

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

December 17, 2015



"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars" is one of my favorite quotes by Norman V. Peale, that I encourage my students with every time I get the chance. **My name is Mrs. Lyn Smith, Senior Counselor/Hospital Homebound Tara High School.** As professional school

counselors we have to give students all that we can to keep them knowledgeable about opportunities that are available after high school. Investing in their future starts in Pre-K and continues through 12th grade. With our little ones we can start with the basics and by 9th grade they should be learning about different careers, diploma pathways, post-secondary options and both State and Federal Student Aid Options. I am excited to learn that in

order to support families and schools, the Department of Education will make available at least \$1 million in grant funding to districts and schools seeking assistance in counseling families. We can also gain access to a list of those students who have completed the FAFSA in your district or school [here](#). And we can find a list of pre-existing supports here, some of which are provided by the [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid \(LOSFA\)](#).

Shooting for the best and investing in students futures, professional school counselors play a great role in counseling and providing assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In December, BESE passed a policy that requires one of four steps prior to students graduating from high school, starting in 2018:

1. Complete the FAFSA (starting in 2016, this form will be completed starting in October of the senior year, based on prior year taxes)
2. Complete the TOPS application form
3. Have a parent sign a waiver
4. Have a district send the state a hardship waiver

Whether students are completing the TOPS University diploma or Jump Start Career diploma pathways, it is imperative to start having conversations with all stakeholders which include parents on the importance of the FAFSA and selecting an appropriate graduation pathway. It is vital that we do not leave money on the table for our students' future!

2016 Jump Start Convention - SAVE THE DATE

The [2016 Jump Start Convention](#) will be held 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 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 register by January 8, 2016, at <https://www.solutionwhere.com/ldoe/cw/showconference.asp?4318>.

For information about hotels with a block of rooms available, please click [here](#).

Please email JumpStart@la.gov with questions.

Spring 2016 Individual Student Planning (Individual Graduation Plan and Diploma Pathway Selection)

The Department released a [guidance document](#) to assist Professional Middle and High School Counselors in the annual development and review of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). After April 1, 2016, Louisiana Connect will no longer host IGPs. Beginning in Spring 2016 and thereafter, districts/charters may choose from a variety of platforms for hosting IGPs:

- District/charter-identified career planning system
- District/charter cumulative folder, or
- LOSFA's Louisiana Award System

Also beginning in spring 2016, professional school counselors will work with the 2018 cohort to guide the selection of a diploma pathway aligned with academic and career interests and upload the diploma pathway selection into the Student Transcript System.

The Department will host two webinars to support professional school counselors with the IGP and diploma pathway selection process.

- Thursday, January 21: 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 27: 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Webinar Login Information (*no pre-registration required)

- Meeting Name: Individual Graduation Plan and Diploma Pathway Selection
- To join the meeting, click <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/igp2016>
- Enter meeting room as a guest and provide your name

For further assistance, please contact Martha.moore@la.gov

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.

LOSFA College Goal Saturday

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

LOSFA Go Alliance Academy

The Go Alliance Academy is a special online college access training program sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). It gives counselors, teachers and college access professionals the additional knowledge and skills that will assist them in getting more students on a path to college. Go Alliance is a professional multistate network that works in concert with school counselors to increase high school graduation rates, as well as access to post-secondary education and degree completion, particularly for those who would be the first in their families to enroll. LOSFA is the state administrator for the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy.

To learn more about the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy, please contact Juterh Nmah, LOSFA program coordinator and professional school counselor at Juterh.nmah@la.gov. To sign up for an upcoming Go Alliance Academy course, please [click here](#).

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. Specific dates can be found in the [2015-2016 District Support Calendar](#). Please email JumpStart@la.gov with questions.

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.

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. For Spanish translation, please click [here](#). For Vietnamese translation, please click [here](#).
- [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.

Parent Guides to School Report Cards Released

The Department has released a set of Parent Guides to help parents better understand the information contained in the 2014-2015 School Reports Cards released today. You can view the 2014-2015 School Report Cards by clicking [here](#). Districts and Principals are encouraged to share these guides with parents along with a copy of the each school's report card.

- [Parent Guide to Elementary School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to Middle School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to Combination School Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Guide to High School Report Cards](#)

Please send questions to assessment@la.gov.

2016 National Youth Science Camp Application Now Available

The application for the 2016 National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) is now open and available here. NYSC is a residential science education program held in Charleston, West Virginia each summer that honors and challenges two graduating high school science students from each state. Scientists from across the nation present lectures and hands-on science seminars and linger to interact informally with student delegates. Delegates are challenged to explore new areas in the biological and physical sciences, art, and music with resident staff members.

The 2016 camp will run from June 15 through July 10, 2016. Districts are encouraged to submit applications for students interested in attending by February 16, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. CT. NYSC is offered at NO COST to the participant or district.

Please email jill.cowart@la.gov with questions.

LDOE Contacts

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