

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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My name is Royce Hooks Sr., a school counselor at Edna Karr High School in New Orleans. I am currently a Provisional Licensed Professional Counselor (PLPC). I serve as the President-Elect of the Louisiana School Counselor Association, and represent the Edna Karr High School Counseling Department as Department Head. I also represent school counselors on the Go Alliance through LOSFA board in educating staff & administrators on the latest updates dealing with financial aid.

Students are best served if they receive information about post-secondary opportunities while they are still in high school. Early information can help students make more informed choices about high school courses so that they have the necessary academic preparation to be admitted to the institution and program of their choice and to succeed. Student's going on college visits just to get a feel of the campus to see if they could see themselves on that particular campus for the next 4 to 5 years of their life is very crucial. A lot of students at this point are uncertain and unprepared of what's going to happen in the next chapter of their lives. Students are having trouble with applying for Financial Aid which is the next most crucial criteria in order for the student to even receive scholarship money, grants, or loans.

The success of students in higher education largely depends on their engagement with their college or post-secondary option. Being invested allows for the belief that their institution is important to their success. Students who are engaged and invested also are more likely to earn a degree or certificate. Student engagement is proportional to an institution's engagement with and commitment to its students. While still in high school, students need to be aware of what constitutes college-level work and what kinds of classes will prepare them appropriately, as well as what sort of study and time management practices will enable them to succeed academically. Once enrolled in college or other post-secondary work, students need guidance about what courses to take to satisfy general education and major prerequisite requirements. Students who transfer to a different institution or who change their academic goals may not have adequate information about how their existing credits will apply to a new degree program. To avoid these problems, institutions must provide clear and easy-to-understand information about courses and major expectations and about the academic pathways students should follow to obtain specific credentials. To make sure that students are on track to graduate, institutions should require students to connect regularly with academic advisors who can monitor their progress.

Mr. Royce Hooks Sr. M.Ed, PLPC

Updated 2016-2016 District Support Calendar

The Department has released an updated [2016-2017 District Support Calendar](#). All new additions or revisions are highlighted in yellow so districts can easily identify these changes:

- Addition of Education Technology Monthly calls
- Updated Science Standards Review meeting dates
- Addition of October Counselor Collaborations

Please email districtsupport@la.gov with questions related to this calendar.

District Test Coordinator Reminders

LEAs are reminded that updates and information on testing can be found by visiting the Department's website, www.louisianabelieves.com.

Weekly office hours are held at 1:00 p.m. each Tuesday for assessment and training information. To register for District Test Coordinator monthly meetings via webinar, simply visit <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/dtc> enter the meeting room as a guest and provide your name. You can also use the Call-In Information feature with the following credentials: (646) 307-1380; meeting room #951155484

Email assessment@la.gov with any questions.

FASFA 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. 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 Rhonda.Bridevaux@la.gov.

Upcoming LOSFA Financial Aid Training Workshop

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance will be hosting a financial aid training workshop on **Wednesday, November 16, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Galvez Building**. This workshop will focus on the FAFSA (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This application is used for students to apply for federal aid and state aid programs.

For the first time ever, the FAFSA opened in October. This will allow students and parents to complete this application earlier and easier with the use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. By attending this training, attendees will receive in-depth training on the FSA ID and how to create it, the FAFSA and its components, common FAFSA errors and ways to avoid them and the different paperwork required by the colleges for verification.

Attendees will also learn about the FAFSA Completion Project and the benefits of participating in it. They will also learn about the START Saving Program, Louisiana's 529 College Savings Plan. Attendees will learn more information about the options available to students and families and will learn strategies that are essential to their role in guiding students through the financial aid process. Attendees will leave with the knowledge needed to help students prepare for and succeed on their postsecondary paths.

Additional information can be found below:

Location: LOSFA

Galvez Building, 602 North 5th Street, Pensacola and Oliver Pollock Room

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Space is limited, so interested attendees should register [here](#). Registration is mandatory for all attendees. LOSFA is working with the Louisiana Counseling Association for this workshop to count toward LPC Continuing Education clock hours.

Signal Vine Test Messaging Reminders



LOSFA is providing 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.

Financial Aid Presentations

LOSFA is available to provide several different presentations throughout the school year, including TOPS, FAFSA, College Knowledge, General Financial Aid and the START Saving Program. These workshops can be requested by schools, school districts, church/civic groups, employers or other types of business and industry. If you are interested in scheduling a LOSFA representative for an event, please contact Sabrina.Johnson2@la.gov.

Financial Literacy for You Tour

Financial Literacy for You (FLY) Tour is a theatrical presentation designed to provide high school seniors with information and resources related to financial awareness, academic performance and college preparation. Topics such as FAFSA, money management and credit building are brought to life as LOSFA staff members perform entertaining skits and scenes using poetry, music and drama.

