

Current Policy

Title 28 EDUCATION

Part CLXVII. Bulletin 140—Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network

Chapter 1. General Provisions

§103. Definitions

8(g) Program—the Student Enhancement Block Grant Program administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that provides funding through the Louisiana education quality start fund that may be used to serve at-risk PreK children.

Assessment—see early childhood care and education assessment.

Assurances—see *program partner assurances*.

At-Risk—children are considered at-risk if their family income is at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level according to the United States Department of Agriculture, or if they are in foster care, or they are English language learners, or they are experiencing homelessness, or they meet the definition of an “infant or toddler with a disability” found in 34 CFR §303.21 for children ages birth to three years or a “child with a disability” found in 34 CFR §300.8 for children ages 3 and older.

BESE—Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Caregiver—any person legally obligated to provide or secure care for a child, including a parent, legal custodian, foster home parent, or other person providing a residence for the child.

CCAP—Child Care Assistance Program.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)—federal program administered by the Louisiana Department of Education that makes payments to child care providers for child care services provided to eligible families.

CLASS[®]—Classroom Assessment Scoring System.

Classroom—see early childhood care and education classroom.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)[®]—a classroom observation-based system used to assess and rate classroom quality across multiple areas using a scale of one to seven.

Community Network Coverage Area—the geographic area of a community network, which typically is the same geographical area as the local school district or school districts, but may be other coverage areas, as determined by the community network and approved by the department.

Coverage Area—see *community network coverage area*.

Department—Louisiana Department of Education.

Early Childhood Care and Education Assessment (Assessment)—observation-based process used to determine whether children ages birth to five years are growing and developing across all the areas of development and learning provided in *Bulletin 136—The Louisiana Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education Programs Serving Children Birth-Five Years*.

Early Childhood Care and Education Classroom (Classroom)—an infant, toddler or PreK classroom.

Early Childhood Care and Education Performance Profile (Performance Profile)—information regarding performance in preparing children for kindergarten that is reported each school year for each publicly-funded site and community network composed of the site or community network’s performance rating and informational metrics.

Early Childhood Care and Education Performance Rating (Performance Rating)—measure of performance in preparing children for kindergarten that is reported each school year for each publicly-funded site and community network.

Early Childhood Care and Education Program (Program)—an early learning center-based or school-based organization that is providing early childhood care and education to children ages birth to five years who have not yet entered kindergarten.

Early Childhood Care and Education Site (Site)—a distinct early learning center-based or school-based location that is providing early childhood care and education to children ages birth to five years who have not yet entered kindergarten.

Early Learning Center—any child day care center, early Head Start, Head Start, or stand-alone prekindergarten program that is not attached to a school.

EarlySteps Program—program administered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities ages birth to three years and their families according to the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), part C.

Equitable Access—the point at which every family who wishes to enroll their at-risk child in a publicly-funded program is able to do so.

Fall Observation Period—observation period between August 1 and December 15 of each year.

Fiscal Year—July 1-June 30.

Full Day—at least 6 continuous hours per day or more than 20 hours per week of care and instruction aligned with a typical school day.

Head Start and Early Head Start Programs—federally-funded early childhood care and education programs that promote and teach school readiness to children ages birth to five from low-income families and provide services in the areas of education, social services for families, nutrition, family engagement, health and mental health, as well as providing the physical plant and instructional staff members for such purposes (42 USC 9801 et seq., 45 CFR part 1300).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B—federal program administered by the Louisiana Department of Education that provides education funding for children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C—federal program administered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities ages birth to three years and their families to meet the developmental needs as identified by the individualized family services plan. See *EarlySteps Program*.

Infant—a child who has not yet reached 15 months of age.

Infant Classroom—a classroom in which the majority of children are infants.

Informational Metric—measure of early childhood care and education best practices at the site or community network level.

LA 4 Program—the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program that provides funding for PreK classrooms for four-year-old children who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following school year.

