

COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



May 2022

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Counselor Spotlight: Tracy Smith



Welcome to one of the most anticipated seasons of them all, summer. For several of us, this is the time when we unwind, rest, and reboot ourselves for the next year. We will be spending more time with family, cooking in the backyard, and the dreaded task of cleaning. There is something about summer that just brings the life out of us, isn't there? Well, those sun-filled, warm-breeze days are here with us yet again (thank goodness) and of course you will be looking for fun summer activities and things to do. Besides sunbathing, walking around in those cute sundresses and letting the sand run through your toes relax the mind, body, and soul.

In our society, there's an underlying expectation to go, go faster, go relentlessly. Rest is considered indulgent, and most people feel guilty when taking a minute for themselves. Work and school are non-negotiable, and if you are a parent, like myself, you have even less time for rest. The concept of slowing down can become foreign or at least hard to obtain. With babies to feed, bills to pay, a new job to perform in, how are we expected to rest? Thankfully, there are practical ways to incorporate some downtime into even the craziest of schedules. Making time for rest can recharge your ability to deal with commitments, relationships and impact your overall health. This is because your mind and body are intrinsically connected.

COVID-19 has forced us into numerous opportunities and made changes more quickly than ever before. I am a first year school counselor at Tensas Elementary. Furthermore, this is the inaugural year for a counselors' presence to be felt on the campus. As a first year school counselor, I have set up group therapy and individual counseling sessions. Social emotional learning lessons such as making new

friends, bullying, conflict resolution, anger management, and defiance are a few of the lessons I have administered at the school.

As we slow down and reflect, our focus must be on the children. Purposely reflect on the good the children have produced. I often dwell on the positive vibes that are produced on the campus. Even though this can be difficult at times, just know that you are making a difference. We must continue to capture motivational moments and let them fill our hearts during this time with students, faculty, and staff.

We as counselors are given a unique platform within our professional parameters. My greatest joy erupts when I am the solution to others problems. I allow my inner passion to propel me through the difficult times. We must remind ourselves of our ultimate destiny and use this as fuel to motivate us to persevere. As I continue to orchestrate the smiles on students' faces, or even lend a listening ear to the students, Always know counselors have a purpose and the students need us.

I have assisted parents by providing information regarding available community resources, sharing information about their child within the boundaries of my professional ethics, and review student academic progress. I definitely work with staff members to identify certain students. Students are identified and assisted through emotional and psychological difficulties. I am often found sitting in on parent/teacher conferences too. If there are professional referrals to outside agencies needed, I will initiate the paperwork. I work with students that do not have adequate study habits. I assist students in setting attainable goals also. As one may realize, school counselors are essential to a healthy school environment.

Tracy Smith
Professional School Counselor
Tensas Elementary School
tracy.smith@tensaspsb.org

How are you welcoming students and families to your office? Thanks for sharing your door Tracy Smith of Tensas Elementary!



Student Opportunities

Career Waves2: Optimize Your Resume for Applicant Tracking Systems!

Learn to get past the digital barrier between you and your dream job. Students are encouraged to [register](#) for this virtual event. Students will discover how applicant tracking systems (ATS) work and how to select keywords to maximize their chances for success. They will explore how their choice of formatting, fonts, and graphics can trip up the ATS.

Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Time: 11 a.m.

Please visit the [Career Waves2](#) portal for more information.

Professional Opportunities

Teacher Leader Summit

In less than 30 days, Louisiana's educators will come together at the Teacher Leader Summit in New Orleans. Educators will have an opportunity to hear from the [keynote speakers](#), Stephen M.R. Covey and Juliana Urtubey.

All registered participants must reserve a seat within WhoVA to attend [sessions](#) during the Teacher Leader Summit. Session capacity is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Evening networking socials are also available on May 31 and June 1. For details on how to reserve a seat, as well as prepare for arrival, attendees can use these [recommendations](#).

The City of New Orleans has lifted the mask, vaccine, and test requirements as of March 21. Under the [updated guidelines](#), Teacher Leader Summit will not require masks, vaccines, or tests.

Please contact LDOEvents@la.gov with questions.

Child Welfare and Attendance

Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) directors, supervisors, and all attendance stakeholders meet monthly.

CWAs are provided with relevant professional development, resources, and tools to support students and families within their systems. As members of the Louisiana Attendance Alliance, CWAs are afforded evidence-based, best-practices to address chronic absence and encourage family engagement during these meetings.

Date: Wednesday, June 1, 2022, 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Link: <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/96850945547?pwd=akhzVlZqVlpuZDRtTbk9yWFJXbzZ6Zz09>

Webinar ID: 968 5094 5547

Passcode: CWAJUNE

Phone Number: 470-250-9358

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

Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training

This YMHFA Instructor training is a skills-based course that teaches caring professionals and caregivers, who regularly interact with young people, how to train others to identify, support and respond to a young person in crisis and non-crisis mental health situations. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of adolescent development, common signs and symptoms of mental health needs, and a five-step action plan to address/support a young person in need.

