



UNIVERSITY of
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L A F A Y E T T E

**Center for
Gifted Education**



LOUISIANA LAGNIAPPE*

**a little something extra*

2026 LAgniappe Educator Conference
JUNE 2-3, 2026

Christine Briggs, Ph.D., Conference Director

Generously hosted by: **Episcopal School of Acadiana**

Wireless Network: **LAgniappe** | Password: **Education**



Welcome to the Louisiana Lagniappe Educator Conference, one of the premier education conferences in the South! Lagniappe features several of the nation's top experts in giftedness, along with local and regional experts. Lagniappe isn't just for teachers of the gifted; it's for teachers, administrators, parents, and counselors of all populations to enable them to identify and develop the gifts of all learners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at University of Louisiana at Lafayette®. We genuinely appreciate the support and recognition of the importance of high-end learning for all students and advanced strategies for educators, administrators, counselors, and parents that Dr. Cross provides.

Heartfelt thanks to a small group of behind-the-scenes folks who give their time, energy, and expertise to make the 2026 Lagniappe Educator Conference happen.

Elizbeth Pham
Paulette Counce

Dr. Kevin Hislop
Dr. Malani Hoffpauir

Bob McIntire
Kathleen McIntire

We would like to extend a special thank you to the faculty and staff of the Episcopal School of Acadiana. We appreciate your willingness to share your home with us.



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JUNE 2-3, 2026

Episcopal School of Acadiana
721 E. Kaliste Saloom Road
Lafayette, LA 70508

Lagniappe Educator Conference Program

There are two, three-hour sessions in the morning, and two, three-hour sessions in the afternoon on both days. Choose one presentation per strand to attend both days, for a total of six hours of in-depth learning per topic.

TIME	ROOM	TUESDAY, JUNE 2	WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3
8:15–8:30 a.m.	Chapel	WELCOME: Dr. T. Cross	WELCOME
STRAND 1	8:30–11:30 a.m.	Art Room Gifted Kids Facing Life with Compassion and Resilience <i>Thomas P. Hebert, Ph.D.</i>	Gifted Kids Facing Life with Compassion and Resilience
	OR		
	8:30–11:30 a.m.	Science Room Quality Differentiation for Advanced Learners: Essential Elements to Consider <i>Marcia B. Imbeau, Ph.D.</i>	Quality Differentiation for Advanced Learners: Essential Elements to Consider
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Chapel	LUNCH	LUNCH
STRAND 2	12:30–3:30 p.m.	Art Room Teaching to Big Ideas: Curricular Design Strategies for Promoting Deeper Learning <i>Jann Leppien, Ph.D.</i>	Teaching to Big Ideas: Curricular Design Strategies for Promoting Deeper Learning
	OR		
	12:30–3:30 p.m.	Science Room Paper Plate Geometry <i>Rachel McAnallen, Ph.D.</i>	Paper Plate Geometry
3:30–3:45 p.m.		DISMISSAL	INSTITUTE & STRAND EVALUATIONS In Strand Rooms

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(337) 482-6701 | gifted@louisiana.edu

STRAND 1

Choose one to attend **Tuesday and Wednesday**. | 8:30–11:30 a.m.

PRESENTATION	ROOM	DESCRIPTION
Gifted Kids Facing Life with Compassion and Resilience <i>Thomas P. Hebert, Ph.D.</i>	Art Room	<i>Gifted kids have a need to develop self-understanding and learn how to face the challenges of adolescence with self-assurance and determination. Educators can help them reach that understanding and develop confidence through effective classroom instruction. This seminar closely examines the social and emotional issues facing gifted kids and the role that empathy, compassion and resilience play in their lives. The seminar also offers educators a variety of time-tested instructional methods to support the emotional well-being of their students.</i>
Quality Differentiation for Advanced Learners: Essential Elements to Consider <i>Marcia B. Imbeau, Ph.D.</i>	Science Room	Meeting the needs of all learners, including those who are advanced, is every teacher's responsibility. Successful teachers see differentiated instruction as critically important in helping them meet the needs of their diverse learners. These highly effective teachers believe differentiation to be a "principle-guided method to approach teaching and learning and is implemented in the context of a classroom system that contains five interdependent elements: learning environment, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and leading and managing flexible routines" (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2023, p.35). This strand will examine each of these five elements that make up the system of differentiation using varied examples/ideas, strategies, and tips with opportunities for K-12 teachers to craft lesson/unit ideas they can use in their classrooms.

STRAND 2

Choose one to attend **Tuesday and Wednesday**. | 12:30–3:30 p.m.

