

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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Guiding students to make choices that prepare them for high school and beyond is critical. This urgency is underscored by the fact that the middle school years are ones in which students undergo a considerable amount emotional, mental, and physical growth. It is important for middle school students to be prepared for the changes ahead, as well as understanding that the schooling they receive during these critical years is laying the foundation for their futures. The middle school years and the transition to ninth grade are critical points for students to develop positive attributes such as critical thinking, persistence, and self-advocacy. In fact, high rates of failure in ninth grade have more to do with a lack of these social/emotional skills and behaviors than a lack of academic skills. For these reasons, middle school students should focus on preparing themselves for high school by identifying their strengths and areas of growth, and continue building self-confidence.

Introducing students early on to the world of work helps them understand the concrete value of what they're learning and how it pertains to their future choices. Developing strong college and career readiness programs in middle school is essential if we want middle school students to identify appropriate career pathways and post-secondary options. To aid in this process, the Louisiana Legislature mandates that each student in the 8th grade complete an [Individual Graduation Plan \(IGP\)](#). Additionally, every 8th grade student and their parents/guardians will complete the TOPS consent form. As middle school counselors, it is our job to help students explore career possibilities and help them identify appropriate graduation pathways, whether it be the [TOPS University diploma](#) or the [Jump Start Career diploma](#) pathway. Middle school counselors should collaborate with their feeder high school counselors in order to introduce the career pathways the students will be offered. Through this collaborative effort, middle school counselors will help build a deep resource pool for students so they become better acquainted with the various career pathways, careers, and other post-secondary options.

Tara Washington, NCC, NCSC, BCPC

LOSFA College Goal Sunday

The [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance \(LOSFA\)](#) and the Louisiana Association of Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) will co-sponsor Louisiana's 8th annual College Goal Sunday events on February 28 and March 6, 2016. College Goal Sunday is a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion event held at postsecondary institutions around the state. Financial aid professionals from the host institutions' Financial Aid offices are on-hand to provide one-on-one, line-by-line, FAFSA completion and submission assistance. The event registration form will be available on the LOSFA Website, www.osfa.la.gov, beginning December 15, 2015.

LOSFA can help students and parents with the FAFSA application process. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact LOSFA:

- Email LOSFA at custserv@la.gov
- Access LOSFA via web at www.osfa.la.gov
- To speak to a representative call LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626

Note: The FAFSA form for students planning to attend a postsecondary institution in the 2016-2017 academic year will be available beginning January 1, 2016, and will require 2015 student and parent federal income tax return information.

Statewide Professional School Counselor Collaborative Sessions

Given Louisiana's new programs and policies, the Department is committed to increasing the amount of hands-on support we provide to professional school counselors. The Department's Network Teams will be providing counselor collaborative sessions throughout the 2015-2016 school year to provide counselors with the tools and information needed to ensure appropriate courses, pathway selections, and Individual Graduation Plans for all students. Initial sessions began in September and will continue in November. Specific dates can be found in the [2015-2016 District Support Calendar](#).

Student FAFSA Completion Data Supports

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.

This [presentation](#) details the state of financial aid for Louisiana high school graduates and proposes to address gaps over the next three years. You can find a list of FAFSA completion supports available now for schools and families [here](#), and district-by-district FAFSA completion information, as requested, [here](#).

Parental Consent in STS Reminder

STS will not roll over to the "Y" in the Parental Consent field from one school year to the next. If your LEA uses online update, please remember to update this field each new school year for those students with parental consent to share transcript data with LOSFA and Board of Regents.

Access a Prior School Year's Data in STS

School counselors should forward requests to access a prior school year to their local LEA STS data manager. The data manager will submit a request to the Department for approval and follow up with the counselor when the changes have been made.

Jump Start Industry-Based Credential Accommodations

All industry organizations offer reasonable and appropriate accommodations on their IBC exams. Examples of these accommodations and how to apply for accommodations appropriate for each student are available from the *All Things Jump Start* web portal document title: [Jump Start Industry Credentials for Students with Disabilities non-LAA1 and Act 833 students](#).

Contacts for obtaining appropriate accommodations on every industry credential are available on the Credential Fact Sheets created for each credential, also available on the *All Things Jump Start* web portal.

Any additional questions about testing accommodations should be sent to JumpStart@la.gov.

