

## Organization, Policies, and Absence of Policy

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### Organization

**Special School District (SSD)** was established to serve students with hearing, visual, or orthopedic impairments, and students who are confined to public health or correctional facilities. SSD is led by the SSD Superintendent.

SSD includes two distinct branches: **Louisiana Special Schools (LSS)** and **Special School Programs (SSP)**.

LSS is led by the LSS Superintendent, and includes the **Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (LSDVI)** and the **Louisiana Special Education Center (LSEC)**. LSDVI operates two distinct educational and residential programs, the **Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD)** and the **Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI)**, on a shared campus, with shared services, including diagnostic and therapeutic services, and operational services. LSDVI operates on a traditional school year, with summer enrichment programs offered. LSEC operates a year-round residential program for students with severe orthopedic impairments. LSD, LSVI, and LSEC are led by School Directors, and Division Directors lead the shared services Divisions.

SSP operates year-round, providing the special education program to supplement the general education program offered by the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) in their facilities, and providing the entire educational programs in facilities operated by the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). SSP is also authorized to provide educational services in other facilities where students are placed by public agencies. Students in OJJ and DOC facilities are in those facilities by court order, based on criminal conduct. Students in other facilities may be court-ordered, referred by a medical professional, placed by family, placed by another state agency, or placed through the Coordinated System of Care (CSOC). SSP is divided into regions throughout the state, and each Region is led by a Regional Coordinator.

### Appointing Authority

All actions affecting personnel or positions must be approved by an Appointing Authority.

The State Superintendent of Education is the statutory appointing authority for SSD. The State Superintendent has delegated administrative and appointing authority for SSD to the SSD Superintendent, and the SSD Superintendent may further delegate appointing authority, to appropriate administrators, to enhance the efficient and orderly operation of SSD.

### Policies

With the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, SSD is consolidating policies and issuing a new set of policies applicable to SSD employees. The policies promulgated at the beginning of the 2013-2014

school year, and in the future, supersede previous employee policies applicable to SSD or individual schools.

SSP employees, who work at facilities not operated by SSD, will continue to be governed by facility policies, as well as SSD policies.

Policies do not create an employment contract. Employees who are not permanent or tenured are at-will employees. SSD has the right and obligation to amend policies when appropriate to address district needs. The SSD Superintendent has the authority to grant exceptions to policies, in the best interest of SSD.

### **Human Resources**

LSDVI and LSEC have Human Resources Offices to administer employment matters for their employees. Employment matters for SSP are administered by the Department of Education's (DOE) Human Resources Office, and SSP employees are governed by DOE policies relating to the administration of employment matters. SSD policies will indicate when SSP employees should follow DOE policies.

The Human Resources Director or Administrator is responsible for maintaining archived policies.

The Human Resources Director or Administrator has the authority and responsibility to ensure that all employees are qualified for the positions they hold, and that all personnel actions are taken by the appointing authority and comply with applicable law, including Civil Service Rules. The Human Resources Director or Administrator has the authority and responsibility to establish internal controls necessary to ensure compliance.

No employee shall gain any entitlement or property right to any position or pay found to have been awarded to him or her in violation of applicable law.

### **Availability of Policies**

LSDVI and LSEC will post updated employees on the school's intranet, and updated policies will be available in the Human Resources Office.

SSP employees, due to their assignments in non-SSD facilities, may not have intranet access. SSD policies are available from Regional Coordinators, and DOE policies are available from DOE's Human Resources Office.

### **Absence of Policy**

In the absence of written policy, decisions are to be guided by the goal of providing a safe and secure educational environment for our students, while complying with all applicable law.

In the absence of written policy, it shall be the responsibility of each School or Division Director and each Regional Coordinator to determine the best course of action to take. This decision shall be based on current policy and practice, historical knowledge of past activities, and the sense of what is the most efficient and effective action for the operation of the school. These administrators are expected to use good judgment in their daily decision making, including advising the SSD or LSS Superintendent when they have been required to make a decision in the absence of policy, recommending that a policy be

created to address similar circumstances, particularly when an issue may impact other areas of the District, and recognizing when it is appropriate to create a protocol/procedure.

### **Procedures/Protocols**

Each area is authorized to create forms and procedures/protocols for ease and efficiency of work, to ensure that safety practices are consistently followed, to ensure compliance with applicable laws or regulations, or for other reasons to promote smooth operation. Procedures/protocols, whether new or existing, do not supersede policies approved by the SSD Superintendent, and may not be used to excuse non-compliance with policy or applicable law.

When an area within SSD implements procedures/protocols, each immediate supervisor is responsible for ensuring that they have been explained to each employee responsible for implementing them, and that each employee responsible for implementing them has access to a usable copy, whether paper or electronic.