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## **Counselor Spotlight: Tiffany Fowler**



Many things have changed in our world in just a matter of weeks. We are all under a statewide stay at home order. We're struggling to find toilet paper and pondering how to help our students and parents who are emailing us for answers. We've all had to quickly adapt to this new normal of communicating exclusively from home.

I have discovered that there are many ways we can adjust to continue helping the students and families we serve. For instance, if we want to provide assistance to our students and keep them abreast of new and ever-changing developments, we can take this time to update or build our school counseling websites. In our updates, we can include any new information about distance learning tools and informational websites. My parish school system, [St. Tammany Parish Public Schools](#), provides a range of online learning resources to help students review, retain, and enrich crucial academic skills while they are at home. I know many of your individual school systems have similar resources you can highlight on your school counseling website. The LDOE is continually updating their [resources](#), so it is important for all of us to refer families to that information as well.

Since schools closed on March 16, students' plans and dreams have been upended. This time of year, I find that many of my students are still considering which college, which major, or which career option to choose, and recent events have not made those decisions any easier. Moving forward, I believe there are some things we counselors--especially those who were already feeling lost. I intend to use this time to reflect on my own practices and re-imagine the ways I can support my school community. For instance, over the years I have developed a short [list](#) of the top activities for sophomores (getting involved, practicing for standardized tests, starting the college search);

juniors (finding leadership opportunities, scheduling college tours, earning IBCs); and seniors (obtaining letters of recommendation, completing college applications, submitting financial aid and scholarship forms). This week I started adapting that list to better reflect the current situation: [online test prep](#) for sophomores, [virtual college tours](#) for juniors, and links to updated [TOPS](#) information for seniors.

I'm aware that school counseling looks different for everyone right now. Some of us are required to keep conferencing hours at home while some are not. Thus, in this uncharted territory we find ourselves in, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to this work. We can just do what we've always done: support our students' academic, career, and social/emotional development in a rapidly changing world.

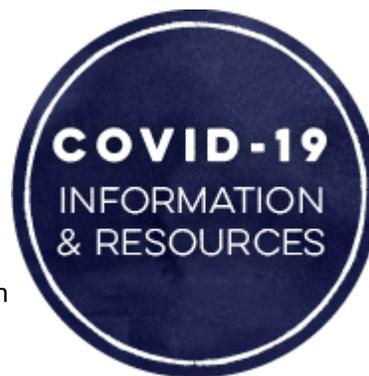
Tiffany Moore Fowler  
12th Grade Counselor  
Slidell High School

## Policy Updates Related to COVID-19

[Effective Monday, March 16](#), all public schools in the State of Louisiana closed facilities to students until April 13. Decisions about whether staff report to school facilities remain the decision of local governing authorities.

Schools may offer complete distance learning as capabilities exist. Instructional minute requirements shall be temporarily suspended for distance education courses and for curriculum delivery. The required 63,720 instructional minute requirement per year shall also be suspended.

While it is not required, school systems and schools may serve a maximum of two free meals per day to children 18 and younger during the closure period, regardless of where the child is enrolled in school. Schools and centers that do not offer meal programs should refer families to [ones that do](#).



On March 20, the U.S. Department of Education [approved Louisiana's waiver request](#) of assessment, accountability, and reporting requirements under ESSA. This means Louisiana will not require standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year. Moreover, since testing data is required to be used in accountability systems, the state will also exclude testing data from performance measures for the current school year.

Today, March 26, the department [released](#) resources to provide school systems with tools and guidance to help them make academic and workforce decisions based on the unique needs of their communities. Key documents include

- [Continuous Education Guide](#): Guidance and tools to support school system leaders as they analyze available instructional and technology resources, develop an approach to providing distance learning opportunities, and implement a distance learning plan.
- [Academic Resources Guide](#): A comprehensive list of academic resources available for distance learning formats, organized by subject and curriculum provider.
- [Staffing Guide](#): A guide to support school system leaders as they determine which essential functions must continue during school facility closures and how to create a staffing plan to ensure the continuation of those functions.

The Department continues to closely monitor the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. **For regularly updated guidance and resources for educators, please refer to the Department's [COVID-19 Information and Resources web page](#)**; visit the [Newsroom](#) for other LDOE communications. Please contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health at 1-855-523-2652 from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with questions about COVID-19.

