

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

March 2021

## In This Issue

- [Counselor Spotlight](#)
- [Pupil Progression Plans](#)
- [Student Opportunities](#)
- [Professional Opportunities](#)
- [Middle and High School News](#)

## Counselor Spotlight: Erica Spencer



Over the years I have caught myself saying, “I’m just the counselor,” and “but we’re only counselors.” I know you can probably recall those times too. It wasn’t until a colleague and dear friend of mine “pulled the scales off of my eyes” that I began considering the connotations. She would say, “You are not *just* a counselor. Every additional duty you have performed has molded you into a transformative educational leader.” Well friends, I was bold enough to believe her! If my story is an indication of where our profession is going, the future is looking bright!

I don’t have to tell you that school counselors wear many hats. We often serve as testing coordinators for state and national examinations, 504 coordinators, ODRs for IEP meetings, dual enrollment coordinators, and sometimes, even the creators of the master schedule. Due to the level of expertise required for those roles, the after-school hours we put in, and the decisions made within those aforementioned roles, oftentimes, we are looked at by teachers, students and parents as having the authority of an administrator.

In October 2020, I interviewed for an early college counselor position at a high school. The job description was very similar to a typical high school counselor, but when I interviewed with the school’s CEO, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of respect and value they placed on their school counselors. So, while I am the early college counselor and fulfill all duties as such, my official title is Assistant Principal of College and Career Readiness. The explanation behind my title is that, because of the roles I am expected to fulfill, the organization wants the position to be respected by all stakeholders as that of an administrator.

Not all counselors want to be perceived as administrators, and many stakeholders, particularly at the district level, don’t see us in that manner. In some settings, that is a very good thing! In schools where we are able to focus on our student caseloads and the mental health services that we provide, an administrative title might portray the wrong idea to the school community. In the eight plus years I spent

as a high school counselor in both Tangipahoa and St. Tammany Parish Schools, my colleagues and I had the opportunity to make a lot of impactful decisions for students in ways that may not have been possible if our students and colleagues considered us a part of the administration.

Regardless of the roles we fill, it is crucial that every one of us remembers that we are more than just counselors to our school communities!

Erica K. Spencer, M.Ed.  
School Counselor, Assistant Principal of College and Career Readiness  
GEO Next Generation High School

## Pupil Progression Plans

### **2021-2022 Pupil Progression Plan Webinar**

The Pupil Progression Plan (PPP) is the comprehensive plan developed and adopted by each school system, based on student performance. The plan also addresses student placement, promotion, retention, and specific policy decisions of the school system.

The Department will hold two webinars to address submission of the 2021-2022 PPP. These presentations are being offered on two dates with the same content. Please select the session that works best for your schedule. The PPP template will be posted in the School Policy library in early April.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 6 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/93454423348>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-381-2552
- **Meeting ID:** 934 5442 3348
  
- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 13 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97684188992>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-250-9358
- **Meeting ID:** 976 8418 8992

Please contact [ppp@la.gov](mailto:ppp@la.gov) with questions.

## Student Opportunities

### **Community Service Opportunities**

Volunteering may look a little different to Louisiana's students due to the Coronavirus. Students are seeking opportunities to volunteer online or from their home to ensure they are meeting safety guidelines. Please refer students to the [Community Service Opportunities](#) document for ways they can volunteer safely and still assist their community during the global pandemic; email [megan.thompson2@la.gov](mailto:megan.thompson2@la.gov) for support.

### **Visual Art and Songwriting Contest**

The Trombone Shorty Foundation and George Rodrigue Foundation sponsor Songwriting Competition for high school junior and senior students. A panel of celebrity judges will select three finalists to share \$6000 in college scholarships.

Louisiana students are invited to create works of art and music which are inspired by their reflections on this past year.

- How has disaster and disease shaped art and music throughout history?
- How has your life changed as a result of COVID-19?
- What does social distancing and quarantine mean to you?
- What has been the most difficult part of this year for you?
- What do you miss most about life before COVID-19?
- What is your hope for the future?

**The deadline for both contests is April 9.** Please visit the George Rodrigue Foundation [scholarship web page](#) for more information.

### **Jump Start Construction Scholars Program Applications Deadline Extended**

The Louisiana Construction Education Foundation (LCEF) Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program is accepting [applications](#) for up to forty \$1,000 scholarships. The scholarship is geared toward students who have earned the Jump Start Diploma, earned a National Center for Construction Education and Research credential and plan to enroll in an LCTCS campus on a construction pathway or in an Associated Builders and Contractors training program. **Applications are due April 12.**

**This is the state's first and only scholarship dedicated exclusively to Jump Start graduates.** This effort is a collaboration of LCEF, LCTCS and LDOE. Please contact [megan.thompson2@la.gov](mailto:megan.thompson2@la.gov) with questions.

### **Dudley DeBosier Scholarship**

Each year, Dudley DeBosier awards eight \$1,000 scholarships for written essays and one \$2,000 Public Service Announcement scholarship. **Eligible students** are high school students who are expected to graduate in the same school year and are attending a college or university within one year of graduation. All applicants must meet the minimum admissions standards of an educational institution. **The application deadline is April 30, 2021.** Winners will be contacted by May 14, 2021. Please visit [DudleyDeBosier.com/scholarship](http://DudleyDeBosier.com/scholarship) for more information.

## Professional Opportunities

### **Pre-Educator Pathway Webinar**

The Department will host monthly webinars to support schools and systems in the development and expansion of the [Pre-Educator Pathway](#) and other Grow Your Own opportunities. We encourage school counselors to join this month's webinar as we will discuss best practices in pathway student recruitment and scheduling.