PRESENTATION	ROOM	DESCRIPTION
Teaching to Big Ideas: Curricular Design Strategies for Promoting Deeper Learning <i>Jann Leppien, Ph.D.</i>	Art Room	Challenge, engagement, and student agency are at the heart of deeper instruction. The way we design or frame our instructional units around compelling ideas or BIG IDEAS enhances this challenge and provides students with learning opportunities to engage in meaning-making tasks that can ignite an intellectual curiosity to wrestle with these complex ideas. In this strand, we will explore organizing curriculum and instruction around a strong conceptual focus and explore instructional strategies and techniques for elevating intellectual thinking processes as we design curriculum in ways that remove the ceiling from learning and result in higher expectations, access to more advanced content, and provide a greater scope of academic growth and engagement for all students.
Paper Plate Geometry <i>Rachel McAnallen, Ph.D.</i>	Science Room	Geometry is an important component of a student's geometric education goals beginning in kindergarten through high school. To understand geometry, one must put their hands in motion to comprehend concepts intellectually as well as tactilely. The content and instructional strategies of this workshop are geared towards teachers of grades kindergarten through high school geometry and are appropriate for students at all levels of proficiency. All teachers – elementary, gifted and talented, special education, middle school, and high school – are invited to attend. Participants will build math models using paper plates, a straightedge, and tape. If the participant brings a sense of curiosity, patience, and a sense of humor to this workshop, they will leave with several models in hand each day.

PRESENTERS



MARCIA B. IMBEAU, PH.D.

Marcia B. Imbeau is currently a University Professor in the Childhood/Elementary Education Program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Arkansas working in their teacher preparation program. She has been a classroom teacher in public schools, a coordinator of university-based summer/Saturday enrichment programs, and a consultant regularly presenting to teachers, instructional leaders, and administrators throughout the United States and abroad. She directs and teaches courses in the Inclusive Education and Clinical Practice program related to Gifted and Talented Education, as well as teaches courses for pre-service teachers in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program on differentiation, classroom management, and curriculum design.

For the last 25 years, she has served as a university liaison working in local public schools to assist MAT interns and their mentor teachers. This role allows her to work closely with public-school faculty (many of whom now have been former students) to prepare a new generation of K-6 educators as well as K-12 teachers who work with advanced learners.

She has been recognized for her teaching and received the 2023 Charles and Nadine Baum Faculty Teaching Award, the College of Education and Health Professions Outstanding Teaching Award in 2000 and 2003 and inducted into the UA Teaching Academy in 2003. She has mentored many honors students and was awarded the Honors College Distinguished Faculty Award in 2014, the College of Education and Health Profession Outstanding Mentoring and Advising Award in 2011, and the COEHP Superior Service Award in 2019.

Imbeau holds a PhD in gifted education from the University of Connecticut, an M.Ed. in gifted education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and a BA in elementary education from Hendrix College.



THOMAS P. HEBERT, PH.D.

Thomas Hébert, Ph.D. enjoyed a career that included more than a decade of K-12 classroom experience working with gifted students and 31 years in higher education training graduate students and educators in gifted education at the University of Alabama, the University of Georgia, and the University of South Carolina. He conducted research for the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) and served on the Board of Directors of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). Tom received the 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut and the 2019 Distinguished Scholar Award from NAGC. Tom is the author of the award-winning *Understanding the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Students* (2nd ed.) (2020), *Talented Young Men Overcoming Tough Times: An Exploration of Resilience* (2018) and *Guiding Gifted Students with Engaging Books* (2022). Tom retired recently and returned home to coastal Maine. You can now find him playing golf, enjoying art classes, participating in a French conversation group, and having a joyful time with great nieces and nephews.



JANN LEPPIEN, PH.D.

Dr. Jann H. Leppien is Professor Emerita from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington. She is the former Margo Long Chair in Gifted Education and Program Director for graduate programs in gifted education (2013-2021). Her professional experience includes serving as a research associate at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, working as an elementary and middle school teacher, and coordinating gifted education services K-8. She conducts professional development for educators in the areas of differentiated instruction, curriculum design and assessment for advanced students, thinking skills, and gifted program development, both nationally and internationally. She has served on the board of the National Association for Gifted Children and currently serves as NAGC'S Teaching for High Potential Editorial Review Board. She also serves on the board for the 2E Center for Research and Professional Development at Bridges Academy in Studio, City, CA is a member of the core faculty for Bridges Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education. She is the coauthor of the *Multiple Menu Model: A Practical Guide for Developing Differentiated Curriculum* and *The Parallel Curriculum: A Design to Develop High Potential and Challenge High-Ability Students* and series editor for content related PCM books. She is also President of Edufest, a summer institute on teaching and learning in Boise, ID that has been serving educators for over 25 years.



RACHEL MCANALLEN, PH.D.

Known simply as Ms. Math to children across the country, Dr. Rachel McAnallen has devoted her life to sharing the joy and beauty of mathematics with learners of all ages. A professional educator for more than 60 years, she travels the globe teaching her subject at every grade level. In addition to her experience in the classroom, Rachel has served as a department chair, a school board member, and a high school administrator.

She claims the latter position is responsible for the majority of her grey hairs. She has a passion for teaching, reading fictional mystery novels, and mathematical modular origami, though not always in that order. Recently, Rachel has co-authored with Carol Williams, children's math books and teaching manuals that accompany the books. A life-long learner, Rachel approaches the world around her with a boundless curiosity and a playful sense of humor that is reflected in her teaching style. She believes that mathematics is a language to be spoken, a music to be heard, an art to be seen, and a dance to be performed.



