



# Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

## Louisiana

### Private Schools

#### Virtual/Online Schools

**Remote Instruction.** An educational model in which the student and educator are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment where instruction may be facilitated by the use of computers, technology, and the internet. Hybrid Instruction. Instruction provided via a combination of face-to-face and remote models.

**Attendance.** Students are considered to be in attendance during remote or hybrid instruction when attendance is checked and recorded on each school day and at the beginning of each class period in accordance with R.S. 17:232. ([LA Admin Code: 28 §907.](#))

#### Steps to Start a Private School

1. Select a name for your school. Retain this name throughout the duration of the school's operation.
2. Designate a Chief Administrative Officer. Select a title, such as Director, Principal, Superintendent, etc.
3. Work with an attorney or CPA to develop organizational documents.
4. Register as a corporation. This is usually a for-profit LLC. Register with your state's Division of Corporations. **Nonprofit status is required to participate in educational savings account (ESA) programs.** ([LA Admin Code: 28 §107.](#))
5. A Federal Employer Identification Number (FEI/EIN) will be required after registering as a company. Apply with the IRS online at: <https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>
6. If the school will be a non-profit LLC, you must file a [IRS form 1023 online.](#)
7. Things to consider
  - 7.1. Accreditation: is optional.
  - 7.2. Teacher Certification: Required to participate in ESA.
  - 7.3. Registration: Is required.
  - 7.4. Licensing: Business licensing may be required by local government.
  - 7.5. Approval: Is optional.

- 7.6. Length of School Year and Days: The institution must operate a minimum session of 180 days. See statutes for minutes per day.
- 7.7. Curriculum: See statutes below for requirements.
- 7.8. State Testing: Assessment of nonpublic school students is optional.
- 7.9. Health and Safety Requirements: Immunization is required.
- 7.10. Nursing and Health: No requirements.

## **Obtaining BESE Approval**

2025-2026 BESE Application:

All Nonpublic Schools seeking to be Board of Education and Secondary Education (BESE) approved for the 2025-2026 school year must submit a series of documents via [Edlink](#) on the webpage. The application includes required forms and submissions for Brumfield v. Dodd approval. Please refer to the [Nonpublic Approval Process Guidelines](#) when applying for the BESE application. All required documents must be completed and submitted as a part of your BESE application by October 15, 2024, to be considered for BESE approval. Please contact [nonpublicschools@la.gov](mailto:nonpublicschools@la.gov) if you have any questions.

- **DO NOT** submit more than one application.
- Complete applications will be submitted to BESE in December for approval for the 2025-2026 school year.

BESE and Brumfield v. Dodd approval is required for participation in the [Louisiana Scholarship Program \(LSP\)](#) and/or the [School Choice Program \(SCP\)](#). Schools interested in participating in either of those programs upon BESE approval must also submit their Notice of Intent To Participate (NOI) at a later date.

## **Brumfield v. Dodd Application**

All nonpublic schools desiring to apply for Brumfield v. Dodd approval as a renewal applicant or new applicant are required to apply each fall to qualify for the following year. Applications for the 2025-2026 school year will be accepted starting August 2024 along with the BESE application via [Edlink](#). Returning schools must complete the [Brumfield v. Dodd Annual Compliance Report](#) and all others must complete the [Brumfield v. Dodd Initial Application](#).

Once the nonpublic school has completed their BESE and/or Brumfield v. Dodd application, it must go before BESE for consideration to be approved as a BESE approved nonpublic school. If you have any questions, please email us at [nonpublicschools@la.gov](mailto:nonpublicschools@la.gov) or we can schedule a zoom call, if desired.

## **Applicant Categories**

[Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) lists the following designations for BESE-Approved schools:

1. Accredited Approved: The school is currently accredited by [SACSCOC](#), [Cognia](#), or [NAIS](#) and meets all other criteria for BESE approval;
2. Non-Accredited Approved: The school is not currently accredited by [SACSCOC](#), [Cognia](#), or [NAIS](#), but has met all other criteria for BESE approval;
3. Louisiana Montessori Accredited Approved: The school meets LMA's accreditation requirements and all other criteria for BESE approval; and
4. Louisiana Montessori Provisionally Accredited Approved: The school is actively working towards meeting LMA's accreditation requirements, but has met all other criteria for BESE approval.

