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"The pep rally will be canceled due to inappropriate student behavior." Hearing this announcement changed my whole perspective on how to address student engagement in a public high school. I had been an educator for twenty years, in both Louisiana and Texas, and I had encountered a variety of school cultures and climates in both urban and rural settings, but it was my first semester at Franklin Parish High School. Knowing that the school had only four pep rallies a year, and that eliminating one of them could greatly affect student morale, I knew I wanted to do something. The 2,000+ disciplinary referrals further indicated a need for a proactive response, and I wanted to be a catalyst.

After doing some research, I discovered that the school had used a behavior management system ten years prior to my arrival. Dusty binders of program materials and documentation remained, and the school still had funds from community donations. With these resources and the desire to enhance school culture, my colleagues and I formed a committee to pave the pathway our previous peers had started.

We first established, adopted, and posted universal support guidelines. We collected data, agreed on common expectations, established behavioral guidelines, and posted guidelines in every school location. Then we asked faculty members to contribute successful strategies they had used to improve the climate in their classrooms. Educators enthusiastically contributed successful strategies they had incorporated into their classroom climates to engage students. We also implemented a support system called Wise Choices to support students and to help them understand how to navigate their social and academic challenges. The committee then added small group sessions to provide individualized instruction; large group sessions to address time management, study skills, and character lessons; and Positive Action classes to provide scaffolding tools and resources for students.

Among the students' favorite activities were the school-wide assemblies our committee organized. We invited motivational speakers such as a representative from the Teen Challenge program and Michael Lewis, the Team Ambassador of the New Orleans Saints. All of our strategies specifically addressed the information we gathered through interviews and questionnaires. We encouraged students to become more intentional about taking positive approaches to challenges they faced. Students responded to practices that highlighted appreciation and encouragement. We implemented support systems to acknowledge students' accomplishments, such as our new positive referral strategy.

Now, five years later, we can see evidence that our efforts have paid off. From the first year of implementation until this past school year, the total number of referrals has decreased by 45 percent!

Our entire team has worked hard to support the culture and climate of FPHS, and our progress speaks for itself. I am glad that I played a small part. We plan to employ this same spirit of collaboration as we seek to address the 2020-2021 school year and all the challenges it may present. In closing out this year, we all have the opportunity to analyze data to inform our next steps. I know that all of us, elementary through high school, north Louisiana to the coast, will advocate for the best ways to maintain connections and sustain best practices--regardless of how and when our students return to their school buildings. We have found that our intentional, comprehensive approach has led to fewer discipline referrals and higher standardized test scores, and I look forward to more growth in the coming years. Thanks to our efforts, we now find ourselves in a better position to engage students this coming year and continue to "Make FP a Great Place to Be!"

Susanne Beeman
School Counselor
Franklin Parish High School

Strong Start 2020

On May 1, the Department [distributed nearly \\$260 million in federal funding](#) to address unfinished learning from the 2019-2020 school year, set the foundation for continuous learning in 2020-2021, and prepare for potential modified operations in the future. To help school systems prioritize how they spend these dollars, the Department released a [guide](#) that outlines how they should build on the 2020-2021 academic plans they had developed before school facilities were closed to meet new academic and operational demands. Plans for 2020-2021 will detail how school systems use high-quality diagnostic tools and assessments to ensure every student's academic needs are identified at the beginning of the year. There shall be a plan for every student, including extra time and support for students with the greatest unfinished learning from the prior year and clear next steps for every high school student and recent graduate who will enter a new economy.

Additionally, the Department advised all school systems to have strong yet agile continuous education plans that include provisions for

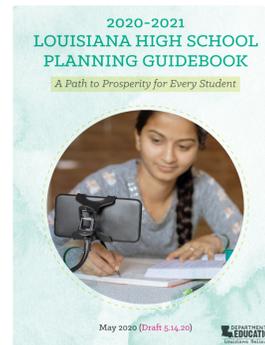
- 1:1 device and internet access;
- assistive technology for students with disabilities;
- strategic communications plans;
- versatile delivery methods for instruction, related services, and professional development;
- adaptive staffing models that optimize teaching talent and student support; and
- flexible and opportunistic calendars and school schedules that maximize learning opportunities in a dynamic public health context.

Please visit the [Strong Start 2020 web page](#) for resources to support educators and families.

2020-2021 High School Planning Guidebook

Since 2014, the Louisiana Department of Education has published the annual [Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook](#). This condensed resource consolidates the policies and programs that are most relevant to high school educators as they plan for the upcoming academic year and prepare all students for college and career success.

The 2020-2021 guidebook includes resources to help school leaders plan for student success, focus on core academics, and develop students' advanced college and workplace skills. It also includes assessment and accountability guidance, a side-by-side comparison of diploma pathways, and a newly updated Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) template. Please visit the [Louisiana Believes website](#) for all of [Louisiana's Guidebooks](#); email leslie.gilliland@la.gov with questions about the High School Planning Guidebook.



Professional Opportunities

Career and Technical Education Webinar

The Department will host a Career and Technical webinar **this Thursday, May 21, at 1:30 p.m.** The webinar will include Jump Start 2.0 implementation, Carl D. Perkins funding, Super Summer Institute digital training, continuous learning support for CTE, and Teacher Leader Summit updates.

