**DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO DISTRICTS AND PARTNERS**

**TO PREPARE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS**

*Pilot proposals to increase teaching time for candidates in training*

BATON ROUGE, La. – The Louisiana Department of Education today announced the recipients of awards for the Believe and Prepare pilots, whereby schools and colleges work together to design preparation programs that provide students studying to be teachers with more time in the classroom, learning from seasoned educators. The proposals will inform future approaches the state will take to teacher training and development prior to candidates entering the classroom as full-time employees.

“Aspiring educators need more time in schools teaching our kids, learning the craft through extensive practice and mentoring,” said State Superintendent John White. “What’s more, graduates should be able to demonstrate a positive impact on student achievement before entering the classroom as professional educators.”

Seven pilot programs will each receive $120,000 to create full-year residencies or apprenticeships for aspiring teachers and may partner with existing teacher preparation programs to redesign theory-based academic coursework into school-based, practice-oriented coursework. Through the Believe and Prepare grant, schools, districts, and preparation programs will have the opportunity to use the state’s best schools as classrooms to prepare future educators, giving them the opportunity to practice their skills with real students. Pilots will also draw on the expertise of Louisiana’s best teachers to ensure future educators develop the skills they need to be successful.

“As an educator, I understand how important it is that future teachers are mentored by top educators to better ensure their teaching skills are developed before they enter the profession,” said Holly Boffy, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education member. “The work of these pilots will demonstrate how schools and districts can support the development of future teachers alongside preparation programs to build the next generation of Louisiana’s educators who will ensure Louisiana’s students are college and career ready.”

Believe and Prepare recipients are:

* **Collegiate Academies in partnership with TeachNOLA**
* **Lafourche Parish in partnership with Nicholls State University**
* **Lincoln Parish in partnership with Louisiana Tech University**
* **New Orleans College Prep in partnership with Relay Graduate School of Education**
* **St. Bernard Parish (applying as a provider of teacher certification)**
* **St. Charles Parish in partnership with Southeastern Louisiana University**
* **West Feliciana Parish in partnership with Louisiana State University**

“Allowing aspiring teachers to experience the classroom environment for a full academic year will likely provide them with the essential tools necessary for success, allowing for greater student outcomes,” said Lincoln Parish Superintendent Danny Bell. “TechLinc, which is a partnership between Louisiana Tech University’s College of Education and the Lincoln Parish School District, will provide the opportunity for prospective teachers to better understand the challenges, demands, and responsibilities a classroom teacher faces from August through May. Both partners will experience benefits: enhanced teacher preparation programs will produce stronger and more effective teacher candidates who can then enter public school classrooms ready to meet the demands of 21st Century learners, thereby allowing districts to focus their resources on student achievement rather than on teacher training and assistance.”

“The Louisiana Believe and Prepare project is just one of the ways Louisiana is leading in changing the way we prepare our educators in the country,” said Chris Minnich, Executive Director for the Council of Chief State School Officers. “For too long, we have relied too heavily on professional development after the teachers are in the classroom, rather than focusing on preparation that truly prepares teachers. This effort ensures teachers are better prepared walking into the classroom on day 1 to help students be successful. CCSSO is pleased to help support Louisiana as well as six other states that are ensuring teachers are prepared through the Network for Transforming Education Preparation.”

“The Believe and Prepare grant has inspired an innovative new partnership between New Orleans College Prep and Relay Graduate School of Education. Together, we will explore new ways to integrate classroom-based certification coursework with school-embedded coaching, unlocking the amazing potential of our first-year teachers to cause student learning at the highest levels.  We will develop strong school-based coaches who can support first-year teachers as they immediately practice what they are learning in their Relay courses,” said Ben Kleban, Founder and CEO of New Orleans College Preparatory Academies.

Believe and Prepare grants recipients will begin work on their programs in April and continue through the 2014-2015 school year.

For a list of Believe and Prepare recipients and a program overview, please click [here](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2014-believe-and-prepare-program-overviews.pdf?sfvrsn=2).

For more information on Believe and Prepare, please click [here](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/teaching/believe-and-prepare).

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