



# PRESS RELEASE

From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Gus Wales

Phone Number: (225) 922-2029

E-mail: gwales@osfa.la.gov

## **Louisiana's START program named nation's top performing 529 college saving plan**

Baton Rouge-- Louisiana's Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust (START) saving program has been ranked the nation's top performing 529 college savings plan in a recently released nationwide analysis.

The study, conducted by [savingforcollege.com](http://savingforcollege.com), analyzed the performance figures for all 529 plans across the country. Every state has at least one 529 plan available. The START Saving Program topped the charts in both categories measured – one-year performance and three-year performance.

"This report verifies what I've been saying for years, that START is the best college savings plan in the nation," said State Treasurer John Kennedy. "As a START account owner myself, I can honestly say Louisiana's 529 Plan is a sound and innovative program for college savings."

To make the comparison, the website selected specific portfolios from each plan that could be directly compared to one another, based on their allocation among stocks, bonds and short-term investments. These were then placed into categories based on their asset-allocation – from 100 percent equity to 100 percent short-term investments.

Within each category, historical performance was compared and assigned a ranking. There were separate rankings for one-year and three-year performance. An average was taken of each plan's category rankings to produce a composite ranking and the plans were rated based on those composite rankings.

Only those plans which can be enrolled in directly or which are sold through brokers were included in the study.

[Savingforcollege.com](http://Savingforcollege.com) was established as a private company in 1999 to help individuals and professional advisors better understand how to meet the challenge of paying for higher education.

START investors can exempt up to \$2,400 in deposits per account per year from income reported on their state tax returns. For married couples filing jointly, the exemption from income can be up to \$4,800 in deposits. If account owners are unable to make \$2,400 (or \$4,800) in deposits in one year, they can carry forward unused portions to subsequent years.

Other START benefits include a state-paid match on deposits ranging from 2 percent to 14 percent, depending on the account's classification and owner's adjusted gross income; a choice of investment options in fixed, variable and mixed portfolios; the flexibility to use funds at any accredited college or university for tuition, room and board, books, fees and more; and a state and federal tax exemption on earnings when used to pay qualified higher education expenses.

For more information on Louisiana's START Saving Plan, contact the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) at 1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012 or visit the START Web site at [www.startsaving.la.gov](http://www.startsaving.la.gov).

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