

# 2025-2026 Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook

**Grow. Achieve. Thrive.**

August 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>STRONG SYSTEM-LEVEL FOUNDATIONS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Louisiana's Education Priorities.....	1
Attendance Initiative: The Power of Presence.....	1
Impact of Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy .....	1
Professional Learning Structures.....	2
School System-Level Instructional Leadership Teams.....	3
School Level Instructional Leadership Teams .....	3
Teacher Collaboration.....	3
<b>BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN THE MIDDLE GRADES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Preparing Middle Grade Students for Future Career and College Success .....	4
Policy Requirements Career Exploration .....	4
The Role of School Counselors in Middle Grades Career and College Planning.....	5
Academic Foundations for Middle Grade Students.....	5
<b>INTRODUCTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLANNING PROCESS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Overview of the IGP Process.....	6
Importance of the IGP in Exploring Educational and Career Opportunities Post Graduation.....	6
Informed Decision-Making: Helping Students Navigate Career Pathways .....	6
Integrating Career Exploration into the IGP.....	7
<b>BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN HIGH SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Aligning Interests with Academic Courses.....	8
Core Subjects and Their Role in Career and College Readiness.....	8
Building Fundamental Skills for College and Career Readiness.....	9
Early Preparation for College and Career Acceleration.....	9
<b>BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Course Choice Program.....	10
Pathways to College .....	11
Pathways to Work.....	11
Pathways to Service .....	12
<b>SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS TO POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Transitioning from High School to Post-Secondary Education or Workforce .....	13
Supporting Students in College Applications and Career Pathway Decisions.....	14
Financial Aid Planning for Post-Secondary Education.....	14
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDANCE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Louisiana's Revised Accountability System.....	15
Accountability Components .....	15
Letter Grades .....	16
Calculating Scores.....	17
Alternative School Performance Scores.....	17
Resources.....	17
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY FAQS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Preparing 8th Grade Students: T9, DCAI, and Graduation Cohort.....	18
LEAP 2025.....	18
Nationally Recognized Exams.....	19
Graduation Cohort .....	19
Graduation Index .....	20
School Performance Scores.....	20

# INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2026 Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook is designed to consolidate policies and programs that are relevant to educators as they plan for the upcoming academic year and prepare students for career and college success. This guidebook is designed to help administrators, school counselors, and educators use key policies, programs, and resources to aid students and schools achieve their goals. This guide has a focus on:

- Developing strong system-level foundations
- Building foundations in middle school
- Building foundations in high schools
- Building a strong foundation for after high school success

## STRONG SYSTEM-LEVEL FOUNDATIONS

---

### LOUISIANA'S EDUCATION PRIORITIES

- Early childhood leading to kindergarten readiness
- Literacy instruction aligned to the Science of Reading
- Math instruction from foundational to advanced skills
- Opportunities ensuring a meaningful high school experience
- An effective teacher for every student
- Expand educational choice for students and families

---

### ATTENDANCE INITIATIVE: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

Student attendance is a fundamental predictor of academic success, internal development, and long-term educational achievement. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recognizes that consistent school attendance is critical for improving educational outcomes and reducing learning gaps. We are committed to supporting regular school attendance to make our schools better, our communities safer, and our economy stronger.

To promote consistent school attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism, system and school leaders should regularly analyze attendance data to determine patterns that can identify at-risk students early. Strategic plans for supporting students with attendance concerns should be developed to include targeted action steps and processes for evaluating the impact of the support actions on student attendance, and subsequent academic outcomes. Attendance improvement efforts can be enhanced by sustained, coherent collaboration between educators, families, and communities. By implementing a comprehensive, data-driven approach, we can create meaningful change in students' educational trajectories.

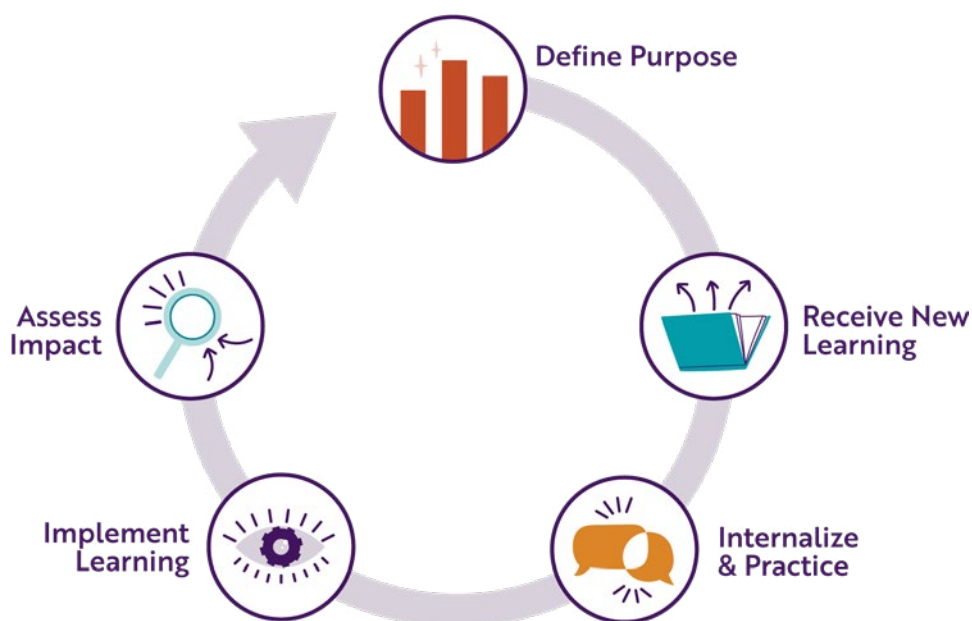
---

### IMPACT OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

Chronic absenteeism—students having enrollment no less than 10 days who are absent 10% or more of the school days—has profound consequences, such as decreased academic performance. Students with chronic absences are significantly more likely to fall behind in core academic skills. Reading proficiency by third grade drops dramatically with increased absences, and high school graduation rates can decrease by up to 40% for chronically absent students. Long-term economic impacts can include reduced earning potential and higher unemployment risk.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STRUCTURES

The [Louisiana Professional Learning Roadmap](#) provides a clear pathway for school systems and schools to align their priorities, and thus improve instructional practice through essential professional learning structures: school system-level Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), school level ILTs, and Teacher Collaboration that follows the High-Quality Professional Learning Cycle and is based on continuous improvement efforts.



HQPL Stages	Descriptions	Example
<b>Define Purpose</b>	Define the purpose for the planned learning. <b>How does the learning from the session benefit the participants?</b>	The facilitator explains the reason for the learning and what benefits the learners will gain from the session.
<b>Receive New Learning</b>	Introduce new content and information. <b>What new information will the participants need to know?</b>	The facilitator introduces the problem choice and explains the new learning with examples.
<b>Internalize and Practice</b>	Put the new learning into action through guided practice to solidify understanding. <b>How can participants engage with the new learning and practice applying it?</b>	Learners apply new learning to practice scenarios and brainstorm possible modifications or new ideas.
<b>Implement Learning</b>	Apply the new learning to real-world situations. <b>Where can participants use the new learning?</b>	Learners develop a plan to use the learning in real life. Learners apply the learning to a real world situation they have faced.
<b>Assess Impact</b>	Evaluate the impact of the learning achieved in the session. <b>What have participants gained from the session?</b>	Learners submit feedback evaluating their learning at the end of the session.

