

SEPTEMBER 2026

LOUISIANA SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Interim Superintendent's Message

Dr. Shirley Lewis

Greetings,

I am honored to welcome our parents, students, staff, community partners, and stakeholders as we begin another exciting school year in the Special School District.

As with the beginning of any school year, we may encounter challenges; however, we are committed to being solution-driven and focused on what matters most—our students. This year, we launched our districtwide theme: Students First: One District, One Team, One Purpose. We are approaching the school year with a renewed sense of purpose, ensuring that Students First resonates in every action we take, every conversation we have, and every decision we make. At the center of our work is one simple but powerful question: What is in the best interest of the students we serve?

To guide our work, we introduced the district's eight targeted priorities, each supported by a strategic goal. These priorities and goals are designed to increase student achievement, improve successful outcomes for students, and strengthen the Special School District as an educational service agency. While this work will not always be easy, I am confident that we can achieve our goals when we remain committed to being One District, One Team, One Purpose with Students First.

Our schools and programs are already hard at work delivering high-quality instruction using high-quality instructional materials. Our educators and leaders are analyzing student and staff data to identify areas of need and provide targeted support where and when it is needed most. At the district level, we are equally committed to providing our schools and programs with ongoing, responsive support that enables them to effectively meet the needs of every student.

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LOUISIANA SPECIAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT



I extend my sincere appreciation to our teachers and support personnel who work directly with our students each day. Your dedication to the students we serve is commendable and deeply appreciated. We see the work you do, and we encourage you to continue providing high-quality instruction, meaningful support, and opportunities that help every student reach their fullest potential.

I also want to recognize our central office and operations staff, who worked diligently throughout the summer to prepare for the new school year. From cleaning and waxing floors, painting school buildings and residential areas, and maintaining our grounds to purchasing curriculum and instructional materials, processing new hires, participating in professional learning, and preparing essential services, your work has been critical to ensuring our students return to a safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environment.

Every role matters. Every contribution counts. When we work together with a common purpose, we strengthen our district and create greater opportunities for the students and families we serve.

Students First: One District, One Team, One Purpose!

Here's to our best year yet,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shirley".



Special School Programs

Perpetra Frazier, Interim Executive Director

PSSC & RHY

PSSC and RHY have been busy getting the new school year off to a great start! Students and staff are excited about the opportunities and activities ahead. PSSC SSP has once again been asked to host a facility-wide election. Staff and students are preparing voting booths and ballots to create a realistic voting experience. This activity is designed to help individuals who are eligible to vote become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the election process and prepare them to participate in future elections.

PSSC is also preparing for its first-ever Homecoming Flag Football Game and Dance! Students and staff are looking forward to establishing a new tradition and celebrating school spirit together.

OJJ

OJJ is excited to welcome two new members to the SSP team!

James Outley joins SSP as the new Regional Coordinator for the North, and Ms. Tikela Mansfield joins the team as the new Special Education Instructor at Swanson.

We are excited to have them on board and look forward to their contributions as we continue supporting students and strengthening special education services across OJJ.

CLSSC Campus Highlights

CLSSC students stayed active and engaged throughout the summer! Students participated in ceramics classes at River Oaks Art Center and enjoyed gardening activities at the school.

As the new school year begins, students are participating in cooking classes, providing another opportunity to develop skills through hands-on learning. CLSSC staff and students are excited about all that the 2026-2027 school year has in store!

SCHOOL NEWS



Louisiana School for the Deaf Dr. Natalie Delgado, Executive Director

The Louisiana School for the Deaf is excited to begin the 2026–2027 school year with a renewed commitment to growth, high expectations, and opportunity for every student. This year's theme, "Dare to SOAR, Don't Settle!", challenges our War Eagles to push beyond what is comfortable, believe in what is possible, and continue striving for excellence.

Across campus, our staff are beginning the year with a strong focus on high-quality instruction, language and literacy development, and deeper student thinking. Teachers are working together to strengthen the use of our core curricula, provide targeted intervention and enrichment, and create classrooms where students are actively analyzing, explaining, evaluating, and communicating their thinking. Our continued focus on ASL and English ensures that students have the language access they need to fully engage in learning.

Just as importantly, we are continuing to strengthen the sense of belonging and community that makes LSD special. From academics and athletics to CTE, student activities, social emotional support, and beyond, we want every War Eagle to be challenged, supported, and connected.