- [Visit the Louisiana Department of Public Health website.](#)
- [Watch the March 22 press conference, stay at home order.](#)

- [Watch the March 23 COVID-19 televised discussion with state health and education leaders.](#)
- [Find a school meal site.](#)
- [Read the March 14 BESE waiver memo.](#)
- [Read Proclamation Number JBE 2020-27.](#)
- [Read the LDOE K-12 Frequently Asked Questions document.](#)
- [Read the LDOE Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions document.](#)
- [Visit the ACT National Exam COVID-19 web page.](#)

## Census 2020

### **Every Child Counts**

By April 1, every U.S. household will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. The Census count impacts the federal funds that communities receive each year for programs and services that are critical for schools, students, and younger children:

- special education
- Head Start
- after-school programs
- classroom technology
- food assistance
- maternal and child health programs

[Completing](#) the census helps Louisiana students! The Department has developed the [2020 Census Toolbox](#) to help educators find Census activities for every grade level.

Please help spread the word. Remind your school community to complete the Census. Responding now will minimize the need to send census takers out into communities to follow up. Visit the U.S. Census 2020 [website](#) to learn more; go to the Partners [page](#) to become a Census partner. Email [ldoecommunications@la.gov](mailto:ldoecommunications@la.gov) for assistance.

## Professional Opportunities

### **LDOE Spring Counselor Institutes**

The Department has temporarily postponed the regional face-to-face Counselor Institutes. We are currently working on the best ways to share current, relevant information with school counselors across the state. Details are coming soon. Please email [leslie.gilliland@la.gov](mailto:leslie.gilliland@la.gov) for more information.

### **Beta Testing for STEM Pathway Tools**

The STEM team at the LDOE is working to develop a suite of STEM Pathway tools for school counselors. Tools will include support for building a course catalog, master scheduling resources, marketing materials, and more. Beta testers will get first access to the tools and have the opportunity to make the tools as useful as possible. School counselors who are interested in being beta testers should complete the online [form](#) to sign up.

### **Free Webinars from the American School Counselor Association**

In an effort to make virtual professional development more accessible, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has made all [webinars](#) free to both members and nonmembers through May 15, 2020. ASCA has also reduced their fees for [ASCA U Specialist training](#) until May 15. Recent webinar topics include "[Ethical Considerations: School Counseling in a Virtual Setting](#)," and "[School Counseling in an Online World](#)." Upcoming live webinars include "[Promote Social/Emotional Learning at the Middle School Level](#)," and "[Align Your School Counseling Program and MTSS](#)." Please visit the ASCA Professional Development Options [page](#) for additional information and opportunities.

### **Free Webinars from the Southern Regional Education Board**

Tomorrow, March 27, [Southern Regional Education Board](#) (SREB) is hosting a webinar that will build on [last week's webinar](#) on how to provide school counseling services virtually. Topics include

supporting students' academic, college/career, and social-emotional needs when schools are closed or have moved to online instruction. Participants will also learn about Reach Higher's virtual plans to celebrate graduating students this upcoming College Signing Day; there will be time for Q&A and discussion. Please visit the SREB Workshops and Webinars [page](#) to [register](#) and/or to view recordings of past offerings.

**Please email [leslie.gilliland@la.gov](mailto:leslie.gilliland@la.gov) to share additional professional opportunities.**

## Middle and High School News

### **Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice Intersession**

The Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#) document has important information regarding students who are currently enrolled in courses as well as opportunities for new enrollments. Content includes links to the [COVID-19 Intersession Provider Directory](#) and [COVID-19 Intersession Registration Procedures 2019-2020](#).

### **AP, CLEP, IB Assessment Updates and Guidance**

The College Board and International Baccalaureate have made adjustments to assessment schedules due to COVID-19. Please monitor the COVID-19 Exam Guidance Solutions [document](#) for updates. This document is updated with new information as it is released from The College Board. Please share all College Board newsletters or updates with necessary school system staff. Email [meredith.mcgovern@la.gov](mailto:meredith.mcgovern@la.gov) for more information.

### **Financial Aid Planning**

- LDOE staff are available to assist families remotely with financial aid planning support and FAFSA completion. Please email a request to [ldofianancialaid@la.gov](mailto:ldofianancialaid@la.gov) for phone or online support.
- The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance ([LOSFA](#)) is providing services remotely until further notice. Until then, please direct all concerns to [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov). Also, follow @LOSFA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), or visit their [website](#) for additional information and updates; refer to the [TOPS Continuation Contingency Policy](#) for information about TOPS.
- The Louisiana Education Authority ([LELA](#)) is a division of the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority (LPFA), a nonprofit public trust established to bring financing assistance and advantages to the people of Louisiana. Families may call their help line (844) GO FAFSA or (844) 463-2372 for assistance with FAFSA-related questions.

