

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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My name is Gwen Bankston. I am a retired professional school counselor with over 25 years of dedicated professional counseling experience and classroom teaching. Currently I support the Statewide Counselor Assistance Center providing support to students, parents and professional school counselors. By now everyone is fully engaged in second semester activities. Soon the 2016 graduating class will walk across the stage and transition into young adults where new opportunities and possibilities are endless. Thank you fellow counselors for your hard work and dedication to our profession. Your valuable knowledge and expertise provide academic and career guidance to our students by motivating them to identify and achieve personal goals set forth in their Individual Graduation Plan. Developing and implementing a personalized Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) is an essential roadmap for diploma pathway planning and completion for all students. Updating the IGP each year will help parents/legal

guardians and students monitor their progress in the selected diploma pathway, Jump Start TOPS Tech Pathway Diploma or TOPS University Pathway Diploma.

It is imperative that all students' postsecondary plans are easily accessible to them without the burden of how to pay for it. The cost of education and technical training should not be an obstacle to student success. Most Louisiana high school graduates are eligible for some form of merit- or need-based state or federal financial aid; however, many are not completing the FAFSA to help defray the cost of their postsecondary plans. Recently, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the policy requiring that students graduating spring 2018 and beyond take one of the following steps as part of their Individual Graduation Plan:

1. Complete the FAFSA;
2. Complete the LOSFA application for state financial aid;
3. Submit a parent's signature on a non-participation form; or
4. Receive a waiver through district hardship waiver process.

The exciting new Jump Start Program provides a variety of innovative industry certification credentials and internships for career ready graduates seeking high demand jobs and wages. The Jump Start Graduation Pathways options available to students are: statewide pathways, integrated pathways, regional pathways and pathways for Act 833 eligible students.

In closing, I would like to share with you one of my favorite quotes.

"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."
By J. Dean

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2nd Annual Jump Start Convention

The 2nd Annual Jump Start Convention in Baton Rouge this week was a tremendous success. Thank you to all those who attended. If you were not able to attend or watch online, or just would like to see some of the events of that day again, we have posted videos from the convention on the Department's website. You can access these videos by clicking [here](#), or using the links provided below.

- [Opening Session \(including Supt. John White's address\)](#)
- [Supt. John White's Address](#)
- [High School Case Study on Jump Start](#)
- [Lunch Session - "The Voice of Industry"](#)

2016 Individual Student Planning

The department released a [guidance document](#) to assist Professional Middle and High School Counselors in the annual development and review of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). After April 1, 2016, Louisiana Connect will no longer host IGPs. Beginning in spring 2016 and thereafter, districts/charters must choose from a variety of platforms for hosting IGPs:

- District/charter-identified career planning system
- District/charter cumulative folder, or
- LOSFA's Louisiana Award System

This spring, professional school counselors will work with the 2018 cohort to guide the selection of a diploma pathway aligned with academic and career interests and upload the diploma pathway selection into the Student Transcript System. The department will host a webinar to support professional school counselors with the IGP and diploma pathway selection process.

- Wednesday, January 27 - 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Webinar Login Information (**no pre-registration required*)

- **Meeting Name:** Individual Graduation Plan and Diploma Pathway Selection
- To join the meeting, click <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/igp2016>
- Enter meeting room as a **guest** and provide your **name**

For further assistance, please contact Martha.moore@la.gov.

The 2016 Girls Leadership Academy

The 2016 Girls Leadership Academy, sponsored by the Louisiana Center for Women in Government and Business, will be held at Nicholls State University, June 12-15. This year's academy will feature keynote speaker Shiza Shahid, co-founder of The Malala Fund. Shiza co-founded the Malala Fund with Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, and led the organization as founding CEO. Shiza Shahid is an entrepreneur and advocate focused on leveraging philanthropy, innovation and the media for poverty alleviation and women's empowerment.

