



Counselor Connect



September 2026

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Student Opportunities

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
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 mia.edwards@act.org with questions.



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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 give participants a chance to connect and network with peers and 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 mia.edwards@act.org with questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

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

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people, making awareness, connection, and early support especially important. ([NAMI](#); [Youth.gov](#); [SAMHSA](#)). Every community is impacted, and prevention begins with creating environments where young people feel seen, heard, valued, and supported. Local Education Agencies can share the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) with students and families and utilize resources within the schools using this toolkit: SAMHSA [Suicide Prevention Awareness Digital Toolkit](#).

Please contact robyn.thomas@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana 988 Day

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

Nationwide, September 8 is known as 988 Day. The Louisiana State Capitol will bring communities together to raise awareness of the 988 Lifeline, promote mental health, and strengthen suicide prevention across Louisiana. Local Education Agencies (LEAs), local school systems, and educators are encouraged to participate by helping spread awareness of 988.

- When: Tuesday, September 8, 2026
- Time: 10:00 am-12:00 pm
- Where: Louisiana State Capitol Garden, Baton Rouge

Please contact robyn.thomas@la.gov with questions.



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Fast Forward

Individual Graduation Plans Update

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

The [Individual Graduation Plan](#) (IGP) document has been updated to reflect [ACT 144](#) requirements. The plan now includes sections for middle school career activities and career interest inventories.

Additional documentation as required by ACT 144 will be available in May 2027.

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

Career Coaches and Career Coach Vendors

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

[ACT 413](#) went into effect August 1, 2026. As a result of the act, the LDOE will provide a list of Career Coaching Vendors that a school system may utilize starting January 2027 on Canopy.

Please contact fastforward@la.gov with questions.

FAFSA Completion

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

The 2027-2028 FAFSA form will not be available until October 1. This form is for students attending college in Fall 2027, including 2027 high school graduates. Schools can still schedule virtual or in-person FSA ID Workshops now. FAFSA completion events can begin scheduling after October 1.

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

AP Registration and Ordering Setup

Please share with school leaders, AP coordinators, and school counselors.

Access codes for the AP Registration and Ordering were disbursed on **August 3**. This access code is unique to your school and is updated each school year. Codes are active between August 3, 2026, and July 31, 2027. AP coordinators should review and accept the AP Exam Ordering and Administration during setup, as there is no longer a separate AP Participation Form.

Please contact fhordge@collegeboard.org with questions.

2027 AP Exam Start Time Changes and Exam Schedule

Please share with school leaders, AP coordinators, and school counselors.

Beginning with the 2027 AP Exam administration, start times for AP Exams administered in some locations have changed to prevent the disclosure of secure exam content across time zones. For most schools, including all schools in the lower 48 states, Hawaii, and Washington, D.C., exams still begin at 8 a.m. and noon local time.



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What is changing?

- Exams will begin at start times based on specific time zones.
- AP Exams are offered as **Session 1** and **Session 2**, replacing the former morning and afternoon designations.

The 2027 AP Exams will be administered May 3-14 for the regularly scheduled exam administration and May 17-21 for the late-testing exam administration.

Learn more about the AP Exam Start Times and scheduling on [AP Central](#).

Please contact fhordge@collegeboard.org with questions.

AP Exam Orders

Please share with school leaders, AP coordinators, and school counselors.

The following deadlines apply to all AP Exams and all schools:

October 2: Preferred Ordering Deadline

November 13: Final Ordering Deadline (Full year and fall semester AP courses and exam sections). Exams submitted after this date will incur an additional \$40 late fee.

March 12, 2027: Spring course orders and fall order changes deadline.

Order updates should be managed in AP Registration and Ordering.

Please contact fhordge@collegeboard.org with questions.

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](#).

- 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.



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Each school with grades K-5 shall provide students with at least **one** career awareness experience or activity each school year that meets at least one of the criteria listed above.

Each school board shall certify compliance to LDOE and maintain auditable records annually for each school and grade level's activities. A form will be disseminated in **May 2027** for compliance purposes.

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

Professional Opportunities

Fall 2026 Counselor Institute Sessions

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

Registration for the Fall 2026 Counselor Institute sessions is available starting September 3 through Eventbrite. This fall, sessions will focus on legislative updates and requirements that affect students in grades K-12.