### **Detailed Steps Accredited School**

- [Brumfield v. Dodd Initial Application](#)  
\*If your school is seeking Brumfield v. Dodd approval (It must be notarized).
- 2 forms of verification that publicizes its nondiscriminatory admissions policy by providing website screenshots of its announcements, including newspaper advertisements, and/or copies of any brochures or similar publications. (A typed nondiscriminatory statement on a Microsoft word document is NOT Acceptable)
- Accreditation letter or certificate from one of the listed [Nonpublic School Approval Process: Accreditation Organizations](#) (The expiration date must be visible on the accreditation letter or certificate)
- Department of Health and Hospital (DHH) Inspection Report (It cannot be dated prior to August 2023)
- City or State Fire Marshal Inspection Report (It cannot be dated prior to August 2023)
- [Program of Study](#) (For schools that serve 9th-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

### **Detailed Steps Non-Accredited Schools**

- [Brumfield v. Dodd Initial Application](#)  
\*If your school is seeking Brumfield v. Dodd approval (It must be notarized)
- 2 forms of verification that publicizes its nondiscriminatory admissions policy by providing website screenshots of its announcements, including newspaper advertisements, and/or copies of any brochures or similar publications. (A typed nondiscriminatory statement on a Microsoft word document is NOT Acceptable)
- [Nonpublic School Approval Questionnaire: New Applicant](#)
- Department of Health and Hospital (DHH) Inspection Report (It cannot be dated prior to August 2023)
- City or State Fire Marshal Inspection Report (It cannot be dated prior to August 2023)
- [Program of Study](#) (For schools that serve 9th-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

### **After Opening**

#### **Teacher Certification**

No state requirement, unless participating in a Scholarship program.

## NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS SEEKING STATE APPROVAL 2024-2025 APPLICATION

Nonpublic Schools Seeking State Approval must apply annually for approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

- The application for the 2024-2025 school year is now closed and will not be available until next fall in preparation for the 2025-2026 BESE Application approval process.
- To become eligible for state and federal funding, schools must be approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and also comply with *Brumfield vs. Dodd*, a federal court order that prohibits discrimination.

## NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS NOT SEEKING STATE APPROVAL

Nonpublic Schools Not Seeking State Approval must annually submit enrollment information for their school by using the online attendance submission form. Persons entering their email address on the form will receive an Attendance Submission Confirmation letter via email immediately upon completion of the form. The attendance submission confirmation is valid for one year from the date of the letter. In hardship situations, attendance submissions may be submitted by mail. For more information, see the Nonpublic Schools Not Seeking State Approval page.

Please email [nonpublicschools@la.gov](mailto:nonpublicschools@la.gov) with questions about any of the processes above. For more resources, please visit the [Non-Public School Resource Library](#).

## **Private School Statutes & Rules**

*The Education Freedom Foundation has relied on the [U.S. Department of Education's State Regulation of Private and Home Schools Map](#) for relevant statutes. Over time, the state pages on this map have been updated since their initial creation. In some cases, states have changed their laws without these updates being reflected on the map. Given the various methods each state uses to publicize changes to its laws, the most recent information for the Start-A-School project was often obtained directly from the U.S. Department of Education website. Users are encouraged to verify any information before making decisions based on it.*

## **Accreditation, Registration, Licensing, and Approval**

- Accreditation is optional.
- Registration is mandatory.
  - If a nonpublic school chooses not to seek state approval, the school must register with the state each school year in order to comply with Louisiana's statute, [La. R.S. Ann. §17:232 \(C\) and \(D\)](#). Nonpublic registered schools (not seeking state approval) may include 1) educational programs or 2) traditional schools with a physical plant that make the choice, based on a variety of reasons,

not to obtain state approval. One example of the latter is a school whose staff do not all meet minimum qualifications.

- To register, a nonpublic school must submit a signed letter including the name of the school, contact information, and total number of students enrolled, to the Department of Education by the 30th day after the school session begins. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:232 \(C\)](#).
- No requirements for Licensing.
- Approval is optional.
  - The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves any private elementary, secondary, or proprietary school upon application, if the school meets and maintains a sustained curriculum or specialized course of study of a quality at least equal to that prescribed for similar public schools. La. Const. Art. VIII, § 4; [La. R.S. Ann. §17:11](#).
  - After initial approval, the board will annually determine whether the private school is maintaining such quality and, if not, shall discontinue approval of the school. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:11](#).
  - Schools are evaluated annually. A school can be classified “approved” if the school meets all the standards specified in the state’s standards for approval of nonpublic schools, “provisionally approved” if the school has deficiencies based on the standards, “probationally approved” if the school assumes one or more of three defined errors, or “unapproved.” An unapproved school becomes ineligible for state and federal funding. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators §107](#).
  - All certificates and diplomas issued by an approved private school shall carry the same privileges as one issued by a state public school. La. R.S. Ann. §17:11 (C). Louisiana Department of Education [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators §2111 \(D\)](#).