---

## SCHOOL SYSTEM-LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

School System-Level ILTs should meet biweekly to continuously address instructional goals through ongoing learning, planning, and decision-making. This team is essential for setting clear system-wide goals, communicating with all stakeholders, creating a strategic long-range plan, and allocating resources accordingly. This is an ideal time for high school supervisors to bring data, ideas, and connections from high school leader, teacher, and student needs to the forefront with other ILT members. A key responsibility of this team is to develop, support, and monitor system-wide expectations.

---

## SCHOOL LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Every school has its own ILT with clear instructional goals, a long-range plan, and consistent time to collaborate, ideally weekly. This team includes school leaders as well as teacher leaders and counselors. The purpose of this team is to align the school's professional learning around a clear focus area, so that teachers and counselors are supported to make instructional improvements in their classrooms. This team is critical to a high school's success as it can bring purpose, focus, and coherence to the continuous efforts of growing both teachers and students. The ILT team also aligns with and supports the work of high impact leaders outlined in the [Louisiana Leader Rubric](#).

The high school level ILT should include membership that represents all core content areas and at least one delegate for non-core courses. This could include teacher leaders or administrative staff. Membership could also include counselors or a counselor delegate and a delegate to represent certain student populations, like students with disabilities and/or English learners. Teacher leaders, master teachers, and mentor teachers should be provided with time in their schedules to facilitate teacher collaboration and ensure follow up from this time occurs through ongoing observations, feedback, and planning support. These individuals could serve as instructors for part of the school day, with intentional time released from teaching duties to support their facilitating and coaching efforts. This approach could help to identify multiple teacher leaders across content areas.

---

## TEACHER COLLABORATION

Meaningful teacher collaboration groups content-alike teachers with school-day embedded time and space to improve instructional practices as outlined in the [Louisiana Educator Rubric](#) and ultimately improve student outcomes. Effective teacher collaboration meetings include the analysis of student work and planning for upcoming instructional using high-quality instructional materials.

To the extent possible, teacher collaboration groups should be conducive by grouping content-alike teachers, and should include special education and English learner teachers. Smaller groups could be used to increase individualized attention and in order to make the collaboration relevant for teachers. High school administrators should intentionally support teacher collaboration groups to help share the vision of strong professional learning and indicate that it is a priority for the school.



# BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

## PREPARING MIDDLE GRADE STUDENTS FOR FUTURE CAREER AND COLLEGE SUCCESS

Middle school students are more likely to lose interest as they navigate the various challenges that occur during adolescence. During these years, students start to build stronger critical thinking skills, solve problems in a more structured and logical way, and become more aware of their own interests, values, and goals. These skills are fundamental not only for academic success, but for future workplace success as well.



Experiences in middle school strongly influence closing achievement gaps, completing high school, and being considered career and college ready. Middle school is a natural time for students to explore careers and gain employability skills that will serve them well in the future. Students are able to point out how what they're learning now connects to future goals and opportunities. With early exposure to career exploration and the development of employability skills, students are more likely to stay engaged in their learning, reducing the risk of disengagement as they navigate adolescence. By introducing career exploration early on, schools can help students realize the connection between their academics and potential career paths.

## POLICY REQUIREMENTS CAREER EXPLORATION

Louisiana law ([R.S. 17: 2925](#)) requires schools to provide career awareness and exploration activities to all students in grades six through eight that create connections between what a student does in school and what the student wants to achieve in the future. Such activities can include:

- Career interest inventories
- Job shadowing and job mentoring
- Career Immersion Days

Schools should also hold informational meetings for the parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in eighth through twelfth grade to provide information regarding graduation requirements and curriculum choices. The meeting shall be held in conjunction with the scheduling of courses for the next academic year.

As stated under [Act 238 of the 2020 Regular Session](#), when developing and reviewing their Individual Graduation Plans (IGP), students in middle and high school shall be provided information developed by the [Louisiana Workforce Commission](#) (LWC) regarding the top twenty high-demand jobs in the state and in the student's region with the highest typical annual salary. Students should learn how to access information on the LWC's website for the listed jobs and other high-demand, high-wage jobs and be shown how to find educational programs offered in Louisiana that qualify the student for those jobs.

---

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN MIDDLE GRADES CAREER AND COLLEGE PLANNING

Middle school is a time of transition and growth. During this time, middle school counselors are in the perfect position to expose students to various career options, assisting students with exploring post-graduation plans. School counselors guide students in making connections between their education and future career and college opportunities. This knowledge and understanding helps students develop skills necessary for both college and future employment.

Middle school career and college readiness development aims to build self-awareness. As students become more self-aware, this guides students in identifying career paths that match their unique skills and interests. With [Perkins V](#) funds available to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) into middle schools, school systems should implement practices to ensure these programs effectively support middle school students. Plans for middle school CTE exposure should be created with clear objectives and outcomes that define what students will gain from these programs. For example, middle school CTE programs should offer students exposure to a variety of careers and industries, support them in exploring and developing their interests, and help them build foundational technical and employability skills that can be further developed in high school. Middle school CTE initiatives should be designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase awareness and exposure to careers
- Enhance self-awareness to identify potential career paths
- Develop employability skills
- Cultivate age-appropriate technical skills

---

## ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS FOR MIDDLE GRADE STUDENTS

### Literacy

Direct and explicit instruction is often an area that can be strengthened within middle school instruction. Providing direct and explicit instruction around the four major literacy components of reading, writing, speaking, and listening allows students to improve reading and comprehension of their content area texts. The Content Literacy Series offers seven reading strategies and five writing strategies that provide direct instruction through current High-quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) in a whole class or small group setting.

The Content Literacy Series is available in the Literacy Library under [Content Literacy Support Resources](#). There are also two professional learning opportunities regarding this series. The Grades 3-12 Content Literacy Series Module on the [Louisiana Professional Learning Platform](#) offers an in-depth mini-course on the development of content literacy, as well as guidance on applying the strategies. The course code is CBB577NN. Videos on application can also be found at the bottom of the [Professional Growth Page](#) in the Literacy Library, under Grades 3-12 Literacy Support PD Series.

### Math

Addressing unfinished learning with middle school students must be done using an acceleration approach. Several resources are available to build students' prior grade knowledge while still engaging in the work of the grade-level. Acceleration resources designed for each HQIM are noted within the Louisiana Guides to Implementing Math materials and posted on the Louisiana Math page under curriculum resources.

To support success of all students, Zearn School Accounts are available for all public schools serving grades K-8. Engagement in Zearn lessons positively impacts student math performance using the acceleration approach.

# INTRODUCTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLANNING PROCESS

---

## OVERVIEW OF THE IGP PROCESS

[Bulletin 741](#) requires that by the end of the eighth grade, each student shall begin to develop, with the input of their parent(s) or other legal guardians and school counselor, an [IGP](#). For a student with an exceptionality, except a student identified as gifted or talented and who has no other exceptionality, the student's IEP team, if applicable, shall assist in developing their IGP. IGPs for students that are assessed on [LEAP Connect](#), are based on the related [graduation requirements](#) that best meet the student's postsecondary goals ([TOPS U diploma requirements](#) and [Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma requirements](#)) and are updated and revised in conjunction with the student's IEP.

Every student's IGP, including those with an IEP if necessary, must detail the essential core courses they will take through tenth grade and specify the classes they will enroll in during their first year of high school.

By the end of the tenth grade, each student's IGP or the student's IEP, if applicable, shall outline the school graduation requirements relevant to the student's chosen postsecondary goals based on the student's academic record, talents, and interests.

Prior to revising a student's IGP, the school counselor should meet with the student's parent or legal guardian to explain the possible impacts the revisions to the plan might have on the student's graduation requirements and postsecondary education goals. Any revisions to a student's plan shall be approved in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian.

---

## IMPORTANCE OF THE IGP IN EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES POST GRADUATION

The [IGP](#) empowers students and provides a platform to start exploring and mapping out their post-graduation academic and career pathways. The IGP will assist students in exploring educational and career opportunities and in making appropriate secondary and postsecondary education decisions as part of an overall postsecondary plan.

Each student, with the assistance of their parent or other legal guardian and school counselor, shall choose the high school curriculum framework and related [graduation requirements](#) that best meet their postsecondary goals. This plan will help students align their coursework and work-based learning opportunities with their career and educational goals beyond high school.

In addition to identifying coursework relevant to a student's graduation pathway, the IGP process should incorporate career exploration to assist students with making informed decisions about their future careers. This will allow for students to align their personal and professional goals to their future aspirations. Students should be exposed early in high school to career education. Coursework and counseling that involves career exploration should be included in the IGP as well as career speciality or occupational goals and career clusters of interest to students based on interest and future aspirations.

---

## INFORMED DECISION-MAKING: HELPING STUDENTS NAVIGATE CAREER PATHWAYS

Helping students navigate career pathways means providing them with comprehensive information about various career options, allowing them to thoroughly assess their own skills, interests, and values, and making choices about which career path aligns best with their personal goals based on an understanding of each potential path.

As stated in [Act 238 of the 2020 Regular Session](#), starting in the 9th grade, each student should have a web-based student profile that includes the student's academic and personal goals, planning for college, exploring careers, participation in extracurricular activities, and other skills and interests. All information contained in the profile also shall be included in the student's [IGP](#) developed based on [R.S. 17:183.2](#) and [R.S. 17:2925](#). When school counselors (or their qualified designee) meet with students and their families yearly to review and revise their profile, there should be a demonstration of how to access the [LWC's](#) website information on high-demand, high-wage jobs. In addition, students should be provided with a listing of the high-demand, high-wage jobs in their region.



## INTEGRATING CAREER EXPLORATION INTO THE IGP

It is important to embed career exploration into the IGP to ensure that students and parents can make informed decisions about career options. It will assist students in identifying their interests and strengths, which shape their personal and professional goals. This can include specific coursework that addresses career exploration as well as counseling or coaching on career education. Career readiness courses such as [Jobs for America's Graduates \(JAG\)](#), prepare students for career and life success. These courses provide students the opportunity to explore their career interests, develop essential workforce skills, and research careers in various industries. Career exploration should inform student coursework in high school and post-secondary plans.

Students' desired career specialty and the career cluster in which they will be pursuing after graduation should be identified. This process should begin before the inception of the IGP in 8th grade, by offering students basic career education and making it known what pathways are available to them in high school as well as the jobs available in the region. This should continue throughout the student's high school career. It should include opportunities for students to learn about themselves, research potential careers, and inform school leaders about creating a plan to achieve student goals. Students should be intentionally scheduled into coursework to allow them to further develop their knowledge of careers and match their aptitudes and interests. Opportunities for technical skill development should exist and be at the forefront of decision-making concerning course scheduling. Diploma pathway decisions should be made with career exploration results as a guidepost. It can help students to decide on a post-secondary major or determine their career paths.

Parents should be informed of career options for students as well as how to understand student aptitudes and interests. This will allow them to assist students in choosing coursework that provides rich connections to their post-secondary aspirations. Parental input should occur at a minimum of once yearly to inform decisions made on the IGP.



# BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN HIGH SCHOOL

## ALIGNING INTERESTS WITH ACADEMIC COURSES

Decisions about academic course progressions should be made to align to student interest. This process should begin in the middle grades and continue into high school while increasing in specificity and focus. Tools such as interest inventories can guide discussions with students about their future career aspirations. Understanding the student's career aspirations and desired high school experience will help the counselor support the student in:

- Making informed decisions regarding both academic and technical coursework.
- Engaging in coursework that not only provides them with the foundational skills needed to persevere into the diploma pathway of choice, but is also aligned closely to relevant and authentic contexts.
- Gaining access to extracurricular activities that agree with their longterm goals.
- Preparing students for post-secondary education or careers that correspond with their personal and professional goals.
- Understanding what academic and career opportunities are available in their own community.

## CORE SUBJECTS AND THEIR ROLE IN CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS

### English

English I and II play a vital role in preparing high school students for both college and career success. These foundational courses develop essential skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. The high-quality instructional materials used in these courses engage students in learning that is centered in [complex grade-level texts](#) to develop knowledge and skills that equip students with the academic tools needed for higher education, while also fostering adaptability in a rapidly changing workforce. Resources such as the [Content Literacy series](#) and [Unit Study Protocol](#) support English I and II teachers to best support students. Additionally, resources such as the student-facing [Reference Guides](#) support students in the development of essential skills that are vital for post-secondary success and nearly every profession. Together, these courses lay the groundwork for deep comprehension, informed decision-making, and effective collaboration.

### Math

Algebra I and Geometry provide the foundation for success in post secondary education, careers, or services. The mathematics in these courses provide students with the skills to interpret the mathematics of real life and to move on to more advanced coursework relevant to their future plans. Resources such as the [High School Numeracy](#) course and [Mathematics Planning Guide](#) support teachers in intentional decisions necessary to address unfinished learning with students. Guides to implement each HQIM are also available on the [Louisiana Math](#) page. As students move beyond required courses in mathematics, special consideration should be given to their individual career aspirations so they are provided relevant mathematics experiences.

### Science

In high school Biology, students actively explore key concepts that help them make sense of the life sciences. The [shifts in science](#) called for by the Louisiana Student Standards for Science build through the primary grades and culminate in Biology to prepare students with the necessary problem-solving skills and foundational understanding of scientific principles that are critical to success in the advancing fields of STEM. The standards integrate disciplinary core ideas with scientific and engineering practices, along with crosscutting concepts, enabling students to develop usable knowledge that applies across science disciplines and prepares students for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.

