

Quest for Success

Frequently Asked Questions for Louisiana Educators

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1. What is *Quest for Success*?

Quest for Success (QFS) is an innovative, new, high school-level, career exploration course designed to prepare all Louisiana graduates for career and life success. The new course will help all students to:

- develop essential 21st century workforce skills - the ability to communicate, collaborate, and lead;
- explore new and exciting careers and industry sectors; and
- learn about themselves and their interests to successfully navigate high school, postsecondary education, and career pathways.

The course, to replace Louisiana's current *Journey to Careers* course, was written by leading educators from across the state as part of the [Louisiana Educator Voice Fellowship](#), a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Education and [America Achieves](#), a national non-profit organization. The Fellowship is part of Louisiana's comprehensive effort to improve career readiness in the state, including its hallmark [Jump Start](#) initiative.

Quest for Success' nine units are carefully planned to help students progress from knowing and being aware of themselves and themselves in relation to others, to leading responsibly, and leveraging these skills in identifying personal and career goals and planning for the future. Informed by business and industry and other experts, the curriculum includes a variety of industry-aligned performance tasks that simulate the real world of work and support development of a variety of in-demand, cross-sector, employability skills (e.g., collaboration, resource management, communication). Additionally, students will learn about high-growth, industry sectors (e.g., information technology, health care, advanced manufacturing) and related career pathways, apply a variety of technology skills, and be asked to continuously reflect on their learning. Watch the [video](#) to hear from some of the Louisiana educators who created the course.

2. Which students should take QFS?

Quest for Success is a high school-level course designed to help ensure *all* Louisiana high school graduates are prepared for career and life success. Local schools and districts will decide when to offer the course to students across the middle and high school grades. While students could take the course at any time in the secondary education career, schools are strongly encouraged to offer it early--primarily to 8th and 9th grade students--to help students and their families explore their particular career interests and opportunities and make academic planning decisions (e.g., whether to follow a TOPs and/or JumpStart pathway, which courses to take, which extracurricular activities and work-based learning opportunities to pursue) aligned to these and following pathways to career success.

3. Who will teach QFS? Can anyone teach it?

To ensure Louisiana teachers and students have the highest quality curriculum and aligned instructional materials, LDOE field-tested specific *QFS* units in Louisiana classrooms in the spring of 2018 and made revisions to the final draft. To continue to improve the course--including assessing the quality of the course, making revisions, and identifying supports needed for effective implementation--before scaling implementation across the state, *Quest for Success* is being piloted in a limited number of representative sites across the state in the 2018-19 school year. (During this time, the course will be studied and revised based on pilot teacher and student input and a formal evaluation.) To support this effort, ensure fidelity of implementation of the pilot materials, and provide time for us to prepare for full-scale implementation in later years, only teachers who participated in LDOE-hosted summer training, have LDOE-specified assurances from their school leadership, commit to pilot conditions, and are confirmed *QFS* pilot participants will be allowed to teach the course in the 2018-19 school year. We

hope to train additional teachers during the spring/summer of 2019 and fully scale implementation across the state during the 2019-20 school year.

4. Why is the state limiting who can teach the course?

The *Quest for Success* curriculum, targeted instructional strategies (e.g., project-based learning, community experiences), and student activities and assignments (e.g., collaborative tasks, uses of technology) are vastly different from the previous *Journey to Careers* course. Effective implementation requires in-depth training, careful planning, local commitment, and deliberate approaches to reflecting on and learning from pilot implementation. As a result, LDOE, in partnership with local schools and districts, is only allowing teachers who participated in the summer training and agree to the criteria to pilot the course.

5. Can teachers use QFS in their other classes?

Quest for Success is designed to include a variety of best practices (e.g., principles of project-based learning, cooperative learning, frequent and task-specific, formative feedback) and high-quality student and teacher resources (e.g., college and career planning websites) that can support improved teaching and learning across the content areas. While teachers are encouraged to apply their new learning and resources in all of their school improvement work, they should NOT use specific instructional activities and assignments, lessons, units, or assessments in other courses. These are designed to be part of a comprehensive curriculum where each activity is carefully planned and sequenced to scaffold the next and their success depends on preserving this course coherence. Additionally, just as we would not want students repeating the same texts or assignments across grades and courses, we do not want students introduced to the same QFS activities outside of this course and multiple times in their academic career. In future years, we would hope that schools might develop their own plans and materials to extend, rather than repeat QFS learning. For example, schools are encouraged to continue to support students in developing and implementing their success planning, completing and revising individualized graduation plans, and researching and planning for postsecondary success (e.g., college visits, FAFSA completion).