## Curriculum

- State approval of a nonpublic school is dependent on whether the school meets and maintains a sustained curriculum or specialized course of study of quality at least equal to that prescribed for similar public schools. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:11](#).
- A minimum of 23 credits is required for incoming freshmen prior to 2009–10. The requirements are four units of English, three units each of mathematics, science, and social studies, two units of health and physical education, and eight units of electives (a maximum of four credits in religion). Specific details of these requirements can be found in Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators §2109](#).
- A minimum of 24 credits is required for incoming freshmen beginning in 2009–10, who will complete the Louisiana Core 4 Curriculum. The minimum course requirements are four units of English, mathematics, science, and social studies, two units of health and physical education, two units of foreign language or speech, one unit of art, and three units of electives. Specific details of these requirements can be found in Louisiana

Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §2109.

- Effective August 2011, prekindergarten programs may be operated as part of an approved elementary school program in conjunction with other grades or may be operated solely as an approved prekindergarten program. Prekindergarten includes developmental programs for children ages 3–4, with a minimum age of 3 by September 30 of the year the child enters prekindergarten. Children in prekindergarten programs are eligible to enter kindergarten at the established age requirement for these programs. Nonpublic schools are not required to offer prekindergarten programs nor are children required to attend these programs. Any other program that operates in a school as a childcare program shall follow the day care standards as prescribed by the appropriate agency. 2011 Legislative Session HB 373 (Act 102).
- No more than 35 students can be enrolled in one class except for certain activity classes such as physical education, art, music, etc. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §707.
- Act 356 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session requires schools, including nonpublic schools, to use a 10-point scale for assigning grades used to calculate the minimum cumulative GPA for TOPS awards for grades earned during the 2024-2025 school year and beyond. This requirement applies only to grades for TOPS core curriculum courses and does not mandate changes to a school’s local grading policies for other purposes, such as report cards or class rank. Nonpublic schools that did not use the 10-point grading scale in the 2024-2025 school year must recalculate and resubmit grades for certain 2024-2025 graduates to the LDOE by August 31, 2025. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:5024\(A\)\(1\)\(b\)](#).

## Health and Safety Requirements

- Persons entering any school within Louisiana for the first time must present satisfactory evidence of immunization or an immunization program in progress according to the schedule approved by the Office of Public Health. If the student or parent submits either a written statement from a physician that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons or a written dissent, the student is not required to be immunized. Administrators of all elementary and secondary schools are responsible for checking students’ records to see that these provisions are enforced. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at the school, the administrators are empowered to exclude unimmunized students until the appropriate disease incubation period has expired or the unimmunized person presents evidence of immunization. .
- It is the duty of the state health officer to prepare and promulgate rules and regulations relative to public and private schools. Plans and specifications for such public and private building structures and facilities must be submitted to the state health officer for review and approval. [La. R.S. Ann. §40:4](#).
- Private schools may request the Department of Transportation and Development to place directional signs to identify the location of their school. The Department will erect

and maintain each sign. The cost of the sign must be paid for in advance by the requestor. [La. R.S. Ann. §32:238](#).

- Nonpublic schools are required to adhere to specific rules and regulations to protect the health and safety of three-year-olds who attend prekindergarten at approved nonpublic schools. 2011 Louisiana Legislative Session HB 373 (Act 102).

### **Length of School Year, School Days, and Minimum School Day**

- To be classified as a school under the General School Law provisions, the institution must operate a minimum session of 180 days. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:236](#).
- For grades 1–12, the minimum school day shall include 330 minutes of instruction time exclusive of recess, lunch, and planning periods. For kindergarten, the minimum instructional day for a full-day program shall be 330 minutes and for a one-half day program, 165 minutes. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §705.

