



Counselor Connect



September 2024

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Reader Survey

We want to hear from you! In an effort to ensure that the LDOE is providing you with the best and most useful information in our newsletter, we are conducting a brief survey to learn more about how you read and use the Counselor Connect Newsletter. Please take a moment to complete the [survey](#) by September 15. Thank you for your time!

Student Opportunities

LOSFA: Why Apply Day is September 20

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

After we kick off the application season with #WhyApply Day, don't forget to sign up for your college application event! LCAAM, in partnership with the American College Application Campaign under the ACT Center for Equity, is an initiative aimed at increasing the number of students applying to postsecondary institutions. Through this initiative, LOSFA offers support for college application events by providing representatives to assist with your event, resources for counselors to plan a college application event, and tools to help students through the college application process. The Louisiana College Application and Access Month (LCAAM) will be held this October, but events can be scheduled throughout the fall and spring semesters! This initiative aims to help high school seniors navigate the college application process. You can begin [registering](#) for your application event



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on the LOSFA website.

Please contact custserv@la.gov with questions.

Financial Literacy

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

In accordance with [Bulletin 741 §2318 and §2319](#) every student entering grade 9 in 2024-2025 and beyond must successfully complete a one-unit [Financial Literacy](#) course (course code 160345) as a requirement for high school graduation. This course is designed to prepare students to make well-informed decisions regarding finances including debt management, building and improving credit, and practical financial decision-making. Students will apply fundamental math skills to compute income taxes, interest rates, and balance a checkbook.

- Students pursuing a **TOPS University diploma** will take Financial Literacy as a separate course. Financial Literacy will not count as a math credit.
- Students pursuing a **TOPS Tech Career diploma** will take Financial Literacy as a math credit.

Please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov with questions.

2025-2026 FAFSA

Please share with school counselors, school administrators and teachers.

Federal Student Aid announced that the 2025-2026 FAFSA® will be released on **December 1, 2024**, with full, end-to-end functionality. The outreach tools and resources that typically accompany the form will be released in advance, and FAFSA® processing will occur within one to three days of submission. If realized, this announcement means that the system will be fully functional for all students on December 1, 2024. **As a reminder, the graduation cohort of 2024-2025 and beyond are not required to complete the FAFSA as a part of their graduation checkout.**

Contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

Reach Pathfinder

Please share with principals, teachers and school counselors.

Help your students discover a college that best fits their unique needs and aligns with their goals using the [REACH Pathfinder](#), a map tailored to guide them through their college application journey.

Contact [Common App Support](#) with any questions.



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Middle School News

Career Exploration in Middle Grades

Please share with principals, teachers and school counselors.

[R.S. 17:183.2](#) has been adopted to prepare students when choosing a career option at the high school level. This career option statute states that schools with grades 6-8 should incorporate activities that expose students to career, technical and academic fields of study. At least six activities should be conducted each school year, per grade level. Types of activities include field trips, guest speakers and career fairs.

Contact candace.joseph@la.gov with any questions.

Professional Opportunities

Fall 2024 Counselor Institute - SAVE THE DATE

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

Registration links for the Fall 2024 Counselor Institute sessions will be released in the October Counselor Connect newsletter. Please invite your CTE Supervisor to join in conversations regarding the new Accountability system and the Counselor Evaluation Rubric. **Each participant must register individually through Eventbrite**; registration is on a first come, first served basis. Maximum registration is based on location capacity.

Date	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.	1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
October 22	West Monroe	Bossier City
October 23	Vernon	Lafayette
October 24	St Tammany	St Charles

Contact angela.jordan@la.gov with questions.



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Elementary School Counselor Survey

Please share with K - 6 school counselors and administrators.

Per [R.S. 17:3005](#), “School counselors shall provide preventive and developmental counseling services to all public elementary school students in kindergarten through grade six in order to prepare them for middle, junior, and senior high school responsibilities and their social and physical development”.

Elementary school counselors and administrators should complete the [Elementary School Counselor Report Survey](#) to provide feedback on your school counseling programs by October 1.

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

LOSFA: 2024 College Board Counselor Workshops

Please share with counselors, secondary principals and assistant principals.

[Registration](#) is open for the 2024 Counselor Workshops occurring online from August 27 to September 12 and may also be viewed on demand. Topics include:

- Updates and information about the Digital SAT® Suite of Assessments, including BigFuture School and Connections
- AP® Program updates
- BigFuture™ college planning resources

You'll have the flexibility to choose a workshop that best suits your experience as a school counselor:

- Counselor Workshop for Newer Counselors: Designed for high school counselors with 0–2 years of experience, this event will provide key information and best practices to help guide your students and their families through the college planning process.
- Counselor Workshop for Experienced Counselors: Learn about updates and new information on College Board programs.