Lead Teacher—the early childhood care and education classroom teacher that is primarily responsible for the classroom and is required to meet the certification requirements in *Bulletin 746—Louisiana Standards for State Certification of School Personnel*.

Learning Year—the 2015-2016 school year shall be a learning year for the early childhood care and education network.

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD)—Louisiana program administered by the Department of Education that provides funding for four-year-old preschool in BESE-approved nonpublic schools and type III early learning centers.

Notice—written notice is considered given:

1. when it is sent by email or fax to the last email address or fax number furnished to the department;
2. when it is hand-delivered; or
3. on the fifth calendar day after it was mailed to the last mailing address furnished to the department.

NSECD—nonpublic school early childhood development program.

Performance Profile—see *early childhood care and education performance profile*.

Performance Rating—see *early childhood care and education performance rating*.

PreK—prekindergarten.

PreK Child—a child age 36 months to 5 years who has not yet entered kindergarten.

PreK Classroom—a classroom in which the majority of children are PreK children.

Program—see *early childhood care and education program*.

Program Partner Assurances—assurances that early childhood care and education programs must submit to the department in order to access their public funding.

Publicly-Funded Children—children ages birth to five years who have not yet entered kindergarten that are being served full day with funds from either CCAP, Early Head Start, Head Start, LA 4 Program, NSECD, 8(g) block grant, title 1 of ESEA, or IDEA part B in a full day setting.

Publicly-Funded Classroom—see *publicly-funded early childhood care and education classroom*.

Publicly-Funded Early Childhood Care and Education Classroom—any infant, toddler or PreK classroom that includes a publicly-funded child or children.

Publicly-Funded Early Childhood Care and Education Program—an early learning center-based or school-based organization that is providing early childhood care and education to children ages birth to five years who have not yet entered kindergarten with funds from either CCAP, Early Head Start, Head Start, NSECD, LA 4 Program, 8(g) block grant, title 1 of ESEA or IDEA part B, or that is authorized to receive CCAP, or that participates in the quality start child care rating system.

Publicly-Funded Early Childhood Care and Education Site—a distinct early learning center-based or school-based location that is providing early childhood care and education to children ages birth to five years who have not yet entered kindergarten in a full-day setting with funds from either CCAP, Early Head Start, Head Start, NSECD, LA 4 Program, 8(g) block grant, title 1 of ESEA or IDEA part B, or that is authorized to receive CCAP, or that participates in the quality start child care rating system.

Publicly-Funded Program—see *publicly-funded early childhood care and education program*.

Publicly-Funded Site—see *publicly-funded early childhood care and education site*.

School Year—for purposes of this bulletin, July 1-June 30.

Site—see *early childhood care and education site*.

Spring Observation Period—observation period between January 1 and May 15 of each school year.

State Superintendent—state superintendent of education.

Title I—title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that provides funding that may be used for preschool programs for disadvantaged children.

Third-Party Independent Contractor (Third-Party Contractor)—contractor that is separate from and independent of the lead agency and the community network with whom the department enters into a contract to perform CLASS® observations on behalf of the department.

Toddler—a child age 15 months to 36 months.

Toddler Classroom—a classroom in which the majority of children are toddlers.

Type III Early Learning Center—an early learning center that directly or indirectly receives state or federal funds from any source other than the federal food and nutrition programs.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:407.23 and R.S. 17:407.21 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:2580 (December 2015), amended LR 42:1871 (November 2016).

