

# COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for  
Louisiana's Professional  
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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## Counselor Spotlight: Tristen Bergholtz



Welcome back to the 2019-2020 school year! I am excited to see how my students and those around the state grow this year academically, personally, and in their career and college planning.

I recently made the switch from middle to high school counseling and realized very quickly how much more growth and knowledge I needed to gain in order to best serve my high school students. I am fortunate to have an extensive network of school counseling colleagues to rely upon to answer my questions. Additionally, the Louisiana Believes [website](#) provides a wealth of information about diploma pathways, financial aid, and individual graduation plans. As a result, I'm constantly referring to the [All Things Jump Start page](#), the [Financial Aid Library](#), and various Department [webinars](#). I also consult publications from regional, state, and [national](#) organizations while listening closely to the needs of my new school family.

As a whole, this is an exciting time for Louisiana school counselors. We have such an important role in moving student outcomes in a [positive direction](#). Just a few examples of the improvements we've seen across the state include these impressive statistics:

- 81.4 percent of the Louisiana Class of 2018 earned a diploma within four years. That's a huge jump from the 72.3 percent of students who graduated just four years before them.
- 23 percent of the Class of 2018 entered college right after high school; more than half of that growth is from students of color.
- The Class of 2018 was number one in the nation for completing the FAFSA. They also earned more early-college credits, state-approved industry credentials, and TOPS scholarships than any other class in our state's history.

Thanks to the hard work of P-12 educators and school counselors, families, and communities across the state, Louisiana is proving that *its* students are just as capable as any other students in America. I am honored to be a part of this work, and I am thankful to be a school counselor in these exciting times.

I can't wait to see the student outcomes for the class of 2020!

## Financial Aid News

School systems across the state are hosting financial aid awareness activities to prepare for the **October 1** opening of the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).

In order to celebrate successes and share ideas, the Department has highlighted several schools, school systems, students, and counselors and released a [resources toolkit](#) to help schools with their own FAFSA promotion efforts.

**How is your school helping students meet their financial aid planning requirement?** Email [ldefinancialaid@la.gov](mailto:ldefinancialaid@la.gov) to share your news and/or to request support for your events.

## Student Scholarship and Award Opportunities

### **Bridging the Dream Scholarship: September 26 Deadline Approaching**

There is still time to submit nominations for Sallie Mae's Bridging the Dream Scholarship. **The nomination period ends at 4:00 p.m. on September 26.**

The scholarship committee is looking for high school juniors and seniors who

- work hard and positively impact their community,
- have an interesting story to tell,
- are gifted or skilled in some way, but
- may not have the funds they need to fulfill their dreams.

Visit [SallieMae.com/BridgingTheDream](http://SallieMae.com/BridgingTheDream) to nominate a student, or contact Christie Smith at [Christie.Smith@SallieMae.com](mailto:Christie.Smith@SallieMae.com) or 318-233-6294 or more information.

### **Student of the Year Awards: October 1 Deadline Approaching**

The Department recently released revised [guidelines](#) for the 2020 Student of the Year program. The Student of the Year Awards Program recognizes outstanding elementary, middle/junior high, and high school students who have demonstrated excellent academic and/or career and technical achievements, leadership ability, and citizenship.

Please reach out to your school system's student of the year coordinator(s) to ensure they have emailed the [District/LEA Information Form](#) to [marian.johnson@la.gov](mailto:marian.johnson@la.gov) by **October 1**, and please share the [program memo](#) with parents of students who are eligible to participate in the program.

### **U. S. Senate Youth Program: October 1 Deadline Approaching**

Two outstanding students from Louisiana will be selected to spend a week in Washington, D.C. in March of 2020, and each will receive a \$10,000 scholarship from the Hearst Foundation. The Department requests your assistance selecting these students.

Please distribute to juniors or seniors who hold elected or appointed offices in school or community groups listed in the [national program brochure](#) and share the [program memo](#), which includes the application and selection procedures. Please ensure that students understand the rules for this competition. For test security reasons, the secure essay topics will only be released to districts/LEAs and will not be available on our website. Please email [marian.johnson@la.gov](mailto:marian.johnson@la.gov) as soon as a student requests the essay topics.