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Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

completed two days of professional development at the

Lagniappe Educator Conference

in Lafayette, Louisiana, on June 2–3, 2026



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Christine J. Briggs

Christine J. Briggs, Ph.D., Director

Center for Gifted Education

Louisiana Lagniappe Educator Conference



**MASTER OF EDUCATION (M.ED)
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: GIFTED**

The Master of Education (M.Ed) in Special Education: Gifted Program at UL Lafayette can help make a difference for able and gifted learners in gifted classrooms, or in a general educational setting. Upon completion, candidates are eligible to add gifted education to their teaching certificate in their certification area. *The program is now 100% online, and its 30-course-hours requirements can be completed in just two years!*



GIFTED EDUCATION FACULTY

Three faculty members hold terminal degrees from the University of Connecticut or the University of Virginia. Both UConn and UVA are leaders in Gifted Education research giving these faculty members cutting edge experiences in Gifted Education and Programming. Additional faculty hold credentials in Gifted Education or related fields that support Gifted Education.

**For more information, visit gradschool.louisiana.edu/current-students/teacher-tuition-incentive-program
Tuition Incentive Award is not guaranteed—Candidates must apply each semester to be considered.*

APPLICATION PROCESS

Visit gradschool.louisiana.edu to learn more about our graduate programs. To apply, click on the online application link gradschool.louisiana.edu/apply and follow the instructions.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Three letters of reference and a cover letter are required for application to Graduate School. The persons who complete the letters of reference should submit them online to the Graduate School: gradschool@louisiana.edu Transcripts should be sent to the Graduate School.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is no longer required!

GIFTED COURSE CYCLE

SPED 500

Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted (3 hours)

SPED 506

Nature and Needs of the Gifted (3 hours)

EDCI 508

Research to Impact Student Achievement (3 hours)

EDCI 507

Writing for the Responsive Professional (3 hours)

SPED 503

Developing Creativity in the Classroom (3 hours)

SPED 509

Instructional Strategies for Teaching the Gifted (3 hours)

SPED 510

Curriculum Development for the Gifted (3 hours)

IRED 501

Integration of technology in Instructional Resources in Education (3 hours)

SPED 592

Capstone I in Gifted Education (3 hours)

SPED 593

Capstone II and Practicum in Gifted Education (3 hours)



*For more information on the Master of Education (M.Ed) in Special Education: Gifted program, contact:
Dr. Christine Briggs | Director, Center for Gifted Education | christine.briggs@louisiana.edu*



DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP WITH A CONCENTRATION IN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Exceptional Learners are present in every school and at all grade levels. Exceptional learners include students with disabilities, gifted, and twice-exceptional learners.

Educational leaders need to know the needs, legal requirements, and best practices in serving these students. This eighteen (18) hour concentration provides students with critical information on who are exceptional learners, what are the legal responsibilities for this population, and what needs to happen instructionally to support teachers in order for their students to reach their potential.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

Anyone who has a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, Curriculum & Instruction, Special Education, Gifted Education, or a similar education field.

WHAT WE OFFER

An opportunity to specialize in both ends of the special education continuum in order to make informed decisions for schools and the students they serve.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Coursework is offered using the executive/blended format plus extensive field experience in the community. Courses are offered Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Two courses per session.

REQUIRED RESEARCH CORE

- EDFL 571** Applied Statistics in Education
- EDLD 800** Introduction to Research Design in Educational Leadership
- EDLD 801** Writing for Research in Educational Leadership
- EDLD 802** Quantitative Methods in Educational Leadership
- EDLD 803** Qualitative Methods in Educational Leadership

EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER CONCENTRATION (18 hrs.)

+ LEADERSHIP COURSES (18 hrs.)

- EDLD 820** Legal Issues and Ethics in Educational Organization
- SPED 890** Contemporary Issues in the Education of Exceptional Learners
- SPED 891** Supervision of Educational Services for Exceptional Learners
- SPED 892** Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Leadership Supports for Exceptional Learners

SPED 893 Accommodations,

Modifications, and Interventions for Exceptional Learners: A Leader's Role

SPED 894 Collaborative Leadership to Support Exceptional Education

SPED 895 Leadership in Encouraging Creative and Critical Thinking Learning Environments

DISSERTATION COURSES

EDLD 900 Doctoral Dissertation Seminar

EDLD 999 Dissertation Research & Dissertation

For more information on the *Exceptional Learner Concentration*, contact:

Dr. Christine Briggs | christine.briggs@louisiana.edu

Dr. Donna Wadsworth | donna.wadsworth@louisiana.edu

For more information on the *Doctoral program*, contact:

Dr. Sebnem Cilesiz

sebnem.cilesiz@louisiana.edu



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Thank you!

FOR ATTENDING THE
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