



Counselor Connect



August 2026

[Student Opportunities](#)
[Fast Forward](#)
[Professional Opportunities](#)
[Resources](#)
[Reminders](#)
[Ask Coco](#)
[Scholarships/Funding Opportunities](#)
[Connect With Our Office](#)
[Monthly Calls](#)

Student Opportunities

2026-2027 High School Planning Guide

Please share with system leaders and school counselors.

The [2026-2027 High School Planning Guide](#) 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.

The guide has topics that include:

- Attendance
- Building strong middle school foundations
- Accountability
- Course requirements
- Internship opportunities
- Post-secondary planning

This guidebook is designed to help administrators, school counselors, and educators use key policies, programs, and resources to help students and schools achieve their goals.

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

ACT - Upcoming Test Dates

Please share with system leaders, counselors, teachers, and students.

Below is the list of [upcoming National ACT test dates](#) and the [registration](#) deadlines.

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration</u>	<u>Scores Released</u>
September 19	August 14	September 1	October 6



Counselor Connect



October 17	September 11	September 29	October 27
December 12	November 6	November 29	December 22
February 27	January 22	February 9	March 16
April 10	March 5	March 23	April 20
June 12	May 7	May 25	June 22
July 10	June 4	June 22	July 20

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

2026 ACT College & Career Readiness Workshops

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

[Registration](#) is open for ACT College and Career Readiness Workshops. These in-person workshops offer participants a chance to connect and network with peers as well as collaborate with an ACT expert. Workshops will be tailored to the Louisiana landscape and include discussions and strategies systems can implement to improve outcomes.

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

- September 17 (Baton Rouge)
- September 22 (New Orleans)
- September 24 (Lafayette)
- September 29 (West Monroe)
- September 30 (Bossier City)

Please contact candace.joseph@la.gov with questions.

Fast Forward

K-8 Career Awareness and Exploration

Please share with administrators, school counselors, and CTE supervisors.

[ACT 144 \(2026\)](#) requires that each school year, at least six activities shall be conducted at each grade level in **grades six through eight** to expose students to career and technical academic fields of study. The activities shall align with the [high-demand sectors by region and state as provided annually by Louisiana Works](#).



Counselor Connect



- Each school year, **at least three of the six activities** for each grade level shall meet one of the following criteria:
 - An activity that provides direct interaction with an employer.
 - An activity that involves career pathway instruction linked to high school course options.
 - An activity that provides a work-based learning exposure.
 - A career interest inventory.
- At least **one** career awareness and exploration activity shall be documented for each school year in each student's Individual Graduation Plan (IGP), and **career interest inventories** should be completed in grade six and updated in seventh and eighth grades.

Each school that has grades K-5 shall provide students with at least **one** career awareness experience or activity each school year meeting at least one of the criteria listed above. Each school board shall certify compliance to LDOE and maintain auditable records for each school and grade level's activities annually. A form will be disseminated in **May 2027** for compliance purposes.

Please contact candace.joseph@la.gov with questions.

School Access to Louisiana Works Employment Certificate System

Please share with administrators, school counselors, and CTE coordinators.

A new state law has shifted responsibility for issuing minors' employment certificates from schools to employers. As a result, school access to the Louisiana Works Employment Certificate System was permanently discontinued effective Friday, July 24, 2026.

[Act 61 \(2026\)](#) removes the requirement that schools and school boards issue employment certificates for minors. Employers will now verify a minor's age, maintain the required documentation, and issue the certificate through the new Louisiana Works process.

If a minor presents an outdated worker's permit application at a school, please direct them to the new [employment certificate](#) or to the Louisiana Works Office of Workforce Development at 225-342-2683 or employmentcertificate@la.gov. Louisiana Works has also released [youth employment certificate FAQs](#).

Please contact employmentcertificate@la.gov with questions.

Professional Opportunities

School Threat Accountability and Safety Act

Please share with school system leaders and principals.

[Act 619](#) (2026), School Threat Accountability and Safety Act, requires public school principals to inform students in grades 6–12 about the crimes and consequences of terrorizing or menacing school property, functions, and firearm-free zones. This information must be disseminated within the first



Counselor Connect



five days of the school year, using the department-created [School Threat Accountability and Safety Act Guidelines for Louisiana Schools and Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment Guidelines](#)

Please contact healthyschool@la.gov with questions.

Human Trafficking Prevention Training

Please share with the principals or designee.

[Act 737](#) (2026) requires each school, including charter schools, to designate at least one employee to receive annual advanced training on human trafficking. The designated employee must be a school counselor, mental health professional, or school administrator.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Student Suicide Prevention Awareness Act

Please share with the principals or designee.