Session dates, locations, and registration links are below:

October 8 - [Rapides Parish](#) (Gladys Higdon Instructional Resource Center)

October 13 - [Bossier Parish](#) (Bossier Instructional Center)

October 23 - [East Baton Rouge Parish](#) (Claiborne Building)

October 30 - [Jefferson Parish](#) (Jefferson Parish Board Room)

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

AP Coordinator Back-to-School Workshop

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

The annual Back-to-School Workshop is tailored to support the needs of new and experienced coordinators with two distinct experiences.

The **New Coordinator Pathway** is for new AP coordinators who want to learn about updates and resources for the upcoming school year, as well as an overview of the AP program, the role of the coordinator, and the must-dos at the start of the school year.

The **Experienced Coordinator Pathway** provides helpful resources and updates to AP policies and timelines for the upcoming school year. This pathway also includes best practices and a discussion of a wide range of related topics.

[Registration](#) is now available through your College Board account. Online workshops will continue through September.

Please contact fhordge@collegeboard.org with questions.



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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:

- 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 submission deadline is **September 9**.

Please contact mia.edwards@act.org with questions.

Annual Occupational and Physical Therapist Summit

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

The Annual Lead Occupational and Physical Therapist (OTPT) Summit will be held on October 29. 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.

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

Please contact debra.harville@cpsb.org 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. 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:

- October 22
- January 28, 2027
- April 22, 2027

Please contact healthyschools@la.gov with questions.



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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. You can share all materials with students to support 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 mia.edwards@act.org with questions.

Labor Market Briefings

Please share with administrators, career counselors, counselors, and teachers.

Louisiana Works has begun to provide monthly [Labor Market Briefings](#) to explore labor market trends, explain helpful resources, and answer questions from session participants. [Meetings](#) will be held the second Wednesday of every month at noon through Microsoft Teams.

Please contact LMI@la.gov for more information.

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.



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LOSFA School Counselor and Administrator Assistance

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

School Counselors and Administrators can [schedule](#) 30-minute one-on-one assistance from a LOSFA representative regarding LOSFA programs and college access information, including TOPS scholarships and Louisiana's savings programs.

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 fhordge@collegeboard.org with questions.

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 LEAs that undergo a name change or transition to a new Charter Management Organization 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 Technology Provider Enrollment Unit

Please contact sbmp@la.gov with questions.

Human Trafficking Prevention Policy Toolkit

Please share with school system leaders and principals.

[Act 737](#) (2026) requires each school, including charter schools, to designate at least one school counselor, mental health professional, or school administrator to complete annual advanced training on human trafficking. School leaders should ensure the required policy is adopted, designate the appropriate employee, and maintain documentation of training and compliance. Leaders are encouraged to use the [Human Trafficking Prevention Policy Toolkit](#). Information about available



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training resources is available through the [Governor's Office of Human Trafficking Prevention](#) and will also be posted to the LDOE website.

For more information, contact humantrafficking@la.gov.

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 Platt 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](#)

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.



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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 are an everyday component of the school day and our individual lives. The Louisiana Department of Health and other stakeholders developed the guidelines in collaboration.

These [guidelines](#) provide school systems with health and safety resources based on best practices for effectively integrating 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.

Course Choice Reporting for Fall and Full Year

Please share with school administrators and school counselors.

The Course Choice Portal is open for reporting enrollments. The deadline for reporting Private Provider enrollments is September 18. The deadline for public higher education is October 23.

Please contact coursechoice@la.gov with questions.



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Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Q: What is best practice to document the required career awareness activities listed in [ACT 144](#)? I'd like to keep track of activities now and do not want to wait until the required document is released.

A: One way to document career awareness activities is to create a form that lists the career activity description, date the activity was completed, the grade level of the students participating, and who presented the information.

Each school year in grades **six through eight**, 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.

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.



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)

[Too Cool to Pay for School Scholarship](#) (Quarterly Deadlines: March, June, September, and December)

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

[Fox Pest Control Future Leaders Scholarship](#) (Deadline: September 30, 2026)

[United States Senate Youth Program](#) (Deadline: October 9, 2026)

[National Rice Month Scholarship Contest](#) (Deadline: October 15, 2026)

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

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



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

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

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

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	December 3 at 10 a.m.
Office of Career and College Readiness	September 17 @3 p.m.
Safe and Healthy Schools	October 22 @ 2 p.m.

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