Chapter 3. Early Childhood Care and Education Network

§309. Community Network Lead Agency

A. A community network lead agency is either a state agency, a local public school system, a non-profit or for-profit corporation having an educational or social services mission, including but not limited to a nonprofit corporation of a philanthropic or policy nature, a Louisiana public postsecondary institution, or a nonprofit corporation established by the governing authority of a parish or municipality, that is approved by BESE and that:

1. serves as the fiscal agent of the community network;
2. coordinates the duties and responsibilities of the community network; and
3. acts as the liaison between the community network and the department.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The lead agency shall be responsible for coordinating the duties and responsibilities of the community network pertaining to:

a. coordinated Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) observations, as provided in §503, which includes but is not limited to:

- i. submitting the community network's annual plan for coordinated CLASS® observations to the department;
- ii. submitting all CLASS® observation results to the department; and

iii. sharing each publicly-funded program's CLASS® observation results with that publicly-funded program and sharing the aggregate CLASS® observation results for the community network with all publicly-funded programs in the community network, at least monthly;

b. coordinated enrollment, as provided in Chapter 7, which includes but is not limited to:

i. ensuring a coordinated enrollment process is operated by the community network each year as provided in §703;

ii. submitting to the department the community network's coordinated enrollment plan, which shall include signatures from each publicly-funded program in the community network indicating approval of the plan and shall describe how the community network will ensure coordinated enrollment for families within the community network who want to enroll their infant, toddler, or PreK children in a publicly-funded program in the community network;

iii. submitting counts to the department twice a year reflecting the total enrollment of at-risk children in all programs in the community network as of October 1 and as of February 1, according to the age cohorts provided in §701;

iv. submitting an annual request for funding to the department for publicly-funded programs in the community network that is based on the results of the coordinated enrollment process used in the community network and is subject to the requirements provided in §709; and

v. working with all publicly-funded programs in the community network to maximize all available resources to increase the quality of and access to the publicly-funded programs for at-risk children;

c. accountability system reporting, as provided in §515;

d. data verification, as provided in §517;

e. requesting waivers, as provided in §519;

f. submitting appeals, as provided in §521; and

g. demonstrating progress toward implementation of coordinated enrollment as provided in §707.

2. The lead agency shall not charge any publicly-funded program for any part of the coordinated observation process and shall not require publicly-funded programs to provide staff to conduct CLASS® observations.

C. Selection and Approval

1. Lead agencies shall be approved by BESE.

2. The department shall identify potential lead agencies through a competitive process and submit them to BESE for approval.

3. Applicants for lead agency shall demonstrate support from all publicly-funded programs within the community network by obtaining signatures from each and submitting them to the department in the competitive process.

4. By June 30 of each year, the department shall recommend the identified lead agencies to BESE for approval.

5. If BESE has not approved a lead agency for a community network by July 1, the department shall serve as lead agency for the community network.

6. Lead agencies approved by BESE shall serve for the fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

D. Contracts

1. Lead agencies approved by BESE shall enter into a lead agency agreement with the department.

2. The lead agency may enter into a contract or agreement with an individual or entity for performance of specific tasks within the duties and responsibilities of the lead agency, but the lead agency remains responsible for satisfactory completion of the tasks.

E. Funding

1. Subject to available funding, lead agencies shall be funded based on the number of early childhood care and education classrooms (classrooms) in the network.

a. Lead agencies shall be notified of their total funding for the following fiscal year by June 30.

b. Lead agencies shall use funding solely to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the community network as provided in this bulletin.

c. If the department is required to serve as a lead agency, the department shall be funded in the same manner as any other lead agency.

F. Audit

1. BESE may request a financial audit of the lead agency's use of funds allocated to it.

2. Audits shall be at the department's expense.

3. If a lead agency improperly uses its allocated funds, the lead agency may be required to repay the improperly used amount.

G. Termination of Lead Agency Approval

1. If a lead agency fails to satisfactorily and timely comply with the duties and responsibilities contained in this Bulletin or with any additional duties and responsibilities established in writing during the competitive process, the department shall notify the lead agency, and all publicly-funded programs within the community network in writing and specify any corrective actions that may be required.

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving such notice, the lead agency shall submit in writing to the department certification that the corrective actions have been taken or are in the process of being taken and submit a timely implementation schedule for department approval.

3. If the lead agency does not respond in writing in a timely or satisfactory manner or adhere to the implementation schedule approved by the department, either or both of the following actions may occur.

a. The department may withhold funds from the lead agency for any work not yet performed.

b. The department may make a recommendation to BESE that approval of the lead agency be terminated.