Please email application portfolios to [marian.johnson@la.gov](mailto:marian.johnson@la.gov) no later than October 1, 2019. Finalists will be notified by October 21, 2019.

## Cooke College Scholarship

[The Cooke College Scholarship Program](#) is currently accepting applications. This opportunity is available to high-achieving high school seniors with financial need who seek to attend the nation's best four-year colleges and universities. The deadline to apply is November 13, 2019.

See the [Counselors and Educators page](#) for more information. Applicants seeking assistance with application platform should reach out to the [Common App Applicant Solutions Center](#).

Since 2000, the [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#) has awarded \$190 million in scholarships to nearly 2,500 students from 8th grade through graduate school, along with comprehensive counseling and other support services. The Foundation has also provided over \$100 million in grants to organizations that serve such students.

## Professional Development Opportunities

### Fall Counselor Institutes

Registration is now open for the Fall Counselor Institutes (formerly known as the Counselor Collaborations). Please click on the date of the event you wish to attend. **All events are from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.**

#### **Northern Region**

[emily.bradley@la.gov](mailto:emily.bradley@la.gov)

<a href="#">October 15</a>	Bossier Instructional Center 2719 Airline Dr., Bossier
<a href="#">October 16</a>	Monroe City School Board 206 Tower Dr., Monroe
<a href="#">October 17</a>	Allen Parish School Board <i>(location change)</i> 1111 West 7th Ave., Oberlin

#### **Southern Region**

[lee.smith@la.gov](mailto:lee.smith@la.gov)

<a href="#">October 22</a>	Acadia Parish Education Center 2402 N. Parkerson Ave., Crowley
<a href="#">October 23</a>	Jefferson Parish Public School System Administration Building 501 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey
<a href="#">October 24</a>	East Baton Rouge Parish School System <i>(location change)</i> Professional Development Center, Building C 3000 N. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Baton Rouge

### **Tentative Agenda Topics**

- Network updates/dates to remember
- New dropout corrections information
- Individual graduation plans
- New STEM pathways
- Financial aid planning
- EMS and EMR differences
- AP changes and reminders
- Jump Start updates and reminders
- Quest for Success trainings and timeline
- LEAP 2025 requirements

- Transitional ninth grade
- CTE Leadership Academy

Please email [leslie.gilliland@la.gov](mailto:leslie.gilliland@la.gov) with questions about the content of the institutes; reach out to your regional contact with questions about locations and logistics.

## **High School Planning Guide and IGP Webinars**

Did you miss the recent [High School Planning Guide](#) and [IGP](#) webinars? The presentation slides are available in the [Counselor Support Library](#).

## **LCA Annual Conference**

Participants can still register for the [Louisiana Counseling Association \(LCA\)](#) annual conference on site. Held at the New Orleans Sheraton Hotel September 29 through October 1, 2019, this year's theme is *Together We Thrive: Revitalize, Rejuvenate, and Invigorate*. Attendees can expect the latest information in the field and opportunities to earn continuing education clock hours. Participants can also increase their professional skills and earn continuing education clock hours at the Saturday [pre-conference learning institutes](#) on September 28.

Please visit the [LCA Conference](#) web page for more information.

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# Middle and High School News

## **AP Coordinator Exam Order Training Dates**

The *preferred* Advanced Placement (AP) exam ordering deadline is Friday, October 4. Please register for one of the remaining Q&A sessions [on the webinar registration site](#).

- Wednesday, September 25 at 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, October 2 at 8:00 a.m.
- Thursday, October 10 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 3 at 3:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 6 at 11:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, November 12 at 8:00 a.m.

The *final deadline* for submitting AP exam orders is **Friday, November 15**. Please email [collegereadiness@la.gov](mailto:collegereadiness@la.gov) for more information about Advanced Placement.

