

Louisiana Statewide Staffing Initiative

The Louisiana Department of Education's Statewide Staffing Initiative will help low-performing schools in four districts build strong instructional teams and open the school year fully staffed. The initiative, run in partnership with The New Teacher Project, will give principals the tools and support they need to hire top talent - a key to raising student achievement.

The Challenge: Inefficient Hiring Practices

For low-performing schools, effective teachers are critically important. Every new teacher hired represents an opportunity to strengthen a school and raise student achievement. Yet in school districts across Louisiana, teacher hiring receives scant attention.

Hiring delays and inefficiencies drive away the strongest teacher candidates. What's more, though building a strong, collaborative instructional team is central to any school leader's success, principals receive little formal training in teacher hiring at any point in their careers.

As a result, schools miss a critical opportunity to shape their teacher workforce and transform student outcomes.

In a study of hiring in four urban districts, **more than five applicants** applied for every open spot.

But **31-58%** of candidates withdrew from the hiring process in August.

And **50-70%** cited late hiring timeliness as a major reason they found other jobs.

Source: *Missed Opportunities*, TNTP 2003.

The Solution: Early, Strategic Hiring

The State of Louisiana's reform plan recognizes that *how* and *when* teachers are hired can have a dramatic impact on teacher quality, and calls for the adoption of a **Louisiana Statewide Staffing Initiative**.

Through its Staffing Initiatives, The New Teacher Project helps historically struggling schools hire as early and effectively as possible, filling more than 10,000 teacher vacancies in 18 states since 2001.

Since 2009, a Staffing Initiative has provided intensive support to hard-to-staff schools in New Orleans, ensuring that partner schools open each year fully staffed with excellent teachers. The New Orleans initiative has increased principals' capacity to hire top talent and build stronger instructional teams:

- ✓ **Strong talent pool:** In 2010, the Staffing Initiative reviewed 2,200 applications for 222 classroom vacancies, holding a very high bar for applicants: only **1 in 4 candidates** advanced to an interview.
- ✓ **Mutual consent:** Participating schools opened **fully staffed** on August 12, the first day of school. In every case (except one), both the principal and the teacher approved the placement, a key to job satisfaction.
- ✓ **Principal satisfaction:** **Ninety-four percent** of school representatives agreed the Staffing Initiative increased their ability to staff their schools with high-quality teachers who have the potential to make significant gains in student achievement.

How It Works: Five Key Strategies

The Louisiana Statewide Staffing Initiative (LSSI) will use five key strategies in a comprehensive effort to strengthen teacher hiring and staffing practices.

1. Direct priority applicants to target schools. When it comes to identifying talent, the LSSI puts struggling schools at the front of the line. Drawing from the district’s existing teacher applicant pool, LSSI staff will advise districts in how to effectively prioritize and cultivate promising teacher applicants in shortage subject areas—including math, science and special education—and match the best with participating schools.

2. Train principals in effective hiring. The LSSI gives school leaders the tools to make smart hiring decisions. Through an intensive workshop series, principals learn how to market their schools to prospective candidates, identify and select for desired teacher qualities, and develop and employ effective interviewing techniques.

3. Provide personalized staffing assistance. Principals inundated with daily demands can let hiring fall by the wayside. The LSSI will advise district staff in working individually with school leaders to project vacancies, create strategic staffing plans and refer candidates, adding capacity and ensuring a constant focus on hiring.

4. Minimize staffing barriers. Some hiring barriers lie outside schools’ control. The LSSI works with its district partners to streamline staffing processes, secure earlier budgets, advance hiring timelines and give participating schools the flexibility to hire the teachers they need to improve student outcomes.

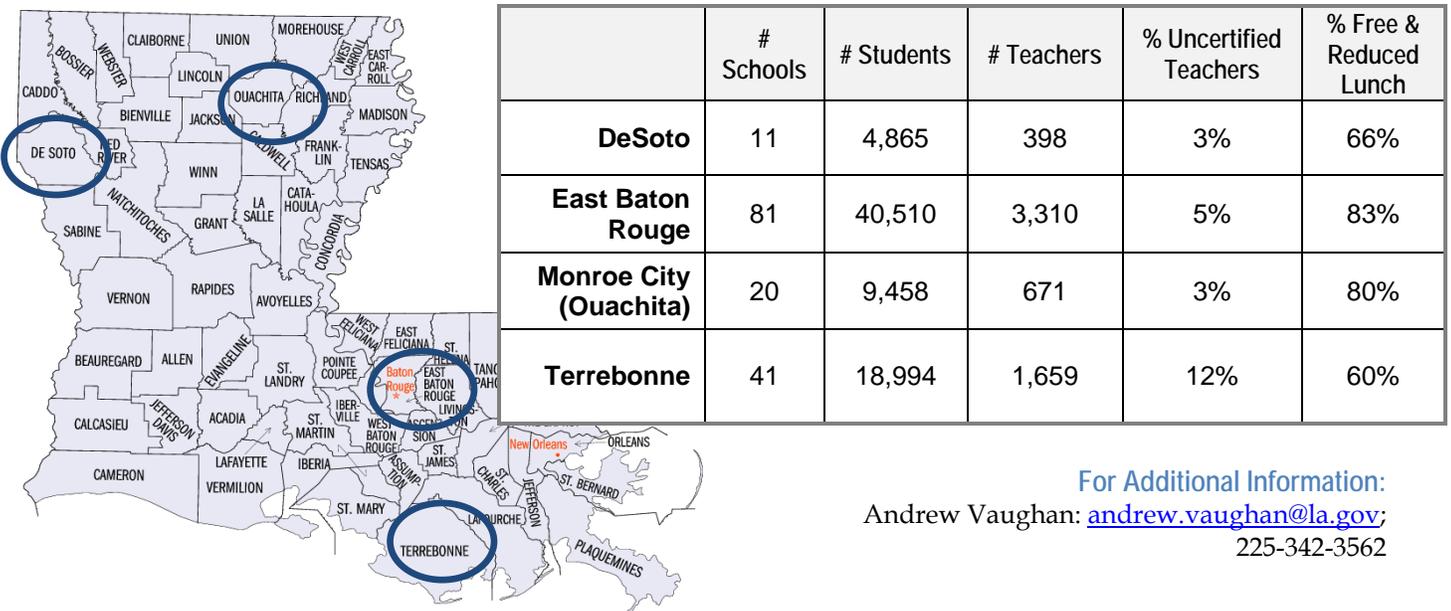
5. Increase the rigor of retention decisions. The LSSI trains district staff to work with principals to identify and reward their top performers, address poor performance, and help all teachers develop to their full potential.

District Partners

In the 2010-11 school year, the Statewide Staffing Initiative will begin in four pilot districts – De Soto, East Baton Rouge, Monroe City and Terrebonne.

All 31 Louisiana Trailblazer districts were invited to participate in the LSSI, and nine responded. To select the participants, the Department of Education and The New Teacher Project examined data on each district (including rate of teacher certification, and number of teachers, schools and students), considered geographic distribution, and spoke with each district to ensure it had the capacity to benefit fully from the initiative.

The Louisiana Department of Education plans to expand the initiative to additional districts in coming years.



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