The live performance, which is written and performed by staff members, will be hosted on the campuses of select postsecondary institutions across the state of Louisiana during Financial Aid Awareness Month in February.

There are currently eight scheduled FLY Tour events at the following campuses:

- Louisiana State University (February 13, 2017)
- Nunez Community College (February 14, 2017)
- Dillard University (February 15, 2017)
- Southeastern Louisiana University (February 16, 2017)
- SOWELA Technical Community College (February 17, 2017)
- CLTCC-Ferriday (February 20, 2017)
- Southern University-Shreveport (February 21, 2017)
- CLTCC-Alexandria (February 22, 2017)
- Grambling State University (February 23, 2017).

Additional sites will be announced once the dates have been confirmed. If you are interested in attending the FLY Tour, please contact Kendra.Williams@la.gov.

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.

Jump Start Program Updates

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](#).

The [Jump Start Video Network \(JSVN\)](#) will provide parents, students, academic-subject teachers and other stakeholders with videos that will describe different aspects of the Jump Start program. Videos will be created by students, teachers and institutions like the Cowen Institute and the Foundation for Excellence in Education.

The [Jump Start Automated Text Response System](#) will provide parents, students, academic-subject teachers and other stakeholders with information about Jump Start. Users text "**JUMPSTART**" to **99008** to enter the system and receive links to the information they want to receive. (Text "**VIDEOS**" to **99008** to get links to the JSVN.)



Jump Start
Graduation
Pathways

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
Office: 504-678-3535 ext. 242
Email: loyd.c.henry.civ@mail.mil

Up Next Texting Service Available for Students



Recently, "Up Next" was launched as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative in conjunction with the Better Make Room campaign. "Up Next" is Better Make Room's mobile messaging tool that will provide students and families across the country with free personalized support regarding college search and application, federal student aid, and student loan repayment.

"Up Next" is based on research that was conducted by University of Virginia Professor Ben Castleman. Professor Castleman, who is on loan to Better Make Room to lead this effort, proved in his research that these "nudges" that are sent to students through Up Next, which address topics/deadlines regarding the admissions process, standardized tests, and federal student aid (aka - FAFSA), are proven to improve educational outcomes, and are FREE for schools, colleges, etc. to use. These texts that students receive will help guide students through the process, and will even provide them with one-on-one advising over text for students who need extra help. These one-on-one advisors come from the top five college advising nonprofits in the country, and have loaned us their services as a way to help more students get to college.

In order to register for the "Up Next" text messaging service, students simply text the word COLLEGE to 44044.

Youth Challenge Program Seeking Applicants

The Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge Program is a FREE, five month residential alternative school for 16-18 year old males and females, which teaches self-discipline, leadership, and responsibility in a structured academic setting. All students are assisted by state certified teachers and work at their own pace to obtain a high school equivalency diploma (HiSET).

Eligible students are also provided the opportunity to earn up to 15 hours of college credit through a Bossier Parish Community College partnership, or participate in a workforce training program to earn a basic certification in either welding, or industrial manufacturing.



For more information on how to apply, call 1-800-CAMP-KID or visit our website at www.langycp.com. You can also find information on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LouisianaYouthChallenge.

USDOE Releases College Scorecard Website

The USDOE has released a new College Scorecard website that allows users to search four-year colleges and universities by program/degree, location, size, or name. Once a university is selected, you can then view information on costs, financial aid, graduation and retention, earning after school, student body, SAT/ACT scores and academic programs.

For more information, visit <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>.

LCA Recognizes Counselors at October Conference

At the recent annual conference of the Louisiana Counseling Association, members who went above and beyond were recognized and awarded for their efforts. Below is a list of nominees and winners. Congratulations to all.

Elementary: Danielle Cole, Stephanie Choy, Kathleen Gabriel, Shelia Lawson, Barrette McBride, Denise Peinado (winner and Louisiana School Counselor of the Year representative)

Middle School: Charles Songy, Emily Ardoin (winner)

High School: Jennifer Roth, Terri Shaw, Marquita George, Ann I. Baker (winner)

Advocacy: Jill Lockhart

Administrator: Pauline Duplantis

Legislator: Representative Barbara Norton

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 Hombeak, 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](#).

Flood Relief Assistance from the Red Cross

The American Red Cross has begun recovery efforts and limited financial assistance to help Louisiana flood victims. Financial assistance is available for those who do not qualify for federal disaster assistance and have had major damage to their homes due to the recent flooding. Persons who meet the qualifications would be eligible for \$125 per person to support recovery efforts.

The Red Cross will also help create recovery plans and locate assistance from other agencies to help get families back on their feet. If your staff members or your students and their families need assistance, they can register [online](#) or call 855-224-2490.



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