

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

July 28, 2016



My name is **Christina Fontenot** and I am the Director of College Counseling at Walter L. Cohen College Prep High School in New Orleans, like many of you, I've spent the later part of the summer preparing for the start of the school year. I've begun planning, engaged in professional development activities and squeezed in a little time for reading. Most recently, I read "*Fish! A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*" by Stephen C. Lundin, PhD, Harry Paul, and John Christensen. Trust me, the book is an easy read and far more applicable to our profession than the title may suggest. I found it to be the perfect book to start off the school year. It helped to shift my mindset and embrace the possibilities that the new school year brings. The Fish! Philosophy focuses on positive thinking, team work, delivering amazing service and building trust; all of which are essential to school and college counseling. The philosophy is focused on four practices: choose your attitude, play, make their day and be there. With this in mind, I went through my own

practices of: plan, be flexible, ask for help, stay abreast of best practices and get involved and thought of ways that I could tie them to The Fish! Philosophy. Combining these practices has already been very helpful, and I feel confident and ready to take on the school year!

1. **Plan** - never underestimate the power of planning. Knowing what tasks need to be completed for the day, the week or the month will help ensure that you maximize your time and that the important things are always on the top of your mind. Planning will save you a great deal of time and energy with the bonus of increased efficiency.

"Be There": Planning shows that you are present, invested and ready to take on the day.

2. **Be flexible** - your plan will ensure that you always know what needs be done and by when, but in many instances your day will not likely go as planned.

"Choose your attitude": This is when I have to channel this philosophy most. I get attached to my plans, but I try my best to remember that the bonus of having a plan is that I will always know where I left off.

3. **Ask for help** - it is our goal to provide the best possible educational experience for our students and families, and in order to do that, we must work together. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. It is important that our students understand self-advocacy and the importance of asking for help, it is equally important that we do the same.

"Choose your attitude": In those moments where you feel a little overwhelmed or don't fully know how a task should be completed, reach out to the supports around you. This could be teachers in your building, fellow counselors or a close friend. Being in a growth mindset and seeing others as valuable resources will help ease some of the stressors of the day.

4. **Stay abreast of best practices** - we are experts in our field and our students and families rely on us for up to date and accurate information. Policy and legislation are changing on a continuous basis, and it is our responsibility to be able to share this information with the members of our school community.

"Make Their Day": Investing in your continued education is one of the best ways you can continue to be the best possible resource for your students and families. I found that parents and teachers really enjoy it when I find additional resources to help a student excel in a particular

area, solve a problem or provide additional classroom supports. A few extra minutes of research or a quick phone call can make a significant impact and can help make their day.

5. **Get involved** - become an active member of your school community. This will help build strong relationships with your students, families and colleagues. It is also beneficial to become involved in your local educational community, perhaps through professional organizations or by reaching out to other counselors in your area.

"Play": This is my favorite! Find ways to make the work you do fun and engaging and I promise it will rub off. Whether it's helping out with an after school club or signing up to be the chaperone for the Sr. Retreat or volunteering to host a local college fair, there are many ways that we can weave a little extra fun into our day to day lives.

If you haven't already, take some time to really think about your year; what do you wish to accomplish and what are the practices and philosophies that will guide you to your goals? I wish you all an amazing start of the school year and hope that you always remember to, **"Be There," "Make Their Day," "Choose Your Attitude" and most importantly, "Play!"**

Christina Fontenot
Director of College Counseling
Walter L. Cohen College Prep High School
New Orleans

2016 EOC and LEAP Science Results Released

The following 2016 assessment results have been released.

- **Spring 2016 LEAP (Science) Assessment Results:** The Spring 2016 LEAP science results are currently available in eDirect. The release includes student reports, school rosters, and CSV files.
- **End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Results:** 2015-2016 summary results for EOC assessments will be available in the [EOC test system](#) by the end of this week.

Please email assessment@la.gov with questions.

Course Choice 2016-2017 Registration Webinar

Course Choice funded through the Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) will provide students and schools with access to a broad variety of course offerings from online, face-to-face, industry training, and dual enrollment course providers. These course offerings will enable schools to provide courses not currently available to their students, including:

- Career and technical preparation, supporting the Jump Start program;
- Academic work required to achieve TOPS;
- Advanced course work not available at the school due to limited resources;
- Dual Enrollment; and
- Intensive remediation for students struggling to stay on pace for graduation.

New for 2016-2017, schools will register students directly with the Course Provider. Please refer to the [Course Choice Registration Instructions](#) for details on this process. Once students are registered with the Course Providers, schools should document enrollments in the Course Choice Registrations system at <http://lacourses.net>.

Informational webinars on usage of the new Course Choice Registration System will be held. School administrators, professional school counselors, and district staff are encouraged to participate in one of the three scheduled dates.

- **Wednesday, July 27:** 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- **Wednesday, August 3:** 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- **Wednesday, August 10:** 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Webinar Login Information: (*No pre-registration required)

- *Meeting Name:* Course Choice Registration System
- *To join the meeting go to* <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/ccr1/>
- *Enter meeting room as a guest and provide your name*
- *Audio access:* 1-800-832-0736; room number: 1053465



Students may soon be asking you to submit their transcripts to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Please remember, only school counselors and administrators can upload transcripts through the High School Portal. Students should not be given log in information, access to the High School Portal or PIN. This information should be kept confidential by school counselors and administrators. For more information, please refer to the [2016-2017 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#).

2016-2017 Pupil Progression Plan Webinar

The Pupil Progression Plan (PPP) is the comprehensive plan developed and adopted by each LEA that establish policies and guidelines local school districts use to determine whether students will be promoted to the next grade, retained in the current grade, or advanced (or skipped) to higher grades. Pupil Progression Plans also outline the criteria for high school graduation.

