

COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



February 2021

In This Issue

- [Counselor Spotlight: Isis Muhammad](#)
- [Family Opportunities](#)
- [Student Opportunities](#)
- [Professional Opportunities](#)
- [Middle and High School News](#)
- [In Case You Missed It](#)

Counselor Spotlight: Isis Muhammad



I have worked in education for over ten years, and I have noticed that many first-year school counselors do not have a built-in support structure in their schools. It seems that the expectation is that we walk in Day 1 as experts, knowing all the things and knowing how to do all the things. It is really tough being in a new position and being expected to be an expert right away. Some of it we put on ourselves. Actually, **much** of it is what we put on ourselves. (It's okay. We can talk about imposter syndrome another day.) You do not have to be an expert! It is okay to say, "You know, I'm not sure," "This is new to me," or "Let's figure it out together." After all, counselors are solution-focused.

Now that I am no longer considered a new school counselor, I have a few tips for school counselors who are just starting their journey.

Balance being a team player while establishing boundaries.

Be clear from the start that you are there to serve all school stakeholders and that you value a team approach when helping children be socially and academically successful in school. Pitching in to help with small things is a great way to start with this. At the same time, it is important to begin to establish boundaries early on. It's easier to do it in the beginning than after you have already taken on more than you should. For example, volunteering to stay late for some after school events? That's being a team player, but it could also lead some people to think that you are always free after school. One of the most important boundaries to establish is the one around your work time at school. For example, my "staffulty" (staff and faculty) know that meeting with our college and career events come first and that I don't cancel them for anything less than an emergency (specifically an emergency that no one else is capable of handling).

Emphasize your relationships with teachers.

Having a good relationship with your teachers can make or break a lot of things, including the success of your counseling program, your happiness, and your sense of competence. This does not mean you have to be close friends with every teacher in your school. You need your teachers to trust you – trust your vision, trust you to do what is best for their students, and trust you not to step on their toes. One of the best things you can do is to show your colleagues how your work helps their work. Value your relationships.

Don't be afraid to reach out for help.

You cannot do it alone. You need to find two groups of people. The first group is “your people” in the building—the people on the same wavelength as you, people with whom you feel supported. For me, this is my co-counselor, the registrar, our co-principals, the literacy coach, and our data manager. Over the years I have had teachers that I connected with in this way. You will probably cry at school, and it is really nice to know where you can do that. (You will probably cry every year, and that's ok.)

The second group of people you need to find is “counseling clique” —counseling colleagues outside of your school. I have a group of counselors that I correspond with regularly. I have met some counselors during my supervision, and some from Facebook groups. These people are incredibly important to me, my growth, and my well-being. Consulting with counseling colleagues is something we should do regularly!

Grant yourself grace (the same grace you grant everyone else.)

You are a beautiful and well-intentioned human who will make mistakes. It is inevitable. And it is ok. Apologize, do better next time, and let yourself move on. This is easier said than done, but it is crucial to grant ourselves the same grace that we grant to everyone else around us.

You've got this! You have the honor and privilege of impacting hundreds of lives. You are going to do amazing things.

Isis Muhammad, PLPC
School Counselor, Sarah T. Reed High School

Family Opportunities

Kinship Care Resources

Louisiana 211 has partnered with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services to support relatives and fictive kin who are providing care to children.

Please share the [kinship flyer](#) with these caregivers and encourage them to **dial 211** or **text KINSHIPLA to 898-211** to identify themselves as a person providing care for a relative or fictive kin child. Louisiana 211 will provide information about available resources in their area.

Louisiana 211 is a confidential, free service that is available in every parish, 24/7. Please visit the [Louisiana 211 Statewide Network](#) page for more information about 211 services in your area. Language translation services are available.

Student Opportunities

Construction Connect Scholars Program: Application Deadline Extended

The Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program—the state’s first and only scholarship dedicated exclusively to Jump Start graduates—is a program of the Louisiana Construction Education Foundation (LCEF), Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). This scholarship will assist graduates in gaining the necessary training to earn industry employment in construction crafts fields that align with four- and five-star jobs that may lead to management positions.

- Eligibility: any high school senior with an NCCER credential who will earn a Jump Start Career Diploma and enroll in an LCTCS construction pathway program or an ABC training program in the summer or fall semester immediately following high school graduation
- Award Amount: up to thirty one-time scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each

The application deadline has been extended to April 12, 2021. Please review the [Construction Connect Scholars Program Application](#) or email megan.thompson2@la.gov for more information.

Girls Who Code Summer Immersion Program

The 2021 [Summer Immersion Program](#) (SIP) is a free, two-week virtual program for rising sophomore, junior and senior girls and non-binary students to build a coding portfolio, meet industry employees, and build community with other peers. Girls Who Code is committed to ensuring equity and diversity across all of their programs; over 50% of the students they serve are from historically underrepresented groups.

Please share the [SIP flyer](#) with girls and non-binary students from underrepresented groups in tech (Black, Latinx, students from low-income backgrounds) and encourage them to apply early.

Participants will

- Join a sisterhood of supportive peers and make lifelong friendships;
- Learn how to use HTML, CSS, and Javascript coding skills to make an impact on what matters to them; and
- Meet women in tech from top corporations such as Disney, AT&T and Twitter.

Student can join for free! In addition, Girls Who Code will provide need-based tech support for those who qualify. For more information, [join a webinar](#) and/or visit the [FAQ page](#).

