

COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



October 2023

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Student Opportunities

Financial Aid Planning

Please share with school counselors and those responsible for FAFSA completion.

All 2024 graduating seniors must complete one of the following:

- Complete [2024-2025 FAFSA](#) application (if you want to apply for the federal Pell grant, federal student loans, the Louisiana GO Grant, and TOPS)
- Fill out a [TOPS application](#) on the LOSFA website(if you want TOPS only)
- Complete and have a waiver on file

The U.S. Department of Education is revamping the FAFSA application. The 2024-2025 application will **open in December 2023** instead of October 2023 (**this year only**).

2024-2025 FAFSA Roadmap

Please share with school system leaders, school counselors, students and families.

The 2024–2025 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) includes unprecedented changes to how students and families apply for federal student aid and how we determine eligibility, giving students a better and simpler experience with the FAFSA form. Improvements include a direct data exchange with the IRS for income data elements, a new “Who’s My Parent?” wizard, and a single consolidated portal for all FAFSA help resources.

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To help ensure that students and families—and the partners critical to getting student aid dollars into the hands of students—are best prepared for a successful [2024–2025 FAFSA cycle](#), we have launched the [Better FAFSA Better Future Roadmap](#). Please note that the 2024-2025 FAFSA will be available in December 2023.

Please contact ldfinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

New 2023-2024 Diploma Requirements

[TOPS University Diploma](#)

- Foreign Language additions
 - [Computer Science as a Foreign Language Guidance](#)
 - For Fall grade 9 entry 2023-2024 graduating in 2026-2027 and thereafter

[Jump Start TOPS Tech \(Career Diploma\) Requirements](#)

- Geometry
 - For Fall grade 9 entry 2023-2024 and thereafter, Geometry is required.
 - For grade 9 entry prior to 2023-2024, students must take three additional Math courses of which Geometry is an option.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

Bulletin 741 Jump Start Reminder

- i. Jump Start 1.0 course sequences will be available for incoming freshmen **through** 2020-2021; and
- ii. Jump Start 2.0 course sequences will be available for incoming freshmen **beginning** in 2020-2021

Policy references grade 9 entry and STS is programmed based on grade 9 entry.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

ASVAB Career Exploration Program

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The ASVAB Career Exploration Program (CEP) is a [FREE career planning resource](#) available to high schools nationwide. This comprehensive program includes one of the most widely used multiple-aptitude test batteries in the world and an interest inventory complemented by a thorough occupational database all designed to give students an in-depth look at the world of work.

To learn more about the [program components](#) or how to bring CEP to your school, call 1-800-323-0513.

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Fast Forward

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The [Fast Forward Program](#) will prepare students for current and emerging professions that expose students to high-skill, high-wage and in-demand occupations. It will assist with establishing statewide industry or sector partnerships among local educational agencies and institutions of higher education, and facilitate the establishment, expansion and integration of opportunities for students to successfully complete coursework that integrates rigorous and challenging technical and academic instruction.

Contact caronda.bean@la.gov with questions.

Proficiency by Exam/Portfolio

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

- Bulletin 741 §2314. Carnegie Credit and Credit Flexibility contains policy concerning student's earning proficiency credit by exam or portfolio
- Per policy school systems must [report](#) exams/portfolios used to award credit by proficiency
- Students may only earn credit by exam or portfolio in a course in which they have never been enrolled and received no formal instruction

Contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

National Apprenticeship Week

Please share with CTE leaders, secondary supervisors, school counselors, and high school administrators.

In celebration of National Apprenticeship Week (November 13 - 19, 2023) LOSFA will host the 2023 Virtual Apprenticeship Expo on November 8, 2023. The Expo will be from 9 - 10:30 a.m. via Zoom. This event is free but requires student registration.

Participants will receive information on apprenticeship programs, processes, benefits, and outcomes at this event. Through a series of interactive presentations from industry professionals as well as state and national workforce development administrations, students will:

1. Discover alternative pathway to high-paying and high-demand jobs,
2. Gain knowledge of soft skills necessary for workforce success

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3. Learn about Louisiana business and industry

[Download the flyer](#) with a QR Code for your students to register.