### **Liability Insurance**

- The school administrator of a school that has a Kindergarten for 3-year-old students, shall maintain in force at all times current liability insurance for the operation of a school to ensure medical coverage for children in the event of accident or injury. The school shall have documentation of the accident or injury on file. Documentation shall consist of the insurance policy or current binder that includes the name of the school facility, physical address of the facility, name of the insurance company, policy number, period of coverage, and explanation of the coverage. [LA Admin Code: 28 §3001.B](#).

### **Nursing and Health**

- There is no state policy at this time.

### **Professional Development**

- A minimum of two days of professional development shall be held each school year. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §305.
- The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education must appoint an advisory committee of private and proprietary school representatives to advise and counsel the board relative to standards and guidelines affecting these schools. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:11](#).

### **Public Aid for Private Education**

- **Constitutional Provisions:** According to the Louisiana Constitution, the legislature shall appropriate funds to supply free schoolbooks and other materials of instruction

prescribed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to the children of the state. La. Const. Art. VIII, §13.

Private schools that are racially segregated are ineligible for state assistance of any kind, including textbooks, materials, and transportation. *Brumfield v. Dodd*, 405 F. Supp. 338 (E.D. La. 1977).

In 1970, the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional Louisiana's Secular Educational Services Law, La. R.S. Ann. §17:1322–1324, which would have allowed the superintendent of public education to purchase secular educational services from nonpublic school teachers to be performed at nonpublic schools with public funds. *Seegers v. Parker*, 241 So.2d 213 (1970).

- Programs for Financial Assistance for Attendance at Private Schools:
  1. Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program became law in 2008 and provides scholarships for New Orleans' students from families with a family income of no greater than 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and who reside within the geographical boundaries of the covered district (Orleans Parish). Kindergarten through sixth-grade students are eligible to receive the scholarship of an amount "equivalent to ninety percent of the per pupil amount the covered district receives from combined state and local sources," or the private school's tuition, whichever is less. Scholarship recipients remain eligible to receive the scholarship through grade 12 as long as they remain enrolled in a participating school. Only state-approved nonpublic schools are eligible to participate. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:4011-17:4025](#).
  2. Elementary and Secondary School Tuition Deduction became law in 2008 and allows a deduction from tax table income for the sum of amounts paid or incurred during the taxable year by a taxpayer for a student's enrollment in a nonpublic elementary or secondary school, or to a public elementary or secondary school for a student's participation in curricular and core classes, or for qualified education expenses associated with homeschooling. Tuition includes the purchase of school uniforms required by schools for general day-to-day use, the purchase of textbooks or other instructional materials required by schools, and the purchase of school supplies required by schools. The deduction shall equal 50 percent of the actual amount of tuition and fees paid by the taxpayer per student or \$5,000 per student, whichever is less. [La. R.S. Ann. §47:297.10-47:297.12](#).
  3. The School Choice Scholarship Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities became law in 2010 and was first implemented in the 2011-2012 school year. The program was established in each parish having a population in excess of 190,000 persons according to the 2000 Federal Census. The program provides students the opportunity to attend schools of their parents' choosing that provide educational services that specifically address the needs of such students. Students who have been evaluated by a local education agency as defined in La. R.S. Ann. §17:1942, determined to be in need of services, and have an Individual Education Plan or a services plan in accordance with Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 300.37 are eligible. The value of each scholarship shall be equivalent to 50 percent of the per-pupil allocation of state

funds to the city, parish, or other local public school district in which the eligible student is residing for the school year, but not to exceed the amount of tuition charged by the eligible nonpublic school. Only state-approved nonpublic schools are eligible to participate. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:4031](#).

