

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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My name is Denise Latour, a school counselor at Ponchatoula High School in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. I am a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and National Certified School Counselor (NCSC). I serve as Secondary Vice-President of the Louisiana School Counselor Association and represent school counselors on the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance Advisory Board.

This school year the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) submission date has moved to October 1. According to Sallie Mae, the benefits of this are: there will be a longer time frame for completing the application, easier access to tax information since prior year tax data will be used, and more time to evaluate financial aid award packages.

Completing the FAFSA is required to qualify for federal, state, and institutional aid, but do your students and parents know that research by the Road Map Project shows:

- It may cost more to attend school if you don't complete the FAFSA
- Students are more likely to enroll in a post-secondary institution if they complete the FAFSA
- Some scholarships require completion of the FAFSA
- Students are more likely to attend full-time if they receive aid
- Students are more likely to complete a degree if full-time students

There are many obstacles that prevent students and parents from completing the FAFSA. One way to combat this and share information is to host a FAFSA Completion Event. Think about your audience. Select a date, time, and location that will be convenient. Secure helpers for the event. Consider asking faculty and community members to assist. Advertise using email, posters, school website, local newspaper, Twitter, and Facebook.

Additional tips from the U.S. Department of Education are:

- Hold the workshop during opening hours for the Federal Student Aid Information Center hotline in case you need to call with questions.
- Show our three-minute video, "How to Fill Out the FAFSA" (see below), at the beginning of the workshop to give an overview of the process.
- Provide handouts to answer frequently asked questions, explain what comes next in the process, or list Federal School Codes for colleges to which many of your students apply.
- Remind students to go to www.fafsa.gov to apply (the official, free FAFSA site.)
- Use the FAFSA demo site on a large screen at the front of the room if you intend to walk through the application question by question with the whole group at once.
- If you want to have several FAFSA experts on hand to help answer individual questions, contact local college financial aid offices, your state's higher education department, TRIO programs, and/or the Federal Student Aid Outreach Team to see who might be available.

Lastly don't forget to reach out to Lela, Louisiana Education Loan Authority, and LOSFA, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, etc. Students and parents can receive free assistance in completing the FAFSA from Lela. Students can register at askLela.org for the chance to win \$1,000 for

completing the FAFSA.

Denise Latour

Fall 2016 Department Counselor Collaboratives

The 2016 Counselor Collaboratives scheduled below will focus on Financial Aid Access for all students and Implementing Appropriate Student Graduation Pathways. Counselors are encouraged to attend a collaborative in their area; however, they may attend a collaborative outside their area if necessary.

Participants are asked to register on [Coursewhere](#). For questions regarding registration, please email JumpStart@la.gov.

Date	Network	Location	Time
October 4	C	Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired, 2888 Brightside Lane, Baton Rouge	9:00 a.m.
October 6	C	Treen Center, 2024 Livingston Street, Mandeville	9:00 a.m.
October 11	B	Acadia Instructional Center, 2124 North Parkerson Avenue, Crowley	9:00 a.m.
October 12	B	Terrebone Parish Library, 4130 West Park Avenue, Gray	9:00 a.m.
October 17	A	Bossier Instructional Center, 2719 Airline Drive, Bossier City	1:00 p.m.
October 18	A	Natchitoches Parish Media Center, 310 Royal Street, Natchitoches	1:00 p.m.
October 19	A	Ouachita Parish Student Support Services, 800 Claiborne Street, West Monroe	1:00 p.m.
October 20	A	Avoyelles Parish Media Center, 136 S. Fair Street, Marksville	1:00 p.m.

FAFSA Completion Project



The FAFSA completion project is a federal initiative to encourage all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA. To participate, school boards, charter schools, and non-public schools must enter agreements with LOSFA that ensure that all data exchanged is handled in a secure manner and will be used only as intended. Public school boards will enter the agreement on behalf of all public schools within the district, and charter schools and non-public schools will enter individual agreements. The only data that will transfer between the agency and the school boards/schools is the student's name and whether the student has completed the FAFSA. Personally identifiable information will not be exchanged. LOSFA will not exchange data with those school boards/schools that do not enter an agreement; these schools will still be able to receive aggregate data from the USDOE. The benefit to this project is that the school boards/schools receive student level data so that they know how to follow up and with whom.

Questions about the FAFSA Completion Project can be sent to [Rhonda Bridevaux](#).