### Social Studies

The high school Civics course ensures that students acquire the foundational knowledge needed to become literate citizens able to contribute to a democratic society. The [Foundations of Freedom: a Louisiana Civics Program](#) broadens and deepens student understanding of the origin, structure, and functions of government, and provides students with practical knowledge of how the American system of government functions on local, state, and national levels. Students also gain an understanding of the philosophical and intellectual underpinnings of our constitutional republic.

---

## BUILDING FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Success in high school transcends the earning of a high school diploma. Every student should have a plan in place that aligns to interest and career aspirations. Basic academic coursework should be aligned with clear pathways to student success. Students need to gain fundamental skills academically by scheduling students in required coursework that prepares them for any pathway they may choose in addition to high-quality technical coursework. Students should also be scheduled into rigorous coursework aligned specifically to their post-secondary or career plans. The high school experience should build students' fundamental skills to ensure they are prepared to persevere into college or career after high school. These skills not only include academic skills, but also include communication, teamwork, financial literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving, which are essential to both college and career. All students, regardless of diploma pathway, should have the opportunity to participate in work-based learning opportunities that prepare them for a career after high school or post-secondary education.

When [Building High-quality Career and Technical Education Programs](#) aimed at strengthening technical skills, it is essential for leaders to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of existing programs. This assessment should identify areas that require foundational reinforcement, realignment, or expansion. CTE leaders must have a clear understanding of the following:

- **Barriers to Growth:** Assess both the actual and perceived obstacles that may hinder the advancement of CTE programs. This includes identifying issues such as funding limitations, stakeholder engagement, and market demand discrepancies.
- **Role of K-12 Education:** Recognize the significant impact that K-12 education has on the economic prosperity of local communities and the broader state. A strong CTE program can facilitate the development of a skilled workforce that meets local business needs.
- **Revised Accountability System:** Louisiana's revised accountability system will raise the bar for academic success, enhance the value of career education, and make it easier for the public to understand how schools are performing. It's named [Grow. Achieve. Thrive.](#)

High-quality high school CTE programs that offer opportunities for both TOPS University and TOPS Tech Career Diplomas students are often an overlooked component of the workforce development pipeline and are most effective when there is strong alignment between business, industry, and local school systems. By aligning goals and resources with workforce demands, school systems can develop and expand programs that contribute to long-term student and economic success. To do this well, education leaders need to pay close attention to local labor trends and build programs that are flexible, relevant and incorporate real-world learning experiences such as internships and Registered Apprenticeships.

---

## EARLY PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER ACCELERATION

Louisiana's revised accountability system emphasizes the importance of early preparation for college and career success by ensuring students are on track for meaningful on-the-job training and postsecondary opportunities. School systems can strategically align coursework and career experiences to build strong workforce development pipelines that connect students to high-wage, high-demand careers in their regions.

- **Specialization:** CTE provides students with specialized skills and knowledge for specific career paths, thus preparing them for advanced education, apprenticeships, and in-demand jobs. CTE combines technical training with academics, ensuring students are well-prepared for their chosen professions.
- **Development of Industry-Specific Skills:** CTE programs are tailored to meet industry standards, ensuring students gain practical, job-ready skills. Whether in healthcare, information technology, skilled trades, or business, students build technical expertise that serve as a foundation for career specialization.
  - A health sciences student may begin as a medical assistant, patient care technician, or pharmacy technician before specializing as a nurse or surgical technician.
  - A welding student might start with basic welding techniques and later specialize in pipe welding or aerospace welding.
- **Hands-On Training & Practical Experience:** Through labs, simulations, internships, and apprenticeships, students apply their learning in real-world settings. This experience helps them understand industry expectations, sharpen their skills, and prepare for advanced roles or certifications.
- **Earning Industry Certifications & Credentials:** Many CTE programs allow students to obtain industry-recognized certifications that boost employability and provide a stepping stone for further specialization. Examples include:
  - CompTIA A+ for IT students
  - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for healthcare students
  - AWS Welding Certification for welding students



A strong CTE pathway begins with intentional planning in the early years of high school, ensuring students build a solid foundation before progressing into specialized coursework. This includes strong literacy and numeracy skills. Foundational CTE courses should provide students with knowledge and skills that prepare them for advanced industry-based credentials. For example, moving NCCER Core coursework to 9th grade allows students to complete the foundational construction safety and skills training earlier. This will allow students more time to focus on mastering challenging concepts in more advanced NCCER courses. This structured approach allows students to maximize their time in high school, deepen their technical expertise, and increase their readiness for post-secondary education and the workforce.

## BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

### COURSE CHOICE PROGRAM

The [Course Choice Program](#) provides students with specialized course opportunities that may not be available at their school. It allows students to physically attend courses on a college or university campus and offers courses in innovative career and technical education and internship opportunities. School systems can take advantage of this program by having their students earn credits towards a college degree, while also gaining experience in specialized areas that can lead to in-demand jobs.

The Course Choice Program also provides access to courses needed to complete Fast Forward Pathways, TOPS aligned courses, and courses embedded in a Certificate of Technical Studies, allowing students to gain access to advanced coursework, promoting future college and career success.

In order to utilize the [Course Choice Program](#) effectively, school systems need to refer to the current [MFP Budget Letter](#) to determine the allocated amount for the current school year. It is also important to designate someone at the school system and school level to handle reporting in the [Course Choice Portal](#). School systems should work closely with course providers to ensure that students are properly [registered](#) through the provider's registration system. Once students are registered with the course provider, the enrollments are then reported in the [Course Choice Portal](#) by the designated deadline.

Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the Course Choice policy was revised. The [revised policy](#) improves transparency, accountability, and student access to high-quality coursework through [Course Choice](#). A key change is [parental involvement](#). Schools must get [written permission](#) and ensure courses fit a student's graduation pathway. There is also a stronger focus on outreach, requiring schools to actively inform parents and students about available courses and funding.

Schools must give parents access to LDOE planning resources, helping them understand graduation requirements and the courses available through the [Course Choice Program](#). [Parents](#) should be actively included in the course selection process, ensuring that decisions are made with both student goals and academic pathways in mind. Before a student can enroll, written parental permission is now required. If a course is not academically appropriate, does not align with the student's graduation plan, or conflicts with state guidelines, the school must notify parents and provide academic guidance. These steps ensure that parents are fully informed, involved, and able to make the best choices for their student's success.



School systems will now prioritize funding based on the following criteria:

1. Seniors who require a course in order to graduate or if student access to TOPS aligned courses is not available through the school or school system.
2. Students enrolling in courses are required to complete an associate degree in a Fast Forward pathway or a certificate of technical studies aligned to high wage, high demand jobs or work-based learning.
3. Students seeking access to TOPS aligned college credit.
4. Students enrolled in a Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR) or Urgent Intervention Required for Academics (UIR-A) schools.
5. Access to high quality academic content aligned to graduation requirements or access to high-quality career and technical content aligned to the Louisiana IBC state focus list which can be offered as recovery credit.
6. Students seeking coursework to increase a student score on a nationally recognized assessment (ACT, SAT, CLT, WorkKeys, or ASVAB) as defined in LAC 28:X1.1711 Bulletin 111.
7. Other priorities defined by the school system, approved by LDOE, and included in the School System's pupil progression plan prior to the student enrollment process.

