

HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEAD)?

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEAD) IS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING THAT IS INTEGRAL TO ENSURING POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND.

Schools must ensure students experience healthy development and rigorous learning. Unfortunately, students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and other underserved students often do not have positive learning experiences. There are six key policy issues that state leaders can implement to create equitable and safe learning environments that promote positive SEAD for all students. School and district leaders should:

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| <p>1 Develop inclusive school discipline and dress code policies</p> | <p>4 Engage students, families, and communities as full partners</p> |
| <p>2 Provide meaningful professional development and supports for all adults in schools</p> | <p>5 Provide access to integrated wraparound services and supports</p> |
| <p>3 Ensure equitable access and support for success in rigorous and culturally sustaining curricula</p> | <p>6 Diversify the educator workforce</p> |

While many of these policy areas are led at the local level, state leaders can support local leaders with three key levers:

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| <p>1.</p> | <p>Prioritize policies that impact SEAD in state goals. In doing so, state leaders can set the expectation for local leaders to implement SEAD with an equity lens</p> |
| <p>2.</p> | <p>Provide evidence-based, equity-focused guidance and sufficient funding to ensure local leaders have the necessary resources to meet these goals</p> |
| <p>3.</p> | <p>Make data publicly available so advocates and local and state leaders can make informed decisions about what works and how to improve</p> |

Notes on implementation

State actions set the stage for districts and schools to implement strong practices that holistically support students' social, emotional, and academic development. However, there is a wide range of implementation at the local level. Some states may have strong policies that are not yet being implemented with fidelity at the district level, and some districts may choose to implement strong policies and practices despite a lack of policy or guidance from the state level. If your school district is not fully implementing the policies discussed below, you can ask district leaders what they are doing to meet or surpass the expectations set forth by the state.

District leaders looking to implement better practices can utilize the tools available from the Alliance for Resource Equity (ARE), a partnership between Ed Trust and Education Resource Strategies, which categorizes the student experience into [10 "dimensions of equity."](#) ARE's toolkit includes a diagnostic tool that is organized around "key questions" and how to identify problem areas. It also includes practical guidebooks that offer actions to address these problems. Under each section below, relevant key questions from the ARE diagnostic tool and guidebooks are highlighted for district leaders and advocates who want to improve policies and practices at the local level.



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE?

TOO OFTEN, HARMFUL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PRACTICES AND DRESS CODES HAVE BEEN USED TO DAMAGE STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT. As such, students of color and students with disabilities are disproportionately excluded from school and miss opportunities to learn and develop holistically. States can influence [district and school disciplinary actions](#) by setting clear goals to reduce disparities and overuses in discipline, ensuring a strong set of data is publicly transparent, and adopting more positive approaches to discipline, such as restorative justice.

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in school discipline by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - Ensure the [state education agency has staff](#) to support districts with addressing discipline disparities and implementing positive discipline practices
 - [Prohibit discrimination based on hairstyles](#) in schools
 - [Encourage the use of a Positive Behavior Intervention Support](#) model for discipline, with regional facilitators available for support.

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that aim to decrease the use of exclusionary discipline and reduce disparities in discipline
- Setting policies and provide resources that...

- Ensure students don't experience physical harm in schools, including by banning corporal punishment and providing sufficient parameters around the use of restraint (e.g., including requirements for only staff trained in both de-escalation and safe restraint be allowed to restrain students, prohibiting prone restraints, limiting the use of restraint to instances of immediate harm to oneself or others)
- Ban harmful discipline policies and practices, including zero tolerance policies, the use of exclusionary discipline for non-violent offenses and for students in Pre-K-5th grade.
- Provide professional development and clear guidance for implementing positive discipline in schools, including restorative justice practices
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that provide more detailed information, including lengths of suspensions and the ability to cross-tabulate data by groups of students

Key question for district leaders

Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

TO EQUITABLY SUPPORT STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATORS MUST HAVE THE SKILLS TO CREATE CULTURALLY AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS, BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR STUDENTS, AND SUPPORT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS. They must also have mindsets geared toward anti-racism. [Professional development](#) (PD) ensures that educators learn these mindsets and skills. States should encourage and support districts to provide [high-quality](#) and relevant [professional learning opportunities](#), especially in asset-based pedagogies (e.g., culturally responsive practices); diversity, equity, and inclusion; adult social-emotional learning (SEL) or adult mindsets; and strategies and approaches for evidence-based, equity-focused, systemic SEL for students.

