



Parents and Families,

The first two beliefs of Believe to Achieve, the Department's roadmap to improving outcomes for all Louisiana children, state that **children are our highest priority** and **families are our partners**. In such a challenging year, marked by a global pandemic, a destructive hurricane season, and severe winter storms, it is essential that we remind ourselves of these basic beliefs as we continue to do what is best for our students and our families.

Despite all these challenges, Louisianans have proven our resilience in responding to crisis, and we must continue to be vigilant, not only in keeping our students safe but ensuring that they have the great education they need and deserve.

Although we have valuable information from school systems, we have an incomplete picture of the pandemic's effects on student learning. We know that learning has suffered, but we need to understand the extent. We need a measure that provides comprehensive data of the impact of the pandemic across the state, one that helps us understand the performance of different student groups and how we might better support our students.

Last year testing was cancelled, and rightly so; we were at the beginning of the pandemic and our school buildings were closed. A year later, our schools are getting stronger every day, with 70% of our students learning in person. We cannot afford to go another year without understanding where students are academically. The LEAP 2025 assessments will allow us to measure the impact in a systematic and strategic way, especially since statewide testing allows students across our state to take the same test under the same conditions.

In February, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released guidance to states about the importance of resuming testing, emphasizing the role assessments and accountability play "in advancing educational equity, identifying student needs, and targeting the resources to address them."

Our State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) issued a [statement](#) in response to the ED's guidance, echoing how significant testing is this year when they wrote, "...we believe there are few issues more critical to ensuring equity, transparency, and student learning than assessing students. Not assessing all students prevents families and teachers from gathering invaluable student data and insights that can then be used to support student learning."

The data from the LEAP 2025 assessments will not only help us examine the "COVID effect" on student learning, it will help us better understand how we might allocate resources to ensure we are serving all students.

I hope the information provided proves valuable and helps you better understand the importance of testing, not only for your student but for students across our great state.

Dr. Cade Brumley

State Superintendent of Education



→ PARENT GUIDE TO LEAP 2025 SPRING TESTING ←

WHY TEST?

Each year, students in grades 3 through high school take state tests to measure their knowledge and skills in each subject area or course and their readiness for the next level of study.

The LEAP 2025 tests are just one of several indicators, in combination with report cards, classroom work and teacher insights, that are used to create a complete picture of a student's performance in school. The results from the tests may be used to help:

- Parents understand how well their children met the expectations for each grade/course
- Teachers identify when students need additional support or more challenging work
- Schools and school systems determine how to better use their resources to support student needs
- Public stay informed on school quality

WHY TEST AFTER SUCH A CHALLENGING YEAR?

Assessing all students not only helps us understand what learning gaps have been created or widened, but also what we must do to close them.

Student advocates across the country have released a [statement](#) supporting testing this year, noting the challenges faced by schools across the country in managing multiple types of instruction and how essential it is to capture information about all students but especially our historically underserved students. They emphasize that “[p]arents and families deserve to know whether their children are meeting college- and career-ready expectations and whether the education system is responding to and improving their opportunities to succeed.”



HOW WILL WE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS SAFE DURING STATEWIDE TESTING?

We are proud of the way our communities and schools have responded to the issues surrounding the opening of our schools across the state. The same stringent safety standards used every day will be applied to our test administration. In addition, we have put in place flexibilities, especially in how to test students who have been learning in completely virtual settings. These include testing individually or in small groups, extended testing windows, testing in the evenings and on weekends, as well as testing students at alternate sites.



HOW WILL WE USE THE TEST RESULTS THIS YEAR TO BETTER SUPPORT YOUR CHILD?

Testing will allow us to gather invaluable student data and insights that can then be used to support students. The results may help us examine:

- Possible effects of the different learning modes your child may have participated in (e.g., in-person, virtual, hybrid instruction)
- Effectiveness of our efforts to provide students digital tools, such as laptops and Internet access, to support their learning, at home and in school
- Effectiveness of the instructional materials used to teach your child
- Additional supports for students, such as tutoring or extension opportunities provided by the school and/or school system

As a recent [editorial](#) from the *Advocate* explains, there are already many safeguards in place to ensure that the test results won't be “detrimental” to our teachers, schools, or children. For example, a recent state law “prohibits officials from using scores to determine whether fourth and eighth graders move to the next grade.” BESE has also allowed flexibility for graduating high school seniors by providing [alternate ways](#) to meet the testing requirement.

The LDOE and BESE appreciate the challenges of this particular year and will continue to consider flexibilities as needed.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR TESTING?

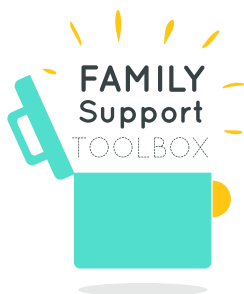
A single test does not define your child, but it does help educators better understand learning and how to support your child. You can encourage your child to do their best and let them know that the tests help us better understand how to help your child. If you have questions or concerns* about testing, please reach out to your child's school. We also encourage you to send questions and concerns to the Department at Assessment@la.gov or by calling our Assessment Hotline at 1-844-268-7320.

Additional information about the tests and helpful resources can be found in the [Parent Guide to LEAP 2025 Tests](#).

**The Department does not have a formal opt-out process. Federal law and state policy require that schools test all students who are enrolled except for students who are too medically fragile to test. A parent can notify the school in writing that their child does not have permission to participate in LEAP testing, but the school will be penalized for nonparticipation. There is no penalty for a student in grades 3-8. However, for students in high school grades, LEAP subject test scores are included in their final grade for the subject, and they are a part of students' graduation requirements. We recommend that parents meet with the school principal if they have not already done so to discuss any other concerns that they may have.*

RESOURCES

- **Parent Guide to LEAP 2025 Tests:** <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/assessment/parent-guide-to-the-leap-tests.pdf>
- **Regulatory Flexibility Guidance for Graduating Seniors:** <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/strong-start-2020/eoc-graduation-waiver-option-2020-2021.pdf>
- **Accelerate (Louisiana's Tutoring Strategy) Library:** <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/accelerate>
- **State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Response to Federal Guidance:** <https://bese.louisiana.gov/about-bese/bese-news/2021/02/24/statement-from-bese-officers-210224>
- **Editorial from the Advocate in Support of Testing:** https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/our_views/article_30ff2894-8276-11eb-bdef-4fa7adac5415.html-bdef-4fa7adac5415.html
- **Complete Statement from Student Advocates Supporting Testing:** <https://edtrust.org/press-release/response-from-civil-rights-social-justice-disability-rights-immigration-policy-and-education-organizations-to-the-u-s-department-of-educations-updated-guidance-on-key-essa-provisions-in/>



FOR ONLINE ACCESS TO ALL ASSESSMENT RESOURCES, visit the Family Support Toolbox at <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/family-support-toolbox>.

For more information about the LEAP 2025 tests, talk to your child's teacher or email the Department at assessment@la.gov.