### **NCAA Updates**

The NCAA Eligibility Center is closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on students and their ability to meet NCAA initial eligibility requirements. The NCAA will be posting more information in the coming days to assist the high school community. For information on COVID-19, please visit [ncaa.org/COVID-19](http://ncaa.org/COVID-19) and continue to monitor for more information. Please also consider completing the [annual survey](#) about your interactions with the Eligibility Center over the past year. Please visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) for more information about college athletics.

## Digital Learning Resources

### **LDOE/LPB Distance and Home Learning Supports**

The Department has developed a [Continuous Education Toolkit](#), which includes academic resources for math, ELA, social studies, science, and early childhood instructional materials. The Department continues to work with [Louisiana Public Broadcasting \(LPB\)](#) to ensure that the [At-Home Learning](#) website includes links to Department-produced guidance and the educational programming is connected to Louisiana student standards as much as possible. LPB Educational TV: Elementary programming is 5:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., and Middle-High is 12:00-5:00 p.m. Please visit the [LBP At-Home Learning](#) website for the [broadcasting schedule](#) for all educational programming and [detailed descriptions](#) of the 12:00-5:00 p.m. educational programs.

## **ACT Open Education Resources**

ACT is providing free digital learning resources for students and the workforce..

- [ACT Academy](#): ACT Academy™ is a free online learning resource for students seeking to improve their academic skills through individualized learning plans. Practice tests for PreACT® and the ACT® test are also available.
- Free live sessions and events: Provided by Kaplan, these ACT test prep sessions and events feature digital learning and live online instruction.
- [ACT Voice-Based Assistant](#): Amazon Alexa guides users through the ACT registration process, including finding test dates and locations.
- [College Research Worksheet](#): This free guide, offered through the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), helps students understand match, fit and cost when researching colleges.

## **AP Review Courses**

The College Board is offering free, live review courses for [AP students](#), delivered by AP teachers from across the country. These courses are optional, mobile-friendly, and can be used alongside any work assigned by a teacher. Monitor the [AP Updates for Schools Impacted by Coronavirus](#) for the most current information about how The College Board is supporting AP instruction and testing. Visit the AP [YouTube channel](#) to browse courses, or refer to the [daily course schedule](#) for the time of each live review course.

## **March2Success Online Study Program**

[March2Success](#) is an online study program designed to help students prepare for standardized tests, improve school work, and review academic materials. The program also provides tools for educators and parents to track and encourage their students. Students have the ability to select any or all sections of the program, which include study tools, academic content review, and test preparation courses. Visit the [March2Success](#) website to learn more.

***Please email [leslie.gilliland@la.gov](mailto:leslie.gilliland@la.gov) to share resources for school counselors.***

## **In Case You Missed It**

[SUPERINTENDENT'S COVID-19 MESSAGE: MARCH 24, 2020](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[LOUISIANA OPENS CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO CRITICAL PERSONNEL AMID COVID-19 OUTBREAK](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[LPB PARTNERS WITH THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO LAUNCH AT-HOME LEARNING](#) (Louisiana Public Broadcasting)

[LOUISIANA SECURES FEDERAL WAIVER FOR REQUIRED STANDARDIZED TESTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OFFERS FREE COUNSELING SERVICES THROUGH KEEP CALM THROUGH COVID HOTLINE](#) (Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health)

[ACT RESCHEDULES APRIL 2020 INTERNATIONAL ACT TEST DATE TO JUNE](#) (ACT, Inc.)

[BESE APPROVES INCREASE IN SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA](#) (Bossier Press-Review)

[THE CENSUS COUNTS: WHAT YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS](#) (Teaching Tolerance)

[COUNSELORS AREN'T JUST COUNSELORS: LIVINGSTON PARISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM RECOGNIZES SCHOOL COUNSELORS](#) (BR Proud)

[CAMERON PARISH SCHOOLS HOST MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL MEDIA WORKSHOPS FOR STUDENTS](#) (KPLC News)

[UNO'S NATIONAL ENGINEER'S DAY DRAWS NEARLY 2,000 MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL](#)

[STUDENTS](#) (University of New Orleans)

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