Signal Vine Text Messaging Reminders

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) provides text messages to convey critical college access information to high school seniors. High school seniors who elect to receive text

messages will receive reminders of ACT/SAT testing registration deadlines, college application preparation assistance, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance, financial aid/college access information and reminders of fee payment deadlines for college applications, housing applications and orientation applications.

Interested seniors can opt-in to the Signal Vine text messaging platform by emailing their name, high school name and cell phone number to LOSFA.SignalVine@la.gov.

LOSFA's Go Alliance Academy



The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) will host the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy. The LOSFA Go Alliance is a series of online courses where participants will learn to address topics that are important in college and career readiness including creating a college-going culture, financial aid, college applications and college/career planning. The courses are developed for practicing professional school counselors, pre-service school counselors, college access advisors, teachers and administrators. Additionally, the sessions help participants develop approaches for communicating and working with low-income students, those who would be first in the family to attend college and diverse populations to remove barriers to high aspirations and achievement.

LOSFA, in partnership with the Louisiana Counseling Association, will offer **30 Continuing Education Units (CEUs)** for those who successfully complete the courses.

Additional information on the modules can be found below:

- **Financial Aid and College Application (High School)**

Courses will begin Sunday, October 2, 2016 and end Sunday, December 4, 2016. The four sessions in this module include: Guiding Parents and Students through the Complexities of Financial Aid, Assisting with the Financial Aid Process, Preparing for College Admissions Tests, and College Admissions: The Application Process. This module is divided into five, one-week sessions: an orientation and four content sessions. Each session will provide participants with readings and resources to increase background knowledge and understanding, activities that help them apply their new knowledge and online discussions to encourage interaction and reflection among course participants. You will need between four to five hours each week to complete the work in each session.

- **College and Career Advising Middle Grades (Middle School)**

Course will begin Sunday, October 2, 2016, and end Sunday, December 11, 2016. The six sessions in this module address the skills and knowledge required to counsel middle grade students for college and careers. This module consists of six one-week sessions plus an orientation. Participants will be engaged in building knowledge and skills in several areas including the creation of a college-going culture, the value and affordability of postsecondary education, career exploration, using data to support student success, academic planning and transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high school, and developing academic mindsets and skills. Each session will provide participants with readings and resources to increase background knowledge and understanding, activities that help apply new knowledge and online discussions to encourage interaction and reflection among course participants. You will need between four to five hours each week to complete the work in each session.

Space is extremely limited, and participants will be enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are interested in applying to participate in one of the two courses, please fill out this [application](#).

High School Student Planning Guide

The [High School Student Planning Guide](#) includes a series of five chapters which show administrators, counselors, and teachers how to use key policies, programs, and resources to help students and schools achieve their goals. The Guidebook includes brief chapters on Planning for struggling students, focusing 9th and 10th grade students on mastering a set of foundational academic

skills, developing basic and advanced college and workplace skills in the 11th and 12th grades to prepare students for college and career success, counseling and supporting student access to graduation pathways, and earning recognition for school excellence through an accountability system.

Updated Jump Start Graduation Pathways

All 47 [Jump Start graduation pathways](#) have been updated to include more courses and new features that make them more user-friendly. To ensure that your students are provided the greatest number of options and opportunities for graduation, always use the most recent version of the graduation pathways available on the redesigned [All Things Jump Start](#) web portal. The new and expanded list of courses qualifying for Career Development Fund (CDF) funding has been included in the [updated Jump Start policy document](#).

ASVAB Career Exploration Program

Counselors and administrators observe, reinforce, and take pride in preparing students to be productive citizens once they graduate from high school. As an educator, familiarity with your students' abilities coupled with your experience in preparing students for post-graduation makes you a valuable resource to students as they decide what to do after high school. The ASVAB Career Exploration Program (CEP) can assist with the challenges of guiding students through the difficulty of making career choices for the future. The ASVAB CEP has four components: the ASVAB Assessment, the Find Your Interest Personality Inventory, the ASVAB Career Exploration Guide, and the ASVAB CEP Website planning tool. The ASVAB CEP assessment provides three Career Exploration scores in Verbal Skills, Math Skills, and Science and Technology. The Career Exploration scores come from eight individual sub-tests covering Arithmetic Reasoning, Paragraph Comprehension, Mechanical Comprehension, Electronics Information, and more. The scores serve as one of several pieces of information the program can provide about students that can aid in the exploration of a wide variety of educational and career options. The ASVAB Career Exploration Program is offered at no cost or obligation to high schools throughout the United States.