[ACT 548](#) (2026) requires public schools to post suicide hotline information, including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, on school websites and, when applicable, on student identification cards to increase awareness and access to crisis support resources.

Schools are required to:

- Post the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline information prominently on their school website.
- Include the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline information on student identification cards, if the school issues ID cards to students

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Suicide Prevention Training

Please share with school counselors, social workers, school nurses, coordinators, and teachers.

[R.S.17:437.1](#) (Jason Flatt Act), school personnel are required to complete a one-time, one-hour training in suicide prevention and maintain documentation of training completion.

Suicide Prevention Resources for Schools:

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\): Suicide Prevention Toolkit for High Schools](#)
- [The Jason Foundation: Training Modules for Suicide Awareness and Prevention](#)
- [Peer Initiative Resources](#)
- [Teacher Resources](#)

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.



Counselor Connect



Mental Health in Schools Survey

Please share with the principals or designee.

[R.S. 17:173.1](#) requires each public school to report, at the end of each school year, to the state Department of Education, by grade level, the number of screenings administered to students in grades 3-12 under its jurisdiction.

The Survey will open on May 3, 2027, and close on June 30, 2027.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Behavioral Health in Schools Survey

Please share with the school system leaders.

[R.S. 17:416.23](#) requires school systems to report the number of students having behavioral or emotional challenges, the number of students for whom a conference was scheduled, and the number of students referred for supportive services.

The Survey will open on May 3, 2027, and close on June 30, 2027.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Digital Devices Guidelines

Please share with school system leaders, school administrators, and school staff.

The prevalence and use of digital devices (e.g., computers, laptops, tablets, Chromebooks, smart devices, project screens, smartboards, and smartphones) by students and educators is an everyday component of the school day and our individual lives. The [guidelines](#) were developed in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Health and other stakeholders.

These [guidelines](#) have been developed to provide school systems with health and safety resources relative to best practices for the effective integration of digital devices in public schools. The resources are not exhaustive but are intended to provide school systems with the age-appropriate time and usage guidelines regarding various digital devices.

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Annual Occupational and Physical Therapist Summit

Please share with school counselors, social workers, school nurses, coordinators, and teachers.

Annual Lead Occupational and Physical Therapist (OTPT) Summit. The summit will focus on collaboration among Lead OT/PTs and will include discussions on Bulletin 1508 revisions, Medicaid claiming, multi-tiered systems of support, transportation safety, and school-based health services and practices in schools. CEUs are pending.



Counselor Connect



- **When:** October 29; 8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
- **Where:** Calcasieu Parish Board Room, 3310 Broad Street.
- **Cost:** Free
- **[Registration](#)**

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools Community of Practice Calls

Please share with school counselors, social workers, school nurses, coordinators, and teachers.

The Safe and Healthy Schools Team has transitioned its Community of Practice Calls from monthly to quarterly, beginning on July 23. The calls will be held on the fourth Thursday of each quarter at 2:00 p.m. The focus for the 2026–2027 school year is Creating a Healthy School Environment. Topics will include the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's six-step process, building and maintaining School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs), the Coordinated School Health Initiative, and other strategies and resources to support healthy school environments.

All calls are from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. via [Zoom](#).

Next scheduled calls:

- July 23, 2026
- October 22, 2026
- January 28, 2027
- April 22, 2027

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.

Call for Proposals: 2027 ACT Summit

Please share with system leaders, school leaders, counselors, teachers, and test administrators.

ACT invites educators and the workforce to [submit session proposals](#) for the [2027 ACT Summit](#), scheduled for July 12-14, 2027, in New Orleans. ACT is seeking 45-60 minute sessions that champion learners and the people who guide them. Each proposal must align with one of their five pillars, which are:

- Scores to Action: Using Readiness Data for Decisions
- Signal Clarity in a Shifting Landscape: Building Trust Through Transparent Communication
- Clearer Pathways: Reimagining Academic Routes for Student Success
- Career Readiness as a Key Outcome: Connecting Skills, Jobs, and Wages
- State Longitudinal Data Systems: Transparency, Trust, and a Culture of Data Sharing

The deadline to submit is **September 9**.

Please contact candace.joseph@la.gov with questions.



Counselor Connect



Resources

LEADS Counselor Handbook

Please share with superintendents, human resource directors, school leaders, systems leaders, and counselors.

The [Louisiana Counselor Rubric and Evaluation Handbook](#) is now available in the [LEADS Library](#). This handbook provides examples to deepen understanding of the rubric indicators. Coaching questions and sample evidence are also included. Evaluators are encouraged to use this resource to assist with the counselor evaluation process.