## **Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA)/Course Choice**

MFP allocations for SCA/Course Choice can be found in [Table 4 of the 2019-2020 MFP budget letter](#). SCA funds can be used for academic, AP/honors/advanced, career-focused, remedial, or dual enrollment coursework.

Please document fall and full-year course enrollments with Course Choice and dual enrollment providers in the [SCA Portal](#) by 5:00 p.m on September 27. Please email [sca@la.gov](mailto:sca@la.gov) with questions.

## **CLEP Preparation and Exam Funding**

The [Modern States Education Alliance](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making college more accessible and affordable. Its Freshman Year for Free™ program offers interested students **free** online courses to prepare for CLEP exams. College professors from across the country teach high-quality college courses that include online lectures, quizzes, and other instructional features. Upon successful completion of the course and practice exam, Modern States will pay the student's CLEP exam fee. The length of each course is six to eight weeks.

Please email [collegereadiness@la.gov](mailto:collegereadiness@la.gov) for more information, and encourage students to [register and enroll](#) to start saving time and money on their college degree.

## Resources for Louisiana Middle and High School Counselors

- [All Things Jump Start](#)
- [Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Policy Page](#)
- [Counselor Support Library](#)
- [Funding My Future web page](#)
- [Louisiana Believes Newsroom](#)
- [Louisiana Education Loan Authority](#)
- [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)
- [Month-by-Month Assessment Checklist](#)
- [Sallie Mae Paying for College resource](#)
- [School System Support Calendar](#)

## Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs

Throughout the month of October, the [Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council \(SILC\)](#) is hosting a series of Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs as part of [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\)](#).

These events are open to anyone interested in learning more about the career opportunities and resources available in their community. Please see the [Inclusion Job and Resource Fairs Schedule](#) for locations. All events are from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

## NCAA Resources and Reminders

### Resources

- The newest edition of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) [Guide for High School Counselors](#) defines the role of the high school counselor in the initial-eligibility process and outlines the requirements for competing in NCAA Division I or II athletics. This is a free resource for both experienced counselors and those new to high school counseling.
- The [School Presentation Resources web page](#) helps counselors, coaches, and administrators give detailed presentations about meeting academic and amateurism requirements. Resources include an initial-eligibility presentation, brochure, and quick reference sheets; the website registration checklist; and the 2019-2020 Guide for the College-Bound Athlete.

### Reminders

- Student-athletes who want to play college sports must [register](#) with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).
  - Student-athletes who want to compete at an NCAA Division I or II school, make official visits to a school, or sign a national letter of intent must create a Certification Account. *Students who are eligible for a [waiver](#) of the \$90 registration fee should indicate that when they are completing their registration.*
  - Student-athletes who are currently unsure which division they want to compete in or plan to compete at a Division III school should create a **free** Profile Page.
- Student-athletes who will be enrolling at a Division I or II school starting in Winter/Spring 2019 must log into their account and complete the "request final amateurism certification" in their Eligibility Center account.

## In Case You Missed It

[OFF THE CUFF PODCAST SPECIAL EPISODE: HOW HAS MANDATING THE FAFSA PLAYED OUT IN LOUISIANA?](#) (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators)

[MEET THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR WHO RAPPER TRAVIS SCOTT SAYS SAVED HIS LIFE](#) (Houston Chronicle)

[MAJORITY OF LOUISIANA SCHOOL BOARD SEATS UP FOR GRABS IN OCTOBER; WILL SHAPE DIRECTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS](#) (The Advocate)

[LOUISIANA K-12 SCHOOLS GET 'PANIC BUTTON' APP](#) (The News Star)

[LETTERS: LA. ON RIGHT COURSE WITH COLLEGE CREDITS](#) (The Advocate)

[HARVARD EDCAST: REDEFINING SCHOOL COUNSELING](#) (Harvard Graduate School of Education)

[NUMBER OF LOUISIANA GRADUATES ENROLLING IN COLLEGE CLIMBS TO ALL-TIME HIGH](#)  
(Louisiana Believes)