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in professional development by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - [Identify a network of intermediary organizations](#) that provide high-quality professional development, including in topics related to social-emotional development
 - [Require teacher candidates](#) to learn to use evidence to continually evaluate their practices, including the effects of their choices and actions on students, and to adopt practice to meet the needs of each student

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that clearly articulate a vision for professional development with an aim of addressing adult mindsets and SEL, and providing the skills necessary to support students' well-being

- Setting policies and provide resources that . . .
 - Require preparation programs to provide training that improves educator mindsets, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion training, or anti-bias/anti-racism training
 - Require educators to demonstrate mastery of a combination of skills and knowledge needed to support students' SEAD for licensure renewal or recertification
 - Ensure the state education agency has staff to support district leaders with identifying and funding high-quality professional development
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that shows educators' perceptions of professional development offerings at the district level

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to strong teachers?](#)

[Does each student have positive relationships with staff and other students?](#)

[Is each student enrolled in a school and attending classes that are racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse?](#)



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH EDUCATOR DIVERSITY?

ACCESS TO A RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE TEACHER WORKFORCE IS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL P-12 STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR, WHO OFTEN THRIVE IN CLASSROOMS LED BY TEACHERS WHO [SHARE THEIR RACIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND](#). Educators of color are more likely to have [higher expectations for their students of color](#). Students of color and White students also [feel cared for and academically challenged by teachers of color](#). Additionally, research shows that Black students who have at least one Black teacher are [less likely to drop out of school and more likely to enroll in college](#), and [teacher-student racial matches affects social, emotional, and academic skills](#). By working to diversify the educator workforce and retain diverse educators, schools will foster a sense of belonging and challenge students to thrive.

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in educator diversity by . . .

- Setting policies and providing resources that . . .
 - Ensure there is a task force, advisory group, or role within the state education agency with access to leadership to examine, create, and monitor strategies to increase the racial diversity of the educator workforce
 - Provide [funding guidance and opportunities](#) for school systems to request funding to identify, recruit, and coach talent, which may be used to also diversify the workforce
 - Adopt rigorous program approval standards to compel teacher preparation programs to recruit and graduate candidates of color
 - Provide [funding for paraprofessionals](#) to pursue a teaching degree

- Invest in practices that retain teachers of color, including [high-retention pathways to teaching](#) and [opportunities for teachers of color to grow](#) and develop in their abilities and qualification for leadership roles
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that show [annual school-level information](#) about the racial demographics of the educator workforce, and the racial makeup of candidates attending and completing in-state teacher preparation programs annually

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that are clear, measurable, and publicly available for increasing the racial diversity of the educator workforce
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Create funding opportunities to implement strategies and develop plans to monitor progress in diversifying the educator workforce
 - Invest in scholarship and loan forgiveness programs to attract students of color into preparation programs and the teaching profession
 - Ensure licensure policies do not have racial bias and instead increase diversity while maintaining quality and rigor
 - Invest in supports and incentives for programs that prepare a high number of teachers of color, including minority-serving institutions
 - Invest in Grow Your Own programs and ensure districts have strategic approaches to building and supporting these programs
 - Invest in an induction and mentoring program that provides at least two years of support for new teachers
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that show annual school-level information about the retention rates of educators of color

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to strong teachers?](#)

[Does the teacher workforce reflect student diversity?](#)



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH RIGOROUS AND CULTURALLY SUSTAINING CURRICULA?

IN ORDER TO THRIVE, STUDENTS MUST BE CHALLENGED AND ENCOURAGED TO MEET HIGH EXPECTATIONS. This means students should have access to [rigorous, deeper learning](#) and [culturally sustaining](#) curricula. When students can both see themselves in the work and feel their teachers challenging them to excel, what follows is a stauncher belief in themselves to reach their goals.