Please contact leads@la.gov with questions.

Free ACT Resources for Counselors

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT is offering free [ACT practice materials for counselors](#). These materials will help counselors access the most useful materials. All materials can be shared with students to help with test prep, including practice tests and test guides. ACT has also provided downloadable 2026-2027 posters for [test dates](#) and a [counselor calendar](#).

Please contact candace.joseph@la.gov with questions.

LOSFA Outreach Events

Please share with administrators and counselors.

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance provides several outreach events, seminars, and workshops for schools, institutions, and organizations. These events can be delivered virtually and in person. Access the [Event Scheduling Guide](#) for more information about LOSFA Events, or submit requests using the [Event Request Form](#).

Please contact losfa.scheduling@la.gov with questions.

AP Resources for Counselors

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

The College Board offers [free counselor resources](#) needed to support and advise students on their journey to college and career. Resources include assistance with preparing specialized students, advising, [reference guides](#), handouts, and [counselor toolkits](#).

Please contact candace.joseph@la.gov with questions.



Counselor Connect



Reminders

Safe and Healthy Schools: School-Based Medicaid

Please share with school counselors, social workers, school nurses, coordinators, and teachers.

As school systems prepare for the 2026–2027 academic year, the Safe and Healthy Schools Division reminds all Charter Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of Medicaid provider enrollment requirements. Charter LEAs must quickly inform the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and Gainwell Technologies of any changes to their name or if they transition to a new Charter Management Organization (CMO). Charter LEA's that undergo a name change or transition to a new Charter Management Company are required to:

- Notify the state of Louisiana Medicaid Fiscal Intermediary/Gainwell Technology Provider Enrollment Unit and Louisiana Department of Health immediately
- Update the [Provider Enrollment Update File Form](#)
- Complete the [Louisiana Medicaid Link/Unlink and Working Relationship Form](#)
- Mail forms with an original signature to Gainwell Provider Enrollment Unit

Please contact sbmp@la.gov with questions.

Community Service Diploma Endorsement

Please share with counselors and school system administrators.

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

Please contact jenny.moran2@la.gov with questions.



Counselor Connect



Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Q: What are school counselor **Student Learning Targets (SLTs)** and what should they consist of?

A: SLTs for counselors are designed to measure the **impact of counseling practices** on student outcomes and align with the school's broader goals.

Counselor SLTs should align with the school's overall improvement goals while also reflecting the counselor's unique role and the specific needs of the students they serve. Using school data and the identified areas of need, counselors should develop SLTs that **focus on outcomes they directly influence through their work with students, families, and school staff**. This alignment ensures that counseling efforts contribute to schoolwide priorities while addressing targeted supports that improve student success.

By establishing clear goals and monitoring progress throughout the year, counselor SLTs help ensure that counseling programs remain responsive to student needs and support continuous improvement within the school community.

Be on the lookout for upcoming School Counselor SLT webinar dates and times.



Scholarship/Funding Opportunities

Scholarship awards can range significantly, from modest amounts, such as \$50-\$500, awarded by local organizations to substantial sums, including full tuition, awarded by larger institutions. Smaller scholarships, despite their lesser amounts, can be a great way to secure funding and often have fewer applicants.

[Army ROTC Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[Regions Riding Forward Scholarship Contest](#) (Deadline: September 30, 2026)

[Vincent G. June Endowed Scholarship](#) (Deadline: November 15, 2026)

[Hagan Scholarship Foundation](#) (Deadline: December 1, 2026)

[Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#) (Deadline: December 1, 2026)

[Louisiana Title 29 Dependents' Educational Assistance Scholarship](#) (Deadline: December 31, 2026)

[Dell Scholars Program](#) (Application Opens: December 15, 2026; Application closes: February 15, 2027)



Counselor Connect



[United States Senate Youth Program](#) (Deadline: October 10, 2026)

Connect With Our Office

Office of Career and College Readiness Contact Information

highschoolacademics@la.gov	General questions about the office and about graduation requirements
coursechoice@la.gov	Questions related to Course Choice/Supplemental Course Allocation
fastforward@la.gov	Questions related to Fast Forward and Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to school safety, school bus transportation, coordinated school health, school health advisory councils, mental and behavioral health initiatives, nursing, or school-based Medicaid
ppp@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression
transcripts@la.gov	Questions about duplicate high school transcripts for graduates

Monthly Calls

Alternative Education	September 3, 2026 @10 a.m.
Office of Career and College Readiness	August 20, 2026 @3 p.m.
Safe and Healthy Schools	October 22, 2026 @2 p.m.

Do you or a colleague need to sign up for the [Counselor Connect](#) newsletter? Please subscribe via the following [link](#).