For questions about the Expo registration or technical assistance for the Expo, please contact tonya.evans@la.gov.

Professional Opportunities/Monthly Calls

2023 LCA Annual Conference

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA) is hosting their **2023 LCA (Hybrid) Annual Conference** at the Baton Rouge Crowne Plaza on October 8-10, 2023. The theme is Help. Heal. Honor. [Registration](#) is now open, and [possible CE hours](#) are available.

Please contact [Louisiana Counseling Association](#) with any questions.

Fall 2023 Counselor Institute

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

Registration for the Fall 2023 Counselor Institute sessions is open. Please invite your CTE Supervisor to join in conversations regarding pathway collaboration. **Each participant must register individually through Eventbrite**; registration is on a first come, first served basis. Maximum registration is based on location capacity.

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Date	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.	1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
October 24	West Monroe	Bossier
October 25	Rapides	Lafayette
October 26	St. Tammany	East Baton Rouge

Contact angela.jordan@la.gov with questions.

Office of Career and College Readiness Monthly Call

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

A monthly webinar hosted by the Office of Career and College Readiness is held at 3 p.m. the 3rd Thursday of the month, and focuses on sharing updates around the various work streams within the office. Slide decks from previous calls may be found in the [Monthly Call Library](#).

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, October 19; 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92322549210>
- **Phone Number:** (312) 626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 923 2254 9210
- **Passcode:** 130834

Please contact erica.spencer@la.gov with questions.

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Child Welfare and Attendance Monthly Call

Please share with Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) directors, supervisors, and all attendance stakeholders.

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 family engagement during these meetings. This opportunity for learning and collaboration is held the first Thursday of each month.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, November 9; 8 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92031673778?>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Webinar ID:** 920 3167 3778
- **Passcode:** 459079

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

Alternative Education Leaders Community of Practice

Please share with Alternative Education Supervisors, Site Leaders and all AE stakeholders.

A webinar for Alternative Education Supervisors and Site Leaders is held the second Thursday of each month and focuses on supporting AE sites leaders with the delivery of criteria outlined in Bulletin 131.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, October 12; 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/94546407532?>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Webinar ID:** 945 4640 7532
- **Passcode:** 764614

Please contact terran.perry@la.gov with questions.

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Healthy Communities Community of Practice Monthly Call

Please share with school safety personnel, Health and Physical Educators, Nurses, Health Providers and all health and well-being stakeholders.

Monthly community of practice calls will be held the 4th Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. The call will address school safety, school health, transportation, nursing, suicide and bullying prevention, health/physical education, School-based Medicaid funding, Whole Child (WSCC) initiative, Well-being advisory councils, Project Aware. The October call will feature Paul Toups from Louisiana State Police discussing School Safety Site Assessments.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, October 26, 2 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91984395787?>
- **Webinar ID:** 919 8439 5787
- **Passcode:** 784203

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

School Health Service Provider of the Year Nominations

Please share with system leaders, school administrators, related service coordinators, and nursing administrators.

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that student health plays a vital role in education and that school health providers are the critical link in ensuring health service delivery to students. The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes and celebrates some of the state's most exceptional school health providers through the [School Health Service Provider of the Year program](#).

Through October 12, [nominations](#) are being accepted for any of the following school employees or contractors: **occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, nurses, and licensed behavioral health providers (LCSW/LMSW, LPC, psychologists).**

Contact elizabeth.duncan@la.gov with questions

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ACT® College & Career Readiness Workshops

Please share with counselors.

ACT® will be hosting [College and Career Readiness Workshops](#). [Registration](#) for in-person workshops that offer content specific to Louisiana is open. Please register at least two weeks in advance of the workshop date to ensure availability of workshop materials.

