

The Office of Career and College Readiness consists of four divisions, **Foundational Years**, **Quality Diplomas**, **Postsecondary Readiness**, and **Pathway Initiatives and Readiness Support**. We believe in preparing all students with knowledge, skills and tools to succeed in college, career and life after school. We have added common questions we have received about the work of our office. Over time we will continue to add and adjust the questions based on feedback from the field. If you have a question that is not covered please contact highschoolacademics@la.gov.

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General

What are the current requirements for high school graduates?

The [2020-2021 High School Planning Guide](#), page 23, has the TOPS University and the Career Diploma graduation requirements.

Are students allowed to graduate early?

Yes, each school system should develop an early graduation program allowing students to accelerate their academic progress, complete all graduation requirements and receive a high school diploma in less than four years. The early graduation program may include distance education, dual enrollment and Carnegie credits earned in middle school. School systems should not have any policies or requirements that would prevent students from graduating in less than four years.

Where can I find course codes?

Course codes are not housed on the LDOE website, but within the Student Transcript System.

Where can I find academic standards?

[Academic standards and grade level expectations](#) are published on the Department's website.

Can a student earn Carnegie credit in Middle School?

A student may earn Carnegie credit as a middle school student in all courses except physical education.

Do all grades earned have to appear on the high school transcript?

Yes, all grades earned in high school should appear on the transcript. The high letter grade would be factored in for LDOE purposes when calculating the GPA. The local school system may have a different practice in place for determining the GPA.

Are there any online schools in Louisiana?

Yes, there are two online charter schools in Louisiana, [Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy](#) and [University View Academy](#).

Where can I find additional information about TOPS?

Information about TOPS can be found at the [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance](#).

What are the TOPS requirements for home study students?

Home study students must be [registered](#) as a home study student with LDOE during their [11th and 12th grade years](#).

Foundational Years

How often does the IGP have to be updated?

Individual graduation plans (IGPs) are updated every year. The student, guardian and school counselor sign the IGP to indicate that all parties have participated in the process. IGP forms, guidance and webinars are located in the [Counselor Support Library](#).

When do schools start the individual graduation planning process?

Per [Bulletin 741](#), students shall have an IGP by the end of eighth grade and every subsequent year until graduation.

What kind of resources does the LDOE provide to school counselors?

The Department publishes a [monthly newsletter](#) for Louisiana school counselors and hosts the biannual Counselor Institutes. The Department also shares information on the Louisiana Believes website in the Counselor Support [Toolbox](#) and in the Counselor Support [Library](#).

Where can I find past issues of the Counselor Connect?

Archived copies of all [LDOE newsletters](#) from the past twelve months are housed in the [Newsroom](#). Please see the [Join Our Newsletter](#) section to subscribe to Department newsletters.

What is Transitional 9th grade?

Policy contained in Bulletin 1566, [Pupil Progression Plan Guidance](#), allows placement of students who are unable to meet the standard of proficiency in 8th grade in Transitional 9th grade to improve the likelihood of high school graduation. To learn more about Transitional 9th grade policy and planning, please review the [Transitional 9th grade guidance](#) compendium, which can be found in the [school policy library](#).

Where can I find Transitional 9th Grade Guidance?

The 2020-2021 [Transitional 9th grade guidance](#) compendium can be found in the [school policy library](#).

Where can I find the Pupil Progression Plan Guidance and template?

[Pupil Progression Plan Guidance](#) and the [template](#) are located in the [school policy library](#). Specific questions about pupil progression should be sent to PPP@la.gov.

Who do I contact if I have questions related to the ACT?

If you have questions related to ACT testing options, please send them by email to assessment@la.gov.

Quality Diplomas

What is Course Choice?

[Course Choice/Supplemental Course Academy \(SCA\)](#) gives school systems and other public schools (grades 7-12) an MFP allocation related to the cost of high school credit courses. The coursework provided is individualized to the needs of secondary students and is provided outside of the traditional secondary school.

Where can I find a list of Course Choice Providers?

The [2020-2021 SCA/Course Choice Provider List](#) is located on the Louisiana Believes website.

How do I become a Course Choice Provider?

Any course provider interested in becoming a Course Choice/SCA Provider should email sca@la.gov for information concerning the application process.

Will there be a Jump Start Convention in 2021?

The 2021 Jump Start Convention will be a virtual event on January 26 and 27. Registration will open in late October.

Are incoming freshmen 2020-2021 limited to utilizing Jump Start 2.0?

Jump Start 1.0 course sequences will be available for incoming freshmen through 2020-2021; and the Jump Start 2.0 course sequences will be available for incoming freshmen beginning in 2020-2021 and beyond.

Can a senior in 2020-2021 utilize Jump Start 2.0?

No

What is Career Development Funds?

Career Development Funds (CDF) is a part of the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP). 6% of the MFP State and Local Base Cost Per Pupil (\$241) is provided for each qualifying student course enrollment in grades 9 through 12. CDF funds are intended to support increased student access to high-value Career and Technical Education courses and training.