New PARCC Educator Resources Released

The Department released PARCC student reports to districts on Thursday, November 12. District Test Coordinators are responsible for distributing these individual reports, and school and classroom rosters to principals.

The Department has also released the following tools to support parents in the release of this data.

- [Parent Guide to PARCC Student Results](#): guide to help parents read and interpret the PARCC student reports, with accompanying online resources
 - Available in [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#)
- [PARCC Student Report Text in Spanish and Vietnamese](#): full text for all possible performance levels on the PARCC student reports in both ELA and math
- [PARCC Results Parent Night Presentation](#): PowerPoint presentation that schools and districts can use during parent nights to preview for parents the student reports and what to expect from them about their child's performance on the PARCC tests
 - Available in [Spanish](#)
- [Model Parent/Teacher Conference Video](#): video of a model parent/teacher conference around the PARCC student reports

Email assessment@la.gov with questions.

Association for Career & Technical Education - Vision 2015

The [Association for Career & Technical Education's \(ACTE's\) CareerTech Vision 2015 Conference](#) will be held November 19-22 in New Orleans. The conference will offer CTE professionals hundreds of CTE sessions, a comprehensive Expo, and a rich array of networking opportunities. Attendees at the conference have the opportunity to register for the NCCER Construction Career Pathways Conference being held November 19 and an exclusive networking reception being held November 18. This event brings together representatives from both industry and education to showcase best practices from across the country and participate in interactive activities with strategic planning groups.

2016 Jump Start Convention SAVE THE DATE

The next Jump Start Convention will be held in Baton Rouge on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, at the Baton Rouge River Center. Attendees of the convention should include high school principals, district administrators, professional school counselors, Jump Start the convention should include high school principals, district administrators, professional school counselors, Jump Start regional team members, and regional economic development and workforce development organizations.

Key Jump Start Convention agenda items this year will include:

- How schools and districts can maximize their Jump Start funding
- Expanding internship programs (including "virtual internships" for rural parishes)
- Pilot programs for expanding IT industry credentials (for TOPS and Jump Start students)
- Best practices for teacher training and externships, counselor support ,and industry engagement

Please email JumpStart@la.gov with questions.

Course Choice Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA)

Registration for spring 2016 Course Choice Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) funded coursework will open **December 1, 2015**. Each high school has an account on the system to validate and approve course offerings:

Career and technical preparation, supporting the Jump Start program

- Academic work required to achieve TOPS
- Advanced coursework not available at the school due to limited resources
- College Credit
- Intensive remediation for students struggling to stay on pace for graduation

If you are unsure of the user account for your school please send an e-mail to SCA@la.gov requesting account information. Please include your school name and school district in the body of the message.

- Course Choice/SCA Registration System: <http://lacourses.net/>
- Information: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/supplemental-course-academy>

Registration for dual enrollment coursework should occur as it has in the past with students registering directly with the post-secondary institution.

ACT WorkKeys Test Administration Training for Online Testing Webinar

This webinar is intended for new test coordinators and proctors administering the online version of ACT WorkKeys. Any test coordinator or proctor who would like a refresher on the basics of ACT WorkKeys online testing is also welcome. **Register [here](#).**

- Monday, November 23rd: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Community Service Endorsements

Beginning with freshmen entering school year 2013-2014 and beyond, LEAs may award the [Community Service Diploma Endorsement](#) to graduates who have completed a minimum number of documented community service hours each year.

The Department is required to provide an annual report to the Legislature regarding the number of students pursuing this diploma endorsement statewide. By December 1, please provide the name and email for a designated Community Service Diploma Endorsement district contact to Jennifer.Falls@la.gov.

District contacts will be invited to participate in a Community Service Diploma Endorsement webinar scheduled for Wednesday, December 9, at 3:00 p.m. Participants will be asked to respond to a brief survey about the status of Community Service Diploma Endorsements in your district.

Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge Program

The Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge Program (YCP) is an alternative educational program which offers 16-18 year old adolescents an opportunity to change their future. Students looking for a way to succeed outside of a traditional school setting learn self-discipline, leadership, and responsibility while working to obtain a high school equivalency diploma. **For more information and application instructions: Call 1-800-CAMP-KID or visit www.languycp.com.**

LDOE Contacts

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LDOE Links

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