### **Pre-Educator Pathway Support Series Webinar #2: Student Recruitment & Engagement**

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 30; 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/3455048179>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 470-381-2552 or 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 345 504 8179

For more information about the pathway, contact [believeandprepare@la.gov](mailto:believeandprepare@la.gov).

## **2021 Individual Graduation Planning Seminar**

All middle and high school counselors are encouraged to attend the (rescheduled) 2021 Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) Webinar on either **March 31 or April 7, from 9 until 11 a.m.** Topics include an overview of Louisiana IGP policies, recent updates to Act 238, and LWC resources for school counselors. A Zoom recording and deck will be available to those unable to attend.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** March 31 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/95873761113>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 958 7376 1113
- **Passcode:** 326318
  
- **Webinar Date and Time:** April 7 at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/98761399712>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 987 6139 9712
- **Passcode:** 156512

Please email [leslie.gilliland@la.gov](mailto:leslie.gilliland@la.gov) for support.

## **Louisiana Aspiring Principal Fellowship Applications Due March 31**

The Louisiana Department of Education is supporting school systems across the state in developing future school leaders. The Aspiring Principal Fellowship is a new initiative that will prepare educators and staff to build the leadership skills essential to the principal role. Applicants should be eligible for or hold an EDL1 certification in Louisiana. This selective statewide fellowship is rooted in Louisiana's five priorities:

- Ensure every student is on track to a professional career, college degree, or service.
- Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children.
- Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment.
- Develop and retain a diverse, highly effective educator workforce.
- Cultivate high-impact systems, structures, and partnerships

APF cohort participants will meet monthly (Orientation at Teacher Leader Summit, commencing monthly in October) and explore best practices with regional experts, school visits, theory, and reflection. Participants will exit this 12-day fellowship with a robust leadership portfolio, the guidance of Louisiana's most successful principals, individualized coaching, and a strong network of lifelong colleagues.

School systems are asked to cover the costs of the \$2500 tuition for presenters and materials, as well as travel costs. Interested candidates should complete the [Aspiring Principal Fellowship Application](#) no later than March 31. Please contact [louisianaleaders@la.gov](mailto:louisianaleaders@la.gov) with questions.

## **NCCER ICTP/Core Instructor Training**

NCCER ICTP/core teacher certification will be held virtually April 12-16 and continues April 19-23. NCCER Master Trainer Chance Plaisance 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. The NCCER card number and any one or all of the following should be submitted to [troy.borne@la.gov](mailto:troy.borne@la.gov):

- Résumé with industry experience including 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. Instructors that only need ICTP or Core should reach out to [troy.borne@la.gov](mailto:troy.borne@la.gov). Registration costs will be paid via the registration link provided. Perkins and/or CDF funds may be utilized for training costs. For more information, please contact [troy.borne@la.gov](mailto:troy.borne@la.gov).

### **Freshman Academy Webinar**

On Tuesday, April 20, the LDOE will host a one-hour webinar entitled “Who’s on First: Leading an Effective Freshman Academy.” The session will be led by a panel of Louisiana-based administrators: Jemi Carlone of Belle Chasse High School, Lauren LeDuff of Warren Easton High School and Lindsey Spence of Zachary High School. Topics discussed will highlight strategies aligning to four key areas:

- Student Centered Experiences
- Academic Support
- Human Capital
- Ongoing Professional Learning

The panel will be moderated by Raphael Curtis from the LDOE and Tara Madden, Chief Program Manager of Talent Development Secondary.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Tuesday, April 20 from 2:00 pm until 3:00 pm
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91519447782?>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 915 1944 778
- **Passcode:** 557090

Please email [raphael.curtis@la.gov](mailto:raphael.curtis@la.gov) for more information.

## **Middle and High School News**

### **LEAP 2025 Graduation Regulatory Flexibility Options for 2020-2021**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has granted [LEAP 2025 graduation regulatory flexibility options](#) for high school seniors to meet the LEAP 2025 and Career Diploma IBC credentialing requirements. These opportunities are available to high school seniors who meet the following qualifications:

1. Met all other graduation requirements
2. Attempted all LEAP 2025 assessments at least one time
3. Were enrolled during the spring 2021 semester and are graduating by August 31, 2021

All high school seniors who meet the qualifications listed above have the option to substitute the following in lieu of the LEAP 2025 high school assessment requirement and/or Career Diploma credential requirement:

### **LEAP 2025 Substitution Opportunities**

1. An ACT composite score of 17 or higher for all students; or
2. An ACT subject score of 17 or higher in the corresponding LEAP 2025 high school assessment; or
3. A score of Silver or better on ACT WorkKeys for students pursuing a Career Diploma; or

4. The student participates in 20 or more extended learning hours per LEAP 2025 high school assessment subject pair for which the student has yet to achieve level 2 (approaching basic/fair) or above, with such instruction provided by a qualified teacher. A template will be provided to LEAs to document the extended learning hours and the level of achievement.
  - a. School systems will determine the number of extended learning hours needed (minimum 20) and the assessment method used to determine whether or not the student is performing at the equivalent of Approaching Basic.
  - b. Qualified teacher is defined as holding a valid and current teaching certification or a final COMPASS evaluation of Effective: Emerging or better.

**Career Diploma IBC Credentialing Requirement Opportunity**

WorkKeys Silver and above can also substitute for an IBC credential for the purpose of meeting graduation requirements for Career Diploma students.

Please review the [dynamic FAQs](#) for more information; email questions to [highschoolacademics@la.gov](mailto:highschoolacademics@la.gov).

**Counselor Updates from ACT**

ACT has a monthly newsletter that includes the latest test information, blogs, links to webinars, and information about ACT trainings, products, and services. To receive ACT updates directly from lease sign up to receive the newsletter on the [ACT Toolkit](#) web page.