Louisiana Young Heroes: Reminder

Louisiana Public Broadcasting is accepting nominations for the 26th annual [Louisiana Young Heroes](#) program through **Monday, March 15, 2021**. Please visit lpb.org/heroes to submit a nomination.

Virtual College Fairs: Reminder

BigFuture Days connect high school sophomores and juniors with hundreds of colleges, admissions officers, and current college students. Presented by College Board, these events help students establish connections and take action on important college planning tasks. Students and educators may register for multiple events. The West and Southwest events have passed, but there are two scheduled in March.

- Sunday, March 7: **Northeast** 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. CST

- Thursday, March 11: **Midwest** 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. CST

College Board has created an [educator toolkit](#) to help schools spread the word. Please visit the [BigFuture Days web pages](#) for more information.

HOBY Leadership Program: Reminder

The Louisiana Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar (HOBY) is seeking nominations for their annual three-day summer leadership seminar. For over 40 years, this summer program has hosted rising juniors from across the state for an immersive leadership development experience. Participants will hear from local leaders, engage in team-building activities, learn how to build effective service projects, and experience peer-to-peer learning. Please email recruitment@hobylouisiana.org to join the HOBY mailing list for more information; visit bit.ly/hobylareg to register a student from your school.

Professional Opportunities

2021 Individual Graduation Planning Seminar

The 2021 Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar is at **9:00 a.m. on March 9, 2021**. The LDOE will provide attendees with an overview of Louisiana IGP policies and recent legislative updates. Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) will demonstrate how school counselors can use LWC resources.

When: Mar 9, 2021 09:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Topic: IGP Webinar

Register in advance at https://doe.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_62_q0eHFQtK9pwwQDBp_ig

Registrants will receive an email with the webinar link after they register. The Zoom recording and slide deck will be available for those who cannot join. Please email leslie.gilliland@la.gov for support.

Counselor Institute Deck

Thanks to all who were able to attend the Spring Virtual Counselor Institute! The [deck](#) is available in the System Support section of the [Counselor Support Library](#).

Middle and High School News

NCCER ICTP/Core Instructor Training

NCCER ICTP/Core teacher certification will be held virtually **March 1 – 5** and continues **March 8 – 12, 2021**. Chance Plaisance, NCCER Master Trainer will serve as the instructor. The master trainer will work with craft instructors to complete performance profiles.

To receive the registration link, documentation of skill of the requested craft is required. Email the NCCER card number and any one or all of the following items to troy.borne@la.gov.

- Résumé with industry experience and professional contacts to verify experience in requested craft area(s)
- Diploma with transcript from postsecondary institution in requested craft area(s)
- Registered apprenticeship in requested craft area(s)

The cost of the certification class for ICTP/Core is \$600.00. Perkins and/or CDF funds may be utilized for training costs. Registration costs will be paid via the registration link provided. Instructors that only need ICTP or Core should reach out to troy.borne@la.gov; email troy.borne@la.gov for more information.

Jump Start Summers 2021

The [Jump Start Summers](#) program will be available to launch summer training sessions for students to participate in work-based learning, earn a student stipend for participation and Carnegie credit aligned to [Fast Forward pathways](#), Jump start 2.0 coursework, and statewide basic or advanced credentials.

The window to submit an [application](#) as a prospective or returning Jump Start Summers provider will close on March 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. The encumbered Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) dollars can be used for this opportunity. Please email jumpstart@la.gov for more information.

Financial Aid Planning

As a requirement of the IGP planning process throughout high school, every senior, as a requirement for graduation, must complete a FAFSA or have a waiver in place.

The FAFSA is the form for state and federal financial aid for postsecondary endeavors. Waivers will be checked during the verification process and must be present for students to count in the cohort graduation rate. Currently there have not been any COVID-19 modifications of initial or continuing TOPS eligibility requirements for the 2020-2021 academic year; however, any modifications of this nature would have to come from the Governor and/or legislative action. Please email ldefinancialaid@la.gov for assistance with financial aid planning.

SCA/Course Choice Spring Registration

All dual enrollment with postsecondary providers must be reported to sca@la.gov by March 3, 2021. This ensures the school system will utilize their SCA allocation to fund tuition before reallocation. Please email sca@la.gov for more information.

AP Exam Update Webinar

The Department is hosting a webinar on [AP Exam Updates](#) on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 11 am. This webinar will discuss the new administration dates for AP Exams, along with the technical requirements for offering the digital version of AP exams.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Wednesday, March 3 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97379365051?pwd=OXN0dUh5bUZBWEovSFEwM2g4MIFZUT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 973 7936 5051
- **Passcode:** 164438
- **Phone Number:** +1 470 381 2552
- **One tap mobile:**
 - o +14703812552,,97379365051#,,,,*164438# US (Atlanta)
 - o +13126266799,,97379365051#,,,,*164438# US (Chicago)

Please email meredith.mcGovern@la.gov with questions.

NCAA Survey

In an effort to improve service to the high school community, the NCAA Eligibility Center invites you to complete a brief survey. This survey seeks feedback about your interactions with staff and processes, and provides respondents an opportunity to provide NCAA with information on any difficult cases you had

last year and inform them about how they can better assist you. The survey takes less than ten minutes to complete. Please complete the [High School Survey](#) before March 31, 2021.

In Case You Missed It

[LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHARTS AMBITIOUS COURSE FORWARD WITH NEW PRIORITIES PLAN](#) (Louisiana Believes)

[PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS](#) (Diverse Issues in Higher Education)

[PAYING FOR COLLEGE CAN BE OVERWHELMING. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO FIND AN AFFORDABLE OPTION](#) (Time)