Webinar Date and Time: 1:30 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98544142335>
Webinar Phone Number: 312-626-6799 or 346-248-7799
Meeting ID: 985 4414 2335
Meeting Password: 742078

Please email jumpstart@la.gov for more information.

Student Opportunities Office Hours

The Office of Student Opportunities is holding office hours on **Wednesdays, May 20 and 27**, to answer questions about the new 2020-2021 High School Planning Guidebook, student planning, and promotion.

Webinar Date and Time: 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/411290309>
Webinar Phone Number: 312-626-6799 or 346-248-7799
Meeting ID#: 411 290 309
Meeting Password: 031058

Please see the K-12 Webinars section of the [COVID-19 Resources Library](#) for previous Senior Credit Office Hours decks; email stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions about the Student Opportunities office hours series.

Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities

In lieu of face-to-face training opportunities, the LDOE Super Summer Institutes are being transitioned to a digital training model. The dynamic [2020 Jump Start Super Summer Institute Digital Training Opportunities guide](#) lists all professional development and training opportunities currently being offered. **This list will continue to be updated as additional training options are confirmed.** *Note: Carl Perkins and Career Development Funds are eligible funding sources for registration. Registration costs for the summer 2020 sessions are paid directly to the provider and not to the LDOE.*

Please email jumpstart@la.gov for more information.

Remote Praxis Exams

ETS is launching a solution that will allow educators to take Praxis exams at home during test center closures. The 30 most frequently used tests, such as Praxis Core and most content tests, launch on May 18. The next set of tests, including PLTs, school leadership, and professional school counselor launch in the beginning of June.

Visit the [ETS Coronavirus Praxis Testing Updates page](#) for more information.

Middle and High School News

SCA/Course Choice

The window for SCA/Course Choice providers to submit spring and full-year final grades **closes on June 30**. The date was extended to allow additional time for students to complete courses. The SCA MFP allocation for the 2019-2020 school year will not be redistributed. If school systems have unspent funds, the remaining balance will carry over for the next school year to be available for additional SCA/Course Choice enrollments.

Registration for Course Choice 2020-2021 will open on July 1. Please refer to the 2020-2021 [Preliminary Provider Directory](#) or email sca@la.gov for more information.

529 Day

With the cost of a college education continually rising, it is no longer practical for parents to solely depend on family income to cover postsecondary expenses. The [Louisiana START College Savings Plan](#) can help. START is a "qualified tuition plan" under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code.

May 29 is National 529 College Savings Plan Day. The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is celebrating with a series of social media activities May 25 - 29, 2020. Activities will focus on saving for college and understanding the importance of a college education. **Participants will have their names entered into a drawing to win \$529.** See the [529 Day flyer](#), and visit the [LOSFA 529 Day website](#) for more information. #GeauxSTARTSaving

FAFSA Now

The *FAFSA Now* campaign urges the class of 2020 to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is important for seniors to understand that the FAFSA is the application for federal aid such as the Pell Grant, work study, and federal student loans. The FAFSA is also the application for state aid such as the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) and the Louisiana GO Grant. In addition, many institutions and national scholarship programs use information from the FAFSA. The *FAFSA Now* initiative uses text messaging and social media outlets (@LOSFA: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#); @LOSFA001: [Instagram](#)) to get the word out about the importance of completing the FAFSA.

Intensive Algebra I

Incoming high school students who scored Unsatisfactory, Approaching Basic, or Low Basic on the Grade 8 LEAP 2025 should be scheduled into an Intensive [Algebra I course](#). For more information on Intensive Algebra I, visit the [K-12 Math Planning page](#). Please email rachel.mccloskey@la.gov for more information.

NCAA COVID-19 Response FAQ

The NCAA Eligibility Center has partnered with the NCAA membership to identify adjustments to the initial-eligibility certification process. Please refer to the [NCAA Eligibility Center COVID-19 Response FAQ document](#) to learn more about these adjustments. NCAA Customer Service is available to assist with questions at 877-622-2321, Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST.

In Case You Missed It

[LOUISIANA CHARTS COURSE FORWARD FOR SUMMER ACTIVITIES, CHILD CARE](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[DEPARTMENT PROVIDES RESOURCES TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO ENSURE STRONG START FOR EVERY STUDENT](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[LOWEST STUDENT-TO-SCHOOL-COUNSELOR RATIO SINCE 1986](#) (The Hechinger Report)

[CALCASIEU PARISH SCHOOLS TO ROLL OUT MOBILE HOTSPOT BUSES TO HELP WITH VIRTUAL LEARNING](#) (KPLC)

[HANDS-ON LEARNING FROM AFAR: FROM CAREER-TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HOW TEACHERS ARE ADAPTING APPLIED LEARNING AMID THE PANDEMIC](#) (The 74)

[NEW NCAN GUIDE FOR K-12: 5 ACTIONS TO TAKE RIGHT NOW TO HELP SENIORS TRANSITION AFTER GRADUATING](#) (National College Attainment Network)

Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

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