---

## PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE

College bound students should be offered and supported through rigorous curriculums to prepare them for post-secondary coursework. In addition to academic rigor, they need clear guidance with financial aid planning and the college application process. To ensure they're ready for the transition, schools should also provide support for college entrance exams, such as [ACT](#), [SAT](#), and [CLT](#) assessments to measure post-secondary readiness.

Louisiana provides opportunities for students to earn and pursue work experiences and college credit. Early college credit can be earned through [Dual Enrollment](#), [Advanced Placement](#) (AP) courses, the [International Baccalaureate](#) (IB) program, and the [College Level Examination Program](#) (CLEP).

- **Academic Dual Enrollment** students can enroll in high school and college courses simultaneously and earn credit on both high school and college transcripts. Courses are taught by a college instructor or an approved high school educator. Dual enrollment courses can be technical or academic in nature. For guidance on dual enrollment, stakeholders can use the [Louisiana Dual Enrollment Portal](#) and the LDOE [Dual Enrollment Resources One Pager](#). Schools should consult with their partner post-secondary institutions for specific information regarding requirements.
- **Advanced Placement (AP)** offers courses to earn college credit by demonstrating mastery of rigorous content through high school based coursework. For more information about AP course offerings and resources, please visit the LDOE [AP Resources One Pager](#).
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)** is a globally recognized program in which students develop knowledge, skills, and sense of purpose. Students who graduate from this program often receive college credit, as many universities recognize the courses.
- **College Level Examination Program (CLEP)** allows students to demonstrate mastery of college-level material through exams in various subjects. Students who achieve qualifying scores can earn college credits, as many universities recognize and accept CLEP exams. To see how CLEP credits transfer to Louisiana State University, visit their [Early Credit Opportunities](#) page.

---

## PATHWAYS TO WORK

High-quality CTE programs thrive best when schools, local businesses, and industries are aligned on what skills are needed in the workforce and how those skills are taught in the classroom. This alignment ultimately enables students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for successful careers. CTE programs bridge the gap between high school and the world of work by offering technical dual enrollment, Registered Apprenticeships, regionally relevant credentials of value, and work-based learning. By strategically planning their coursework and experiences, students can participate in work-based learning programs, earn Certificates of Technical Studies (CTS), and even begin Registered Apprenticeships while still in high school. These advanced CTE opportunities allow students to develop career-ready skills, earn college credit, and establish strong connections with employers.



- **Technical Dual Enrollment:** Programs such as [Fast Forward](#) have been integral in providing students with opportunities to gain relevant work experience while earning high school and college credits. Fast Forward, in particular, supports students in acquiring industry-recognized credentials, preparing them for the workforce while allowing them to continue their academic studies. These pathways are designed not only to ensure students are prepared for success in the workforce but also to guarantee that they remain on track to complete their educational requirements. The integration of work-based learning with academic instruction creates a well-rounded educational experience that is highly valued by both students and employers.
- **Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS):** Students have the opportunity to earn a CTS through various CTE programs, particularly [MJ Foster](#)-eligible CTS's. The MJ Foster Promise Program has targeted five industry sectors (Construction, Healthcare, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Transportation and Warehousing). CTS programs are offered through the [Louisiana Community and Technical College System](#) (LCTCS). CTS's can be earned through DE partnerships and offered at the high school facility if the instructor is certified by their LCTCS campus and the CTS is less than 60% of the aligned Technical Diploma and/or Associate Degree.
- **Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs):** Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are federally regulated workforce development initiatives that provide employers with a strong return on investment. As an earn-and-learn model, RAPs offer apprentices a structured career pathway that integrates hands-on training with classroom instruction, ensuring they gain expertise in their chosen field. These programs help apprentices build essential skills and industry-specific knowledge. Upon completion, participants earn a nationally recognized, portable credential that validates their proficiency. Employers also benefit by gaining highly trained, certified professionals to strengthen their workforce. All of these programs are [approved by the LWC](#) and the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprenticeship programs can be customized to meet the needs of business and the skills of apprentices. These programs also include on-the-job training, allowing apprentices to gain real-world experience in their chosen field while building a strong foundation for their careers.
- **High-Quality and Stackable Credentials:** Provide opportunities for students to earn [industry-based certifications](#) (IBCs) from the Louisiana State Focus List, allowing them to progressively build skills and gain credentials that are recognized and highly valued in the job market.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Louisiana students also have the option of earning work experience through Work-Based Learning. These experiences provide students with the skills necessary to attain employment in high-demand job sectors. Experiences include internships, cooperative education, and registered apprenticeships. WBL offers CTE students valuable opportunities to integrate academic knowledge with practical job experience. By participating in WBL, students can develop critical job skills, explore potential career paths, and gain hands-on experience in real-world settings. The LDOE has developed comprehensive [Building High-Quality Work-Based Learning Programs](#), outlining the best practices for creating robust and high-quality WBL experiences for students.

## PATHWAYS TO SERVICE

### Community Service

In 2013, the idea of the Community Service Endorsement was initiated by the [Volunteer Louisiana Commission](#) and approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Community service benefits students by contributing to personal growth, skill development, career development, and a sense of self-worth. School systems may award a Community Service Endorsement to students completing a minimum of 80 hours of service anytime between ninth and twelfth grade. Students may earn service hours identified in the [Community Service Diploma Endorsement Categories](#). Documentation of community service is housed at the local high school. Every year, the LDOE and BESE honor the top three school systems awarding the Community Service Diploma Seal by recognizing them at a BESE meeting.

### Military Service

Students may choose to enter into military service while in or after exiting high school. Information on military academies and branches of service should be made available to students. Recruiters should be allowed on campus and given access to students based on their career goals to increase awareness of military branches and the benefits of military service. Students should be supported in taking the [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery \(ASVAB\)](#), which the Department of Defense administers to assess aptitude and potential for military service, helping determine enlistment qualifications and suitable job roles.

# SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS TO POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANS

## TRANSITIONING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR WORKFORCE

Nearly 1 in 6 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 in Louisiana are disconnected from both school and work, the highest rate in the nation. High schools should provide the transitional support needed for students to either persist into post-secondary education or move to careers.

Transitioning out of high school and into the world can require varying levels of support and options for student success and depend on the career interests and goals of graduating students.

A key component of student success post-graduation is ensuring students develop and understand their college and career pathway options early. Helping students understand both educational and career opportunities within their communities is particularly important.