6. If I teach QFS, can I substitute my own resources for those in the curriculum?

While we want and expect teachers to use their professional judgement to make different decisions about instructional strategies - based on your expertise, available resources, students' needs, etc. - we also want you to be as deliberate as possible in following the overall plan for the course. Your Louisiana colleagues gave a lot of thought to the scope, sequence, and pacing of content and the various performance tasks. As stated above, each unit and performance task is designed to be part of a comprehensive curriculum where each activity is sequenced to scaffold the next. If activities are substituted, there is the potential for students to miss key aspects of the curriculum which will be important to learning in future units. Also, during this pilot year, it will be very important to maintain as much consistency as possible across classrooms so that LDOE can gather consistent data to inform the improvements of the curriculum for next year. While teachers may supplement/add to course materials to further scaffold or extend student learning (e.g., to differentiate support for struggling readers, students with disabilities, or English Learners), pilot teachers commit to use and NOT replace the materials provided. (Note, some materials are offered as background and/or supplemental or optional. In most cases, these are delineated as such and teachers are encouraged to make their best professional judgements about which of these to use and how to best meet the specific needs of their students and the learning goals of the course.)

7. Why are there so many technology-based resources and activities in the course materials? Do we have to be a one-to-one school to offer the course?

Most of us use computers in some sort or fashion every day in our job and we know that nearly all of our students will be expected to do so in their future work. As we heard from industry partners as we designed the course, they are increasingly seeking employees who not only are familiar with and competent in using specific program applications (e.g., Word, EXCEL, PowerPoint, LinkedIn), but who are also demonstrate needed information and digital literacy skills (e.g., how to search for, synthesize, use, and appropriately share information in a digital environment) and model executive, communication, and collaboration skills in this space. *QFS* deliberately embeds a variety of this skills into course activities and authentic performance tasks.

While we acknowledge that so much technology integration will be new to some teachers, students, and schools and may present some early implementation challenges, we believe that it is essential to preparing students for future career and life success. However, you do not have to be a one-to-one device school in order to offer the course or implement it with fidelity. Teachers may choose to leverage computer labs and/or class sets of computers or tablets (or student cell phones in schools with approved, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies) for different parts of the course. Some resources (e.g., specific websites) can be used in whole class instruction, instead of by small groups or individuals and some materials can be printed. Teachers should make sure to carefully review units and activities in advance to ensure appropriate access to technology-based and other appropriate resources to meet the specified learning objectives and best prepare students for the demands of the world of work in the 21st century.

8. The course includes lots of team activities and projects, but my students don't behave in groups. Can I skip or change these?

While we want and expect teachers to use their professional judgement to make different decisions about instructional strategies - based on your expertise, available resources, students' needs, etc. - we also want you to be as deliberate as possible in following the overall plan for the course. (It will be important for teachers to clearly set expectations for group work and appropriately model expectations for completing the activities. Use of gradual release of responsibility is encouraged for students less experienced in collaborative work, but teachers should work to move students quickly from guided to independent practice.) The classroom discussions, small-group activities, and project-based tasks engage students in learning about or reflecting on themselves and their own work, including applying knowledge and skills in new contexts, new problems, and with different people. These, most notably collaboration and communication skills, are in high-demand and prove to be important lifelong skills that will serve them in nearly every job across different industries. Though it may be difficult at first, teachers should not skip or significantly alter the design of these activities.

9. Where do teachers get the materials to teach QFS? What are the costs to the school?

The pilot curriculum is hosted virtually by the Louisiana Department of Education and all participating schools have access. There are no costs to the school to implement, though among the recommended resources there are some, like Nepris, that do have a cost. To the extent possible, we have focused on Open Education Resources and tried to limit the number of resources that cost. Where those are included, that is generally signaled and other alternatives identified.

10. What resources are needed to teach QFS?

Each of the nine units includes a unit plan, teacher guide, student resources, performance tasks, and student performance rubrics. These tools provide educators with the information necessary, including

identifying needed classroom materials for hands-on activities, to teach the course with fidelity and meet both learning objectives and our goals for students' career readiness. Of note, a variety of core and supplemental resources (e.g., texts, videos, web-based applications) have been carefully selected to support this learning and are included among these. Every effort has been made to identify Open Education Resources (OER) that can be freely accessed by schools. However, in identifying the highest-quality and most-appropriate resources, some for-fee tools and resources have been included. Wherever possible, these have been identified and/or alternative resources suggested. Additionally, because *QFS* activities are meant to simulate and prepare students for the real world of work, the course relies heavily on authentic technology use. We understand that technology access varies across sites as do policies for use of specific internet sites and resources. Teachers will need to plan and adjust accordingly to simultaneously adhere to local policies, manage limited technology resources, and ensure implementation fidelity. (Note, there are a number of websites and software programs embedded in the curriculum that both teachers and students need access to. To help pilot teachers and their sites to plan accordingly, a full list of websites/applications is available upon request.)