## Recordkeeping and Reports

- Nonpublic schools must keep registration and attendance records of students, and maintain a current permanent record of the student's individual data and academic progress through school. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#), §505.
- Nonpublic schools must maintain a health record for each student from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §519.
- A nonpublic school is required to submit an annual school report to the State Department of Education by October 15. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §527.
- Upon entering a private school for the first time, all children must present a copy of their official birth record to the school principal. Children born in Louisiana will be given a 15-day grace period to secure a copy of their birth record. Children born out of this state will be given a 30-day grace period in which to produce a copy of their birth record. If birth certificates or birth verification cannot be obtained, the school principal may accept whatever positive proof of age, race, and parentage is available. It is left to the discretion of the parish or city superintendent of schools, subject to the authority of the school board, as to whether or not a child shall continue in school upon failure to comply. [La. R.S. Ann. §§17:167, 222](#).
- Private schools that receive local, state, or federal funds, directly or indirectly, or whose students or their parents are recipients or beneficiaries of any local, state, or federal education program or assistance must cooperate with visiting teachers or supervisors of child welfare and attendance. Within 30 days after the beginning of the school term, principals must report in writing to the visiting teacher or supervisor of child welfare and attendance the name, birth date, race, parents' names, and residence of each pupil in attendance at their schools, and make other reports as required. Attendance must be taken daily and at the beginning of each class period, verified by the teacher keeping the record and open to inspection. All schools must immediately report unexplained, unexcused, or illegal absence, or habitual tardiness. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:232.A, B, C](#).
- Private schools that do not receive local, state, or federal funds, directly or indirectly, and where neither students nor parents are recipients or beneficiaries of such funds, are required to report to the Louisiana Department of Education their total attendance as of the 30th day of their school term. [La. R.S. Ann. §17.232.C](#).
- All schools in Louisiana must respond to the request of a city or parish public school system as to whether an individual student is enrolled in the school and fulfilling the compulsory attendance requirements. [La. R.S. Ann. §17.232.D](#).

## Reimbursement for Performing State and Local Functions

- Annually, the superintendent of education reimburses approved nonpublic schools for the actual cost incurred for providing school services, maintaining records, and completing and filing mandatory reports, e.g. forms, reports, or records relative to school approval or evaluation, public attendance, pupil health and pupil health testing, transportation of pupils, federally funded educational programs, including school lunch and breakfast programs, school textbooks and supplies, library books, pupil appraisal, pupil progress, transfer of pupils, teacher certification, teacher continuing education programs, unemployment, and annual school data. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:361](#).

## Special Education

- Louisiana at times places exceptional students in nonpublic schools. Local education agencies must apply to the state education agency for the authority to place children with disabilities in programs other than public schools. The Office of Special Education ensures that private schools serving exceptional children and receiving funds establish uniform accounting and reporting procedures and meet minimum requirements established by the Louisiana Department of Education. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:1944](#).
- The Louisiana state department of education and local education authorities may, under state policies, enter into the purchase of service agreements or contracts with other public or nonpublic agencies to provide special education and related services. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:1947](#).

## Tax Exemption

- Property owned by nonprofit corporations, organized and operated exclusively for religious or educational purposes, and exempt from federal and state income tax, are exempt from ad valorem taxation. La. Const. Art. VII, §21.

## Teacher Certification

- To be classified as a school under the General School Law provisions, the instructional staff of a nonpublic school receiving local, state, or federal funds or support, directly or indirectly, must be qualified in accordance with the rules established by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. If the school does not receive public aid, directly or indirectly, the instructional staff must meet such requirements as may be prescribed by the school or the church. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:236](#).
- Instructional staff at nonpublic schools must meet one of the following three criteria: hold a valid Louisiana teaching certification for the courses he/she instructs; qualify to teach in a nonpublic school (as qualified by guidance outlined by the Louisiana Department of Education), or obtain a one-year Nonpublic Temporary Teaching

Authorization (NTTA) issued by the Department of Education or diocesan superintendent for schools within the diocesan system. Specific details of these qualifications can be found in Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §303.

## Technology

- Nonpublic schools choosing to implement a distance education program shall establish policies and procedures for reviewing and approving programs that meet the Standards for Distance Education as established by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §2523.

## Testing

- Any approved nonpublic school may award a school diploma to any student who meets the state's minimum high school graduation requirements.
- Assessment of nonpublic school students is optional. Any approved nonpublic school that participates in the state Exit Testing Program shall award a state and/or school diploma to a student who successfully completes the state's minimum graduation requirements and meets the following assessment requirements:
  - Students entering the ninth grade prior to 2010–11 must pass the English Language Arts and Mathematics components, and either the Science or Social Studies components of the Graduation Exit examination. For incoming freshmen in 2010–11 and beyond, students must pass three End-of-Course Tests in English II or English III; Algebra I or geometry; biology or American history.
  - A student who attends an approved nonpublic school that opts to participate in the state Exit Testing Program but who does not successfully complete the state's minimum graduation requirements and meet the assessment requirements shall not be eligible for either a state or a school diploma.
- Any approved nonpublic school that wishes to award the state diploma to its students shall follow state department of education timelines and other administrative guidelines for administering the state Exit Testing Program.
- Any nonpublic school that opts to participate in the state Exit Testing Program shall follow the rules and regulations set by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Any state-approved nonpublic school that does not choose to participate in the state Exit Testing Program may grant a school diploma, which denotes the state's minimum graduation requirements have been met. This school diploma carries the same privileges as one issued by a public school.
- A participating nonpublic school shall ensure that scholarship recipients are administered all examinations required pursuant to the school and district accountability system at the prescribed grade levels and that the results of such examinations are provided to parents or legal guardians. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:4023](#).

