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LOUISIANA AWARDED $3 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT FROM US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Sep 30, 2020

Competitive Grants for State Assessments Program supports the quality of assessments used for measuring the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education has been awarded a nearly $3 million competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The Competitive Grant for State Assessments (CGSA) will support the development and scaling of Louisiana's innovative English language arts assessment.

"Accountability and assessments are critical components of Louisiana's education system. Equally important for long-term student success is the high-quality curriculum that is taught every day in the classroom," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley. "When combined, these components maximize the odds of student success."

LDOE submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education in response to a provision in the Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA) by which states are allowed to develop and pilot new high-quality assessment formats in lieu of the existing statewide achievement tests. In 2018, Louisiana was the first state to receive an Innovative Assessment Development Authority (IADA) waiver. Louisiana was granted five years to develop, pilot, operationalize and scale the innovative assessment.

The Department is using the IADA waiver to establish and operate an assessment system that is directly aligned to high-quality curriculum. Instead of testing once in the spring, these innovative, through-course assessments include end-of-unit tests administered in three windows during the school year (fall, winter and spring) so that students are able to demonstrate learning recently acquired from their classroom lessons.

The goal is for every student in Louisiana to have the opportunity to take a LEAP 2025 assessment format that best matches the high-quality curriculum their teacher uses and the instruction they receive on a daily basis. Louisiana has piloted items in grades 6 through 8 for an assessment aligned to the ELA Guidebooks, which is the most widely used curriculum in the state. (The grade 7 assessment was scheduled to be operational in 2019-2020, but the final administration window was canceled due to Covid-19.)

Over the four-year grant, the Department hopes to scale the assessment to grades 3 through 5. The Department will provide more information soon to school systems about plans for expansion.

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