The theme of the Academy is "Light the Torch and LEAD." The program focuses on:

- Communication
- Situational Leadership
- Public Service and Responsible Citizenship
- Current Issues in Louisiana public policy

Please click here to learn more about the program. <http://louisianawomen.org/program/louisiana-girls-leadership-academy/>

Student FAFSA Completion Data

The Louisiana Office of Student and Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education that now allows LOSFA to communicate FAFSA completion rates with each Local Educational Agency (LEAs) in the state as well as with certain college access service providers, provided that those LEAs and service providers enter an agreement with LOSFA. LOSFA is partnering with the state's school boards and college access providers to ensure that all high school seniors have an opportunity to complete the FAFSA. If you would like to participate in this project, please contact LOSFA at custserv@osfa.la.gov with the subject line FAFSA Completion Project.

LOSFA College Goal Saturday

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and the Louisiana Association of Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) will co-sponsor Louisiana's 8th annual College Goal Sunday events on February 28 and March 6, 2016. College Goal Sunday is a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion event held at postsecondary institutions around the state. Financial aid professionals from the host institutions' Financial Aid offices are on-hand to provide one-on-one, line-by-line, FAFSA completion and submission assistance. The event registration form will be available on the LOSFA website, www.osfa.la.gov, beginning December 15, 2015.

LOSFA can help students and parents with the FAFSA application process. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact LOSFA:

- Email LOSFA at custserv@la.gov
- Access LOSFA via web at www.osfa.la.gov
- To speak to a representative call LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626

LOSFA Go Alliance Academy

The Go Alliance Academy is a special online college access training program sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). It gives counselors, teachers and college access professionals the additional knowledge and skills that will assist them in getting more students on a path to college. Go Alliance is a professional multistate network that works in concert with school counselors to increase high school graduation rates, as well as access to post-secondary education and degree completion, particularly for those who would be the first in their families to enroll. LOSFA is the state administrator for the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy.

To learn more about the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy, please contact Juterh Nmah, LOSFA program coordinator and professional school counselor at Juterh.nmah@la.gov.

Course Choice/SCA Spring 2016 Reallocation Process Update

Registration for spring 2016 Course Choice Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) funded coursework is now closed. The reallocation process has been extended until mid-February. This will give LEAs the needed time to reconcile post-secondary dual enrollment coursework. LDOE will reach out to LEAs individually starting in early February to provide a funding reconciliation. Questions regarding the process should be sent to: SCA@LA.GOV

The College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP) helps students receive college credit for completion of advanced coursework. District Test Coordinators, Administrators, Professional School Counselors, and Lead Teachers are invited to participate in one of the following CLEP Webinar presentation scheduled for:

- Tuesday, January 25 from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Webinar Login Information

- **Meeting Name:** Louisiana High School and CLEP
- **Click [here](#)** to register and join the meeting

For more information on CLEP opportunities, please contact CollegeReadiness@la.gov.

2014-2015 State Testing Scores Label

The 2014-2015 labels for student cumulative folders were released on Tuesday, January 12. PDF files with individual student labels by site code will be placed in LEAs'/Charter Sites' Data Management FTPs as a single zipped subfolder with the name, "LEA Code_LEAName_Cumulative Folder Labels." This file will expire from the FTP on February 12, 2016.

Please provide this file to your District Test Coordinator so that all districts and charter schools download, print, and place the labels on student cumulative folders. AVERY 8163 or comparable labels should be used when printing.

Please email assessment@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) Kids' Chance Scholarship Program

The **Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) Kids' Chance Scholarship Program** awards scholarships to dependent children of a worker killed or permanently and totally disabled in an accident that is compensable under a state or federal Workers' Compensation Act or law.

It is administered by the LBF and is governed by a committee representing a cross-section of the legal and workers compensation communities.

Basic Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a dependent of a worker killed or permanently and totally disabled in an accident compensable under a state or federal Worker's Compensation Act or law.
- Must be a Louisiana resident between the ages of 16 and 25.
- Must maintain a "C" average or higher.
- Must be pursuing a primary college or university degree (bachelor's or associate's) or vocational education and training (certificate or license) from an accredited Louisiana university, community, technical or vocational college and/or state approved proprietary school.
- Must demonstrate substantial financial need.

The online application process is now open. You can access the online application by clicking [here](#). The deadline to apply is **February 19, 2016**.

LDOE Contacts

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State Superintendent of Education

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