11. The materials refer to the state standards in the content areas, why? Do you have to be a core subject teacher to teach this course?

Just as key career readiness skills (e.g., communication, collaboration, and resource management) are developed over time and across the content areas, so too are core academic skills, particularly for language and literacy learning. All teachers should be conscious of the ways they can more deliberately support the development of the whole child and best prepare him/her for academic and career success; we each have a role to play. As a result, the *QFS* unit plan and other resources are designed to very clearly draw attention to the cross-curricular connections and relevant core academic standards embedded in the course and display how *Quest for Success* can help students develop expected knowledge and skills of other content areas. *Quest for Success* teachers do not have to be core subject teachers, but they should be committed to supporting the whole child.

12. How should *Quest for Success* students be assessed and graded?

The pilot *QFS* materials identify the specific learning goals and major performance task(s) for each unit. Additionally, a variety of checks for understanding and mini-assessment activities are embedded in the curriculum, and project-specific rubrics are provided to assess and provide feedback on student performance on each major unit task(s). Pilot teachers are encouraged to use these to reinforce learning goals, support students in reflecting on their own learning and providing feedback to peers, and providing meaningful feedback to help students continue to take ownership for and make progress in their learning. Additionally, these rubrics can support summative feedback to students.

As with other courses taught, teachers should make grading decisions based on local and state grading policies (e.g., guidelines for accounting for attendance, participation, and homework), best practices, and their professional judgement to ensure all students receive fair and accurate reports of their progress in the course.

13. What is the course code for *Quest for Success* and how should enrollment and completion be included on the student transcript? What, if any graduation requirements does it meet?

The course code for *Quest for Success* is 080411. The course was developed to be part of the 9-credit, regionally designed Jumpstart Pathways and can be taken for high school credit. The course also is considered a [CDF course](#).

14. How will new course implementation be supported in the pilot year?

The Louisiana Department of Education is committed to supporting our QFS pilot sites and the dedicated teachers who have volunteered to teach the course this year. LDOE has created a digital platform to share updates, course curriculum and related resources and best practices; support professional development; and host an online learning community for teachers participating in the pilot. Teachers can share best practices, including student exemplars, teacher tips and lessons learned during the pilot. LDOE will also host professional development, face-to-face and via webinar, throughout the school year. LDOE will provide support and engagement to the leaders of schools participating in the pilot, as well as the educators teaching the course. Feedback from teachers and students participating in the pilot will be collected.

15. What is required of a QFS pilot school, classroom, or teacher

Teachers participating in the *Quest for Success* pilot are required to join and participate in a virtual community to share best practices and tips with other pilot teachers, collect and share their own feedback and feedback from their students, and participate in a face-to-face and virtual professional development thorough the school year.

16. What's the difference between the pilot and scale-up year?

As described above, limited implementation in the 2018-19 school year will allow us to assess and improve both the *Quest for Success* and related resources, including plans for teacher support. A variety of data, including pilot teacher and student input, will be collected and course revisions made, as appropriate. As appropriate, based on findings and progress from the pilot, plans for full-scale implementation of the new course will be developed.

17. How will we know if the course is successful?

The ultimate indication of our students' career readiness and our effectiveness in preparing them will be found in the career and life success experienced by our students after they leave us--the extent to which they are employed in jobs they enjoy and that allow them to earn a good living, support their families, and meaningfully contribute to their communities. Indeed, these are bold ambitions and meeting them and will require more than the promise of a single course or instructor, no matter how innovative. We will all need to be more reflective and planful about how we define and support career readiness across content areas, courses, and the full PreK-12 continuum. (See [Getting Real About Career Readiness](#) to help your school or district focus on career readiness.) However, we can't effectively assess this level of impact in a single year.

While we continue to assess student progress over time, in the pilot year we will collect a variety of data, including feedback from teachers and students, to learn more about success in terms of the following, 1) teacher perceptions & user satisfaction, 2) fidelity of implementation, 3) student performance/progress toward learning goals, and 4) student satisfaction.

18. What happens to *Journey to Careers*?

Journey to Careers along with other potential introduction career courses will start to be gradually phased out from the Louisiana Department of Education's available course listings beginning during the 2019-2020 school year.

19. Who is managing the pilot? Who do we contact if we have questions?

The Louisiana Department of Education is managing the pilot with the support of America Achieves, a national non-profit organization. Please contact Ted Holmes at tedrick.holmes@la.gov with any questions.