Dear Principal,

In partnership with the Louisiana’s Department of Education, Well-Ahead Louisiana is gearing up for the Fall Edition of Bright Smiles for Bright Futures. Studies show that healthy students are better learners. This project gives students the opportunity for a healthy smile, which is vital to overall health.

Childhood obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s. But, did you know that tooth decay remains the most common chronic disease among children? Dental care is often a child’s top unmet health need. In 2009, Bright Smiles for Bright Futures uncovered that a startling 42% of Louisiana third graders had untreated tooth decay, 66% had an untreated cavity, and 43% needed to be referred to a dentist for further treatment. Discomfort from untreated oral health issues can cause difficulty concentrating and school absences.

Bright Smiles for Bright Futures provides a basic oral health screening to eligible third grade students. This means that a licensed dental hygienist screens students for dental sealants, tooth decay, and cavities, and makes appropriate dental recommendations. Screenings are performed on campus and take less than two minutes per student. In addition, students receive brief oral health education and dental supplies. This project also helps Well-Ahead Louisiana collect data in hopes of securing funding for future oral health programming for Louisiana students. Participation is confidential and all data collected will be reported in aggregate form, ensuring the privacy of both students and schools.

In the toolkit attached, you will find the resources listed below:

- School Participation Form: Please complete and return this form.
- Parent Flyer and Consent Form: Please send home with students a week before the screening.
- Screening Report Form: A sample of screening results – to be sent home post screening.
- Educational Coloring Sheet: A sample of the education provided during the screening.

Bright Smiles for Bright Futures is supported by State Superintendent, John White. Please complete and return the attached School Participation Form. I will reach out soon to discuss potential screening dates. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at (225) 342-9499 or Kaitlyn.King@la.gov. Together, we can move the health of Louisiana students forward.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn King
Well-Ahead Louisiana Oral Health Coordinator