

COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



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Counselor Spotlight: Kristen St. Pierre



At Dutchtown High School, we believe in the “all hands-on deck” motto. Our five-member counseling department would not be able to adequately support our 2,530 students if we did not work together, and I truly believe that it is our team approach that ensures that students have the tools they need to succeed—especially those who select a [Jump Start](#) pathway.

As school counselors, part of our role is to serve as student advocates. We stay connected with parents, teachers, administrators, career coaches, and families to achieve this. As our school Jump Start counselor, staying connected and getting accurate information out is so important as I keep students on track to graduate. Besides ensuring students earn the 23 credits they need to graduate with a TOPS Tech career diploma, I make sure that students are taking their nine pathway electives and earning associated credentials. I could not accomplish this without building and maintaining connections.

Staying Connected with Students

I raise awareness about the Jump Start diploma track by presenting information to all English II classes and through an advisory lesson for the whole student body. To keep my Jump Start students on track and updated on their diploma requirements, I visit the classes that offer industry-based certifications (IBCs) to reiterate the importance of earning credentials. Every year I meet with each senior individually to go over their credentials and pathway electives.

Staying Connected with Teachers and Administrators

It is important that teachers and administrators are aware of all that is required for a career diploma. Before the school year begins, my counselor colleagues and I present important information to faculty. The Jump Start diploma requirements are included so that teachers are knowledgeable about these specific graduation requirements. To ensure that teachers who offer IBCs know which students need further support to graduate, I distribute a list of seniors who have not yet earned their required credentials. Keeping these teachers connected is crucial to making sure every Jump Start student graduates.

Staying Connected with Parents

It goes without saying that every parent must understand what their child needs to graduate. At the beginning of the school year, I send out letters with a list of courses with associated IBCs. I call parents while I am meeting with students about graduation requirements. Parents need to stay connected throughout the process, and I know it is up to me to keep those connections strong.

Staying Connected with Jump Start

Jump Start graduation requirements have evolved with Jump Start 2.0. Every school district has a CTE supervisor who is extremely helpful when learning new information about the pathways. My CTE supervisor meets with me frequently to make sure I have the latest information. The LDOE is another connection. For instance, the 2022 Jump Start Convention is an event that covers all the information high school counselors will need to know regarding Jump Start. I always register early so I don't miss out.

School counselors can feel pulled in all directions, and we must stay connected to everyone involved in a student's academic journey. Counselors, please reach out so that you can stay afloat! Our students need us! This is a rewarding career, and I do believe that we play a huge role in shaping our students for the future--if we just stay connected.

Kristen St. Pierre, M.Ed.
Professional School Counselor
Dutchtown High School

Professional Opportunities

2022 Jump Start Convention

The 2022 Jump Start Convention will be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at the Raising Cane's River Center in Baton Rouge. [Registration](#) is currently open and will close on December 3, or until capacity is reached. Please contact erica.spencer@la.gov with questions.

Teacher Leader Summit

Save the date for the 2022 Teacher Leader Summit: May 31 through June 2, 2022, at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. More information coming soon. Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Child Welfare and Attendance Monthly Call

Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) directors, supervisors, attendance specialists, and attendance stakeholders meet every first Wednesday of the month. The next monthly meeting will be held on December 1 at 8 a.m.

- Webinar Date and Time: 8 - 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 1
- Webinar Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99831502953?pwd=TWRkclVwMG5na1FSbGNyUE45OEEdndz09>
- Webinar Phone Number: 312-626-6799
- Meeting ID: 998 3150 2953
- Passcode: 821422

Please contact shelneka.adams@la.gov with questions.

Middle and High School News

Fast Forward

[Fast Forward](#) is a program that allows students to earn an associate degree or participate in a state approved pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship in high school. There are currently [39 BESE-approved pathways](#) which can be used statewide with the approved postsecondary and apprenticeship organizations. Assistance is available for schools/school systems that want to adopt a currently approved pathway or begin developing new pathways to present for approval. There are regional webinars the second week of each month for schools/school systems. Please contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions or to get the links for technical assistance sessions.

Financial Aid Planning

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) opened on October 1. Completing the application early is imperative to ensure students get the maximum aid available to them. Schools/school systems can get live, phone or online assistance with FAFSA completion events from the Department. FAFSA completion or having a waiver on file is a requirement for graduation and to count in the graduation cohort. Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov for more information or to set up an assistance visit.

In Case You Missed It

[LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LAUNCHES THE BE ENGAGED INITIATIVE](#)

(Louisiana Believes)

[LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ALLOCATES \\$5.4 MILLION IN ACCELERATING SCHOOLS FUNDING](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[THE 'ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL' ROLE OF BLACK COUNSELORS ON CAMPUS](#) (EdSource)