



From the Desk of the Executive Director



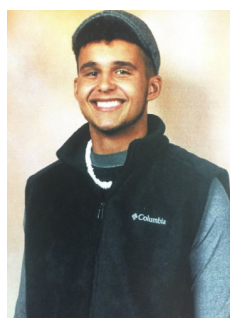
"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

Dr. Sujuan Boutté The powerful words of John Quincy Adams best describe our 2015-16 Trailblazer Leaders. These peer advisors truly hit the ground running. They received training during the summer on financial aid and college access. They established a group motto

"Trust and support as leaders through camaraderie, respect and dedication to provide college access and financial aid information."

and elected officers. They are actively working in their schools and in their regions to ensure that students have the information they need to transition from high school to postsecondary education. School has barely begun and we are already seeing the results of their efforts. Calls are steadily coming in from additional schools requesting College Kick-Off and College Application Month events.. LOSFA is proud to introduce to you our 2015 LOSFA Trailblazer Leadership Officers!



Christian Olivier-Governor
Highland Baptist Christian School
New Iberia, LA

Hi, my name is Christian Olivier. I am a senior at Highland Baptist Christian School in New Iberia. I am actively involved in Student Council, NSHSS, NHS, Beta, HOBY, and Trailblazers of course. I plan on going to college and majoring in biomedical sciences for cancer research and oncology. What I hope to accomplish in Trailblazers is this: that students in Louisiana recognize how beautifully important education and schooling is. The fact that the only responsibility you have in life is to learn, and that the more you learn the more successful you can be, is nothing short of amazing to me.



Azariya McClendon- Lieutenant Governor
Ringgold High School
Ringgold, LA

I am a senior honor student with a 3.9 GPA at Ringgold High School. I am an active member of 4-H, BETA, ELITES, FBLA, FFA, LHSA Student Council Advisory Board, and I also play softball. I attend Bossier Parish Community College as a dual enrollment student in order to get a jump start on my post-secondary education. So far I have enjoyed my experience with LOSFA Trailblazers and I look forward to making my peers aware of all the benefits of college. It's time for us to take charge and make a change!!

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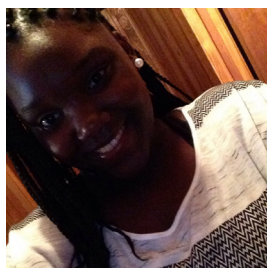
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**Brianna Dunn- Attorney General
East Feliciana High School
Jackson, LA**

I am a "A,B" honor roll student with a 3.0 GPA and I attend East Feliciana High School in Jackson, LA. I have participated in several programs and I'm still participating in some of them such as 4-H, Beta, Educational Talent Search, Spanish Club and Science Club. I excel in English Language Arts and Biology. My goal as a LOSFA Trailblazer State Officer is to make sure every student inside and outside of East Feliciana Parish will become college bound, and know about FAFSA, Scholarships, College and Tuition. I also want everyone to know where you come from doesn't elucidate you, it doesn't matter where you come from you can do what you want and go where you want. I am beyond proud to be a LOSFA Trailblazer because I have grown as an individual and met new people. Being a LOSFA Trailblazer has taught me how to speak in public, connect with others, and use accountable talk during certain situations. The last thing I want to leave with everyone is to be great and do great.

students around me feel excited for any college they decide to attend, because everyone's post-secondary education of choice is special! I have been able to increase my communication skills and knowledge of financial aid greatly throughout my participation in the Trailblazer program, which will come in handy when I pursue my desired career as a College Recruiter.



**Amber Peltier-Senate President
H. L. Bourgeois High School
Gray, LA**

I currently attend H.L. Bourgeois High School where I am an active member in the band, Beta club, National Honor Society, and hold the office position of Insight for Christ president. Being a dedicated Christian, service has always been a significant part of who I am, which is why I am ecstatic about being a Trailblazer Officer. As a Trailblazer, I hope to properly aid my class and other senior classes with college access. I aspire to resolve any worries that the 2016 Senior Class may have because I believe every one of them has a future and a significant role in society. I am humbled that I was chosen to make a change in my class and eagerly await the activities ahead.

Can you feel the energy? We sure can! Although you've only met the officers there are 43 more just like them and they are on the move! Stay tuned for more as the year rolls on 😊

Best-
S.

Not pictured:

**Brittney Durant-Speaker of the House
Pineville High School
Pineville, LA**



**Elizabeth Guinn-Secretary of State
Cedar Creek School
Ruston, LA**

I am Elizabeth Guinn, and I attend Cedar Creek School in Ruston, LA. I teach Sunday School at The Bridge Community Church, where I am also involved in youth activities. I am a member of the National Honor Society and an officer of my school's Student Council, Future Business Leaders of America Chapter, Key Club, and Ambassador program for new students. As a Varsity Cheer Captain and Homecoming Court Maid, there is nothing I take pride in more than my high school! My goal as a LOSFA Trailblazer State Officer is to help the

Parental Consent Forms Are Not Required for Non-Public High School Students

Act 837 requires parents of 8th through 12th grade PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS to complete a parental consent form to allow their academic data to be shared with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) for purposes of tracking progress toward earning a TOPS scholarship, determining eligibility for a TOPS scholarship, and providing transcript data to Louisiana postsecondary institutions for admissions decisions. High school grade data must be entered into the Louisiana Department of Education Student Transcript System (STS) prior to sharing with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR). The way STS

is currently structured, LOSFA only receives data for students whose consent “flag” is turned on.