Where can I find guidance on Career Development Funds (CDF)?

We have published [Guidelines for Use of CDF Allocation](#) and a [List of CDF Qualifying Courses](#).

Where can I find specific information regarding the Industry-Based Credentials (IBCs)?

[Jump Start fact sheets](#) provide details on IBCs. Fact sheets are currently being redesigned to be more link-oriented and contain certification and testing resources.

Where can I find guidance on Quest for Success?

Robust guidance on [Quest for Success is available](#) including curriculum, webinar recordings, and a list of [FAQs](#).

Postsecondary Readiness

What is the FAFSA?

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) is the first step to getting any federal aid for college, career, and/or graduate school.

What will I need to fill out the FAFSA?

To complete the FAFSA you will need:

- Social Security Number or Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records for money earned (note: you may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into the FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool)
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- An FSA ID to sign electronically

If you are a dependent student, then you will also need most of the above information for your parents.

What is the FSA ID?

The [FSA ID](#) allows students and parents to identify themselves electronically to access the Federal Student Aid websites. It is the fastest way to sign your application and have it processed. **Note:** If the parent of a student previously created a FSA ID as a student or for another child, a new FSA ID doesn't need to be created.

Can my parents and I share the same FSA ID?

No, parents and students may not share a FSA ID.

If I have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), am I eligible for federal financial aid?

Undocumented students, including DACA recipients, are not eligible for federal financial aid, but the student may still be eligible for institutional or private scholarships. The student can check with their financial aid office for more information.

I submitted my FAFSA; what happens next?

The U.S. Department of Education will process your application within 3-5 business days. Once your application is processed, you will receive a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR), which summarizes the information you provided on your FAFSA.

Where can I find FAFSA Data frequently asked questions?

We have published the [FAFSA Data](#) form with all the answers.

How do I request a duplicate transcript?

Schools and school districts maintain permanent records and provide electronic copies to the Louisiana Department of Education via Student Transcript System. To expedite your request for a duplicate transcript, contact your local school district. Duplicate transcripts from the LDOE must be requested via mail with a completed [application](#) and accompanying documentation.

Are duplicate transcripts sent via e-mail?

The LDOE does not email transcripts.

Does the department provide duplicate diplomas?

Duplicate diplomas must be requested of the issuing school or school system.

What is a proficiency exam?

Proficiency exams are tests that students take that show mastery of content and allow students to earn credit in courses for which they have never been enrolled.

Is there an approval process for providing a proficiency exam?

Proficiency exams must be submitted to the LDOE per Bulletin 741 policy via the online [portal](#).

How does a student go about earning a GED or high school equivalency?

Please visit LCTCS [WorkReady-U](#) to learn more about high school equivalency options.

When do school systems order diplomas and seals?

The Department releases the electronic Diploma Order Form after midterm. When the order form link is live, the information will be included in the Newsletter and in the School System Planning Call. One order should be made per school system. The Department will pay for the initial printing and shipping costs.

Can students who attend non-public schools receive seals?

Yes, students who meet the endorsement requirements in non-public schools can earn a seal.

Should diplomas with past official's signatures be kept in the case that a reissue is needed?

Diplomas issued should have the signatures of current officials.

What is the OTS Regular Diploma?

The OTS Regular Diploma is used as a replacement for damaged or lost diplomas.

What diploma do students who take the Alternate Assessment receive?

Students who take the alternate assessment can work towards earning a Jump Start Diploma, or if they are unable to meet the requirements they can earn a Certificate of Achievement. There is no such thing as a LAA1 or LEAP Connect Diploma.

Do students who take the Alternate Assessment have to earn an IBC to receive a Jump Start Diploma?

Students who take the LEAP Connect do not have to earn an IBC in order to receive a Jump Start Diploma.

What diploma endorsements are available for students in Louisiana?

[Bulletin 741](#), Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators: §2317. High Schools, outlines the diploma endorsements Louisiana high school students may earn upon graduation. Students can earn a Community Service Diploma Endorsement, State Seal of Biliteracy, and/or a silver or gold STEM diploma endorsement in biomedical sciences, computing, cyber security, digital design and emergent media, environmental protection and sustainability, pre-engineering, and pre-pharmacy. Information on available endorsements can be found in the [Diploma Endorsement](#) document.

Pathway Initiatives and Readiness Support

When is the deadline for ordering AP Exams?

[Preferred ordering deadline](#) for AP Exams is October 2 with a final ordering deadline of November 13.

When will the 2021 Spring AP exams occur?

[AP Exams](#) are scheduled for May 3-7, 2021 and May 10-14, 2021.

How much do AP Exams cost?

AP exams cost [\\$95 per exam](#). There is a late order fee of \$40 for all exams ordered past the October deadline.

What are the minimum requirements for enrollment in Dual Enrollment courses?