New Counselors (3 years or less)

- September 10, 9am CST

Experienced Counselors

- September 11, 1pm CST
- September 12, 9am CST

Contact losfa.counselors@la.gov with questions.



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LOSFA: Professional School Counselor Webinars

Please share with counselors, secondary principals and assistant principals.

Please mark your calendars for LOSFA's annual Fall Professional School Counselor Webinars!

The Fall 2024 Professional School Counselor Webinars will be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, October 1
- Wednesday, October 2
- Thursday, October 3

Registration links will be emailed from LOSFA.

Contact losfa.counselors@la.gov with questions.

ACT® College & Career Readiness Workshops

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

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

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

- September 10 (New Orleans)
- September 12 (Baton Rouge)
- September 17 (Alexandria)
- September 18 (Lake Charles)
- September 19 (Lafayette)

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

Resources

Common App

Explore [resources and tools](#) tailored for you. From creating a Common App practice account to accessing our Common App Ready toolkit, discover our array of resources to help you support students' navigation of the application process.

Contact [Common App Support](#) with any questions.



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Financial Aid Planning

The FAFSA policy has changed. The graduation cohort of 2024-2025 and beyond are not required to complete the FAFSA as a part of their graduation checkout. This policy change doesn't remove the requirement of local education agencies (LEAs) to provide students and their parents or guardians with information regarding financial aid programs to support postsecondary education and training. LEAs must ensure that each student receives adequate support in completing and submitting an application for financial aid. However, a student action related to FAFSA completion will not be required. An updated parent and student financial aid planning toolkit is available to school systems. Here are a few toolkits you can use.

- [NCAN Toolkit](#)
- [Federal Student Aid Financial Aid Toolkit](#)

Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

Scholarships/Funding Opportunities

[Rise First scholarship directory](#)

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

[Dr Edward V Chavez Athletic Memorial Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Wednesday, October 30)

[U.S. Senate Youth Scholarship Opportunity](#) (Deadline: Friday, October 4)

[Lela's FAFSA Completion Scholarship for the Class of 2025](#) for those who plan to complete a FAFSA for access to federal grants, work study, and student loans. (Deadline: Ongoing)

[Lela's Choose Louisiana Scholarship](#) for those planning to attend a college in the state of Louisiana. (Deadline: Ongoing)



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Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Q: Isn't STS closing soon? What should counselors do now to prepare for times we can't get into the program?

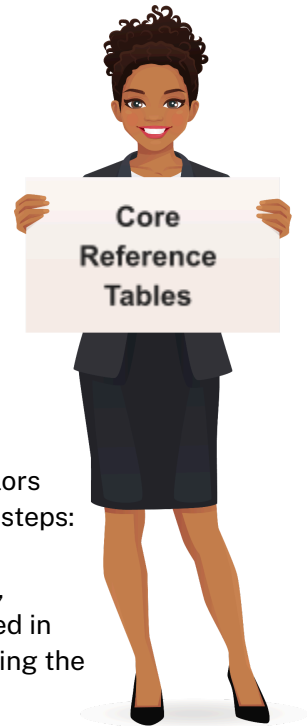
- The "Be Ready" Counselor

A: STS is scheduled to close October 1 through December for uploads/updates. Counselors are usually still able to view transcripts. It would be very helpful to perform the following steps:

- Save the Core Reference Tables for all three diploma paths (TOPS University - TU, TOPS Tech Career - CA, and LAA1 - L1). These reports display the courses accepted in each diploma path and will assist counselors in reviewing transcripts and scheduling the Spring semester.
- Review summer school students and students who previously failed, then passed part of a course and connect the passing parts with "1" and "2" on their transcripts.
- Contact your system Data Manager and request an upload of grade 10 and grade 11 transcripts to STS by Friday, September 27 to ensure all courses are in STS.

Reminders

- 2023-2024 courses can be uploaded to STS through September 30, 2024. Please connect with your district Data Manager to correct state transcripts.
- [Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities/April Dunn](#)
- [TOPS University](#) and [TOPS Tech](#) Course Requirements documents can be found on the [LDOE Graduation Requirements](#) webpage





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Connect With Our Office

Office of Career and College Readiness Contact Information

highschoolacademics@la.gov	General questions about the office and about graduation requirements
ldefinancialaid@la.gov	Questions related to the financial aid policy or for assistance with FAFSA completion
sca@la.gov	Questions related to Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice
jumpstart@la.gov	Questions related to Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to healthy schools, healthy communities, and whole child
ppp@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression
transcripts@la.gov	Questions about duplicate high school transcripts for graduates

Monthly Calls

Alternative Education	September 12 at 10am
Office of Career and College Readiness	September 19 at 3pm
Safe and Healthy Schools	September 26 at 2pm
Child Welfare and Attendance	October 3 at 8am

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