March Spotlight: Lindsey LeBlanc

During a recent Career and Technical Education Leadership Academy webinar, someone posed the question, "Where do school counselors fit into the CTE equation?" During our first in-person meeting last July, a fellow member introduced himself and then said, "Our counselors are the biggest hurdles to our CTE program." As I sat with my rage, I began to ask myself the hard question: was I a hurdle to the CTE program at Central High School? I felt more uncertain about the answer than I wanted to be, so I made it my professional mission to figure out how I fit into the CTE equation.

As school counselors, our words have so much power. When a student is sitting in our office wondering what courses to schedule next year, we can use that power to either convince her that welding is a real option for her or persuade her that girls don't weld. I want to use the power of my words to steer my students in the best direction for them, not what makes me most comfortable. To do that, I have to know each of our CTE pathways intimately. For example, a year ago I knew very little about the Jump Start manufacturing pathway.

Since then I've done online research, visited the Pelican Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC Pelican), and spent countless hours with our manufacturing instructors to learn exactly what I'm recommending to my students. Our welding instructor has even agreed to hold our very first Women in Welding class for counselors, administrators, and teachers this summer. Next year when students come into my office, they will see something that I welded over the summer. Hopefully this will show all of my students that welding isn't just for boys.

By gaining a better understanding of CTE, I have also formed a stronger rapport with my Jump Start students. This year we piloted the idea of a Jump Start counselor, and I served as the CTE and Jump Start school counselor for students in grades 9 through 12. It has been so rewarding to see my CTE students finally find something that they enjoy and can be successful in. Students will run into my office to tell me that they just passed their industry-based credential (IBC) exam. CTE teachers will
come in to sit on my couch and ask for help reaching students. Parents call me so excited that their children get to learn a trade (for free!) and support themselves immediately after graduating from high school.

Being a school counselor gives me the opportunity to promote our CTE program. In the fall, for example, I was part of a team that spoke to the Central Chamber of Commerce about opportunities for involvement. I have also presented at faculty meetings and, parent nights to provide information on our programs and to attempt to remove the stigma of a CTE education. Based on the schedule requests for next year, we have already increased our CTE enrollment by 27%!

Becoming better versed in Jump Start has helped me grow as a counselor and as a leader. Now I can say with certainty that I am a catalyst for our CTE program—not a roadblock.

Lindsey LeBlanc, M. Ed.
Central High School
CTE and Jump Start School Counselor
CTE Leadership Academy Cohort 1

Assessment Resources and Reminders

General

- The 2018-2019 Assessment Month-by-Month Checklist lists key dates and deadlines for statewide assessments, provides action steps to ensure readiness for administering those assessments, and recommends resources for school system and school staff.
- The 2018-2019 Louisiana Assessment Calendar includes dates in a calendar format. Information includes grade-specific assessments, delivery methods, and testing windows.

Both resources are located in the Assessment Library.

LEAP 2025

- The U.S. History Practice Test Answer Key has been updated and is available in the Practice Test Library. The key now includes annotated student responses to help teachers and students better understand the scoring of constructed-response and extended-response items.
- Practice test answer keys with annotated student responses for social studies grades 3-8 are available in the Practice Test Library.
- Test setup for LEAP 2025 grades 3-8 will open in eDIRECT on March 18 and for LEAP 2025 High School on March 25. On these dates STCs can begin
  - adding TA numbers,
  - ensuring all students are in eDIRECT at the appropriate site,
  - verifying accommodations, and
  - creating test sessions.

LEAP 360: Interim Form 2 reports are now available in eDIRECT.

- Student reports are located in under Report Delivery and Student Reports.
- All other reports are located Report Delivery and View Reports.

LEAP Connect: The LEAP Connect and LAA1 scores will be available in eDIRECT in May.

ELPT: The ELPT scores will be available in May in the AIR Online Reporting System (ORS) in the ELPT portal.

Please email assessment@la.gov for with questions about state assessments.

AP: The 2019 Advanced Placement examination period begins May 6, 2019, starting with the following subjects:

- AP® US Government and Politics
- AP® Chinese Language and Culture
- AP® Environmental Science

Please visit AP Central for a full schedule of 2019 AP exams. Email collegereadiness@la.gov for more information regarding Advanced Placement.
Professional Opportunities

2019 Super Summer Institute

Super Summer Institute (SSI) provides secondary and postsecondary educators the opportunity to attend training sessions and earn statewide industry-based certifications that align with Jump Start pathways. Quest for Success teacher training is also offered at SSI.

Please share the SSI Overview Document with the appropriate personnel at your school or e-mail jumpstart@la.gov for more information.

Counselor Questionnaire

Share your opinions about school counseling resources by completing our brief Counselor Questionnaire. This five-minute survey includes questions about the topics presented at the Counselor Collaborations and the content included in the Counselor Connect newsletter.

