements

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allow, and sometimes require, LEAs to use Part B funds for coordinated early intervening services (CEIS).
- CEIS can benefit general education by reducing academic and behavioral problems in the general education environment.
- CEIS can also benefit special education by ensuring that students are appropriately referred to special education, which would reduce referrals for special education and related services for needs that could have been addressed with relatively simple general education interventions.



# CEIS Requirements

IDEA permits LEAs to use not more than 15% of the IDEA allocation received for CEIS.

Additionally, IDEA regulates the following:

- how CEIS funds may be spent;
- on whom CEIS funds may be spent;
- the reporting requirements for LEAs providing CEIS;
- the requirement for using CEIS funds by an LEA identified as having significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity; and
- the relationship of CEIS to maintenance of effort requirements.

# CEIS: The Basics

- CEIS are services provided to students who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. (34 CFR 300.226)
- There are two paths through which a school system may reserve IDEA funds to support CEIS activities: voluntary and mandatory.

# Voluntary CEIS

## What is it?

Voluntary CEIS allows school systems to use up to 15% of their IDEA Part B funds to implement voluntary CEIS activities.

## Who can benefit?

Voluntary CEIS may be provided to children without a disability in grades K-12, with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three.



# Mandatory (Comprehensive) CEIS

## What is it?

Mandatory CEIS, or CCEIS, is when a school system is flagged as significantly disproportionate in the identification, discipline, or placement of students with disabilities, by race or ethnicity. The LEA must reserve exactly 15% of their IDEA Part B funds to implement CEIS activities.

## Who can benefit?

Mandatory CEIS is for students ages 3 through grade 12 who are: 1) general education students, or 2) general education and special education students.



# CEIS Planning



## CREATE A PLAN

Understand the data and identify contributing factors to the significant disproportionality

+



## DEVELOP AN ALIGNED BUDGET

Ensure funds are allocated to activities that address the root cause and comply with permissible activities

+



## IMPLEMENT WITH SUPPORT

Implement activities funded through CEIS, track students who receive CEIS services and efficacy of activities

# CEIS Planning



CREATE  
A PLAN

- The first step in the planning process is to understand the areas in which your school system was identified as significantly disproportionate.
- Each school system receives results for each required reporting category. This is a required section in the IDEA section of Super App.

**2022-2023 SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY  
COORDINATED EARLY INTERVENING SERVICES (CEIS) REPORT**

ACADIA PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM (001)

The LDOE annually collects and examines data to determine if school systems have significant disproportionality in the identification, placement, or discipline of students with disabilities, based on race/ethnicity. School systems are significantly disproportionate when outcomes (using a risk ratio) show that students from one race/ethnicity are 3.0 times (3x) as likely to be

- identified as a child with a disability, including particular impairments,
- placed in certain more restrictive educational settings, or
- subject to certain disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions

when compared to all other students from all other races/ethnicities in their school system.

If a school system is identified as significantly disproportionate, they must set aside 15 percent of their IDEA Part B funding for coordinated early intervening services (CEIS). Learn more about [CEIS](#).

This report shows the outcomes for this school system for all identification, discipline and placement categories. Risk ratios that meet or exceed the 3.0 threshold in each year are displayed below.

**CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS**

**IDENTIFICATION:**

CATEGORY	SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY	RACE/ETHNICITY	RISK RATIO 2022-2023	RISK RATIO 2021-2022	RISK RATIO 2020-2021
All Disabilities	No	*	*	*	*
Autism	No	*	*	*	*
Emotional Disturbance	No	*	*	*	*
Intellectual Disabilities	No	*	*	*	*
Speech or Language Impairment	No	*	*	*	*
Other Health Impairments	No	*	*	*	*
Specific Learning Disabilities	No	*	*	*	*

**DISCIPLINE:**

CATEGORY	SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY	RACE/ETHNICITY	RISK RATIO 2022-2023	RISK RATIO 2021-2022	RISK RATIO 2020-2021
Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions, ≤ 10 days	No	*	*	*	*
Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions, > 10 days	No	*	*	*	*
In-School Suspensions, ≤ 10 days	No	*	*	*	*
In-School Suspensions, > 10 days	No	*	*	*	*
Discipline Removals in Total	No	*	*	*	*

**PLACEMENT:**

CATEGORY	SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY	RACE/ETHNICITY	RISK RATIO 2022-2023	RISK RATIO 2021-2022	RISK RATIO 2020-2021
Inside a Regular Class <40% of the Day	No	*	*	*	*
Inside Separate Schools and Residential Facilities	No	*	*	*	*

>SEE STATEWIDE RESULTS<

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# CEIS Planning



CREATE  
A PLAN

- School systems should review their results to see if there are any instances of significant disproportionality.
- If a school system is identified as significantly disproportionate in one or more categories, they will participate in **mandatory** CEIS.

# CEIS Planning: Allowable Costs

- [Allowable Costs for Voluntary and Required IDEA Coordinated Early Intervening Services \(CEIS\)](#)

**RtI/MTSS COORDINATOR SALARY:** CEIS funds may be used for salaries and fringe benefits, or portion thereof, of staff that directly coordinate or supervise the delivery and monitoring of academic or behavioral interventions. RtI Coordinator costs must align with the LEA's activities as reported in the CEIS narrative. CEIS funds may not be used to fund coordination of services intended to benefit all students or only students with disabilities.

**PROGRESS MONITORING ACTIVITIES/SOFTWARE:** CEIS funds may be used for progress monitoring of supplemental interventions provided to those students determined to need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in general education. CEIS funds may not be used for universal screening or assessment administered to all students in a grade, school, or LEA.

**GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER SALARIES:** Under CEIS funding, general education teachers may provide academic interventions, behavioral interventions, assessments and receive/deliver professional development. Any staff charged to a federal grant must be appropriately licensed in the area in which they are providing academic instruction.



# Contact Information

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