A valuable tool in helping students understand local and statewide high-demand, high-wage career opportunities as well as post-secondary options aligned to those opportunities is the [Louisiana Star Jobs](#) portal. Here, individuals can filter by occupation, wage, star rating, and location, and find current job listings. The tool also connects occupations to post-secondary educational opportunities directly aligned to each job. Per [Act 238](#) of the 2020 regular legislative session, schools are required to provide students with LWC information on the top twenty high-wage high-demand jobs in the state and the students' region. School personnel must show students how to access this information on the [LWC website](#) and provide students with a printed version of the jobs for the region. In addition, LDOE will maintain a link to LWC on its website and all public middle and high schools.

To best support students as they transition into post-secondary education and the workforce, it is also vital to ensure students understand what credits earned in high school should transfer into the post-secondary institution of their choosing. The Prior Learning Matrix will verify the articulation of credentials and/or credits earned through the LCTCS system.

The [Board of Regents Articulation Matrix](#) will verify the articulation of credentials and/or credits earned at four-year institutions. Teaching students about what courses and credentials transfer into their post-secondary settings will allow them to make informed decisions about their education and career paths, maximize transferable credits, reduce time and cost in postsecondary programs, and smoothly transition into their chosen fields with a clear understanding of their next steps.

Some things to consider when preparing students to engage with post-secondary institutions:

- Develop and distribute a student-friendly guide or checklist outlining which dual enrollment courses and industry-based credentials articulate to specific degree pathways.
- Integrate post-secondary planning into advising by reviewing students' coursework and credentials in relation to their post-secondary goals.
- Provide students with the document(s) needed to verify their dual enrollment credit/certification with the post-secondary institution.
- Provide students with a point of contact at the post-secondary institution of their choice who accepts the proof of dual enrollment credit/certification.



---

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN COLLEGE APPLICATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAY DECISIONS

Students exiting high school will be going on to post-secondary education, careers, or military service. High schools should offer transitional support to help students attain their aspirations. It is important to counsel students consistently to uphold their post-secondary plans and ensure they are prepared to persist.

If students are on a post-secondary pathway, they should be supported in filling out college applications to their institutions of choice. They should be made aware of entrance requirements for the institutions of choice and their transcripts should be evaluated to ensure they are meeting all requirements. Assistance should be offered for students to research major areas of study and the identification of schools that offer those particular pathways. Students should be made aware of scholarship opportunities and assisted with applying for them. Workshops should be offered to students on completing college essays to gain entrance into their preferred institutions. The [Louisiana Office of Students Financial Assistance](#) (LOSFA) hosts a [Louisiana College Application and Access Month](#) in October that assists students with their post-secondary plans. Students on a college pathway should also receive guidance on measures of post-secondary success through assessments such as the ACT, SAT, or CLT.

Students transitioning from high school to work should be counseled on career pathways. Education and assistance with searching for job postings and completing a job application should be integrated into the guidance services for students. These lessons should include how to write a resume and adapt that document to meet the needs of individual employment options. Experiences should include job interview training. In addition, WBL opportunities should be available to career-bound students to prepare them for employment after high school. Students should be invited to career/job fairs to make connections and be afforded employment opportunities. They should receive support to take the [ACT WorkKeys](#) exam to measure career-relevant skills for workplace success.

Students entering military service should receive support in applying to military academies and/or access to recruiters from military branches to assist with matriculating into service. Support should be in place to assist students in taking the [ASVAB](#) to determine their aptitude for military service. Students entering military service should be tracked, and offer letters from military branches should be retained to receive credit in the revised accountability system.

---

## FINANCIAL AID PLANNING FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Post-secondary education is a pathway to in-demand careers and quality of life. It can open doors to career pathways and is integral to employment in certain fields. Secondary institutions must educate students about financial aid planning opportunities to afford students who are interested in post-secondary options the ability to achieve their goals.

Conversations about funding post-secondary education options should begin with students in the ninth and tenth grade so needs can be assessed, and students and parents can be ready to make decisions about funding those opportunities. Funding college opportunities is a suggested topic in the [financial literacy course](#) graduation requirement. Student discussions around post-secondary plans, the [TOPS Scholarship](#), and other scholarship opportunities should be initiated. It is the responsibility of schools to assist students and parents in assessing the need for postsecondary financial aid planning and with completing the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) if that is their desire. Resources for financial aid planning can be found on the [LDOE Financial Aid web page](#).

LOSFA can help students and parents with the FAFSA application process by assisting with setting up Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID numbers, gathering information needed to complete the form, and completing all required parts of the application. If you have questions or need assistance contact LOSFA:

- Email LOSFA at [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov)
- Access LOSFA via web at [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov)
- To speak to a LOSFA representative, call 1-800-259-5626

Federal Student Aid (FSA) is responsible for managing the student financial assistance programs authorized under [Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965](#). These programs provide grants, work-study, and loan funds to students attending college or career school.

# ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDANCE

## LOUISIANA'S REVISED ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Grow. Achieve. Thrive. is Louisiana's revised K-12 accountability system which goes into effect for the 2025-2026 school year. Louisiana wants to raise the bar for academic success, enhance the value of career education, and make it easier for the public to understand how schools are performing. Instead of using complex formulas, the revised formula prioritizes simplicity and transparency where each school's scores equals the percent of their students who meet the expectation.

## ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS

In 2025-2026, a school's grade will be measured by up to nine components for elementary and middle school and up to twelve components for high school. The number of components used for a school performance score is dependent on the school having the minimum number of 15 students for whom data is available. Each component will simply ask: What percent of a school's students met the expectation?

Schools will earn 0-100 points for each component where one (1) point is awarded for each percentage of students. The points earned for each component are added together and divided by the total number of available points to determine the percentage of points earned.

### **Grow.**

Simply described, we expect students to make meaningful progress toward the next level of proficiency. The *Grow* components answer the question: "What percent of students are making progress on their understanding of grade level content as measured by state assessments?"

The *Grow* components are included in calculations grades K-12. These components are:

- The percent of students growing in English Language Arts
- The percent of students growing in Mathematics
- English Language Arts growth for the lowest twenty-five percent of students
- Math growth for the lowest twenty-five percent of students
- The percent of English Learners growing in English Language Acquisition (EL).

These components are measured by student performance on statewide standardized assessments through demonstrating a learning gain from the prior year to the current year.

### **Achieve.**

Simply described, we want to know if students in a school are on grade level. The *Achieve* components answer the question: "What percent of students are on grade level?"

The *Achieve* components are included in calculations grades K-12. These components are:

- The percent of students who demonstrate proficiency in English Language Arts
- The percent of students who demonstrate proficiency in Mathematics
- The percent of students who demonstrate proficiency in Science
- The percent of students who demonstrate proficiency in Social Studies.

These components are also measured by student performance on statewide standardized assessments. Proficiency is defined as the percentage of students scoring Mastery or Advanced in each subject.

### **Thrive.**

The *Thrive* components are only included for schools which have had a graduation cohort conclude in the most recent year. These components are:

- The graduation rate
- % of students earning a passing score on nationally recognized assessments
- % of students prepared for career or college (and earned aligned high quality credentials), or are entering military service.

**By measuring these components, Louisiana is setting the expectation that our students will grow, achieve, and thrive.**

Below is the format for how these component scores will be shared on the revised Louisiana Accountability Scorecard. This revised format creates new opportunities for dialogue, and understanding areas for improvement in our state.

LOUISIANA'S ACCOUNTABILITY SCORECARD					
% of Students Growing		% of Students Who Are Proficient		% of High School Students Thriving	
Math		Math		Graduation Rate	
English		English		Ready based on a nationally recognized exam	
Math Growth for lowest 25% of students		Science		Accelerated into college coursework, career training, or service	
English Growth for lowest 25% of students		Social Studies			
English Language Acquisition (ELL)					
Average:					

## LETTER GRADES

Based on the school's score, a school is assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. The letter grades are equivalent to the following:

**A**—produces excellent student achievement and progress

**B**—produces above average student achievement and progress

**C**—produces satisfactory student achievement and progress

**D**—produces less than satisfactory student achievement and progress

**F**—fails to produce adequate student achievement and progress

Letter Grade	2023 Simulated Elementary/Middle	2023 Simulated High	2023 Simulated District	Each time 50% or more schools on a scale earn A/B combined the following year the scales go up by 5 points until we reach the final scale	Final Scale
A	62.8% to 100%	56.2% to 100%	52.7% to 100%		90 – 100
B	53.1% to 62.7%	49% to 56.1%	49.1% to 52.6%		80 – 89
C	41.5% to 53%	36.7% to 48.9%	41% to 49%		70 – 79
D	35.3% to 41.4%	29.7% to 36.6%	36.4% to 40.9%		60 – 69
F	35.2% and below	29.6% and below	36.3% and below		0 – 59

After cut ranges have been set in 2026, in any year in which 50 percent or more of schools or districts on a scale earn a grade of A or B, the scale required to earn a school grade will be raised by five percent for the following year. These automatic increases will continue until the scale reaches the final scale.



# CALCULATING SCORES

A [simulated 2025-2026 calculator](#) is available in the [Accountability library](#). This calculator provides systems with the opportunity to estimate the SPS using the revised accountability formula outlined in this document. This calculator may be updated between now and 2026 based on feedback. In the calculator, there are two options:

1. A traditional SPS calculator, which includes each subcomponent and allows for entry of individual student counts.
2. A “simple calculator,” which allows for entry of percentages for each category.

This is a tool to only estimate SPS. It is not intended to determine a final school or district performance score.

# ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORES

There have been no policy changes for alternative school performance scores. Alternative education schools continue to receive accountability scores based on the following indices for local accountability.

K-8	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress Index</li><li>• Dropout/Credit Accumulation Index</li><li>• Interests and Opportunities Index</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress Index</li><li>• Core Academic Credit Accumulation Index</li><li>• Dropout/Credit Accumulation Index</li><li>• Credential Attainment Index</li><li>• Interests and Opportunities Index</li></ul>

The final accountability results issued in the fall semester of each year reflect the configuration of the alternative school as it existed the prior spring semester. For combination alternative schools, which have a grade configuration that includes a combination from both K-8 and 9-12 receive a score from a weighted average of the K-8 SPS and the 9-12 SPS.

- The K-8 SPS is weighted by the number of students eligible to test during the spring test administration.
- The 9-12 SPS is weighted by the sum of assessment units from students who are initial testers for high school LEAP 2025, plus the students eligible to take the ACT®. Students with high school LEAP 2025 and ACT® will count only one time.

For alternative schools with configurations that include ninth through eleventh grades, but do not have a twelfth grade, the school performance score will consist only of the indices available to calculate.

# RESOURCES

The School and District Accountability rules in [Bulletin 111](#) describe policy more specifically.

The LDOE [Accountability Library](#) has been updated to include resources and webinars for a variety of audiences (school administrators, teachers, counselors, and central office employees). Guidance documents are also included to assist families, students and business/industry partners in understanding the revised Accountability system, and how to assist with student success.

The LDOE website also contains additional information about school and district grades, including the results of the calculation for each school and district in the [Data Center](#). This information is also made available on [LouisianaSchools.com](#). Additional information describing the calculation and historical information are available in the [Accountability Library](#).

For more detailed information on how to calculate school performance scores based on the revised accountability system, please see the [Simulated Guidebook](#).

# ACCOUNTABILITY FAQs

---

## PREPARING 8TH GRADE STUDENTS: T9, DCAI, AND GRADUATION COHORT

### 1. What happens if state assessments indicate that an 8th grader is not ready to enter 9th grade?

Schools should refer to the transitional 9th grade policy in their Pupil Progression Plan for guidance.

### 2. For alternative schools only, do the credits earned by transitional 9th graders count toward DCAI?

Yes, credits earned by students in T9 count toward the dropout credit accumulation index. The Carnegie credits earned by a student in T9 are analogous to that of a first-time 9th grader.

### 3. For alternative schools only, do credits earned after the T9 year count toward DCAI?

Carnegie credits that are earned through the end of a student's transitional 9th grade year count in the school's dropout credit accumulation index. Credits earned by the transitional 9th grader in a future year are not included in DCAI calculations.

### 4. When does a student in transitional 9th grade enter the graduation grade cohort?

A student enters the graduation cohort the year after transitional 9th grade, regardless of grade level.

### 5. What happens if a student drops out in T9?

If a student drops out in the transitional 9th grade year, that student is included in the cohort and earns zero points.

---

## LEAP 2025

### 1. Do students in a Jump Start pathway have to take the same tests and/or courses?

All students who are on the Jump Start Career Diploma pathway taking regular LEAP assessments will take a core/foundational set of academic courses in grades 9 and 10. All students must take the corresponding LEAP 2025 test for any course that has one and the score must be included in their final grade for the course. All Louisiana students must take a high-school level English and math test regardless of courses taken or graduation pathway, by their third year of high school.

### 2. What happens if a student transfers from a nonpublic or out-of-state school? Do they take LEAP 2025?

The following rules apply for transfer students who are Louisiana residents transferring into the Louisiana public school district from out-of-state schools, nonpublic schools, or approved home study programs.

- A transfer student is not required to take the LEAP 2025 tests for courses he/she already successfully completed for Carnegie credit.
- A transfer student shall be required to take the LEAP 2025 test for courses he/she previously took but did not pass.
- A transfer student may choose to take the LEAP 2025 test for a course he/she has already successfully completed if he/she scored Unsatisfactory on a LEAP 2025 test in another course and the student must pass the LEAP 2025 test for one of the LEAP 2025 pairs.

### 3. Which score counts if a student retakes a LEAP 2025 test?

The score from an initial LEAP 2025 test is the only score that is used for accountability. If the initial test is taken in the summer, the LEAP 2025 will be used for accountability calculations in the following academic year.

---

## NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXAMS

### 1. Which scores are used for students in the Nationally Recognized Exams indicator in Thrive?

Accountability points are based on the highest ACT®, SAT®, CLT®, or ASVAB® certificate score that is available by April of the expected graduation year for a cohort. While all students can use the WorkKeys® certificate to meet this indicator, all TOPS University students must all have taken the ACT®, SAT® or CLT®. Students will only be included the year of their expected graduation as a member of the official graduation cohort.

