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MARCH 2011

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Education's Next Horizon is pleased to announce the creation of the Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning (LACAL). LACAL was recently awarded a three-year statewide afterschool network grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, thanks in large part to the generous matching contributions from the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership. Louisiana now joins 38 other states that have developed statewide afterschool networks.

The mission of LACAL is to innovate learning in the out of school hours by ensuring a coordinated and uniform focus on high quality afterschool programs across Louisiana that improve outcomes for young people and support working families. LACAL will prove to be a strategic support and intervention strategy in our efforts to close the achievement gap and improve high school graduation rates.

LACAL is directed by **Dara Shackelford**. Before joining Education's Next Horizon, Dara was director of policy and research at the Afterschool Partnership. She holds a J.D. from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill. For more information about LACAL, contact Dara at (225) 383-3844 or by email at dshackelford@lanexthorizon.org.



Louisiana Communities In Action

This is a snapshot of the goals that Louisiana's Promise-supported school districts and communities are implementing to increase graduation rates:

Early Detection & Community Support Systems

- Develop procedures and guidelines to ensure that DEWS is administered efficiently and effectively.
- Maintain and expand current school-to-work programs.
- Develop appropriate support and intervention strategies for Pre-GED/Options and overage students.
- Significantly improve the district's early detection, support and intervention services for PreK-8 grade students.

Truancy and Attendance

- Maintain zero (0) unexcused absences.
- Achieve a 2% truancy rate and 98% attendance rate by 2014.
- Fully implement existing policies and amend district policy to allow and mandate makeup hours.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of Family in Need of Services (FINS).
- Develop written procedures of the truancy policy and communicate them system-wide and to parents.

Connecting Schools to the Future

- Expose students to career and post-secondary options and prepare students to be college (two and four year options) and career ready.
- Starting at middle school, develop ways to better engage students in "relevant" learning opportunities.
- Expand Dual Enrollment and Career & Technical Education courses.
- Better inform parents and teachers about career and post-secondary options.

Local Community Ideas & Community

- Continuously communicate and promote dropout prevention efforts on a district-wide basis.
- Build community partnership and ownership of the school

system.

- Improve parental engagement.

For assistance in tackling the dropout rate in your community,
contact us at (225) 383-3844 or jsmith@lanexthorizon.org