4. If BESE terminates a lead agency's approval and does not approve a new lead agency, the department shall serve as lead agency for a community network.

5. The department shall notify all publicly-funded programs in a community network of any change in that community network's lead agency.

6. If a lead agency's approval is terminated:

a. The entity shall be ineligible to serve as lead agency in the community network from which its approval was terminated for a minimum period of 24 months.

b. If the entity serves as lead agency for more than one community network, the entity may continue to serve as lead agency for any community network for which its approval has not been terminated.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:407.21 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:2583 (December 2015).

Chapter 5. Early Childhood Care and Education Accountability System

§511. Performance Rating Calculations for Community Networks

A. Community networks shall receive two performance ratings which shall be calculated as follows.

1. *CLASS*[®] observation results shall be one of the community network performance ratings.

2. An equitable access score for four-year-olds shall be one of the community network performance ratings.

3. BESE may include a weight for improvement on equitable access beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

B. The *CLASS*[®] observation results shall be determined by averaging the results of all fall and spring dimension-level toddler and PreK observation results for all toddler and PreK classrooms within the community network excluding negative climate.

1. Any classroom in a site that does not have the observations required in LAC 28:XCI.503, or has not had all observation results reported, shall have third-party scores for that classroom reported when available. If no third-party scores are available for that classroom, but there are observation scores for comparable classrooms within that site as required in LAC 28:XCI.503, the department shall assign the average domain score for the comparable classrooms to each missing *CLASS*[®] domain score. The department may assign a score of 1 to each missing *CLASS*[®] domain score if no comparable local or third-party score is available. If this occurs, the score of 1 for missing observation or not-reported

results shall be included in the performance rating calculation for the community network. In these circumstances the number of missing or not-reported observation results shall be reported on the community network’s performance profile.

a. Lead agencies may be subject to termination as provided in §309.G for incomplete observations or observation results not reported.

2. The department shall compare the domain-level results from observations of classrooms conducted by the department’s third-party contractors to the domain-level results from observations conducted by community network for each publicly-funded site.

a. In calculating the performance rating, the department shall replace domain-level results from classroom observations conducted by community network with the domain-level results from observations conducted by the department’s third-party contractor for any single domain in which the results differ by more than one point and shall calculate the performance rating using the replaced results.

b. The department shall monitor domain-level observation results of classroom observations conducted by community network for each publicly-funded site, including by observer, and domain-level observation results conducted by the department’s third-party contractors for each publicly-funded site.

i. For the 2015-2016 learning year, if the observation results conducted by a community network are consistently different by more than one point from observation results conducted by the department’s third-party contractor, the department may replace all of the community network’s observation results for a publicly-funded site with the results from the department’s third-party contractor for that site, including those results that do not differ by at least one point.

ii. For every year after the 2015-2016 school year, if the observation results conducted by a community network are consistently different by more than one point from observation results conducted by the department’s third-party contractor, the department may replace all of the community network’s observation results for a publicly-funded site with the results from the department’s third-party contractor for that site, including those results that do not differ by at least one point.

C. The equitable access score performance rating shall be determined by calculating the access achieved by the community network for all at-risk four-year-old children in the community network coverage area. Points are earned on a four-level rating scale according to:

Percentage of At-Risk Four-Year-Olds Served	Rating
90-100 percent	Excellent
80-89.99 percent	Proficient
70-79.99 percent	Approaching Proficient
0-69.99 percent	Unsatisfactory

D. The CLASS® observation results performance rating for each community network shall be based on the following numerical scale:

1. 6.0-7.0—excellent;
2. 4.5-5.99—proficient;
3. 3.0-4.49—approaching proficient;
4. 1.0-2.99—unsatisfactory.

E. The numerical scale and performance rating shall be used for reporting each CLASS® domain and the overall performance rating.

