



IDEA Public Schools Louisiana, Inc.

Executive Director Report
May 14, 2020

Kenneth Campbell
Executive Director

General

Continued focus on 5 major activities

1. Taking actions to flatten the curve and keep staff and families safe
2. Feeding our community
3. Continuing to educate our students
4. Supporting our staff
5. Preparing for 2020-21 school year

Health and Safety

Continued emphasis on self-care and well-being

All staff report healthy. We had 2 positive cases total within region, and both have recovered

Buildings will remain closed this summer, but we will allow opportunities (under phase 1 social distancing guidelines) for students to turn in technology, teachers to clean out classrooms, etc.

Supporting Our Staff

All staff has continued to get paid during school closure, but a number of staff members (primarily operations) will go “off contract” for the summer. Since we are not envisioning a need to layoff staff, it is our hope that they all return to us at the start of next year’s contract period.

Feeding Our Community

- Since school closure we've prepared and served more than 32,000 meals in Baton Rouge
- Planning to offer “gratitude” bonuses for first-line workers who have been involved in community feeding
- FRL families eligible for one-time Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) of \$285 per student on an EBT card. This is designed to provide extra help buying groceries for the families who normally receive free and reduced-price meals at school. This doesn't affect our community feeding program in any way. We have notified families of timeline and state communication is forthcoming

Continuing to Educate Our Students

Last day of school is 5/15 for students and 5/22 for teachers. The last week is considered “ramp-up” week where our teachers and leaders will focus on planning and preparing for next year

Despite some inconsistencies in the quality of instruction, I feel like our teachers and leaders did a strong job during distance education. However, challenges remain:

- Participation rates were not as strong as we would have liked, and students with the least amount of participation are also the students who are most behind
- We’ve started and will continue diagnostic testing of all students to get more precise assessments of where we have to start next year
- Intervention/remediation will be critical going forward

1-to-1 Computers

- The state is driving toward a goal of having one computer for every student in the district. This is consistent with the direction we are taking at IDEA across our organization and we have begun to fundraise nationally to meet the goal.
- I believe going to a 1-to-1 program is essential, but I'm concerned about the pace of implementation and cost implications. I've advocated for an approach that would have us phase this in over perhaps 3 years

CARES Act Funding

We have gotten initial allocations for CARES Act funding in the amount of \$168,000 (Bridge), \$120,000 Innovation, and \$160,000 UP.

There is still some uncertainty about final amounts, as USDOE guidance suggests that a larger share of the funding should have been directed to private schools

2020-21 School Year

No determination about how we will return to school, but the expectation is that we'll likely return to buildings in August but with some social distancing requirements and that we'll still be offering a significant amount of distance learning

Education leaders in Baton Rouge are working collaborative to provide a common plan for returning to school so that there is consistency between schools across the city

Leadership Update

Innovation Academy principal. After multiple interview days and meeting quite a number of candidates, we selected **Ms. Shenell Deville** as the replacement for Jason. In addition to being the top candidate for our local team and HQ supporters, she was also the overwhelming first choice from Innovation Academy instructional and ops staff. Shenell comes to us from North Louisiana, and her resume is attached.

VP of Schools. Mr. Edwin Strickland from Springdale, Arkansas, has been selected for our new VP of Schools. As was the case with Ms. Deville, Mr. Strickland went through multiple rounds of interviews with our local team and our HQ team. Also received an enthusiastic thumbs up from Jo Ann. Excited about him coming...

Both Shenell and Edwin begin on June 1, and we are working on refining our onboarding plans for both of them, as well as prescribing PD plans for the summer.

Finally, we're promoting Courtney Peterson to the regional ELA Curriculum Manager role.

Baton Rouge University Prep

Our management agreement with Baton Rouge University Prep has been executed, and BESE is scheduled to vote on approving UP's contract amendment request next week.

Ultimately, the contract was revised to focus primarily on support for the instructional program and managing staff. So things will operate a little differently than they do next year for Bridge and Innovation

- Staff remain employees of UP
- 4th Sector Solutions remains under contract for finance, payroll, benefits, business office, state reporting, and HR support
- Continue contracting our food service and transportation
- IDEA making high-level decisions on budget, working in partnership with 4SS

Our work to date with Brytanni Blanchard (principal of UP) has been excellent

Upcoming Events/Important Dates Baton Rouge

May 15	Last day of school for students
May 19	Board Meeting (first budget presentation)
May 22	Last contract day for teachers
June 2	Finance Committee Meeting
June 9	Board Meeting
June 30	Finance Committee Meeting