- The awarding of high school diplomas shall in no way affect the school approval classifications of any school. Specific details of these requirements can be found in the Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §2111.

## Textbooks

- City and parish school boards that disburse school library books, textbooks, and other materials of instruction to nonpublic school students may submit to the superintendent of education documentation to verify administrative costs and receive reimbursement from the state. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:353](#).
- A record of all state-purchased textbooks shall be kept. This shall include textbooks on hand at the beginning of the session, those added, and those lost or worn-out. Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §517

## Transportation

- Parish and city school boards must provide free transportation for nonpublic school students attending approved schools, providing the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin. If a parish or city school board determines transportation by bus is impractical, not available, or unwarranted, the board may utilize common carriers. If transportation is not provided by the parish or city school for economically justifiable reasons approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Education will reimburse the parent of any student who resides more than one mile from the school as funds are appropriated by the legislature but not more than \$125 per student or \$375 per family. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:158](#). “If transportation is not provided by the public school board, parents of students attending nonpublic schools shall be reimbursed for transportation, provided funds are appropriated.” La. R.S. Ann. §17:158 (C), (D), (H). Louisiana Department of Education (Nonpublic) [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §1901.
- Approved nonpublic schools may voluntarily pool their bids with city and parish school boards for purchases of school buses and related equipment. The Louisiana Department of Education prepares bid forms and specifications, obtains quotations of prices, and makes such forms and information available to school boards and any participating nonpublic schools in order to facilitate this service. [La. R.S. Ann. §158.3](#).
- Contract drivers of all privately owned school buses transporting private school students qualify for a refund of one-half of the gasoline tax and the special fuel tax. [La. R.S. Ann. §47:715.1](#).
- The secretary of the Department of Revenue and Taxation will make refunds of gasoline taxes on gasoline used for operating any boat to transport children to or from parochial schools.
- Relevant Statutes
  1. [R.S. 17:6 \(A\)\(10\), \(11\), and \(15\)](#)

2. [R.S. 17:7\(6\)](#)
3. [R.S. 17:10](#),
4. [R.S. 17:22\(6\)](#)
5. [R.S. 17:391.2-391.10](#)
6. [R.S. 44:411](#).

## Resources

### Contact Information — State and Federal Departments of Education

- Louisiana Department of Education  
1201 North Third  
P.O. Box 94064  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064  
Phone: (225) 219-5172  
Toll-Free: (877) 453-2721  
Fax: (225) 342-0781  
Email: [customerservice@la.gov](mailto:customerservice@la.gov)  
Website: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/>
- U.S. Department of Education, [Louisiana](#)

### Information and Legislation

- [Louisiana Department of Education \(LDOE\): Nonpublic Schools](#)
- [LDOE: BESE Approved Home Study Guidance and Applications](#)
- [LDOE Registered Nonpublic Schools Not Seeking State Approval](#)
- [Louisiana School Choice Pilot Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities](#)
- [Louisiana Administrative Code](#)
- [LDOE Legislative Bulletin 133](#)
- [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#)

## School Choice Programs

### [Louisiana Scholarship Program](#)

The Louisiana Scholarship Program will continue to be administered through the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The Louisiana Scholarship Program will sunset on June 30, 2025 and all Louisiana Scholarship Program students and nonpublic schools will receive priority access to the [LA GATOR Scholarship Program](#). The Louisiana Department of Education is contacting current Louisiana Scholarship Program families and schools on next steps for the 2025-2026 school year.

## School Choice Program for Students with Exceptionalities (SCP)

The School Choice Program enables students with exceptionalities to attend schools that can meet their unique needs. The program provides tuition assistance of up to 50% of the state per pupil funding for the student's school district. [La. R.S. Ann. §17:4031](#)

To be eligible to participate in the program, a non-public school must be both [BESE approved](#) and [Brumfield v. Dodd compliant](#). In addition, eligible schools must be located in a parish with a recent census population greater than 190,000 residents and must be prepared to serve students with exceptionalities, as demonstrated by a history of serving students with exceptionalities over the past two years and teachers on staff who have appropriate certificates in special education.

