

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for
Louisiana's Professional
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

February 2018



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Counselor Spotlight: Sundy Barjon



FAFSA Marketing Push

Getting students and parents to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has always been a challenge for the Professional School Counselor (PSC).

Because all seniors are now required to complete the FAFSA and the enrollment data commences in the month of October, filing for students and parents is even more of a challenge for the PCS.

Another problem in the application process for the PCS is ensuring that parents clearly understand its terminology. Some parents encounter confusion with the term "prior prior" as it relates to their income tax filings in completing the application.

Since the FAFSA has changed over the years, the PCS must get parents to understand these changes. Parents who have filed applications for children in the past, in many instances, must undergo a mindset change to correctly complete the new application. This represents another challenge for the PSC.

In working to meet the established goals of FAFSA Completion, PSCs have scheduled FAFSA Days, Weekends and Nights, and have promoted College Goal Sundays for students and parents as sponsored by the Louisiana Office of Financial Assistance (LOSFA). The support and resources provided by LOSFA in these endeavors are invaluable assets to PSCs in the successful completion of this critical work.

With October 1st set as the beginning filing date for FAFSA, along with ensuring that students meet the requirements for graduation, the job responsibilities of PCSs have increased—we must do more and provide more.

With the training provided by LOSFA, PSCs have learn how to walk students and parents through the

initial filing for FASAID, to assist them in completing the application and to troubleshoot when there are problems in the process.

How do we push FAFSA?

- FAFSA Nights: once a month during the school year
- FAFSA Days: every other month of the school year from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and 2:00 until 6:00 p.m.
- Robocall to Parents: reminders of FAFSA Events
- Senior Parent Night during 1st semester (September)
- Senior Parent Night during 2nd semester (January)
- FAFSA Board of Completers-displayed in the main hallway of the school*
- PTO Website
- School Website
- Senior Website
- Registration in SignalVine-all seniors

Since LOSFA has provided the FAFSA Completers Data, PSCs are able to identify those students who have not started the process and assist those who have errors reported on their FAFSA.

The overall goal of this work is to have all FAFSA applications completed before spring break, including those who have to submit the waiver for non-completion.

Dr. Sundry Barjon, PhD, LPC-S, NCSC, NCC
Professional School Counselor, Edna Karr High School

*With the FAFSA Board of Completers Display, the pictures of seniors who have successfully completed FAFSA are placed in the center of an enlarged hundred-dollar bill in the main hallway of the school. This recognition is motivational in nature. It congratulates those seniors who have successfully completed FAFSA and encourages those who have not to have their pictures on the display board.

Counselor Collaboration

Thank you to everyone who attended the spring collaboration events. Usually held once per semester, the Counselor Collaborations are an opportunity for counselors across the state to meet LDOE staff, network with other professionals in their region, and receive updates and resources.

If you weren't able to attend one of the collaborations, please refer to the [presentation slide deck](#) or contact your network liaison for more information.

Financial Aid News

Financial Aid Webinars

LDOE Financial Aid Planning Webinar

Do you need assistance with increasing the number of FAFSA submissions in your school? We are here to help. On Monday, February 26, the Department is hosting a webinar to discuss what you should know about the FAFSA, including frequent FAFSA errors and best practices for increasing FAFSA submission rates.

To join the Financial Aid Planning Webinar on Monday, February 26, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., go to <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/r3il5f9s1c0s/>.

Please email LDEFinancialAid@la.gov for more information.

Frank FAFSA Webinars

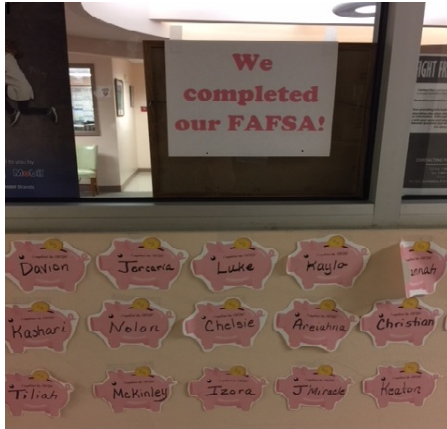
[Frank](#), a free resource that helps students complete their federal aid applications, is hosting weekly webinars for counselors who would like to learn about the tool. Webinars are Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. and Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.

Attendees will learn about Frank's mission and features of the Frank FAFSA tool. The interactive webinar is aimed at college access professionals and will include opportunities for live Q&A at the

end of the demonstration. Interested participants should visit the [Frank FAFSA web site](#) to register.

Please email support@frankfafsa.com for more information.

Local Financial Aid Events



Spotlight: Winnfield High School

Dr. Deona Austin from Winnfield High School recognizes students who have completed FAFSA by posting their personal piggy banks on a bulletin board.

What is your school doing to help students fund their futures? The Department wants to publicize the great things counselors are doing to help students complete their financial aid requirement.

Tag the Department in your social media posts, or email leslie.gilliland@la.gov to explore other ways to share ideas with your colleagues around the state.

Regional Financial Aid Events

The [LDOE Regional Financial Aid Calendar of Events](#) is a great way to announce your upcoming events. The calendar is available on the LDOE [Financial Aid web page](#). School systems who wish to publish financial aid-related events in the calendar should send the event name, date and time, specific location, and a brief description to LDEFinancialAid@la.gov.

Compete to Complete? Challenge Accepted!

Would you like to know where your school ranks in FAFSA completions? Check out LOSFA's new [Compete to Complete](#) challenge to find out!

High School Opportunities

2018-2019 Dual Enrollment Policy Update

The Louisiana Board of Regents recently approved new [minimum requirements](#) for dual enrollment coursework. The new policy addresses course content and rigor, faculty qualifications, and student eligibility. The Board also adopted a revision to the minimum requirements for entry-level, college-level mathematics and English. The [revised policy](#) defines the threshold for access to entry-level, college-level courses. [Alternative minimum scores](#) are offered for college-level enrollment and have been amended to include ACCUPLACER.

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov.

SkillsUSA Scholarship Window Closes March 1

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System is partnering with SkillsUSA Louisiana to offer the [LCTCS-SkillsUSA Scholarship](#) to high school and career and technical center graduates to use at any LCTCS college. Please contact [SkillsUSA Louisiana](#) for more information.

No-Cost ACT Prep

The results are in, and March2Success is having positive results. In a study of 133 Tennessee students who completed the free March2Success Bootcamp, Dr. Jerrick Hornbeak reports that **89 students averaged a 2.5-point gain** in their composite scores.

- 105 students increased 3 points in English
- 98 students increased 4 points in reading
- 78 students increased 4 points in science
- 73 students increased 2.5 points in mathematics

Students who use the program are under no obligation to join or receive further information from the military.

Please review the [March2Success slide show presentation](#) from the Spring Counselor Collaborations or email jerrick.l.hornbeak@mail.mil for more information.

In Case You Missed It

[MICHELLE OBAMA PRESENTS 2018 COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR AWARD TO CHICAGO EDUCATOR](#) (Education Week)

[COUNSELORS PLAY HUGE ROLE IN PARISH'S FUTURE](#) (Richland Today)

[LOUISIANA IS BUILDING CURRICULUM FOR RESTORING THE COAST](#) (NOLA.com)

[LOUISIANA APPROVES 19 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR PERSISTENTLY STRUGGLING SCHOOLS](#) (Louisiana Believes)

