

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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Positive School Culture is Essential in 2019

Over the past 20 years, I have been involved in counseling programs that have had a positive impact on student achievement. Throughout this time, I have learned that students' academic needs are far easier to identify than their social and emotional needs. They have a history that precedes their time with us—the stresses, emotions, challenges, and/or traumas that can impede their academic achievement. This is why we need time to address social/emotional learning for students and teachers. The classroom is usually the first place students display the need for positive social-emotional support, so I always strive to be a positive resource for teachers. I have found that the best way to support students and teachers is to create a supportive, positive school environment.

Building a positive school culture is challenging, but it is possible when school staff consistently model respectful communication, support diversity, demonstrate respectful communication, and practice peaceful conflict resolution. Creating such a culture involves all stakeholders. Parents and other visitors must feel welcome when they come to the school campus. Students must feel they may express their feelings when they are at school. Our goal should be to make every one of our students feels safe, supported, and respected in all aspects of their school experience—from academics and social learning to the physical environment.

As a middle school counselor, I work hard to build an environment in which everyone chooses their words carefully and every kind word matters. Our students love to have a voice and feel valued, and with technology, even introverted students can have a voice through email and voice messages. We can also encourage students and faculty to communicate with their body language. For example, on our campus we use a catch phrase to remind each other to watch our facial expressions.

Additionally, we must help foster a culture of resilience. As we teach students to use their voice, we eliminate distrust and uneasiness and build a culture of inclusion. In a positive school environment, students develop and maintain caring, trusting relationships with faculty, staff, and each other. These relationships are all important in the development of a resilient student. As we model how to overcome

adversity, stress, and disappointment, students learn how to adjust and move on, unconsciously building resilience.

At Galvez, our total focus is being positive and developing the whole child. I am very fortunate to work with colleagues who understand how addressing the needs of the whole child is our ticket to success. We never forget that every child, every day, and every word matters!

Be Kind!

Linda M. Peace, LPC, NCC, NCSC
Professional School Counselor
Galvez Middle School

Back-to-School Message from Veronica Douglas LSCA President 2019-2020

It's hard to believe summer is over and another school year is well under way. As we move forward in this new school year, we do so with anticipation and great expectations. The Louisiana School Counselor Association goal for this year is to continue setting new goals and increasing collaboration and advocacy efforts for School Counselors in ALL of Louisiana.

[Read more](#)

Student Scholarship Opportunities

U.S. Senate Youth Scholarship

The Louisiana Department of Education and the [William Randolph Hearst Foundation](#) are pleased to announce the launch of the 2020 United States Senate Youth Program. Two outstanding students from Louisiana will receive a \$10,000 scholarship from the Hearst Foundation and will spend a week in Washington, D.C. in March of 2020. The Department requests your assistance selecting these students.

Please distribute to juniors or seniors who hold elected or appointed offices in school or community groups that are listed in the [national program brochure](#), and refer to the [LDOE memo](#) for application and selection procedures. Please ensure that students understand the rules and regulations governing this competition.

For test security reasons, the essay topics will only be released to school systems individually. High school personnel should email marian.johnson@la.gov as soon as a student requests the essay topics.

The names of the selected students and their application portfolios must be received by the program coordinator via email **no later than October 1, 2019**. Finalists will be notified by October 21, 2019.

Please contact Marian Johnson, Program Coordinator, at marian.johnson@la.gov for assistance.

Cooke College Scholarship

[The Cooke College Scholarship Program](#) is currently accepting applications. This opportunity is available to high-achieving high school seniors with financial need who seek to attend the nation's best four-year colleges and universities. The deadline to apply is November 13, 2019.

See the [Counselors and Educators page](#) for more information. Applicants seeking assistance with application platform should reach out to the [Common App Applicant Solutions Center](#).

Since 2000, the [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#) has awarded \$190 million in scholarships to nearly 2,500 students from 8th grade through graduate school, along with comprehensive counseling and other support services. The Foundation has also provided over \$100 million in grants to organizations

Professional Development Opportunities

LDOE Webinars

The **High School Planning Guidebook Webinar** provides a brief overview of the 2019-2020 High School Planning Guidebook. Some of the topics in this year's guide are planning for student success, creating a layered continuum of support, understanding diploma pathways, and supporting students with diverse needs. The webinar will be offered twice on August 28.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** August 28 at 9:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/161162185>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID:** 161 162 185

- **Webinar Date and Time:** August 28 at 3:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/765350153>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID:** 765 350 153

The **IGP Webinar** explains the policies and processes related to individual graduation plans. This presentation is designed for middle and high school counselors who are new to the IGP process. The webinar will be offered twice, on September 11 and 12.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** September 11 at 3:00 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/977449302>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID:** 977 449 302

- **Webinar Date and Time:** September 12 at 10:00 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/695790901>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 669-900-6833
- **Meeting ID:** 695 790 901

The slide decks for both webinars will be available in the [Counselor Support Library](#). Please email leslie.gilliland@la.gov for more information.

LCA Annual Conference

The [Louisiana Counseling Association \(LCA\)](#) will hold its annual conference at the New Orleans Sheraton Hotel September 29 through October 1, 2019. This year's theme is Together We Thrive: Revitalize, Rejuvenate, and Invigorate. Attendees can expect the latest information in the field and opportunities to earn continuing education clock hours. Participants can also increase their professional skills and earn continuing education clock hours at the Saturday [pre-conference learning institutes](#) on September 28.

Please visit the [LCA Conference](#) web page for more information.

Fall Counselor Institutes: Save the Dates

Save the dates for the LDOE Counselor Institutes (formerly Counselor Collaborations). These events are designed provide middle and high school counselors with information and resources to support them in their work throughout the year.

North Region

October 15 in Bossier (confirmed)
October 16 in Monroe (confirmed)
October 17 in Avoyelles (tentative)

South Region

October 22 in Acadia (confirmed)
October 23 in St. Charles (tentative)
October 24 in St. Tammany (tentative)

The agenda, exact locations, and times will be published in the weekly school system newsletter and in the September Counselor Connect. Please reach out to your regional network contact for more information.

Middle and High School News

Louisiana Youth Summit on Opioid Awareness

The South Louisiana Youth Summit on Opioid Awareness on is happening on October 1, 2019, at the New Orleans Lakefront Arena. Hosted by the [Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation](#) and [DEA 360](#), this free half-day event is designed to educate middle and high school students about the dangers of opioid addiction and encourage them to be part of the solution to ending this epidemic. The Summit seeks to empower students to take action in their schools to promote the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Please visit the [summit website](#) for event updates or email traynard@therendongroup.com for more information.

Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs

Throughout the month of October, the [Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council \(SILC\)](#) is hosting a series of [Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs](#) as part of [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\)](#).

The [Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs](#) are open to anyone interested in learning more about the career opportunities and resources available in their community. See the [Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs Schedule](#) for locations. All events are from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

In Case You Missed It

[NEW STEM-FOCUSED JUMP START PATHWAYS TO PROVIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH ADVANCED SKILLS, COLLEGE AND CAREER CREDENTIALS](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[CADDO PARISH SCHOOLS: A TRAUMA RESPONSIVE DISTRICT](#) (Kesha Simmons, M.Ed.)

[MAKING THE FAFSA MANDATORY](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

[LAFAYETTE SCHOOL COUNSELOR WINS 2019 MRS. LOUISIANA](#) (Lafayette Daily Advertiser)

[CLASS OF 2018 ACHIEVES HIGHEST GRADUATION OUTCOMES IN LOUISIANA HISTORY](#) (Louisiana Believes)