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in rigorous and culturally sustaining curricula by...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that encourage district leaders to [prioritize access to advanced coursework](#)
- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - Ensure schools and districts have [guidance](#) and funding for schools and districts to select standards-aligned curricula
 - [Issue guidance](#) to encourage districts to expand advanced coursework enrollment
- Collecting and publicly reporting [advanced coursework enrollment data](#) that is disaggregated by student demographics

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that for using culturally sustaining and rigorous curricula, and provide clear expectations for district leaders equitably enroll and ensure success in advanced coursework opportunities
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Ensure the state has a state lead, team, or task force to provide supports to districts on adopting and implementing curricula that is culturally sustaining
 - Ensure schools and districts have funding and guidance to adopt curricula for core subjects that integrates social justice material or culturally sustaining learning that leverages students' contexts by immersing them in local heritages, cultures, and experiences
 - Include a review process for determining whether curricula are both culturally sustaining and aligned to standards
 - Require districts to equitably enroll students in advanced coursework
- Collecting and publicly reporting advanced coursework enrollment data that disaggregates by type of coursework and shows data on advanced coursework success

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to teaching practices that are engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned?](#)

[Does each student have access to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials?](#)

[Is each student enrolled in courses that set them up for success in college and a meaningful career, including equal access to advanced courses?](#)



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

[STRONG PARTNERSHIPS](#) BETWEEN EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT. When educators engage the communities they serve, they gain a deeper understanding of their students, including their strengths, identities, and needs. This fortifies relationships with students and [increases students' academic success](#). It is also important that school leaders ensure that the voices of students of color and their families, and those from low-income and other marginalized backgrounds, are [centered in policy and practice decisions](#).

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in student, family, and community engagement by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - Ensure the state department of education has [dedicated staff](#) that explicitly support schools and districts with family and community engagement
 - Provide [detailed guidance](#) for schools and districts to successfully engage students, families, and communities throughout the P-12 continuum and accounts for the unique needs of frequently marginalized student and family populations
 - Require school leader training in school leader standards

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that prioritize student, family, and community engagement strategies
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Ensure professional development in student, family, and community engagement is provided to educators and that this topic is included in teacher evaluation rubrics
 - Elevate student voice in state-level decision-making, such as by having a student representative on the board of education or a student advisory council
 - Elevate family and community voice in state-level decision-making, such as by including family and community representatives in decision-making groups, or by creating a parent advisory council
 - Require educators and school leaders to receive training in student, family, and community engagement according to both teacher and school leader standards and certification requirements
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that show disaggregated student and family perceptions, such as through student and family survey and satisfaction data or school climate data

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages families?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted physical and mental health supports receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted family support receive it?](#)



HOW DOES LOUISIANA SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH WRAPAROUND SERVICES?

MULTI-TIERED OR INTEGRATED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS) — ALSO KNOWN AS WRAPAROUND SERVICES — PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO RESOURCES TO OVERCOME ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC BARRIERS TO SUCCESS. [MTSS are frameworks](#) that districts and schools can use to [connect services](#) to students. When schools identify and provide targeted supports to each student, when the health and well-being of students are met, and when efforts are made to ensure students feel they belong, students can better engage in schools.

Bright spots

Louisiana stands out as doing positive work in wraparound services by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - Include a [Children’s Cabinet to coordinate interagency services](#) for children and youth
 - Expressly authorize school districts to bill for services delivered to all Medicaid-enrolled students and provides state-level resources for [oral health supports](#) for students
 - Mandate all schools to participate in [federal school meal programs](#), [prevents lunch-shaming students](#) for unpaid meal debt, and have licensing requirements to ensure early childhood education programs provide meals or snacks that meet nutrition guidelines

How to improve

Louisiana still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that...
 - Prioritize developing and adopting multi-tiered or integrated systems for student support
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Explicitly include a clear initiative for the Children’s Cabinet for advancing race equity
 - Issue guidance for districts and schools to develop and fund evidence-based multi-tiered systems of support, and require districts to monitor their effectiveness
 - Provide guidance for supporting students experiencing homelessness
 - Ensure inclusive learning and extracurricular environments, including comprehensive anti-bullying policies that underscore groups of students more likely to be bullied and harassed, and policies supporting transgender K-12 student participation in athletics and facility use based on gender identity

- Mandate and fund school counseling for all students in K-12 at the American School Counselor Association's recommended student-to-school-counselor ratio of 250:1
- Require districts to conduct student-level and system-level strengths and needs assessments, and requires districts to measure and report the fidelity of implementation of multi-tiered systems of support

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted physical and mental health supports receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted family support receive it?](#)