Educator Blog

The February edition of Classroom Chronicles, "Being Present: How a Middle School Counselor Is Improving Attendance," features Donneisha Wilson, school counselor and Communities in Schools site coordinator at Morris Jeff Community School in Orleans Parish. In the post, Donneisha shares creative strategies for boosting attendance. By engaging students, teachers, and families, Donneisha and her colleagues have increased attendance to 95% and demonstrated just how much a comprehensive approach can create a measurable difference in students’ lives.

Please consider nominating an inspiring educator for an upcoming edition of Classroom Chronicles. Your professional recommendation is important to us.

Please email ldoeCommunications@la.gov for more information.

NCAA High School Advisory Group

The NCAA Eligibility Center is accepting applications for six high school administrators, counselors, and athletic administrators to serve as members of the NCAA High School Advisory Group. The purpose of the Advisory Group is to review new processes and procedures and provide feedback on the NCAA Eligibility Center.

To apply, please submit a resume and 500-word statement describing why you would like to serve as a member of the High School Advisory Group to ec-clientrelations@ncaa.org. Entries must be submitted by Friday, April 26, 2019. Late submissions will not be considered.

Serving in the Advisory Group requires a two-year commitment and participation in monthly teleconferences during the academic year.

 Collegiate Athletics Compliance Informational Session

School counselors and college access professionals are invited to attend the Collegiate Athletics Compliance Informational Session on Friday, April 5, 2019, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at the Galvez State Office Building, 602 North 5th Street, Baton Rouge, 70821.

The session covers information for the major athletic associations (NCAA, NJCAA, NAIA). Topics include

- compliance requirements
- student-athlete eligibility
- financial aid/scholarships
- registration processes

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) will be providing breakfast, water, and coffee. Counselors who attend the entire session can receive three CEUs from the Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA).
Middle and High School News

FAFSA Rankings

Louisiana ranks second in the nation for the percent of high school seniors who have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Louisiana ranked eighth at this time last year.

"By the 2018 priority deadline, Louisiana ranked number one in the nation for the number of students completing the FAFSA and for year-over-year growth," said State Superintendent John White, "and we fully expect to see the same success in 2019."

As of March 15, 2019, 60% of graduating seniors had completed the FAFSA for the 2019-2020 academic year. The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) acknowledge that this success is due in large part to the tireless work of school counselors throughout the state.

LOSFA Field Outreach Services Director Dr. Tireka Cobb says, "Professional school counselors are an essential part of senior FAFSA completion. They have relationships with students and parents and are able to work with both to ensure FAFSA completion. Through these relationships, counselors can often identify students who may have special or extenuating circumstances that can make FAFSA completion seem intimidating. Counselors wear many hats on a daily basis, but they make time to ensure that students have the funding they need for their postsecondary choices. We are glad to work together with counselors across the state to accomplish this for students and families."

Visit the #FormYourFuture FAFSA Tracker from the National College Access Network (NCAN) or FAFSA Tracker - National from Data Insight Partners for the latest FAFSA rankings.

Financial Aid Reminders

Updates from the LDOE
The graduation exit review process will include verification of parental opt-out and hardship waivers. This means that students who cannot be verified will not count in the graduation cohort.

Also, please be aware that, when the Department shares the FAFSA rates of Louisiana schools and school systems, only the number of students who have submitted a FAFSA are included in those calculations. Reports on FAFSA submissions will not include counts for any students who used a different financial aid planning option as part of their graduation requirements.

Please email ldefinancialaid@la.gov for more information.

Updates from the Office of Federal Student Aid

- Upcoming Implementation of myFAFSA Enhancements
- Upcoming Enhancements to the FSA ID
- Reminder of Valid Signature Rules for Printed FAFSA Signature Pages

Please visit the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website for more resources related to federal student aid.

Help for At-Risk Students

The Youth Challenge Program (YCP) became a BESE-approved SCA provider in 2017, which allowed them to offer families a credit recovery option that does not require the student to withdraw from his or her school. This additional avenue allows at-risk students to reap the benefits of YCP while they earn a high school diploma. The YCP education coordinator works with each student's school counselor to create a schedule for the student's time in the program. Since the student remains
enrolled, the school has the final say on which courses the student will complete. Counselors receive monthly progress reports, notification of pathway or enrollment changes, and transcripts at the end of the program. This pathway is beneficial to students who want to maintain their current course loads, those who may need some credit recovery, or those who want to earn additional Carnegie Units.

**ACT Scholarship Giveaway**

Eligible sophomores and juniors who register to take the ACT on the April, June, or July US national test dates may enter to win a $40,000 scholarship and a $5,000 tech package in the ACT Scholarship Giveaway. Students may enter by mail or opt in for the giveaway when they register for the test.

Please see the scholarship announcement or FAQ document for more information.

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**In Case You Missed It**

WITH FEWER THAN 100 DAYS UNTIL PRIORITY DEADLINE, LOUISIANA RANKS NO. 2 IN NATION FOR FAFSA COMPLETION (Louisiana Believes)

2 TIPS FOR SELECTING HIGH SCHOOL ELECTIVES (U.S. News)


DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES STUDENTS OF THE YEAR REGIONAL FINALISTS (Louisiana Believes)

Visit the Newsroom.