The updated [2016-2017 Pupil Progression Plan Template](#) is now available. Each district should submit a plan in PDF format to PPP@la.gov by October 14, 2016. For additional information please email PPP@la.gov.

U.S. Department of Education Releases Newcomer Toolkit

The U.S. Department of Education's has released its [Newcomer Toolkit](#) designed to help schools support immigrants, refugees, and their families with a successful integration process. This [toolkit](#) provides information, resources and examples of effective practices that educators can use to support newcomers in our schools and communities.

March2Success - Test Preparation Sponsored by the U.S. Army

How well students are performing on standardized tests can have a great impact on their future. Many students under-perform, not because of a lack of knowledge, but because of a lack of good testing skills and familiarity of the test they are given.



The cost of test preparation courses can serve as a barrier for many students and schools. March2Success, sponsored by the U.S. Army, is a free, web-based program that makes high quality test preparation instruction available to any current or former student.

The website includes materials to help meet STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) requirements. New test banks and practice questions have been added for STEM with detailed explanations in social science, nursing, technology, pre-engineering, and math.

Individuals will have the capability of selecting part or all sections of the course offered within March2Success. These sections include:

- Preparation on study skills, language arts, math, science for rising 9th and 10th graders;
- Standardized Test Preparation: Comprehensive English (language usage, reading, writing), Integrated math (basic math, algebra, geometry, statistics) and Integrated science (earth science, biology, chemistry, physics);
- Seven timed and full length SAT and ACT Practice tests;
- 20 vocabulary and grammar and five math SAT/ACT flashcards decks;
- An interactive game designed to increase SAT/ACT test scores and enhance general mathematics and vocabulary skills

Schools and teachers incur no obligation by recommending use of March2Success. More importantly, there is no collection of information from participants about their school, and the program does not track participation by school affiliation. While registrants can request recruiter contact, there is no obligation for them to do so. Only those registrants who indicate such a desire will be contacted. The privacy of March2Success participants is respected.

The free program is available to anyone over the age of 13 with Internet access. To enroll or to view a demonstration, visit www.march2success.com, go to "register", then answer a few questions and registration is complete.

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 in your school 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 etc. The three Career Exploration 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 website at www.asvabprogram.com or directly contact one of the ASVAB CEP Program Managers for the state of Louisiana:

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

TOPS Opt-Out Questions and Answers



As you know the Legislature included an "opt out" provision for students not wishing to receive a TOPS award payment during budget shortfalls. We recently published on our homepage and on social media, a direct link to the official document that will answer a number of questions including what opt out means, how does one opt out, what if a suspension due to grades or life circumstances occurs and numerous others. For more information, please read LOSFA's [TOPS Opt-Out Questions and Answers document](#).

Upcoming LOSFA LFOS Financial Aid Training Workshop

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance will be hosting a counselor financial aid training workshop on Tuesday, August 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. in the Galvez Building. This workshop will address financial literacy, the different types of financial aid available to students, the FAFSA, common FAFSA errors, professional judgment, the FAFSA verification process, and FSA IDs. In addition to learning about the federal programs available to students, counselors will have the opportunity to learn more about the different state aid programs, changes made to the TOPS Program and about several different LOSFA initiatives that students can participate in statewide. Attendees will be able to learn about different ways they can guide students and parents through the complex financial aid process, which will ultimately lead to empowered students who have been successfully prepared for postsecondary endeavors.

Location of Financial Aid Training Workshop:
LOSFA
Galvez Building
Pensacola and Oliver Pollock Room
602 North 5th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Space is limited, so interested attendees should [register](#) as soon as possible. Registration is mandatory for all attendees.

LOSFA is working with the Louisiana Counseling Association for this workshop to count toward LPC Continuing Education dock hours.

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."

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Lela Assists with Financial Aid College Planning Resources

Lela is Louisiana's non-profit resource for FAFSA completion and College Planning. The Lela team has been busy preparing for the 2016-2017 school year and has many free resources available for you, your students and their parents.



Lela will be offering free college planning materials to all high schools in Louisiana. Request for materials and checklists for Juniors and Seniors can be made by visiting the [Lela website](#).

In an effort to increase FAFSA completion rates in Louisiana, Lela continues to focus on one-on-one assistance with FAFSA submissions. Please contact them by emailing info@lela.org to schedule a FAFSA Completion Day on your campus. With the "Early FAFSA" federal changes, the Lela team will begin making appointments beginning in October. Families can then use their "Prior-Prior Year" tax returns from the calendar year 2015.

Lela also offers a statewide College Planning Resources Calendar for public viewing which includes college fairs, financial aid nights, college preview days and many other special events held on high school and college campuses. To have your events added to the public calendar, please email info@lela.org.

Lela's College Planning Center is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. For more information or if your student would like to schedule an appointment for one-on-one assistance, please email Lela at info@lela.org, or for assistance on FAFSA related questions, please call Lela's FAFSA HELPLINE at (844) GO-FAFSA or (844) 463-2372.

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. 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 3.0 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.

Statewide ESSA Forums

State Superintendent John White is hosting a series of statewide forums this summer to discuss creating educational opportunities for students through the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All district and school leaders and teachers are encouraged to attend these forums and share their feedback with the Department. A [schedule of forums around the state](#) is posted on the Department's website.

Please email districtsupport@la.gov with questions.

LDOE Contacts

[John White](#)

State Superintendent of Education

877.453.2721 (toll-free)

Twitter [@LouisianaSupe](#)

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