18 CEUs Available! There will be 2 cohorts, with 16 participants each. Instructors will need to teach at least 3 times per year to keep their certification active. Please consider this when registering. In addition to the 3-day training, there will be a required 8 hours of pre/post work to be completed by each participant.

Date: June 27 - 29, 2022

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Interest Form: Click [here](#) if interested.

For questions contact natalie.fikac@austin.utexas.edu or rachel.bunch@la.gov

Special Education Advisory Panel Application Open

Please share with special education leaders, educators, parents and community stakeholders.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) application is now open. SEAP advises and assists the Louisiana Department of Education with the provision of free and appropriate public education for individuals with disabilities. It exists by authority of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide guidance on special education programs and services. Interested applicants can find the vacant roles and more information in the vacancy announcement and application, and interested applicants should apply during the month of May 2022.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Middle and High School News

Summer Learning Programs

Please share with summer learning program coordinators.

School systems should be in the final planning stages of their summer learning programs using the planning checklist located in the Summer Learning Program Guidance. During the month of May, school systems should be focused on hiring staff, planning professional development, previewing summer tutoring lessons with teachers, planning enrichment activities, confirming community involvement, developing student rosters and bus routes, as well as communicating summer learning program details to parents.

Systems may also refer to the Summer Learning Program Guidance document located in the School System Support Library for specific details about data collection for summer learning programs. Beginning this summer 2022, all CIR and UIR-A schools must provide a summer learning program that includes tutoring for all students.

Please contact keisha.thomas2@la.gov with questions.

Well-Being and Healthy Communities

Virtual Youth Suicide Safety Planning Clinical Workshop

A workshop designed to provide an overview of suicide safety intervention and its adaptation for working with youth and their family. Led by Dr. Ryan Hill, Assistant Professor of Psychology at University of Texas at San Antonio and Dr. Raymond Tucker Assistant Professor of Psychology at Louisiana State University and Director of the National Suicidology Training Center. [Registration](#) is open.

Date: May 19, 2022

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Please contact rachel.bunch@la.gov with questions.

Well-Being Monthly Call

The May call has been canceled. Use this time to prepare for TL Summit or practice some self-care. We will see you again in June.

Please contact rachel.bunch@la.gov with questions.

LDOE Virtual Therapy through Ochsner for Educators

Ochsner Anywhere Care is a secure virtual visit tool offering appointments with licensed psychologists or therapists through your smartphone, tablet or personal computer—so you can get care where and when you need it! Schedule an appointment with the provider of your choice.

What can we treat? Addiction, Adolescent Counseling, Anxiety and Panic Attacks, Attention Deficit, Disorder (ADD/ADHD), Depression and Mood Disorders, Eating Disorders, Grief and Loss Counseling, Insomnia, Marriage and Family Counseling, Postpartum Depression, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Work-related Stress

Convenient virtual therapy appointments are available Monday – Friday until 8 p.m., with additional appointment times on Saturdays.

Sign up at ldoe.ochsneranywherecare.com and enter Service Key: LDOE; Coupon Code: TEACH.

Please email anywherecare@ochsner.org or for 24/7 technical support, call 855-667-9711.

Please contact rachel.bunch@la.gov with questions.

Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnect!

Do you have any questions and you're not sure who to ask? CoCo is here to support her fellow counselors! Send all your counseling related (or unrelated) questions to CoCo and she will respond in this section. Questions will be reposted anonymously then answered. Some answers may require research, so they may not always be answered in the order in which they are received. All questions will be acknowledged; here or directly to your inbox!

Please email shelneka.adams@la.gov CoCo's assistant, all questions. The subject line should read: ASK COCO!



Reminders

Information from past Counselor Connects that you may have missed.

Jump Start Construction Scholarship Opportunity

The Jump Start Construction Connect Scholars Program is accepting applications for up to forty one-time \$1,000 scholarships. [Jump Start Construction Connect Scholarship Applications](#) are due May 20.

Applicants must:

- Have a Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma.
- Have a National Center for Construction Education and Research credential.
- Have a plan to enroll in an LCTCS campus on a construction pathway or in an Associated Builders and Contractors training program.

Please contact megan.thompson2@la.gov with questions.

Helpful Information

highschoolacademics@la.gov	General questions about the office and about graduation requirements
ldefinancialaid@la.gov	Questions related to the financial aid policy or for assistance with FAFSA completion
SCA@la.gov	Questions related to Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice

jumpstart@la.gov	Questions related to Jump Start
PPP@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression
collegereadiness@la.gov	Questions related to dual enrollment or Advanced Placement