We are grateful to our families, staff, and community partners for helping us start the year with such positive momentum. As we move forward together, we will continue encouraging our students to take ownership of their learning, embrace challenges, and remember: **Dare to SOAR, Don't Settle!**



SCHOOL NEWS



Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired Susan Covington, Executive Director

LSVI started the year off with one of its teachers being named Louisiana State Teacher of the Year- congratulations to Alisha Butler!

LSVI has 57 students and more students and their families are touring. The first week of school, all students who needed to take benchmark tests took them. The teachers are using data and giving their best to make students first! We are looking forward to a great year!



**Join Our Team
scan to view
current openings**





Teaching & Learning

Nancy Rawls, Interim Deputy Superintendent

Teaching & Learning: A Strong Start to the School Year! The school year is off to a busy and exciting start across the Division of Teaching & Learning! Our students and teachers are working hard each day, with a continued focus on strong academics, meaningful instruction, and student growth. Our Teaching & Learning team is working alongside school leaders and teachers to identify strengths, address areas of need, and plan intentional learning strategies for the months ahead. Our goal remains simple but important: every student receiving effective instruction in a positive, supportive learning environment.

We are also excited to see a steady stream of new students applying to SSD. Each new application represents the possibility of welcoming another student and family into our SSD community, and we look forward to continuing to grow our SSD family!

Our Louisiana Instructional Materials Center (LIMC) and Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center are especially busy this time of year. Their teams are working hard to prepare and distribute accessible instructional materials and equipment to students across Louisiana, helping ensure students have equitable access to learning.

There is great work happening throughout SSD, and we are excited about what this school year will bring. Students First—every day, in every classroom, and in every decision we make.

Shared Services

Kathleen Carr, Executive Director



Welcome Back, Students!

Welcome back! The campus is full of energy as our students settle into new routines, reconnect with friends, and begin another exciting school year. Across Shared Services—including Residential Services, the Student Health Center, Special Education Services, Transportation, and the Cafeteria—our teams are working together to create a safe, supportive, and welcoming experience for every student. In our residential programs, students are getting settled, building routines, and already giving us plenty to celebrate as we recognize their positive choices and good behavior with special reward activities.

There is so much to look forward to this year! Sports practices are underway, new activities are getting started, and we are excited to begin a collaboration with the local YMCA focused on water safety and swimming for our residential students. We are grateful for the community partners and volunteers who continue to invest in our students, including LSU's Delta Zeta and Delta Gamma, Changing the Outlook, and Bayou Buddies Pet Therapy. Students First: One Team. One Mission. One District. Together, we are making every moment count!



Operations

Jeff Jacobs, Executive Director

The Operations team has worked extremely hard over the summer getting the campus ready for the return of the staff and students and are looking forward to a great upcoming school year.

The Grounds team directed by Murray Jackson has done a wonderful job keeping the campus looking great even in the extreme heat they work in every day during the summer. I wanted to give a special shoutout to Shad Sona for his amazing tree work all around campus.

The Custodial team directed by Sherry Robertson has done an amazing job getting the dorms and schools ready for the new school year. The team is extremely hard working and keeps our campus buildings clean and safe for the students and staff.

The Specialty team directed by Scott Crain has worked diligently over the summer completing work orders and performing preventive maintenance all over campus to keep our buildings running smoothly.

The Boiler Room team directed by Caleb Wells has done a great job keeping the buildings cool all summer and preparing the dorms and schools for the start of the school year.

The Security team has done an exceptional job keeping the campus safe for our staff and students. Just a reminder that all guests on campus must go through the Visitor Management System upon entering campus. All employees are directed to use their key fobs to enter and exit campus.

The Warehouse team is excited to welcome back Lynn Russell. The District is really appreciative of Wilfredo Rodriguez and Kevin Carls for their hard work and dedication managing the warehouse during her absence.

Our administrative team has been in full gear since the start of school. A special shoutout to Temika Sullivan for handling all the key requests for the new staff around campus.

The Safety team directed by Micah Rollins has done a great job working with the schools and dorms on various projects to better train the staff in case of an emergency. He has been busy updating the District's plan involving Emergency and Hurricane Preparedness.

The District is working with the team at Facility & Planning on a few projects for the upcoming school year. We are replacing the roofs on the LSD High School/Vocational Building and the LSD Dormitory. We are also replacing the air handler units in the Student Center, Cafeteria, and the AEM Center. We are really looking forward to completing these projects and appreciate the State for selecting us.