Tuition assistance is 50% of the state per pupil funding for the student's school district (approximately \$2,500) and cannot exceed the cost of the private school tuition. Families are responsible for paying the difference if tuition exceeds that amount.

More information about participation requirements can be found in the School Choice Program FAQ PDF.

For any questions contact [studentscholarships@la.gov](mailto:studentscholarships@la.gov).

### **ESA Application Process**

All schools wishing to participate in the School Choice Program must complete the following annually:

1. BESE Application
2. Brumfield v. Dodd Application
3. NOI (Notice of Intent) Form

Per [Bulletin 741 \(Nonpublic\) - Louisiana Handbook for Nonpublic School Administrators](#) §107, the school must be a nonprofit institutional day or residential school that provides elementary education, secondary education, or both.

### **Useful Websites**

- [Nonpublic School Resources](#)
- [Brumfield v Dodd - Compliance Report PDF](#)
- [Brumfield v Dodd - Initial Application PDF](#)

## Tuition Donation Credit Program

Per [La. R.S. Ann. §47:297.10-47:297.12](#), the Tuition Donation Credit Program empowers Louisiana families with the financial resources to choose the nonpublic school that best prepares their child for college and careers. This program, established by the Louisiana Legislature, authorizes School Tuition Organizations (STOs) to collect and use taxpayer donations to provide scholarships to students that meet the program's income requirements to attend nonpublic schools. All School Tuition Organizations are tax-exempt, not-for-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status. Taxpayers earn a credit toward their Louisiana state taxes for the year in which they make a donation.

Students apply directly to School Tuition Organizations for scholarships. Once a student receives a scholarship, the student then applies directly to one of the nonpublic schools that partners with the STO for enrollment.

School Tuition Organizations determine the amount of the scholarship. Scholarship amounts cannot exceed the lesser of either the school's tuition and mandatory fees or 80% of the state average per pupil funding for elementary and middle school students and 90% of the state average per pupil funding for high school students. Parents must pay the difference of any tuition and fees not covered by the scholarship.

For more information on the School Tuition Organizations participating in the Tuition Donation Credit Program, use the following links:

- [ACE Scholarships Louisiana \(will open in new tab\)](#)
- [Arete Scholars Louisiana \(will open in new tab\)](#)
- [Aspiring Scholars Louisiana \(will open in new tab\)](#)
- [San Damiano Scholars \(will open in new tab\)](#)
- [Son of a Saint Louisiana \(will open in new tab\)](#)

To learn more about the Tuition Donation Credit Program, please review the [Tuition Donation Credit Program FAQ PDF](#).

### **LA GATOR Scholarship Program**

The "Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship Program" passed the House and Senate on 30 May.

Repeals R.S. 17:4011 through 4013 and 4015 through 4025, §4037.

The department shall begin enrolling participating students not later than March 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year;

§4037.5. Schools and service providers; eligibility; participation

A. To be eligible to participate in the program, a school shall meet all of the following criteria:

- a. It has been approved by the state board pursuant to R.S. 17:10 or R.S. 17:11 and meets any other standards established by the state board pertaining to health, safety, and program of study as required by the state board.
- b. It is in compliance with the criteria set forth in *Brumfield, et al. v. Dodd, et al.*, 425 F. Supp. 528 (E.D. La. 1977).
- c. It meets all other program requirements provided in rules promulgated by the state board.
- d. If offering courses with student contact, staff with supervisory or disciplinary authority over participating students have cleared a criminal background check and fingerprinting process, in compliance with [R.S. 15:587.1](#) and [15:587.3](#). This process is conducted through the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information.

#### About Louisiana GATOR Program

- [LA GATOR Scholarship Program Webinar for Louisiana Scholarship Program Families](#)
- [Established Rules for the 2025-2026 LA GATOR Program](#)
- [What are Eligible Educational Expenses for the LA GATOR Program?](#)
- [Is the LA GATOR Program the same as the Louisiana Scholarship Program?](#)
- [What is the LA GATOR Program?](#)

#### Vendor Eligibility

- [Can an Approved School be a Vendor or Service Provider for the GATOR Program?](#)
- [How to Become a Vendor or Service Provider for the LA GATOR Program](#)
- [How to Complete the LA GATOR Vendor and Service Provider Application](#)