

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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My name is Wendy D. Rock, and I am a school counselor at Hahnville High School in Boutte, Louisiana. I hold a Ph.D. from the University of Holy Cross in New Orleans, Louisiana, I am a Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselor and board approved supervisor (LPC-S), National Certified Counselor (NCC) and National Certified School Counselor (NCSC). I serve on the editorial board for the *Professional Counselor* and was recently selected to serve on the Louisiana ACT Council. I also served as a past president of the Louisiana School Counselor Association.

As we watch many areas of our state deal with the effects of the recent flooding, and the rebuilding of communities begins, we wanted to take this time to reach out to each of you with our words of encouragement and support. The floods will forever leave an imprint on our state. Many of our students will feel a strong sense of loss. Many of them will feel displaced. Many of you will no doubt also be suffering. We remind everyone not to do so in silence. Call upon family, friends, colleagues or services available to you. It will no doubt take time to recover economically and emotionally, but images we have all seen recently have shown a great beauty in the people of our state. We are a resilient and caring people who come together in times of crisis. We are Louisiana strong. We hope that each of you has a network you can call upon, and that you can use your experiences to assist students who may be grieving. One such way to assist with that healing may be to guide students into extracurricular activities that could be a benefit to their well-being and give them a much needed outlet at this time.

Extracurricular activities provide great benefits for students. For example, they can teach children to manage their time. Sometimes having less down time forces a child to get organized and gives them less opportunity to procrastinate or get into trouble. As extracurricular activities usually involve a commitment over an extended period, they can teach students about making and adhering to their commitments which is an important life skill. Practice in prioritizing tasks can prepare students for the challenges of adult life that include managing multiple commitments. In addition, extracurricular activities can provide a welcome break from a rigorous day of learning by allowing time for the brain to reset in preparation for tackling the challenges of homework in the evening.

Extracurricular activities can also help students increase self-esteem. It is a time when they can demonstrate their strengths and feel good about their performance in activities they find enjoyable. In addition, they often feel as though they are making a positive contribution to the school community, as well as expanding their social circle by meeting new people who share similar interests in a fun and more relaxed environment.

It is well known that extracurricular participation and especially leadership opportunities help students in the college admissions process and in receiving scholarships. It has been my experience that it is not always the highest achiever who receives scholarships but rather students who are involved in their school and community while making good grades.

There can be too much of a good thing. The adults in the lives of students (parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) must help students select appropriate extracurricular activities and an

amount they can reasonably manage. Students who take on more than they can handle will negate the benefits listed above.

Let's not forget the importance of extracurricular activities for ourselves. As caregivers we are often reminded of the importance of self-care. Extracurricular activities and hobbies for us are an important part of our self-care. Hobbies can reduce stress and relax us. Community service gives us an opportunity to pay it forward and help others or our community. Exercise has many psychological and physical health benefits. One of my favorite extracurricular activities has been involvement in professional organizations such as the Louisiana School Counselor Association, the Louisiana Counseling Association, and the American School Counselor Association. Involvement in these organizations has provided excellent professional development which enhances my career, has taught me leadership skills, fueled my passion for the school counseling profession, and given me great opportunities such as communicating with you through this newsletter.

I hope everyone has a successful school year, that you accomplish all you set out to accomplish and that your students benefit from your hard work and perseverance.

Wendy D. Rock, Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC, NCSC

Extra-Curricular Activities

Below are a few options you may want to consider for students looking to get involved in activities outside of the classroom:

- National Beta Club (often called "Beta Club" or simply "Beta") is an organization for 4th through 12th grade students in the United States. Its purpose is "to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, leadership and service among elementary and secondary school students." <http://www.betaclub.org/>
- 4-H helps develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility and life skills of youth through experiential learning programs and a positive youth development approach. Though typically thought of as an agriculturally-focused organization as a result of its history, 4-H today focuses on citizenship, healthy living, science, engineering, and technology programs. <http://4-h.org/>
- Future Farmers of America (FFA) continues to help the next generation of farmers develop their own unique talents and explore their interests in a broad range of career pathways. <https://www.ffa.org/home/>
- Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a state-based national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who are most at-risk. <http://www.jag.org/>
- Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, applying learning in the context of business, connecting to business and the community and promoting competition. <http://www.deca.org/>

2016 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	EBR, TBD	9:00 a.m.
October 6	C	Treen Center, Mandeville	9:00 a.m.
October 11	B	Acadia Instructional Center	9:00 a.m.
October 12	B	Terrebone Parish Library	9:00 a.m.
October 17	A	Shreveport	1:00 p.m.

October 18	A	Natchitoches	1:00 p.m.
October 19	A	West Monroe	1:00 p.m.
October 20	A	Marksville	1:00 p.m.

Registration is Underway for LCA September Conference



The Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA) Conference is taking place in Baton Rouge from September 25 - 27, with pre-registration ending on September 12. This year's theme is Diversity is the Spice of Life. Anyone interested in registering is invited to visit <http://www.lacounseling.org/lca/Conference.asp>.