F. BESE may transition to a five-level rating scale beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

G. BESE shall review the overall rating calculation, including but not limited to data collected on the informational metrics of best practices, prior to the 2016-2017 school year and determine whether additional factors should be added to the rating calculation.

H. Prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year, a workgroup of Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council members shall be formed to study the inclusion of additional metrics in the performance rating calculations and review R.S. 17:407.21 et seq., for potential statutory changes, and shall make recommendations regarding the use of any additional performance rating calculation metrics in LAC 28:XCI.509.D.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:407.21 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:2588 (December 2015), amended LR 42:1874 (November 2016).

Chapter 7. Coordinated Enrollment

703. Coordinated Enrollment Process

A. Coordinated enrollment is the process developed and implemented by a community network to coordinate enrollment for infant, toddler, and PreK children in the community network whose families want to enroll them in a publicly-funded program in the community network.

B. The coordinated enrollment process consists of:

1. a coordinated information campaign through which the community network informs families about the availability of publicly-funded programs serving children ages birth to five years;

2. a coordinated eligibility determination through which the community network coordinates enrollment, eligibility criteria, and waiting lists to ensure that families are referred to other available publicly-funded early childhood programs should they be ineligible for or unable to access their primary choice;

3. a coordinated application process through which the community network conducts a unified application process so families can easily indicate their enrollment choices for publicly-funded programs; and

4. a matching based on family preference through which the community network enrolls at-risk children, using available public funds and based upon stated family preferences.

C. In collaboration with representatives of providers of child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten services, the lead agency shall develop policies and procedures for how the requirements of Subsection B of this Section will be implemented. These policies and procedures shall be submitted to the department prior to initiation of the enrollment process, and shall include training for providers and parents on the eligibility criteria for different programs, the matching process for the network, and the complaint process for providers and parents as needed.

D. Each community network shall operate a coordinated enrollment process for each school year, subject to the implementation timeline provided in §705.

E. The lead agency shall ensure the community network develops and implements a process to enroll publicly-funded children on an ongoing basis outside of the community network's established application period each year.

F. Any publicly-funded program that seeks to enroll children outside of their community network's coordinated enrollment process shall obtain prior written approval from the department.

G. Request for Departmental Review

1. Any parent or caregiver may request that the department review the placement of his or her child resulting from the coordinated enrollment process.

2. A request for departmental review shall be submitted in writing to the department within 30 calendar days of placement of the child or of the event upon which the request for review is based.

3. All requests for departmental review shall clearly state the specific reasons for requesting the review and the action being sought, and shall include all necessary supporting documentation.

4. The department shall respond to the request for departmental review within 30 calendar days after receiving it.

5. Written notice of the process in outlined in Paragraph 2 of this Subsection, as well of the complaint process described in LAC 28:XCI.311.A-F, and the appropriate contact information for the department, shall be made available to any parent or caregiver.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:407.21 et seq., and R.S. 17:407.91 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:2591 (December 2015), amended LR 42:1876 (November 2016).

§709. Community Network Request for Funding for Publicly-Funded Programs

A. By December 1 of each fiscal year, the lead agency shall develop, in collaboration with representatives of providers of child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten services, and submit a funding request for the following fiscal year to the department on behalf of the community network that is based on the coordinated enrollment results, which shall include the following:

1. the number of applications received for each age of at-risk children;
2. the number of seats requested at each publicly-funded site;
3. the number of seats recommended by the lead agency to receive funding with a prioritization by site and age of children served by funding source;
4. the criteria and process used to develop the community network request;
5. the recommended plan to maximize all funding sources to increase service to at-risk children;
6. the number of seats being requested in a mixed delivery setting; and
7. the number of eligible children served in the network by specific program type.

B. The lead agency shall provide an opportunity for each publicly-funded program in the community network and the general public in the coverage area of the community network to comment on the proposed funding request prior to submission to the department and shall include documentation of this process in the funding request.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:407.21 et seq., and R.S. 17:407.91 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:2592 (December 2015), amended LR 42:1877 (November 2016).