Act 837 of the 2014 Louisiana Legislature **DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**. Non-public schools are not required to distribute/receive/retain parental consent forms.

Non-public schools are authorized to set the consent flag to “yes” in STS for all their students. IF the non-public school is requested by a parent to withhold their child’s data from LOSFA and BOR, the non-public school may set the consent flag in STS to “no” for that student and the data will not be sent to LOSFA.

LASFAC Approves Emergency Rules to Implement Legislative Acts

At its July 14, 2015 meeting, the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) approved Emergency Rules and a Notice of Intent that implement Acts 101, 230, and 403 of the 2015 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. A brief summary of these Acts are below:

Act 101 – TOPS Citizenship Requirement Effective: 2019 Graduates

This Act provides that students who are not citizens of the United States but who are children of non-citizens serving in the Armed Forces or honorably discharged from the Armed Forces meet the citizenship requirements of the TOPS statute. This provision will go into effect for graduates of 2019 and later.

Act 230 – TOPS Tech Award Provisions Effective: 2017 Graduates

This Act makes significant changes to the TOPS Tech Award. Currently, students who are eligible for the

TOPS Tech award may pursue any skill or occupational training, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree. TOPS Tech awardees are not currently eligible to receive their award if they are enrolled in an academic program of study. Under Act 230, 2017 high school graduates will only be able to use the TOPS Tech Award to pursue an associate’s degree or other shorter-term training and education programs, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council and the Board of Regents determine are aligned to state workforce priorities. Based on the lists of proposed programs provided to the legislature, the programs will be limited to specified postsecondary institutions. This means that TOPS Tech awardees may be able to use their award to enroll in academic associate’s degree programs, provided that the student is enrolled in an eligible program at an eligible school. LOSFA will provide an update on the implementation

LASFAC Approves Emergency Rules to Implement Legislative Acts *(continued)*

of this Act when an approved list of eligible courses is provided by the Workforce Investment Council and the Board of Regents.

Act 403 – TOPS Tech and Tech Early Start Effective: 2015-16 academic year

This Act aligns the TOPS Tech core curriculum and the career diploma graduation requirements so that students who pursue and graduate high school with a career diploma will be eligible for TOPS Tech, provided the student meets other eligibility requirements, including a 2.5 cumulative grade point average on the core curriculum and at least a 17 on the ACT or WorkKeys Silver certificate. Both the current TOPS Tech core curriculum and the new curriculum will be effective through the 2016-2017 academic year; thereafter, only the curriculum that is aligned with the career diploma will be available.

Act 403 also adds alternate standardized tests for the TOPS Tech Early Start (TTES) award. Eligibility requirements now allow a score of 15 or above on the mathematics and English portion of the ACT PLAN

Assessment or a successor assessment, or on the ACT, or the equivalent concordant value on the SAT, or a Silver Level score on the ACT WorkKeys assessment.

Act 228, amended the state privacy act that was passed during the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Act 228 provides that beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year, parents will only be required to provide one completed consent form to their student's high school instead of one form each year the student is enrolled. The purpose of the consent form is to allow the parents the opportunity to determine whether to allow the high school to release their student's transcript data to LOSFA for the purpose of tracking and determining their child's eligibility for TOPS and to provide college access services. The form also allows the release of student transcript data to the Board of Regents so that state colleges and universities can determine a student's eligibility to enroll in college. The first executed form will be valid until the student graduates or until a new consent form is signed and returned to the student's high school. Parents will be notified each year of the process for granting or revoking consent.

College Kick-Off Events Start in Louisiana!

LOSFA's Field Outreach Services Division started College Kick Off Events in September. Twenty-seven events are scheduled across the State of Louisiana for September. As of September 9, seven events have taken place. Here is what some of the parents and students are saying about the College Kick Off Events:

"This will be my first time with one of my kids graduating. [College Kickoff] refreshed my memory about a lot of things. These events are important to parents who aren't familiar and to inform kids about all of the different resources that are available," said Brenda Thompson, mom of senior Dominique Thompson and

freshman Victoria Thompson at Ponchatoula High School.

"A lot of the students here don't realize that all of these programs are out there to help us and get us on the right track on going to college. When we have events like these, they sit us down and talk to us, and they have fun activities to keep us interested and we learn about all of this stuff so we can use it in the future and get us on track," said Bastrop High senior Joseph Schwartz.

Follow LOSFA's College Kick Off events on Twitter @LOSFA and you can participate in the conversation using #TurnUpForCollege #LOSFAmotivates.

LOSFA's Social Media Sites



<http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>



<http://instagram.com/LOSFA001>



For more information, contact the
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626

By E-mail: custserv@la.gov

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: www.osfa.la.gov

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP,
please contact Gus Wales at Gus.Wales@la.gov.