2023-2024 LOUISIANA HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDEBOOK

A Path to Prosperity for Every Student

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DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The **2023-2024 Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook** consolidates the policies and programs that are most relevant to high school educators as they plan for the upcoming academic year and prepare every student for college and career success. The **Louisiana High School Planning Guidebook** is published annually, as is the **2023-2024 School System Planning Guide**.

Ensuring every high school student is on track for success is but one of the educational priorities for the Louisiana Department of Education.

✓ Ensure every student is on track to a professional career, college degree or service

✓ Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children

✓ Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment

✓ Develop and retain a diverse, highly effective educator workforce

✓ Cultivate high-impact systems, structures and partnerships

These priorities are set forth in *Believe to Achieve*, which also includes state data to help track the Department's progress toward its six critical goals.

To support school systems with planning for and budgeting new pandemic relief funds, the LDOE has launched a **suite of resources**.

PLAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The high school experience opens doors for young adults—sparking interests, presenting opportunities, and expanding possibilities. To maximize this experience, students must have a smooth, well-planned transition to high school; to ensure their success until graduation, all students must have access to a range of academic opportunities and behavioral supports.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Louisiana requires students to attend school for a certain number of days to be promoted to the next grade and earn credit for a course. Under the law, students must attend school from age 5 through 18 or until they graduate from high school. BESE policy requires students to attend school regularly and must attend at least 167 days to earn credit and be eligible for promotion to the next grade.

REVISIT SCHOOL PROCESSES

Create a Layered Continuum of Support

Schools that sustain a high level of performance for all students employ a layered continuum of academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support. In a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), educators identify student needs early and provide real-time interventions based on data. MTSS prioritizes alignment of resources and support for students, teachers, and staff. MTSS includes universal screening, evidence-based interventions, and frequent progress monitoring to assess interventions and facilitate necessary adjustments.

Schools should implement a student engagement program that includes: (1) team-driven shared leadership; (2) data-based problem solving and decision making; (3) layered continuum of supports; (4) evidence-based practices; and (5) family, school, and community partnering.

Establish a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Every Louisiana high school should have a comprehensive program that supports students' academic, career, and social/emotional needs. An integral component of the school's mission, **effective school counseling programs** are a collaborative effort between the school counselor, families, community stakeholders and other educators to create an environment resulting in a positive impact on student achievement" (American School Counselor Association, 2021). The American School Counselor Association publishes **position statements** on **school counseling programs**, **academic development**, **career development**, **character education**, and **career and technical education**. The **National College Attainment Network (NCAN)**, provides an **advisor training module** for school counselors to create a comprehensive **early awareness program** for college and career readiness.

Build a High-Quality Academic Program

Selecting and implementing a high-quality curriculum has a significant impact on the quality of student learning. That curriculum must be connected to the standards-aligned assessments students take and the training teachers receive. When curricula, assessments, and professional development work together, students are more likely to reach the expectations of the academic standards.

The Department assists local school systems in selecting high-quality curricula and aligning them with assessments and **professional development** by

- **reviewing** curricula for quality and supporting districts in accessing the best materials,
- providing **instructional resources** around high-quality curricula, and
- building **high-quality tools** and **refreshing practices** to fill in gaps when needed.

Please contact **classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov** with questions. Visit the **LDOE Academics** and the **English Learners web page** for guidance on building quality programs for diverse learners.

Develop Robust Career-Technical Education Opportunities

Louisiana's Jump Start program is a nationally recognized model for career and technical education (CTE), requiring students to attain industry-valued credentials as part of their high school experience. Jump Start aligns Louisiana's K-12 CTE strategy with the state's economic development strategies, preparing students for the careers that will drive our state's future prosperity. Therefore, school leaders must carefully consider the resources they will need in order to meet the needs of their students as well as those of the larger community. All Louisiana students—whether they are on the TOPS Tech or the TOPS University Diploma track—must have the opportunity to obtain industry-based credentials that will prepare them for high-wage, high-demand careers.

REVIEW STUDENT RECORDS

Review information systems. Ensure that there are flexible classroom strategies and solid transition programs in place for students who have an **IEP**, **IAP**, **EL Accommodation Checklist**, and/or the designation of homeless or transient status. Provide relevant support and effective professional development for all school staff, and develop administrative procedures that increase the overall quality of students' school experience.

Review graduation plans. Individual student planning starts no later than the 8th grade and continues until graduation. Ideally, the records from the middle/junior high school will include an individual graduation plan (IGP) for every incoming student. This **plan** provides important information about the kind of planning that occurred in the middle school years and informs next steps for high school personnel. School counselors should make time to meet individually with students transferring from an out-of-country school and any other students who enters high school without an IGP.

Review placement recommendations from the middle/junior high. Research shows that students placed on a high school campus are less likely to drop out than students who are retained at the middle school. The School Building Level Committee (SBLC) at the middle school should review standardized test scores, prior coursework, and student behavioral data to determine the most appropriate setting for each student. Placement in transitional ninth grade (T9) is at the discretion of the local school and/or school system where the student was enrolled in eighth grade. However, middle schools are highly encouraged to collaborate with the high school for such placement. See **page 13** of this guide for information about **Louisiana's Promotion Policy**.

DETERMINE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

Confirm or modify each student's placement for the first year experience: 9th or transitional 9th grade (T9). For any eighth grade completer who transfers from another state or country, the school system shall determine appropriate placement **no later than October 1** of each school year. Most school systems determine eligibility for T9 based on a combination of the following data:

- high-quality assessments
- classroom evaluations
- course grades
- student growth
- IEP goals
- attendance records

English Learners (ELs) who enroll with little or no documentation of previous education should be placed in the grade according to their age. High school-aged students may be placed in 9 grade or in T9 if they are unable to produce valid transcripts showing earned high school credits. A school representative should meet with students who may need more than four years to acquire enough English to meet all **graduation requirements**. Visit the **English Learner Library** for tools on how to identify and support ELs in high school. Review the **SIFE One-Pager** if the student potentially meets the criteria of a student with interrupted formal education.

Louisiana state placement tests are available in grades 4 and 8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and may be used to assess a student's grade-level readiness in those subjects. Mathematics placement tests are also available in Spanish. School systems should use assessments in the student's native language, when available, to assess their proficiency and to determine their literacy level. More information about these tests can be found in the **Louisiana World Languages Compendium** for more information.

If a student with a disability is enrolled in a course and will be applying the April Dunn Act, ensure that goals and IEP are updated to reflect this within the first 30 days of the course.

Engage families in the high school experience and begin discussions about the range of possibilities available to students during their high school years. Provide information about opportunities to earn college credit and industry credentials, and explain course recovery options when applicable. Discuss student engagement programs and any other opportunities that could be of value to the family. At schools with approved **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)** programs, inform parents about this national dropout prevention model.

Visit the **Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities** web page and the **Students with Disabilities Library** for tools to support planning an effective high school experience for students eligible for alternate diploma pathways. Refer to the **Louisiana Special Education Guidance for High School Students** for an outline of the policies that impact all students with disabilities.

PLAN FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

Support the Well-Being of Students

Every day, all students should experience schools that treat them with dignity and respect, where they have the opportunity to build knowledge of the world, read meaningful texts, express ideas through writing and speaking, and solve complex problems. School systems and schools should focus on the following areas to develop and sustain positive student engagement and success.

1. **Prioritize Positive, Intentional Relationships:** Facilitate meaningful interactions to develop sustaining, strong relationships within the classroom and throughout the school that includes a focus on staff to student, staff to staff, student to student, and staff to family.

2. **Attend to Individual Students' Needs:** Provide individualized supports and services to meet the social, emotional, mental health well-being of students.

3. **Respond to Student Behavior with Appropriate Support:** Address policies and practices to ensure that students receive appropriate support, as behavior incedents are often a signal of need.

Determine how often to evaluate an individual student's progress, specifying the data the support team will use to identify student progress and gaps.

Quarterly support team meetings are recommended as interim progress checks for reviewing course grades, common assessments, attendance records, and teacher/mentor evaluations.

Execute individual performance criteria through the IEP process for students eligible under the April Dunn Act.

Review course schedule and student needs to develop individual performance criteria as appropriate.

Consider outside resources for support.

Identify students who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services** (LRS). LRS can provide pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), career interest identification, soft skills training, job development, job coaching, and job placement.

Educate school personnel and families about graduation options for all students.

Students who are eligible to take the LEAP Connect (alternate assessment) are able to pursue an alternate pathway to a high school diploma. This pathway mirrors the requirements of the traditional graduation pathway and consists of academic, assessment, workforce readiness, and transition components that the student must meet in order to receive a diploma. The diploma looks identical to a traditional high school diploma, and the student's transcript will identify whether the student took Carnegie unit courses or applied credit courses.

English Learners are eligible for any graduation option, and schools should make sure that these options are communicated to them in a language they and/or their families can understand. Schools must thoroughly explain the requirements for each option and discuss any additional requirements that might relate to English proficiency.

SELECT APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

In Louisiana, school systems purchase instructional materials that they determine are best for their local communities. To support this process, educators and experts from across the state have reviewed a large body of resources to determine how well they align with state **standards**. To make the evaluation results understandable and accessible, the Department designates these programs with tiers and provides the **curricular resources annotated reviews** online. The Department also provides the following resources:

- **Teacher toolbox**
- **Grade-specific libraries**
- **English Language Arts (ELA) Guidebooks**
- **Louisiana Literacy**
- **Louisiana Math Refresh**
- **Math planning resources**

- **Social studies planning resources**
- **Science planning resources**
- **Accelerate: Louisiana's Pre-K Through High School Tutoring Strategy**

Once a school system has selected its resources, principals must support teachers with **quality professional development** around those materials.

PROVIDE RELEVANT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EXPERIENCES

In order to provide students with the greatest range of opportunity, schools must offer state-of-the-art career and technical education facilities, equipment, and instruction. Students who attain a high-demand credential during high school will be better prepared for continued success—regardless of the **graduation pathway** they ultimately pursue. Pre-Engineering, Digital Design and Emergent Media, and Louisiana Pre-Educator pathways are just a few of the high-demand **Jump Start pathways** that schools can make available to students. The **Jump Start Implementation Guidance for Students with Disabilities** serves as guidance for IEP teams to ensure that students on the Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma path are prepared for their postsecondary aspirations.

In addition to providing access to relevant credentials, schools must give students the opportunity to learn about careers early and often. To prepare students for their options in high school, Louisiana middle schools expose students to several career exploration activities. Activities might include career interest inventories, job shadowing, field trips, guest speakers, community service activities, and other experiences that are designed to introduce students to the occupations that are in-demand in Louisiana. Students may have also taken a career development course in middle school. Students who did not attend middle school in Louisiana or the United States may require access to additional resources and counseling in these areas.

All students can benefit from taking a high school-level career readiness course; students who choose a Jump Start pathway are required to complete at least one. **Quest for Success** is Louisiana's innovative career exploration course that prepares students for career and life success. This high school-level course is beneficial to students in either diploma pathway. Students explore their interests, develop essential workforce skills, and research careers and industry sectors.

Schools have additional basic career readiness course options. **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)** is a state-based national nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who have serious barriers to graduation and/or employment. The program includes a for-credit class that trains students in career development, job attainment, job survival, basic skills, leadership, and self-development. Louisiana is one of 34 states in the **JAG National Network**.

Agriscience arms students with knowledge of agricultural, scientific principles, agrifinance, agribusiness, and food science. Students of agriscience also learn about the history of the field and the science applications involved in that industry sector. The **Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources pathway** includes career development lessons and activities that apply to a wide variety of careers.

FOCUS ON CORE ACADEMICS: 9TH AND 10TH GRADES

OVERVIEW

During the first two years of high school, students should focus on building on the knowledge and skills they gained in previous grades. Every 9th and 10th grade student will take core academic classes to pursue a diploma. At the completion of the 10th grade year, a student may choose a Jump Start TOPS Tech Pathway, the TOPS University Pathway. Students, families, and educators collaborate to make these decisions based on a student's interests, capabilities, ambitions, and whether they meet the eligibility criteria. These decisions are updated annually in the student's **Individual Graduation Plan** (IGP).
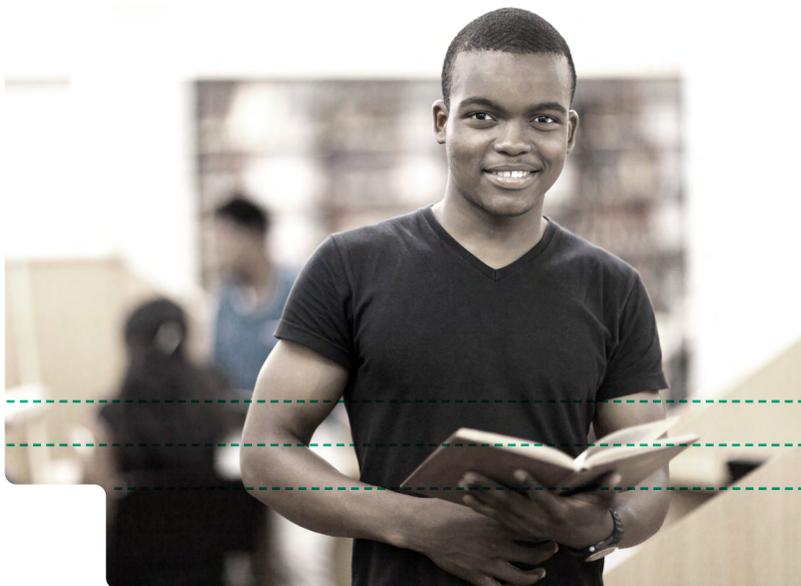
FOCUS ON 9TH & 10TH GRADE STUDENTS

☑ Determine Appropriate Placement

☑ Plan for Student Engagement

☑ Schedule Student Coursework

☑ Select Initial Student Pathway

STEP 1: Determine Appropriate Placement

Academic Considerations

- Data indicators for student placement can include information from a variety of sources:
  » student growth measures
  » teacher SLT data
  » high-quality assessments
  » IEP goals
  » course grades
  » IGPs

Career Considerations

- **Readiness** – Does the student have the necessary skills to be successful in the workplace?
- **Interests** – What are the student's hobbies outside of school?
- **Strengths** – What does the student perceive to be strengths and abilities?

STEP 2: Plan for Student Engagement

COLLEGE AND CAREER AWARENESS

Offer 9th and 10th grade college and career readiness activities that will allow students to engage with experts within the school and the community.

Career Awareness

- Career Fairs
- Workplace Visits
- Role-Play Activities
- Guest Speakers (in-person or online)
- Mentors

College Awareness

- Campus Visits
- College Fairs
- Financial Literacy Activities

Email **JumpStart@la.gov** for information about providing students and teachers with online access to industry experts locally and across the country with platforms such as **Nepris**.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Provide student organizations to support a variety of interests and endeavors.

- **National Beta Club** is an organization that promotes the ideals of academic achievement, character, leadership, and service among students.
- **4-H** helps students develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility, and life skills through experiential learning programs and a positive youth development approach. Though typically thought of as an agriculturally-focused organization, 4-H focuses on citizenship, healthy living, science, engineering, and technology programs.

- The **National FFA Organization** makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

- **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)** is a state-based, national nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who are most at risk.

- **Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)** enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, applying learning in the context of business, connecting to business and the community, and promoting competition.

- **SkillsUSA** is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. We help each student excel. SkillsUSA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens. We improve the quality of our nation's future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics.

- **HOSA-Future Health Professionals** provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition for students enrolled in health science education and biomedical science programs or who have interests in pursuing careers in health professions. HOSA is 100% health care! HOSA actively promotes career opportunities in the health industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people.

STEP 3: Schedule Student Coursework

COMMON COURSEWORK

Louisiana's 9th and 10th grade students take common coursework, irrespective of the diploma pathway they ultimately select. Per **Bulletin 741**, student scheduling shall be individually appropriate and flexible to allow entry into and exit from courses and course sequences that are available for meeting curricular requirements.

SUBJECT	COMMON COURSEWORK FOR 9TH AND 10TH GRADE STUDENTS
English	2
Math	2
Physical Education	1.5
Health	.5
Science	2
Social Studies	2
Total	10

SUPPLEMENTAL COURSES

Schools that cannot offer all the necessary courses for every student should consider leveraging the resources of the **Course Choice Program**. The Supplemental Course Allocation gives school districts and other public schools an allocation related to the cost of high school credit courses. Course Choice course offerings are individualized to the needs of secondary students and provided outside the traditional secondary school. Offerings include

- career and technical preparation course classes
- academic work required to achieve TOPS
- advanced coursework not available at the school
- dual enrollment courses from Louisiana postsecondary institutions
- intensive remediation for students who are not on track for graduation

Refer to the **Course Choice Reporting System** for Course Choice offerings.

Newcomer ELs, or those who are identified as SIFEs, may need specific supplemental classes to acquire enough language to then access the core content. Most ELs will require **additional language supports** in their content classes.

FAST FORWARD

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. Students on this pathway would spend grades 9 and 10 on their high school campus earning required diploma coursework in core academic areas. Students would then have the opportunity to spend grades 11 and 12 on a postsecondary campus or a Board of Regents-approved postsecondary satellite campus earning an associate degree or be fully immersed in a **state-recognized pre-apprentice or apprentice program** while dually earning a high school diploma.

Students in the Fast Forward Program will have the option to participate in one of three pathways:

FAST FORWARD JUMP START 2.0 PATHWAY	FAST FORWARD TOPS UNIVERSITY PATHWAY	FAST FORWARD HIGH-DEMAND APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY
This pathway encompasses a vast array of careers or postsecondary pathways students may enter after earning a technical associate degree on a postsecondary campus or Board of Regents approved satellite campus and dually earning a Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma.	This pathway allows students to earn a universal **transfer degree** or technical associate degree from a postsecondary campus while dually earning a TOPS University Diploma. The transfer degree curricula allow students to seamlessly transfer to a four year institution upon earning the degree.	This pathway encompasses a vast array of careers or postsecondary pathways students may enter after participating in a Louisiana Workforce Commission registered pre-apprenticeship/ apprenticeship program and dually earning a TOPS University Diploma or a Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma.

INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLANS

Per **Bulletin 741**, "by the end of the eighth grade, each student shall begin to develop, with the input of his parent(s) or other legal custodians and school counselor, an individual graduation plan." Each student's **Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)** lists the courses students will take in subsequent years and identifies the diploma path they choose in 10th grade. The plan is reviewed, updated, and signed annually.

For students who are assessed on **LEAP Connect**, the IGP is based on the student's academic record, talents, interests, and postsecondary goals. With the assistance of his/her family and the school counselor, each student shall be allowed to choose the high school curriculum framework and related graduation requirements that best meet his/her postsecondary goals. The IGP is reviewed annually and updated or revised in conjunction with the student's **IEP**.

To support the graduation planning process, the Department provides several IGP resources in the **Counselor Support Library**. Resources include sample IGP forms in multiple languages, a guidance document, and pertinent webinar decks. The **Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)** also offers several tools that support the student planning process. See **page 14** of this document for more information about these resources and what information is required under **Act 238**.

CARNEGIE CREDIT AND CREDIT FLEXIBILITY

When awarding credit based on instructional time, school systems shall provide a minimum of 7,965 instructional minutes for one Carnegie credit, and students shall be in attendance for a minimum of 7,515 minutes. In order to grant one-half Carnegie credit, school systems shall provide a minimum of 3,983 instructional minutes, and students shall be in attendance for a minimum of 3,758 minutes.

When awarding Carnegie credit that includes individual performance criteria as outlined in the April Dunn Act, school systems must ensure that IEP teams do the following:

- Document the student's eligibility in SER; and

- Include goals and objectives specific to the course in the student's IEP within the first 30 days of the course.

When awarding Carnegie credit based on demonstrated proficiency, school systems, on behalf of any student or group of students, must **report** the following information to the Department:

- the name of the examination used to measure proficiency, if nationally recognized, or a copy of the examination used to measure proficiency if locally developed, or a listing of requirements to demonstrate proficiency by portfolio submission; and

- the score required to demonstrate proficiency or a listing of requirements to demonstrate proficiency through portfolio submissions.

Proficiency in a course with a state-administered LEAP 2025 exam must be demonstrated using the LEAP 2025 exam. The Department may require revisions to assessments in order to ensure they adequately measure proficiency.

Students meeting the requirements for Carnegie credit based on proficiency shall have the course title, the year proficiency was demonstrated, grade earned, and the unit of credit earned entered on their transcript. School systems shall determine whether to award the letter grade earned on the proficiency assessment(s) or a P (pass) when a student demonstrates proficiency. Students participating in LEAP Connect are **eligible to take applied courses**. They may also earn Carnegie units for classes like P.E.

STEP 4: Select the Initial Student Pathway

By the end of the tenth grade, each student's **Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)** (and IEP if applicable) will be updated to include the recommended sequence of courses for successful completion of a chosen pathway. Pathway selection should be based on the student's postsecondary goals, academic record, talents, and interests. IGPs should be developed for all students, including those with disabilities.

STEP 5: Evaluate Student Growth and Identify Next Steps

- Review academic data to determine if the student is progressing.

- Assess whether the student has acclimated to the high school campus both socially and academically.

- Plan ongoing counseling and mentoring.

- Revise the **individual graduation plan** based on the student's ongoing needs.

DEVELOP ADVANCED COLLEGE & WORKPLACE SKILLS: 11TH AND 12TH GRADES

Student pathways should connect with real outcomes after high school – for both college-bound students and career-bound students. The TOPS University Pathway ensures students going to four-year colleges have taken a true college preparatory curriculum while in high school and have every chance possible to receive TOPS. Students who complete a Jump Start TOPS Tech Pathway will have attained an industry credential and also be prepared to continue postsecondary opportunities.

Identifying an appropriate individualized student graduation pathway is a critical step at the end of the 10th grade year. Students can participate in one or both pathways—TOPS University or Jump Start TOPS Tech. Both pathways help students prepare for postsecondary success and gain access to scholarships. Schools receive equal accountability system rewards for both pathways.

Students selecting the **TOPS University Pathway** will continue to pursue core academic credits that mirror the **TOPS Core curriculum**. Upon completion of all core course credits, students may graduate from high school early or pursue AP®, IB®, CLEP®, Cambridge AICE, or dual enrollment credits. Students graduating on the TOPS University Pathway may also complete Jump Start courses as electives and earn an industry credential. TOPS University Pathway requirements can be found on the **Graduation Requirements** web page.

Students pursuing the **Jump Start TOPS Tech Pathway** may earn basic or advanced credentials or equivalent credentials earned through dual enrollment coursework. Students graduating with a Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma will be required to attain Jump Start statewide or regional credentials. See the **Graduation Requirements** web page for details.

DEVELOPING ADVANCED AND BASIC COLLEGE AND WORKPLACE SKILLS FOR 11TH/12TH GRADE

- ✓ Identify student interests
- ✓ Identify appropriate coursework
- ✓ Distinguish among various secondary pathways
- ✓ Explore Postsecondary Opportunities
- ✓ Assist families with financial aid planning

School systems collaborate with postsecondary institutions, business, and industry to provide career courses and workplace experiences for high school students.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved 11 Jump Start 2.0 pathways, along with a waiver process for facilitating changes late in students' progressions. These 11 pathways align to the National Career Clusters.

PER BULLETIN 741 §2319. C.2.G.

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

Jump Start is a dynamic, adaptive program structured to evolve and grow at the pace of business. The three basic tenets of Jump Start are 1) collaboration—among districts and regional teams; 2) sharing—of best practices and innovations across districts; and 3) certification—for Jump Start students so they have the high-value industry credentials they need to attain high-wage jobs.

INDICATORS FOR STUDENT PLACEMENT

Benchmark, **LEAP 2025** and **WorkKeys®** test results can be used to provide guidance for placement in the appropriate diploma pathway. Students taking LEAP Connect (as identified by their IEP team) are on an alternate pathway within the Jump Start Career diploma pathway.

- **Benchmark Data:** School districts that use benchmark assessments and curriculum-embedded assessments can use that data to guide students to the pathway where they will be most successful.

- **LEAP 2025 Data:** Students' LEAP 2025 results may be used as a guidepost over time to select pathways for students.

- **ACT Scores and WorkKeys Results:** These standardized tests provide schools with nationally normed data that can inform several decisions.

- **Teacher/Parent Feedback:** Both teacher feedback and parental input are essential in successful placement of students in the best pathway. Schools and districts can work to develop forms that are effective at communicating best placement to school counselors.

Step 1: Identify Student Interests

It is imperative that students be exposed to activities and programs that help them explore their interests. Online career interest tools such as **Unlock My Future** help students see how their interests and professional goals can align with academic work during high school and beyond.

Planning appropriate high school experiences for some students with disabilities requires particular assessments and strategies. Through the guidance in "**Planning Appropriate High School Experiences for Act 833 Eligible Students**" and "**Planning Appropriate High School Experiences for Students Eligible for Alternate Assessment**," school systems can assist students with identifying their interests and choosing coursework that will lead to postsecondary success.

Step 2: Identify Appropriate Coursework

Jump Start offers students flexibility by choosing a pathway and spending time in junior and senior years taking courses designed by regional teams of industry leaders, economic development organizations, community and technical colleges, and school districts whose sequences of in- and out-of-school courses and apprenticeships are designed to yield work-ready graduates. The specific credentials will vary by region, but they may include an associate degree or technical diploma at a community college or receipt of a nationally-recognized career certification. Students need to meet prerequisite course/pathway requirements prior to enrollment (age, course prerequisites, WorkKeys®, etc.). These will vary by postsecondary partner. The various curricular, age, exam, and certifying agencies of each pathway can be found within each IBC Fact sheet.

Students should review the entrance requirements for the colleges of interest and ensure all necessary coursework is completed. Students planning to stay in Louisiana must meet specific **TOPS** requirements to receive this valuable state-sponsored scholarship.

Step 3: Explore Postsecondary Opportunities

Louisiana's Community and Technical Colleges: These are typically nonresidential and offer hundreds of two-year degrees that transfer to four-year universities and certifications that lead to high-wage careers.

Four-Year Universities: These are public universities, private universities, liberal arts colleges, and career colleges offering bachelor's degrees. All fall into the category of 4-year colleges and universities. These schools offer bachelor's degrees, which are usually completed in four years of full-time study, and some may also have a graduate school that offers advanced degrees.

Private and Out-of-State Universities: Using the **ACT® College Search Tool** students can explore private school and out-of-state college options.

TOPS Tech Early Start Private Training Providers: A TOPS-Tech Early Start Award may be used to fund any technical or applied course leading to an Industry-Based Certification, a Certification of Applied Science, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences offered at a Louisiana public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution, or by any Louisiana training provider recognized by the Louisiana Workforce Commission and approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

Step 4: Pursue Workplace Experiences and Early College Credit

Workplace-based learning experiences help students, master key workplace behaviors, improve communication skills, and gain exposure to industry. Workplace-based learning can include in-person or virtual workplace experiences. Jump Start seeks to help every Louisiana student gain the skills they need to attain employment in high-growth job sectors. Examples include job location visits, internships, and guest speakers—face-to-face or via the internet.

EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT

Advanced Placement: (AP®) courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit by demonstrating mastery of rigorous content through high school-based courses.

- Explore available **Advanced Placement® courses**.
- View the **AP® Exam schedule** for Advanced Placement® tests.
- Get more information on **increasing AP® participation**.

The cohort graduation index recognizes a score of 3 or higher on at least one AP® exam as the highest level of achievement earned by a cohort graduate.

The International Baccalaureate (IB®) program is recognized among the world's higher education institutions. For students, success in the IB often results in advanced standing, course credit, scholarships, and other admissions-related benefits. To offer **IB programs**, a school must become authorized as an **IB World School**.

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP®) is a credit-by-examination program that offers students the chance to earn college credit based on prior learning by getting qualifying scores in **Composition and Literature**, **World Languages**, **History and Social Sciences**, **Science and Mathematics**, and **Business** categories. The 33 examinations are administered year-round at authorized CLEP® testing centers.

In the **dual enrollment** (DE) model, students enroll in high school and college simultaneously and receive credit on both their high school and college transcripts. Taught by a college instructor or an approved high school educator, these courses are offered by technical, community, and four-year colleges. By using **SCA funds**, schools give students the potential to complete college sooner and at a lower cost. Students must meet the admission standards of the college awarding the credit. The Board of Regents has updated the dual enrollment minimum requirements to include the following: 2.5 GPA and one of the identified assessment score or 2.5 GPA and a high school counselor recommendation. Schools should consult with their partner postsecondary institutes for specifics. Visit the **Graduation Requirements** page for the most current **Dual Enrollment/Matrix Options for TOPS Core**.

For more information about dual enrollment, please visit the **Board of Regents Dual Enrollment Portal**.

Cambridge International **Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Levels and Advanced (A) Levels** are subject-based qualifications usually taken in the final two years of high school. The Cambridge curriculum was created specifically for an international student body with content suited for a wide variety of schools. Cambridge International AS Level is typically a one-year program of study; Cambridge International A Level Assessments are offered at the end of each program of study. The program is administered by Cambridge Assessment International Education, a part of the University of Cambridge, and the **international curriculum** is recognized by universities and employers worldwide.

Step 5: Assist Families with the Financial Aid Planning Process

A high school diploma is no longer enough to earn graduates a living wage in today's economy. Some form of postsecondary education or training is essential. A major barrier to accessing postsecondary education and training is financial resources. Financial Aid can remove the barriers to accessing four-year universities, two-year community colleges, and technical training programs. Most Louisiana high school graduates are eligible for some form of state or federal financial aid – either merit-based or need-based. State and Federal Financial Aid can be accessed by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form is used to determine the amount of money a family is expected to contribute to the price of attending a postsecondary institution. The results of the FAFSA are used in determining student grants, work study, and loan amount.

See **page 12** of this guidebook for information about Louisiana's financial aid planning requirement.

PLANNING RESOURCES

FINANCIAL AID POLICY

The extent to which Louisiana's students achieve postsecondary education and training is critically tied to the state's economic well-being and quality of life.

Louisiana students forego tens of millions of dollars each year in federal grants, state opportunities, and other funding for postsecondary education.

In December 2015, the Board approved a revision to **Bulletin 741**, Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, which requires public school students graduating spring 2018 and beyond to take one of the following steps:

✓ Submit the FAFSA;*

✓ Apply for TOPS;

✓ Submit an opt-out non-participation form or letter; or

✓ Receive a waiver through the school system.

School counselors should begin speaking to students about the benefits and financial costs associated with postsecondary education and training in their freshmen and sophomore years of high school. They should also inform students about the circumstances in which they may complete a FAFSA and receive financial aid without cooperation from a parent or guardian.

Resources for financial aid planning can be found on the **LDOE Financial Aid web page**.

*Students are able to submit a FAFSA for the upcoming school year as early as October 1.

FINANCIAL AID PLANNING SUPPORT

Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)

LOSFA can help students and parents with the FAFSA application process. If you have questions or need assistance contact LOSFA:

- Email LOSFA at **custserv@la.gov**
- Access LOSFA via web at **www.osfa.la.gov**
- To speak to a representative call LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626
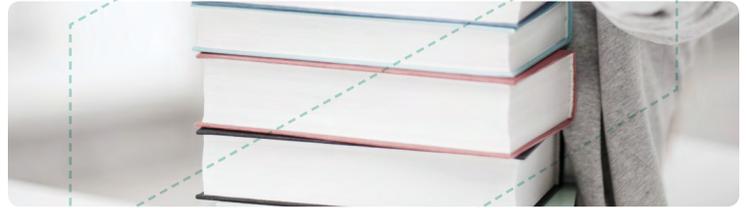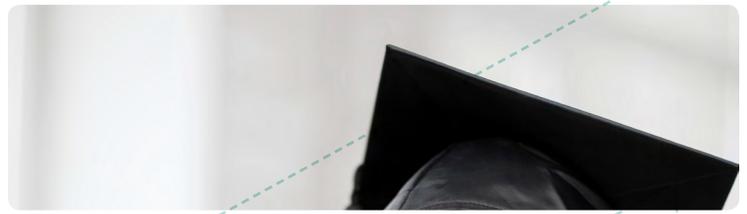
Office of Federal Student Aid

Federal Student Aid is responsible for managing student financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Federal Student Aid ensures students and their families can benefit from these programs by:

- informing students and families about the availability of the federal student aid programs and the process for applying for and receiving aid from those programs;
- developing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** (FAFSA®) and processing approximately 22 million FAFSA submissions each year;
- accurately disbursing, reconciling, and accounting for all federal student aid funds delivered to students each year through more than 6,200 colleges and career schools;
- managing the outstanding federal student loan portfolio and securing repayment from federal student loan borrowers;
- offering free assistance to students, parents, and borrowers throughout the entire financial aid process; and
- providing oversight and monitoring of all program participants—schools, financial entities, and students—to ensure compliance with the laws, regulations, and policies governing the federal student aid programs.

Student FAFSA Completion Data

The Louisiana Office of Student and Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education that now allows LOSFA to communicate FAFSA completion rates with each school system in the state as well as with certain college access service providers, provided those school systems and service providers enter an agreement with LOSFA. LOSFA is partnering with the state's school boards and college access providers to ensure all high school seniors have an opportunity to complete the FAFSA. If you would like to participate in this project, please contact LOSFA at **custserv@ osfa.la.gov** with the subject line FAFSA Completion Project.

LOUISIANA PROMOTION POLICY

General Requirements

Louisiana state law (R.S. 24.4) requires local education agencies (LEAs) to establish a comprehensive **pupil progression plan** based on student performance on LEAP 2025 with goals and objectives that are compatible with the Louisiana Competency-Based Education Program and which supplements the minimum standards approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The plan shall address student placement and promotion and shall require the student's mastery of grade-appropriate skills before he or she can be recommended from promotion.

Promotion and Support Standard for Grade 8

Promotion/retention should be determined by the school system based on academic records and student learning throughout the year.

Eighth grade students shall score at least at the "basic" achievement level in either English language arts or mathematics and "approaching basic" in the other subject in order to be promoted to the ninth grade. Any first-time eighth grade student who does not meet the passing standard set forth in BESE Bulletin 1566, §703, and any student not eligible for any waiver pursuant to § 707 of the bulletin, may be placed on a high school campus in transitional ninth grade. LEAs shall follow the guidelines set forth in §703 to determine, based on evidence of student learning, whether eighth grade students may be promoted to the ninth grade or placed on a high school campus in transitional ninth grade.

Credit Recovery

Credit recovery programs can be offered to Louisiana students to ensure on-time graduation, yet still provide them with a fulfilling experience. Bulletin 741 policy has recently been revised to ensure fidelity and quality.

- School system credit recovery program and policy are included in the local **pupil progression plan**;

- Credit recovery units applied toward graduation requirements are limited to a maximum of seven, with no more than two annually;

- In order to be eligible for credit recovery, students must have previously taken and failed the course, and all attempts must be documented on the official transcript;

- Credit recovery courses are identified and labeled on the official transcript;

- Credit recovery courses are aligned with state content standards and have an aligned pre-test to identify areas in need of remediation and post-tests to demonstrate proficiency in content previously identified as deficient; and

- Online credit recovery courses have an assigned Louisiana certified teacher of record.

PLANNING SUPPORTS

Louisiana Workforce Commission

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) offers several tools to support the student planning process.

- **My Life/My Way**
- **STAR Jobs**
- **High Demand/High Wage Jobs**

Per **Act 238**, schools must provide students with information developed by the LWC regarding the top twenty **high-demand, high-wage jobs** in the **state** and in the **student's region**.

- Designated school personnel shall demonstrate to the student how to access the information on the LWC website.
- Designated school personnel shall provide the student a printed copy of the listing for that region.
- LDOE shall display a link to the LWC information on its website.
- Each public middle and high school will display the link on its website.

Cross State High School Collaborative

The **Cross State High School Redesign Collaborative (CSHSC)** is a joint effort of seven participating states **(Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, and Ohio)** and supported by the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, the Council of Chief School Officers, and Civic Enterprises. The resources procured and developed as a result of this collaborative are organized into four key improvement levers:

- **Organizing Adults**
- **Students at the Center**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Post Secondary Pathways**

Funding Opportunities

Each school system **determines** what is best for its students, and which Jump Start investments help them achieve their goals and improve/sustain school performance. Note: the following funds are not limited to Jump Start courses and capabilities.

- **MFP Career Development Fund**
- **Carl Perkins**
- **TOPS Tech Early Start**

* Districts and schools are not limited to spending these funds on Jump Start courses and capabilities. Each school system determines what is best for its students, and which Jump Start investments help them achieve their goals and improve/sustain school performance.

Counselor Support Toolbox

A variety of school-level professional school counselor tools is available via the Department's **Counselor Support Toolbox**.

JUMP START OPPORTUNITIES

JUMP START KEY CONCEPTS

Perkins Regional Teams	Perkins regional teams are public-private partnerships made up of school systems and their governing authorities, two-year colleges, local industry, and economic and workforce development experts who together develop regional programs of study.
Graduation Pathways	The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved 11 Jump Start 2.0 pathways, along with a waiver process for facilitating changes late in students' progressions. All **approved graduation pathways** are available on the Department's website.
Statewide Credentials	Industry credentials approved by the **Workforce Investment Council (WIC)** for high-wage jobs in high-growth career sectors that are valued by employers when making entry-level hiring decisions.
Emerging Credentials	Regional (Emerging) credentials are not necessarily associated with a high-demand job sector. Students with these credentials may have substantial employability, but only in specific regions of the state or they are emerging to statewide status.

Jump Start Vision: students of all interests and capabilities will graduate high school with quality experiences and credentials that lead to a successful adulthood.

K-16 PATHWAYS

Louisiana STEM pathways better prepare students to pursue opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. These pathways provide students with a range of postsecondary opportunities in both the TOPS University and TOPS Tech pathways. With the Louisiana STEM pathways, TOPS University students have the opportunity to align their studies in a meaningful way, while TOPS Tech students have an opportunity to pursue a high-tech, high-engagement STEM Jump Start pathways.

JUMP START SUMMERS

Funded by the Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA), **Jump Start Summers** is an innovative program that gives Louisiana youth the opportunity to attain high-value, industry-based credentials (IBCs); high school and/or dual enrollment course credits; important workplace behaviors, and communication skills; and a respectable summer wage.

Students who participated in the summer of 2018 earned 1553 industry-based credentials, 1371 academic credits, and an average stipend of $662. All students—university or career-focused students, students with disabilities, even recent high school graduates—can participate in the program. For full details on the overall success of the Jump Start Summers, and individual district and provider experiences, see the **Jump Start Summers Evaluation Reports**.

ALTERNATE PATHWAYS TO A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

While most students with disabilities will pursue a traditional pathway to a high school diploma, some are eligible for **alternate pathways**.

- Under the April Dunn Act, eligible students with disabilities can pursue a standard high school diploma by meeting standard graduation requirements through alternate performance criteria.

- Students who are assessed with LEAP Connect can pursue a diploma by meeting alternate requirements.

The **Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities Resources** document can assist both educators and families with planning and implementing a successful high school experience for students with disabilities.

STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (SAMPLE SCHEDULE)			
Subject	**Course**	**Course Credit (for purposes of graduation)**	**Carnegie Credit**
English	Applied English 1	1	0
Math	Applied Math 1	1	0
Physical Education	Physical Education		1.5
Transition	Foundational Skills	1	
Transition	Employment Sampling	1	
Science	Applied Science 1	1	0
Social Studies	Applied Social Studies 1	1	0
Electives	Band		2
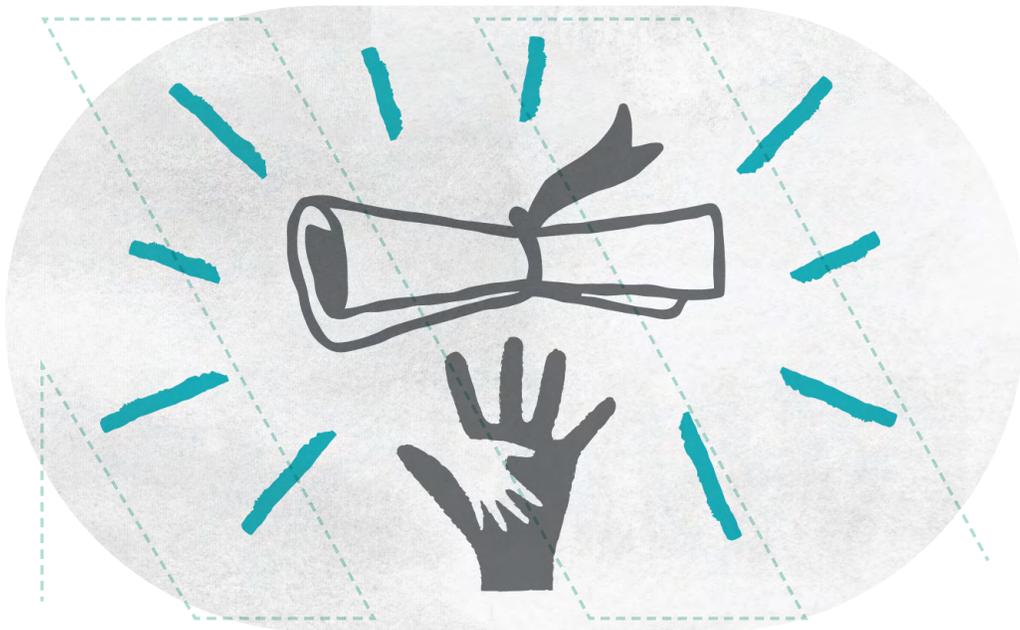
ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDANCE

INCLUSION IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COHORT

Students placed in transitional 9th grade (T9) shall not be included in the high school's graduation cohort during their first year on the high school campus. These students can enroll in high school-level classes that parents and schools deem appropriate, with a goal of keeping them on track for on-time graduation. Following one year in T9, students will enter the first-time ninth grade cohort. For instance, a student who enters T9 in 2021-2022 will enter ninth grade for the first time in 2022-2023 and will be in the 2025-2026 graduation cohort—a year later than if the student had not participated in T9 and entered ninth grade directly from eighth grade.

DROPOUT/CREDIT ACCUMULATION INDEX (DCAI)

Schools with an 8th grade earn accountability points based on the number of Carnegie credits students accumulate by the end of the 9th grade (and transitional 9th grade, when applicable). This encourages a successful transition to high school by allowing students the opportunity to earn Carnegie credits early and often. Points are awarded as follows.

CARNEGIE COURSE CREDITS (earned by the end of 9th grade)	DCAI POINTS PER STUDENT
7+	150 pts.
6.5	125 pts.
6	100 pts.
5.5	75 pts.
5	50 pts.
4.5	25 pts.
4 or less	0 pts.
3-year 8th grade student	0 pts.
Dropout	0 pts.

Note: Credit accumulation for transitional 9th graders includes credits earned in T9. Schools do not receive points for both the T9 and 9th grade year. Applied credits are counted in the DCAI for students who are identified in STS as pursuing a diploma through the Jump Start diploma for students who participate in LEAP Connect.

LEAP 2025: Students in T9 are required to take the assessments associated with their coursework. If they score below basic, they may retest without penalty to the school. If they score basic or higher, the score shall count toward the high school, just as it would for an 8th grader who was successful on LEAP 2025. April Dunn and LEAP Connect eligible students in grades 9-12 are required to take all assessments corresponding to the courses in which they are enrolled. Accountability points are awarded for scores of basic or higher.

STRENGTH OF DIPLOMA INDEX

The strength of diploma index in the accountability system measures the extent to which high schools have prepared students for college or a career. The table below demonstrates how points are assigned in the accountability system for the achievements of both TOPS University Pathway and Jump Start TOPS Tech Pathway students.

INDEX POINTS	STUDENT RESULT
160	**HS Diploma plus Associate's Degree**
150	**HS Diploma plus** (a) AP® score of 3 or higher, IB® Score of 4 or higher, or CLEP® score of 50 or higher **OR** (b) Advanced statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 160 points.*
110	**HS Diploma plus** (a) At least one passing course grade for TOPS core curriculum credit of the following type: AP®, college credit, dual enrollment, or IB® **OR** (b) Basic statewide Jump Start credential *Students achieving both (a) and (b) will generate 115 points.* *Students must take the AP®/IB® exam and pass the course to earn 110 points.*
100	**Four-year graduate** includes Career Diploma student with a regional JS 1.0 and emerging JS 2.0 Jump Start credential as well as students who participate in LEAP Connect and earn the appropriate Jump Start diploma within the required timeline.
75	**Five-year graduate with any diploma** *Five-year graduates who earn an AP score of 3 or higher, an IB score of 4 or higher, a CLEP score of 50 or higher, or an Advanced statewide Jump Start credential will generate 140 points. Five-year graduates who earn an Associate's Degree will generate 150 points.*
50	**Six-year graduate with any diploma**
40	**HiSET® plus Jump Start credential**
25	**HiSET®**
0	**Non-graduate without HiSET**

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.

Note: In 2019-2020, school systems should use a preponderance of evidence from student learning throughout the school year to determine promotion and retention.

2. 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. 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 during their first time in 9th grade are not included towards DCAI.

4. Do LEAP 2025 scores earned in T9 get "banked"?

LEAP 2025 scores for students in T9 are banked, or transferred, the same way that students who take LEAP 2025 exams in middle school.

5. 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.

6. 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. 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 summer, the LEAP 2025 will be used for accountability calculations in the following academic year. The LEAP 2025 test score from a student in middle school is banked for use at the high school in which the student is enrolled for grade 9. If the achievement level earned on the assessment taken in middle school yields 0 points, then the high school has one additional opportunity to test the student. If the student scores proficient, the school performance score will include the higher of the two scores.

ACT® AND WORKKEYS®

1. Which scores are used to calculate accountability points?

Accountability points are based on the highest ACT score that is taken by the April test date of the student's 12th grade year. For students who take both the ACT and WorkKeys, accountability points are based on the score that yields the higher number of index points. Students who repeat the 12th grade are not included in the ACT index if their highest score was used in a prior year. Note: The ACT/WorkKeys concordance table has changed. Please visit the **Assessment Library** for the most current information.

2. What if a student takes the ACT® multiple times?

The school and district are held accountable for the highest ACT® score a student earns through April of their 12th grade year.

3. What happens if a student takes the ACT® at a different school?

The highest score for a 12th grade student will count at the school where the student is considered *full academic year* for their 12th grade year regardless of where the test was taken. A student is considered *full academic year* in a school system if the student is enrolled on October 1 and for the date of ACT® testing. If the student counts at the school system, the student score is included in the SPS of the school at which the student was enrolled on February 1.

4. How can I learn more about ACT® and WorkKeys®?

Visit the **ACT State Testing** page for Louisiana.

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

All Louisiana 11th graders take the ACT, a nationally recognized measure of college and career readiness. In 2014-2015, the Department began work to form a concordance table using ACT and WorkKeys, a nationally recognized workforce readiness assessment. Schools earn points for the highest composite score earned by a student through the April testing date of their senior year. Workkeys is included in the ACT index for accountability using the following scale:

- Platinum on WorkKeys = 27 on ACT
- Gold on WorkKeys = 22 on ACT
- Silver on WorkKeys = 18 on ACT
- ELs should be given the opportunity to take both the ACT and Work Keys. There are limited EL accommodations available for both tests.

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. 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?

Yes. The cohort graduation rate measures the extent to which students graduate on time (in four years). However, students who graduate in five years may be included in the graduation index for strength of diploma. Each student who graduates in five years with a regular high school diploma may earn the school 75 points in the graduation index; students who graduate in six years earn the school 50 points. Schools earn 140 points for each student who graduates in five years with an advanced credential.

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 2018-2019 academic year is included in the 2021-2022 cohort graduation rate—even if he graduates the year before that.

GRADUATION INDEX

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

The Louisiana Office of Student and Financial Aid (LOSFA) maintains current lists of Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) requirements. Visit the **TOPS** web page for more information.

2. How is HiSET® different than 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.

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?

A student's highest score is used to determine the category in the strength of diploma index that is used to award points in the index. For example, if a high school graduate earned an AP® score of 5 and an IB® score of 3, the graduate would earn 150 points in the graduation index.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORES

1. How can I estimate SPS?

The LDOE provides school performance score calculations in the LDOE **accountability library**.

2. Who do I contact when I have questions about SPS?

Please email **accountability@la.gov**.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST

1. How are scores from the new English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) going to be used in accountability?

The school performance score assessment index includes a growth measure on the ELPT. Student progress will be determined by comparing the current year results to a student's baseline test. For students who participated in ELDA testing prior to the implementation of ELPT, the 2017-2018 ELPT scores will be used as baseline.

2. How much growth is expected of students each year?

The following table provides the expected growth for each English Learner based on the baseline score and the current year score, as well as the number of years between the two administrations. For example, a student whose baseline was established in 2017-2018 as Progressing Level 1 (at least one dimension score of 1 and at least one dimension score of 3) is expected to score at Progressing Level 2 in Year 3 (2019-2020). If the student meets the expected trajectory the school is awarded 100 points.

TRAJECTORY TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: STUDENTS FIRST IDENTIFIED IN GRADES 6-12						
Initial ELPT Proficiency Level	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Year 6**	**Year 7 and Beyond**
Emerging (E)	P1	P2	P2	P3	P3	T
Progressing 1 (P1)	P2	P2	P3	P3	T	T
Progressing 2 (P2)	P2	P3	P3	T	T	T
Progressing 3 (P3)	P3	T	T	T	T	T
Transitioning (T)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. How is the assessment index affected by the new points awarded for growth in English language proficiency?

The school is assigned points for the progress of English Learners who meet the full academic year requirement as outlined in the table below. For high school students, the points carry a minimum weight of 2 in the assessment index.

ELPT PROGRESS ASSESSMENT INDEX POINTS	
Outcome	**Index Points**
ELPT level exceeds trajectory	150
ELPT level meets trajectory	100
ELPT level is at least one above the prior year	80
ELPT level is the same or lower than the prior year	0

APPENDIX I: COURSE REQUIREMENTS CHART

SUBJECTS	TOPS UNIVERSITY DIPLOMA		JUMP START TOPS TECH CAREER DIPLOMA	
	# Units	Courses	# Units	Courses
English	1	**One of the following:** English I, English Language Part 1: Cambridge IGCSE, or English Literature Part 1: Cambridge IGCSE	1	**One of the following:** English I, English Language Part 1: Cambridge IGCSE, or English Literature Part 1: Cambridge IGCSE
	1	**One of the following:** English II, English Language Part 2: Cambridge IGCSE, or English Literature Part 2: Cambridge IGCSE	1	**One of the following:** English II, English Language Part 2: Cambridge IGCSE, or English Literature Part 2: Cambridge IGCSE
	1	**One of the following:** English III, AP English Language and Composition, IB Literature, IB Language and Literature, IB Literature and Performance, English Language Part 1: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), or Literature in English Part 1: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors)	2	**The remaining units shall come from the following:** Technical Writing, Business English, English III, English Language Part 1: Cambridge AICE - AS (Honors), Literature in English Part 1AICE - AS (Honors), English IV, any AP or IB English course, English Language Part 2: Cambridge AICE - AS (Honors), Literature in English Part 2: Cambridge AICE - AS (Honors), or comparable Louisiana technical college courses offered by Jump Start regional teams as approved by BESE
	1	**One of the following:** English IV, AP English Literature and Composition, IB Literature, IB Language and Literature, IB Literature and Performance, English Language Part 2: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), or Literature in English Part 2: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors)		
		NOTE: If a student chooses to take the A level Cambridge course, the second unit will count as an elective credit.		
Mathematics	1	Algebra I	1	Algebra I, Applied Algebra I, or Algebra I-Part 2 *(The elective course Algebra I-Part 1 is a prerequisite.)*
	1	Geometry	1	Geometry[1]
	1	Algebra II	2	**The remaining units shall come from the following:** Financial Literacy (formerly Financial Math), Math Essentials, Algebra II, Advanced Math-Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math—Pre-Calculus, Algebra III, Pre-Calculus, Business Math, Probability and Statistics, Statistical Reasoning, Transition to College Math, or comparable Louisiana technical college courses offered by Jump Start regional teams as approved by BESE, Integrated mathematics I,II, and III may be substituted for algebra I, geometry, and algebra II and shall count as three math credits, Additional Math: Cambridge IGCSE, Math 1 (Pure Math): Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), Math 1 (Pure Math): Cambridge AICE - AS (Honors)
	1	**One of the following:** Algebra III, Advanced Math—Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math—Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, IB Math Studies (Math Methods), Calculus, AP Calculus AB, IB Mathematics SL, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, IB Further Mathematics HL, IB Mathematics HL, Probability and Statistics, AP Computer Science A, Statistical Reasoning, Additional Math—Cambridge IGCSE, Math 1 (Probability and Statistics): Cambridge AICE (Honors), Math 1 (Pure Math): Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), Math 2 (Part 1): Cambridge AICE—A Level (Honors), or Math 2 (Part 2): Cambridge AICE—A Level (Honors)		
		NOTE: The Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III sequence, including the Cambridge IGCSE Integrated Math sequence, may be substituted for the Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II sequence.		
Science	1	Biology I	1	Biology I
	1	Chemistry I	1	**One of the following:** Chemistry I, Physical Science, Earth Science, Agriscience II*, Environmental Science, Principles of Engineering, any AP or IB science course, PLTW Principles of Engineering, Principles of engineering (LSU Partnership), Physics I: Cambridge IGCSE, Biology II: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), Chemistry II: AICE—AS (Honors), or Physics II: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors)
	2	**Two units chosen from the following:** (a) Earth Science; (b) **one of** Environmental Science, Environmental Awareness; (c) **one of** Physical Science, Principles of Engineering, PLTW Principles of Engineering, Principles of Engineering (LSU Partnership); (d) Agriscience II*; (e) **one of** Chemistry II, AP Chemistry, IB Chemistry I, IB Chemistry II, or Chemistry II: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (f) **one of** AP Environmental Science, IB Environmental Systems; (g) **one of** Physics I, IB Physics I, AP Physics I, Physics I: Cambridge IGCSE; or (h) **one of** AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C: Mechanics, IB Physics II, AP Physics II, or Physics II: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (i) **one of** Biology II, AP Biology, IB Biology I, IB Biology II, Biology II: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors), or Human Anatomy and Physiology		
		*The elective course Agriscience I is a prerequisite for Agriscience II.		
Social Studies	1	**One of the following:** U.S. History, AP U.S. History, or IB History of the Americas I	1	**One of the following:** U.S. History, AP U.S. History, or IB History of the Americas I
	1	**One of the following:** Civics, American Government, AP U.S. Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP U.S. Government and Politics: United States	1	**One of the following:** Civics, American Government, AP U.S. Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP U.S. Government and Politics: United States
	2	**Two units chosen from the following:** (a) **one of** European History, AP European History, Western Civilization, or History (European): Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (b) **one of** World Geography, AP Human Geography, IB Geography, Physical Geography, or Geography: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (c) **one of** World History, AP World History, IB History of the Americas II, or History (International): Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (d) History of Religion; (e) **one of** IB Economics, Economics, AP Macroeconomics, AP Microeconomics, or Economics: Cambridge AICE—AS (Honors); (f) AP Psychology, History of Religion, or African American history*		
Health and Physical Education	0.5	Health Education	0.5	Health Education
	1.5	Physical Education I and II; Adapted Physical Education I and II for eligible students in special education; JROTC I, II, III, or IV; or Physical Education I (1 unit) and 1/2 unit of Marching Band, extracurricular sports, Cheerleading, or Dance Team	1.5	Physical Education I and one half unit from among the following: Physical Education II, Marching Band, extracurricular sports, Cheerleading, Dance Team Adapted PE for eligible students or JROTC or may be substituted
		NOTE: JROTC I and II may be used to meet the health education requirement. Refer to §2347.		
World Language	2	Two units from the same language (§2345)[2]		
Art	1	Art (§2333), Music (§2355), Dance (§2337), Theatre (§2369), Speech III and IV (one unit combined), Fine Arts Survey, Drafting, Media Arts (§2354), Photography I/II, Digital Photography, or Digital Design (§ 2338)		
Electives/ Jump Start	3	Electives	9	Jump Start course sequence, workplace experiences, and approved credentials (a minimum of one industry-based credential is required for graduation)
Total Units	24		23	

Refer to **Bulletin 741** and the **LDOE Graduation Requirements** page the most current information.   REVISED AUGUST 29, 2023

1 Geometry is now required for JumpStart TOPS Tech (Career Diploma) students with a Fall grade 9 2023-2024 entry year and thereafter. For grade 9 entry prior to 2023-2024, students must take three additional Math courses of which Geometry is an option.

2 Computer Science has been added to TOPS University students with a Fall grade 9 2023-2024 entry year graduating in 2026-2027 and thereafter.

APPENDIX II:
SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN FORM

BASIC INFORMATION

Name:	9th Grade Entry Date:	○ Academic Support Plan Attached
High School Attending:	Originating Middle School:	

EDUCATION GOALS

Diploma Pathway	○ TOPS University Diploma ○ Jump Start TOPS Tech (Career) Diploma
Diploma Endorsements	○ Community Service Diploma Endorsement ○ State Seal of Biliteracy ○ STEM Diploma Endorsement
Financial Aid & Scholarships	○ TOPS Honors ○ TOPS Performance ○ TOPS Opportunity ○ TOPS Tech Early Start ○ TOPS Tech Completion Date: _____

COLLEGE & CAREER GOALS

Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 1):		Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 2):	
Career Cluster® (Option 1):		Career Cluster® (Option 2):	
Jump Start Graduation Pathway:		Jump Start Graduation Pathway:	
Post-High School Workforce Plans:	○ On-the-Job Training ○ Military ○ Employment	Certifications: ○ Statewide ○ Regional	○ Complementary

COURSE PLANNING

Subjects	6th–8th/T9 Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Graduation Tracker Min Req	Earned	Enrolled	Must Complete
English						4			
Mathematics						4			
Science									
Social Science									
Health						.5			
Physical Education						1.5			
World Languages									
Arts									
Electives/CTE									
Electives									
Credit Totals									

EXTRACURRICULAR & EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular					Awards/Industry-Based Certifications
Employment					
Community Service					

ASSESSMENTS

	Academic						Personal Instrument	Scores/Notes
College & Career Readiness					ACT		ACT Engage	
					WorkKeys		ASVAB	
LEAP 2025	English	English I	English II				Skills Inventory	
	Math	Algebra I	Geometry	US History			Career Interest	
	Science		Biology				Learning Styles	
	Social Studies						ONET Profiler	
Diagnostic								

Gifted & Talented Courses		AP, IB, & Cambridge Courses		CLEP Exams		Articulated Credit/Dual Enrollment Courses			
Course	**Credit**	**Course**	**Score**	**Course**	**Credit**	**Course**	**Credit**	**Course**	**Credit**

SIGNATURE APPROVALS

Dates LWC data provided:

	6th–8th/T9	Date	9th	Date	10th	Date	11th	Date	12th	Date
Student										
Parent										
Counselor/Advisor										

Visit the **Counselor Support Library** for the most current iterations of the Department's sample IGP fillable forms.

APPENDIX III (LEAP CONNECT IGP)

The information in this form should be aligned with student's IEP.

BASIC INFORMATION

Name:	9th Grade Entry Date:
High School Attending:	Originating Middle School:

EDUCATION GOALS

Exit Document	○ Jump Start Diploma ○ Certificate of Achievement
Diploma Endorsements	○ Academic Endorsement ○ Career/Technical Endorsement ○ Community Service Endorsement ○ Other: _____
Postsecondary Education Plans	○ Technical College ○ Community College ○ Other: _____ Completion Date: _____

CAREER GOALS

Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 1):	**Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 2):**
Jump Start Graduation Pathway:	**Jump Start Graduation Pathway:**
Post-High School Work Force Plans: ○ On-the-Job Training ○ Employment ○ Supported Employment ○ Other: _____	

COURSE SELECTIONS FOR CHOSEN PATHWAY

Subjects	Transitional 9th Grade (if applicable)	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Graduation Tracker Min Req	Earned	Enrolled	Must Complete
English						4			
Mathematics						4			
Science						2			
Social Science						2			
Workforce and Career Electives						7-9			
General Electives (may include Health and PE)						2-4			
Credit Totals						23			

COURSE SELECTIONS FOR CHOSEN PATHWAY

Subjects	5th HS Year	6th HS Year	7th HS Year	8th HS Year		Graduation Tracker Min Req	Earned	Enrolled	Must Complete
English						4			
Mathematics						4			
Science						2			
Social Science						2			
Workforce and Career Electives						7-9			
General Electives (may include Health and PE)						2-4			
Credit Totals						23			

EXTRACURRICULAR & EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular					Awards/Industry-Based Certifications
Employment					
Community Service					

SIGNATURE APPROVAL

	Student	Date	Parent	Date	Special Education	Date	Teacher	Date	Counselor/Advisor	Date
8th/T9										
9th										
10th										
11th										
12th										
5th HS YR										
6th HS YR										
7th HS YR										
8th HS YR										