Scholarships for Teachers Pursuing Certification in Blind/Visually Impaired

Through a federal grant from the Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Tech University will be offering financial support for individuals who wish to complete coursework and training to become certified in the state as a teacher of the Blind/Visually Impaired. Most coursework can be completed online. Classes begin September 7. To be considered, the application process can be found in the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness informational document.

For more information call 318-257-4554.

Back to School Tips

As you return to school and are looking for new ways to discuss students' progress, here are a few tips that will allow for clear and consistent communication with parents and caregivers.

- Share results of their children's [2016 LEAP reports](#). These results can provide parents an overview as to what is contained in the report, and can host individual conversations about the reports and the results they contain.
- Utilize the 2016-2017 Back-to-School package to include newly released resources such as:
 - [Teacher Guide to LEAP Results](#): guidance for teachers on how to interpret the 2016 LEAP student reports, and available resources to support adjustments to instruction.
 - [Parent Conversation Guide to 2016 LEAP Results](#): quick guide to support teachers in preparing for parent conferences regarding the 2016 LEAP results.
 - [2016-2017 Month-by-Month Assessment Checklist](#): identifies key dates, action steps, and resource for the 2016-2017 assessment administrations.
 - [Digital Literacy Guide](#): guide for teachers in supporting students' use of technology in the classroom.

Email districtsupport@la.gov with any questions

USDOE Released Guidance to Schools on Ensuring Equity and Providing Behavioral Supports for Students with Disabilities

USDOE Released Guidance to Schools on Ensuring Equity and Providing Behavioral Supports for Students with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Education released last week a significant guidance document in the form of a

Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) emphasizing the requirement schools provide positive behavioral supports to students with disabilities who need them. It also clarifies the repeated use of disciplinary actions may suggest many children with disabilities may not be receiving appropriate behavioral interventions and supports. The guidance and accompanying resources for teachers, school leaders, and stakeholders can be found on the [Rethinking Discipline website](#).



District Test Coordinator Reminders

- LEAP Online Tools Trainings (OTT): LEAP OTTs are available in INSIGHT and [here](#) using the Chrome browser. DTCs should share this resource with principals and teachers. Students and teachers should utilize the OTTs this fall prior to engaging in online tests to become familiar with online testing tools.
- 2016-2017 Month-by-Month Checklist: The [2016-2017 Month-by-Month Checklist](#) is available in the [Assessment Library](#). The checklist includes key activities and dates related to testing throughout the school year. Please review and share this document with district staff.
- 2016-2017 Assessment Guides: Grades 3-8 Social Studies and End-of-Course Biology and US History Assessment Guides are now available on the [Assessment Guidance](#) page. Timing information and a complete administration schedule will be provided in a September update to the grades 3-8 social studies guides.

Please contact assessment@la.gov with any questions.

SAT Score Delivery Update

Please [review](#) the updated delivery dates through the month of September from College Board. Reviewing will allow you to advise your students accordingly.

Louisiana Students Earn Record Number of Advanced Placement College Credits

Due to increased numbers in challenging AP courses and an increase in the percentage of participating students achieving qualifying scores, Louisiana high school students earned 845 more qualifying scores of 3, 4, or 5 on Advanced Placement® (AP®) exams in 2016 than in 2015, increasing the total from 7,703 to 8,548, an 11 percent increase. The percentage of test takers earning a 3 or higher increased, from 31.9 percent in 2015 to 33.5 percent in 2016. Credits earned by students who score a qualifying score of 3, 4, or 5 on the AP® exams are transferable to nearly any college in the nation and all colleges in Louisiana.



Click [here](#) to find out more on how these improvements are impacting our area students.

In early August, The Department released district and school-level AP exam results. Additionally, district level counts and percentages of students taking AP exams by exam title was released via the Data Management secure FTP. These files will be available on the FTP until September 5, 2016, with the filename "LEACode_LEAName_2016_APStudentsbyExamTitle."

For more information, please contact CollegeReadiness@la.gov.

Louisiana College Application and Access Month (LCAAM)

The [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance \(LOSFA\)](#)

along with key education stakeholders in the State of Louisiana, has collaborated to develop and implement Louisiana College Application and Access Month during the month of October.

LCAAM was developed to assist 12th grade

students with navigating the complex college admissions process and to ensure that they apply to at least one postsecondary institution of interest. Schools have the opportunity to invite families to attend and to take advantage of completing and submitting college applications with their students. LCAAM events may include college applications, FSA ID registrations, FAFSA Completions, career searches, employment applications, military searches and military applications. For additional information or to register for an LCAAM event at your school, please contact Brandi Morrison, LCAAM State Coordinator, at Brandi.Morrison@la.gov



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."

LDOE Contacts

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LDOE Links

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