In person workshops are at 9 a.m. at the following locations:

- October 10 (Lafayette)
- October 16 (Alexandria)
- October 17 (Lake Charles)

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

College Board Weekly Office Hours

Please share with principals, counselors, AP teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering weekly office hours starting on August 8. Topics will include the AP 2024 exam schedule and digital AP exams. Please feel free to join the weekly discussion on any questions that you have about AP exams and resources.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Every Tuesday; 10 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** [Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)
- **Webinar ID:** 232 293 189 414
- **Passcode:** 7VQcYk

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

Apply to be an AP Reader in 2024

Please share with principals, counselors, AP teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering the opportunity to become an [AP Exam Reader](#). The opportunity is open to all authorized AP high school teachers who are currently teaching AP subjects, regardless of years of experience. [Applications](#) are accepted year round, but spots are limited.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

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2023 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

Please share with school safety personnel, school administrators, counselors, middle school and high school leaders, Nurses, Health Providers and all health and well-being stakeholders.

2023 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health: Building Hopeful Futures for All Youth will take place on December 5-7 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference is sponsored by The National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Click to [register](#) for the conference.

Click [here](#) join listserv to get information on relevant resources, conferences, events and more.

Resources

2023-2024 (BSSY 2023) STS Documents

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

- [2023-Beyond STS Master Course Code List](#) **updated 8/10/23**
- [2023-Beyond STS IBC Matrix](#)
- [2023-Beyond Jumpstart Pathway IBCs](#)
- [2023-Beyond Jumpstart Pathway Course Sets](#)

JumpStart Pathway Briefs

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

JumpStart [Pathway Briefs](#) are traditionally posted to the LDOE [All Things JumpStart](#) website early Spring reflecting changes approved at the January BESE meeting. Please use the most current documents when developing student IGPs and schedules.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

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2023-2024 High School Planning Guide

Please share with system leaders, secondary supervisors, high school and middle school leaders, and school counselors.

The [2023-2024 Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook](#) is now available on the LDOE [Graduation Requirements](#) webpage. This guidebook consolidates the policies and programs most relevant to high school educators as they plan for the upcoming academic year and prepare every student for college and career success.

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

Graduation Requirements Documents

Please share with school administrators and counselors.

The TOPS University and JumpStart TOPS TECH graduation requirements documents have been updated to reflect changes to Bulletin 741.

All Louisiana [graduation requirements](#) can be found on the LDOE website.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

Graduation Resources for Student with Disabilities

Please share with school administrators and counselors.

- [Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Graduation Resources for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Special Education Guidance for High School Students](#)
- [Special Education Course Codes](#)

Please contact SpecialEducation@la.gov with questions.

2023-2024 ACT Counselor's Guide

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT is offering a **free** [Counselor's Guide for the 2023-2024 school year](#). The guide will provide information regarding national offerings of the ACT test, tools and resources to help support students, season-based timelines for juniors and seniors, test preparation, and so much more.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

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Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Q: I tried to access STS and received an error message. Why is STS closed?
- The "Best Practices" Counselor

A: STS is closed from October 1 through December 1 to make preparations for the first uploads of the 2023-2024 school year. Please ensure your Fall transcripts are finalized and ready to be uploaded in January.



Scholarships/Funding Opportunities

[Scholarship.CollegeCovered.com](https://scholarship.collegecovered.com)

[Big Future College Board](#)

[Access Scholarships](#)

[Scholarships.com](https://scholarships.com)

[College Raptor Scholarship Search](#)

[Lela's \\$1000 FAFSA Completion Scholarship](#) application for the Class of 2024 is now available for those who plan to apply for college financial aid by submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Reminders

Community Service Diploma Endorsement

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Students have the opportunity to earn 80 hours of community service during their high school years and earn the [Community Service Diploma Endorsement](#). Visit the [Diploma Endorsement webpage](#) for more information.

Please contact suzette.rabalais@la.gov with questions.

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Office of Career and College Readiness Contact 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 Allocation/Course Choice
jumpstart@la.gov	Questions related to Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to healthy schools, healthy communities, and whole child
PPP@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression