

Louisiana Believes

**Superintendents' Advisory Council
November 5, 2015**

Agenda

- I. Consideration of proposed policies regarding the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 assessment results and related accountability measures
- II. Consideration of proposed policies related to postsecondary planning for graduating high school seniors
- III. Consideration of a discussion regarding Act 3 of the 2012 Legislative Session to provide an update related to LEA superintendents' concerns
- IV. Consideration of a discussion regarding charter school enrollment and verification
- V. Consideration of a discussion regarding Act 1 of the 2012 Legislative Session concerning LEA Superintendent Evaluations

Increasing Expectations for Louisiana's Graduates

- Louisiana forecasts show jobs requiring associate's degrees or other credentials that take less than a year to achieve will grow 19 percent through 2018.
- At least 55 percent of all new jobs will require 1-2 years of specialized education and training.
- 85 percent of new jobs will be filled by people with industry-valued certificates and associate degrees.

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, but too few of our students are meeting these expectations.

Preparing to Meet Increased Expectations of Postsecondary Education and Training

- Perceptions about the affordability of college or postsecondary training are a major reason why many students and their families do not pursue them.

“There has been little doubt for decades that financial factors play an important role in the educational decision making of students and families. Financial barriers have long been seen as a factor that may potentially undermine educational aspirations, expectations, and plans – even academic preparation – as early as middle school.” –

Report to Congress by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2010

“More than three-quarters (79%) of adults in the U.S. do not think that education beyond high school is affordable for everyone in this country who needs it.” – 2014 Gallup-Lumina Foundation Study

- Most Louisiana high school graduates are eligible for some form of merit- or need-based state or federal financial aid. Those funds can be accessed by submitting the FAFSA or LOFSA’s application for state financial aid.
- Historically, approximately 90 percent of the most economically disadvantaged students who submitted the FAFSA – i.e. those from families with annual incomes of less than \$40,000 – received financial aid.

Financial Aid Available through FAFSA

The FAFSA serves as an application for federal Pell grants, work study, low-interest loans, as well as Louisiana TOPS and Go Grant awards. These grants can fund four-year universities, two-year community colleges, and technical training programs.

Financial Aid Sources	Type of Financial Aid Requiring FAFSA	Description
Federal	Pell Grant	Grant of up to \$5,730 for students with low Expected Family Contributions (EFC).
	Subsidized Stafford Loan	Federally-funded student loans for higher education that are awarded based on financial need. Students are not charged interest (which is currently fixed at 4.66 percent) before beginning repayment or during periods of deferment, as the federal government pays the interest during these times.
	Federal Perkins Loan	Similar to the Subsidized Stafford Loan, but offered only by schools that are participating in the Federal Perkins Loan Program. Interest rate is fixed at five (5) percent.
	Federal Work-Study Program	Provides students with a part-time job, up to a certain amount per academic year. The student's wages are usually paid equally by the federal government and the student's institution.
State	Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Opportunity Award	State scholarship program for qualified Louisiana residents who attend state universities, state community and technical colleges, Louisiana-approved proprietary schools, or institutions that are part of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU).
	TOPS Tech Award	State scholarship program available to qualified students pursuing skill, occupational or technical training at eligible community and technical colleges, universities, and/or private training providers that offer a technical education certificate or diploma program or a non-academic undergraduate degree
	Louisiana Go Grant Program	Provides a need-based component to the state's financial aid plan to support non-traditional and low- to moderate-income students who need additional aid to afford the cost of attending college. The minimum and maximum annual award amounts for the 2014-2015 Academic Year were \$300 and \$3,000, respectively.

Federal and state financial aid available by submitting the FAFSA

FAFSA Completion by Louisiana Students

During the 2012-2013 school year, the FAFSA completion rate nationwide was approximately 55 percent. Louisiana's public school completion rate was 44 percent.

Percentage of Students Completing FAFSA (public only)*	Total Students Completing FAFSA (Actual)	Average Grant and Work Study Award***	Total Grant and Work Study Awards Received	Marginal Increase Relative to LA's Current Completion Rate (in \$)
44% (REAL)	17,823	\$12,340	\$219.9MM	-
55%	22,184**	\$12,340	\$273.8MM	\$53.9MM
60%	24,200	\$12,340	\$298.6MM	\$78.7MM
70%	28,234	\$12,340	\$348.4MM	\$128.5MM
80%	32,267	\$12,340	\$398.1MM	\$178.2MM
90%	36,300	\$12,340	\$447.9MM	\$228.0MM
100%	40,334	\$12,340	\$497.7MM	\$277.8MM

Marginal increase in federal funding at varying FAFSA completion rates

* Four states had FAFSA completion rates between 30 – 39.9%; 20 states, including Louisiana, had FAFSA completion rates between 40 – and 49.9%; 25 states had completion rates between 50 – 59.9%; two states had completion rates between 60 – 69.9%

** An additional 4,361 Louisiana public school students would have received financial aid had the state's completion rate been equal to the national average

*** NCES: Digest of Education Statistics, Table 389 – Average amount of financial aid awarded to full-time, full-year undergraduates, by type and source of aid and selected student characteristics (2012)

Students Most in Need Apply for the Least Support

- In Louisiana, it is the students most in need financially who are not completing financial aid forms.
- Among students who qualify for a TOPS award, lower scoring students apply for the award at a much lower rate.
 - Approximately 91 percent of students eligible for TOPS Opportunity awards seek awards.
 - **Only 21 percent of students eligible for TOPS Tech awards apply for awards.**
- Forty-seven percent of 2015 graduates did not meet the requirements for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Tech awards. These students are thus highly unlikely to receive state aid for college or technical training programs.
 - **However, more than 11,000 of these students (56%) did not complete a FAFSA, making them ineligible to receive federal aid as well.**

Identifying Opportunities to Expand Access

In December 2014, the Department of Education issued a report on the rate of FAFSA completion among Louisiana seniors. The report led to two statewide forums on the subject:

- December 2014: The Department presented the report at a public forum held with the Board of Regents.
- March 2015: The Department and the Board of Regents jointly hosted a forum at River Parishes Community College with educators and policy makers from across the state.

Statewide Proposals for Expanding Access

The two statewide forums have led to four proposals for expanding access to all students, especially the most in need, over the next three years:

- Require that students graduating spring 2018 and beyond have taken one of the following steps as part of their Individual Graduation Plan:
 - Complete the FAFSA
 - Complete the Louisiana TOPS form
 - Submit a parent's signature on non-participation form
 - Receive a waiver through district hardship waiver process
- Create a Louisiana FAFSA Counselor Assistance Center.
- Make available the option for school systems to review the real-time status of FAFSA applications among all seniors in the district.
- Make grants to any school system interested in accessing, developing, or purchasing capacity to counsel parents and guardians directly on FAFSA completion.

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