In response to the COVID19 pandemic, the Louisiana Board of Regents passed [an emergency dual enrollment minimum requirement policy](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. In addition to the minimum 2.5 GPA requirement for admissions to a dual enrollment program, students may use a counselor recommendation instead of a standardized test score.

Student of the Year Program

What is the purpose of this recognition program?

This program strives to recognize outstanding students in Grades 5, 8 and 12 based on academic achievement, leadership, service to school, church and community and honors and awards.

What is the process for selection?

- School submits nominees to the school system
- School systems submit nominations to the regional coordinator
- The Regional Selection Committee submits nominations to the state coordinator

What is the selection process timeline ?

- State posts required documents on the state website by August
- School systems submit their form indicating their participation and contact information by August
- Charter schools submit their nominees to their Zone Selection Committee in December
- School systems and Charter Zone Selection Committees submit nominations to their Regional Coordinators in January
- Regional Coordinators submit their nominations to the State Coordinator in February
- State Selection Committees select the winners for each grade level

Where are the documents located?

The [guidelines and the application packet](#) are posted on the Department website.

What documents must be submitted?

- A portfolio with all required components is submitted at all levels
- Students respond to an essay topic sent by state at regional and state levels of competition

Must all pages of the application be submitted?

Yes, all pages of the application must be submitted so missing information does not need to be solicited by a coordinator.

What about assessment documentation for 2019-2020?

Provide all assessment scores that are available. If scores are not available, please provide a statement explaining the absence of the information.

Who prepares the portfolio?

Portfolios are collaboratively compiled by the student, parent, school and school system. School systems work with students and parents to electronically submit portfolios to the regional coordinator.

Are interviews required?

Interviews are not required at the school or school system levels, but are recommended. Interviews are conducted at the regional and state levels.

When are nominees for each level announced?

Schools and school systems announce their nominations when they are made. State finalists are announced by the state the first week of March. The winners are announced at the Awards Program in April.

U. S. Senate Youth Scholarship Program

What is the nature of this program?

The Hearst Foundation coordinates a week of meetings in Washington, D.C with legislative, executive and military dignitaries to provide a better understanding of governmental processes and programming.

What is the value of this scholarship?

After attending all required meetings/events of Washington Week held in March, the student is awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to the college of his/her choice.

What is the application process?

The [application packet](#) is currently available with directions on submission. The Louisiana deadline to submit is November 16.

Who can apply?

Any high school junior or senior is eligible for the program provided they have not received a USSYP scholarship. Qualify secretary or treasurer; Student Council representative; A National Honor Society officer (including discipline-based Honor Societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components); Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization approved by the state selection administrator.

Important dates

December 15	Final stage of competition in Baton Rouge (national exam and interview)
February 5, 2021	The Hearst Foundation announces the delegates and alternates.
March 14-21, 2021	Virtual Washington Week

Gifted and Talented Programming

How does a parent or guardian request a gifted evaluation?

Request, in writing, that you would like to have a screening for gifted classification; this request can occur at any time during the year. The school will respond within a reasonable time period how they plan to proceed. If they deny your request, they must put the reason for denial in writing.

How old must my child be in order to be evaluated?

Bulletin 1508, the Pupil Appraisal Handbook, and Bulletin 1706-Subpart 2: Regulations for Gifted/Talented Students, both state that school systems must identify and provide gifted services between the ages of three and twenty-one. Talented evaluations are available once a student enters kindergarten and are available throughout their school career.

What is the process for a gifted evaluation?

Once a request for gifted evaluation is submitted, school systems typically conduct an intellectual screening to determine if further action is needed. If further information is warranted, then they will collect data concerning the student's reading and math assessment scores. The School Building Level Committee will review the information and make a recommendation with the parent in attendance at their committee meeting. The student is referred to Pupil Appraisal for further evaluation.

What types of tests must the student complete during the full gifted evaluation?

The student must complete an intelligence test and reading and math assessments.

How is a student referred for talented evaluations?

Request, in writing, that you would like to have a screening for a talented classification; this request can occur at any time during the year. A screening instrument is completed by a member of the instructional staff. If the student earns a passing score, then performance samples are submitted to the School Building Level Committee.

What tests are required for talented evaluation?

- Visual Arts - test and drawing exercise
- Music - Aural Perception Test (grades K-6), interview, audition of two selections of their choice and sight-reading (grades 7-12)
- Theatre - All grades complete an interview and theatrical exercises; Grade 4-6 perform a monologue from a required list; and Grades 7-12 select and perform a monologue from a required list of books

What type of programming must be provided to the students identified?

Districts have the right to determine the type of programming to be offered in their school system. Services are based on the needs of the student.

Office Contacts

highschoolacademics@la.gov - for general questions about graduation requirements

ldefinancialaid@la.gov - for questions related to the financial aid policy or for assistance with FAFSA completion

sca@la.gov - for questions related to Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice

jumpstart@la.gov - for questions related to Jump Start

PPP@la.gov - for questions related to pupil progression

collegereadiness@la.gov - for questions related to dual enrollment or Advanced Placement