For more information visit the [ASVAB Program](#) or contact:

F. "Collin" Henry Jr.
Program Manager (ESS), ASVAB Career Exploration Program
New Orleans, LA
Office: 504-678-3535 ext. 242
Fax: 504-678-8925
Email: floyd.c.henry.civ@mail.mil

PreACT/ACT News

Interested in learning more about PreACT? Consider registering for an enrollment webinar about implementation or score reports. A [registration link](#) with available dates, times, and descriptions is now available.

ACT Profile is a free online tool that combines personalized student insights and ACT expertise to help them make smarter decisions about their next steps after graduation. And with dedicated counselor accounts, it's the simple way to keep you connected throughout their planning process.

Find out more [here](#).



CollegePoint Opportunity

CollegePoint is an initiative designed to increase the amount of high achieving low- and moderate-income students nationwide that apply to, enroll in and graduate from top colleges and universities.

COLLEGEPOINT

Partnered with organizations that provide virtual college advising, CollegePoint supports eligible high school juniors and seniors during the entire college process. Advisors help students develop the list of schools to which they will apply; provide feedback on students' personal statements and college applications; walk students and families through completing the FAFSA; assist with the completion of scholarship applications; advise students as they weigh their acceptance letters and financial aid awards; and support students during the summer transition from high school to college.

To be eligible for this free opportunity students must:

- Have a minimum high school grade point average (GPA) of 90 or 3.5;
- Have a maximum family income of \$80,000;
- Be at or above the 90th percentile on the ACT, PSAT or SAT.

In order to sign up please visit the [CollegePoint website](#). For additional information contact [Brett Kimmel](#), Chief Program Officer, America Achieves College Access and Success.

March2Success Offers Interactive Assistance



"March2Success is a free online self-paced academic readiness program designed to provide high school and college students with easy access to test preparation training," said Dr. Jerrick Hornbeak, Education Services Specialist, Baton Rouge Army Recruiting Battalion. "Specifically, the interactive program offers instruction in math, science and English, as well as training for the SAT, ACT, state standardized tests and the ASVAB. For educators, the updated March2Success curriculum and free educational resources can supplement lesson plans. Plus, the program allows educators to track student progress and performance online."

More information about March2Success including downloading resources visit the [March2Success website](#).

District Test Coordinator Reminders

This section provides LEAs with reminders and updates on information related to testing. **Please share with District Test and Technology Coordinators and Data Managers.**

Assessment Administration Support:

- **Weekly Office Hours:** Held each Tuesday, starting **September 13, at 1:00 p.m.**
 - Webinar Link: louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/dtc
 - Enter the meeting room as a guest and provide your name
 - Call-In Information: (646) 307-1380, meeting room # 951155484
- **New DTC Training and an EOC overview** will be held at the September Collaborative as a Supervisor session, including updates on the transition to online assessments. All new District Test Coordinators should attend this training.
- **EAGLE EOC Training:** The Department will host hands-on EAGLE EOC training for district test and technology coordinators in early October. These trainings will be posted [here](#). Participants may sign up for either a morning or afternoon session.
 - Monroe: October 6
 - Bossier: October 7

- Jefferson Davis: October 10
- Rapides: October 11
- Baton Rouge: October 18
- Jefferson: October 20

Assessment Administration Resources:

- [2016-2017 Social Studies and Math EOC Assessment Guides](#): provide more-detailed information about the social studies, Algebra I, and Geometry test designs and include links to resources.
- [Guides to the Online Equation Builders](#): provide guidance for using the math equation builder for grades 3-5, 6-8, Algebra I and Geometry. Spanish versions are also available.
- **EOC Online Tools Training (OTT)**: The EOC OTT is now available and can be accessed through Insight as well as the link [here](#) using a Chrome browser. The LEAP OTT is also available.

Assessment Results:

- **Louisianaeoc.org** is no longer available. EOC test history information can now be found in LEADS Inquiry (LIQ). Use the [guidance document](#) for searching and downloading test histories in LIQ.

LDOE Contacts

John White

State Superintendent of Education

877.453.2721 (toll-free)

Twitter [@LouisianaSupe](#)

LDOE Links

[LDOE Website](#)

[Contact Us](#)