### 2. What if a student takes a nationally recognized exam multiple times?

The school and district are held accountable for the highest ACT®, SAT®, CLT®, or ASVAB® exam by the end of the graduation cohort window.

### 3. What happens if a student takes the ACT®, SAT®, CLT®, or ASVAB® at a different school?

The ACT score is used under two of three Thrive indicators. All students in a graduation cohort must have data from all three Thrive indicators. ACT participation will no longer be determined by grade enrollment.

### 4. When will student performance on WorkKeys® count toward accountability results?

WorkKeys® is in Thrive under the indicator of Nationally Recognized Exams. While all students in the graduation cohort can use WorkKeys gold or platinum to meet the indicator, TOPS University students must have also taken the ACT®, SAT®, or CLT®.

The nationally recognized exam component is calculated by the percentage of students in the graduation cohort earning one of the following:

#### For University Diploma students:

- ACT® of 20+, which meets the TOPS ACT Requirement; or
- SAT® of 1040+; or
- Classical Learning Test® (CLT) of 67+; or
- Have taken the ACT, SAT, or CLT and earned a Gold or Platinum on the WorkKeys

#### For Career Diploma students:

- WorkKeys® Gold or Platinum; or
- 59%+ ASVAB (AFQT); or
- Any of the University Diploma requirements

---

## GRADUATION COHORT

### 1. How does the accountability system account for students who enter the school after grade 9?

If a student enters a Louisiana school for the first time as a 10th grader, the student will be placed with the cohort that is in their second year of high school. If a student enters a Louisiana school for the first time as an 11th grader, then the student will be placed with the cohort that is in their third year of high school. All students who enter the cohort at grades other than grade 9 will count at the LEA if they are enrolled by October 1 of their third year and fourth year of high school, unless they are dropouts. Dropouts count at the last school of record, regardless of October enrollment. If the student is counting at the LEA, the student is assigned to the school in the LEA where they were enrolled on October 1 of their fourth year and there is no interruption of enrollment at the school of 45 or more days. Additionally, all students who transfer within an LEA on or before October 1 of the fourth cohort year are included in the graduation rate.

### 2. Are students who graduate in five or six years included in the accountability system?

The revised accountability system does not award credit for students who graduate in five or six years in the graduation rate. The cohort graduation rate measures the extent to which students graduate on time (in four years). However, students who do not graduate on time may be counted as meeting goals for the other two Thrive indicators: Nationally Recognized Exam and College/Career Accelerator.

### 3. What happens if a student graduates early?

Students are included in the graduation rate for the year in which they are expected to graduate. For instance, a student who enters 9th grade in the 2022-2023 academic year is included in the 2025-2026 cohort graduation rate, even if the student graduates in an earlier year.

---

## GRADUATION INDEX

### 1. What are TOPS core courses and how do I find information on what counts as TOPS core courses?

LOSFA maintains current lists of TOPS requirements. Visit the [TOPS web page](#) for more information.

### 2. How is HiSET® different from the GED? How can I find out more information about it?

The GED was phased out as the adult education equivalency exam and replaced by the HiSET® in January 2014. Refer to the [High School Equivalency \(HSE\) Guidance Document](#) for more information. The HiSET is no longer used in the accountability model.

### 3. What is the CLEP® test? How can I find out more information about it?

CLEP® is a computer-based, credit-by-exam opportunity that offers the chance for students to be awarded college credit for knowledge gained outside of the classroom. High schools may apply to become an authorized CLEP® testing center through an application and certification process. Visit the [CLEP® exam web page](#) for a list of the tests.

### 4. If a student earns multiple AP®, IB®, or CLEP® scores, which one is used for the Thrive indicators?

A student meets the goal of the Thrive indicators if they meet at least one of the options.

---

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORES

### 1. How can I estimate SPS?

The LDOE provides school performance score calculations in the LDOE [Accountability Library](#).

### 2. How will the school performance scores and letter grade ranges for combination schools be calculated?

There is a single SPS calculated for a combination school using only the indicators that are available for the school. Any school with a cohort graduation rate will utilize the high school indicators and scale; all other schools will utilize the elementary school scale.

### 3. Are there any changes to how students are included in the revised accountability model indicators?

There are no changes to the full academic year rule. In the new accountability model, there must be at least 15 full academic year students who have data for the indicator.

### 4. How is CIR, UIR, and UIN identification changing with the revised accountability model?

There are currently no changes in approved policy to change Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR), Urgent Intervention Required (UIR), and Urgent Intervention Needed (UIN) identification. Intervention labels based on out-of-school discipline will be removed, pending ED approval. Please see the [SPS FAQ](#) in the data center for current CIR, UIR, and UIN policies.

### 5. How will LEAP Connect scores be used in the new accountability model?

LEAP Connect scores will be used for all components that require a LEAP score.

For the percentage of students scoring mastery for ELA, math, and science students who earn an achievement level of "At Goal" or "Above Goal" will be considered proficient.

For growth, students will have met growth if 1) the student moves from the lower half of scale score ranges for Below Goal and Near Goal to the upper half of scale score ranges for the achievement levels, 2) the student scores At Goal in the prior year and earns at least 1 scale score point in the same achievement level or scores Above Goal, and 3) the student earns Above Goal in the prior year and maintains the same achievement level.

Students participating in LEAP Connect will be included in the students with disabilities subgroup calculations.

## **6. How are students identified for growth of the lowest 25%?**

To determine the students in the lowest 25%, for ELA and math separately:

### **For the denominator**

- Establish the number of students who represent 25% of the total number of students who meet the full academic year definition for inclusion and who have both a prior year and current year LEAP score for ELA and/or math. Do not separate the students by grade level.
- Rank order all students from 850 to 650.
- Beginning with the lowest scale score, include the number of students who represent 25% to identify students who are in the denominator.

### **For the numerator**

- Count the number of students in the denominator who met growth criteria. Divide this number by the total number of students in the lowest 25% (denominator) to calculate the percentage of students meeting growth.

## **7. Will newly arrived English Learners (EL) be given two years in a U.S. school before they are counted in the assessment indicators?**

Newly arrived English Learners are defined as students who have been in U.S. school for less than two calendar years. Please see below how newly arrived ELs are included in each component:

- A newly arrived EL can be excluded from the percentage of students who score proficient in ELA, math, science, or social studies during the first two years of enrollment in a U.S. English-speaking school.
- A newly arrived EL is excluded from the growth components for their first year of testing. They will be included in the second year for both LEAP ELA/Math and ELPT/ELPT Connect growth.

## **8. What awards can schools earn under the revised system?**

- The Value-Added Growth Award recognizes schools in the 90th percentile for growth in reading/ELA, mathematics, science, or social studies.
- The Top Gains/Growth Award recognizes schools with exceptional growth.

## **9. Who do I contact when I have questions about SPS?**

Please email [accountability@la.gov](mailto:accountability@la.gov) with any additional questions.



