



LOSFA LOOP

June 2012 Edition

Volume 5-6

From the Desk of the Executive Director

“Hey Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit out of my hat”. Many of you (if you’re old enough) will remember Bullwinkle the moose, always looking for that rabbit, but instead pulling out everything but. That’s sort of like the legislative budget process we are currently watching unfold. I’d love to see that rabbit come out now, but am terribly afraid of what will really appear. As higher education continues to do “more with less” (more budget cuts, less money) in Louisiana, I hope further cuts will not affect your offices or staffs, as I know most of you are already working under strained conditions. Financial aid people are the most resourceful group I’ve been associated with and always find a way to make things work for their students and I know that will continue.

The legislative session will be ending on June 4, so I can report that it looks like the only tuition increases authorized for the 2012-13 academic year will be those previously authorized under the Grad Act. That action should be authorized at the Board of Regents at their meeting to be held on June 20, at which time LOSFA will tentatively calculate the 2012-13 TOPS Tuition Amounts.

Also, as we move into the month of June many colleges have either completed or are close to completing their summer intersessions, and are beginning their regular summer terms. Wow, no rest for the weary! Don’t forget summer terms can now help TOPS recipients who may not have fulfilled their 24 credit hour requirement during the fall and spring semesters. It is important to note that TOPS does not automatically pay for summer sessions. There are specific criteria that must be met in order for TOPS to pay for a summer session and even then, the student must elect to request payment by submitting the TOPS Summer Session Request Form (http://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/TOPS_Form_9900.pdf). It is also very important to note that an award made for summer school expends one semester or term of TOPS eligibility. For more detailed information regarding the recent rule change go to <http://www.osfa.la.gov/schgrt6.htm>.

The TOPS Master Roster will be updated on Friday, June 8th with the first group of newly eligible students and every week thereafter until all eligible students have been awarded. This year there will be an additional way that students can be apprised of their status. Students have always received

continued on Page 5

In this edition. . .

<i>LOSFA Outreach</i>	2
<i>Benjamin Franklin High in Top 100</i>	3
<i>Miller-McCoy Academy achieves 100 percent college rate</i>	3
<i>Legislative Update</i>	4
<i>LAICU schools TOPS amount for 2012-13</i>	4
<i>Trailblazer Camp Update</i>	5
<i>Award System Update</i>	5

LOSFA Outreach



Earl E. Start, spokesperson for the START Saving Program, attended the Kid's Healthy Fun Fest at the Mall of Louisiana last month, hanging out with his young fans while LOSFA representatives shared information for saving for college with their parents.

If you'd like Earl to attend your event, contact LOSFA at (225) 219-1012 or (800) 259-5626.

Louisiana Connect Update

As of May 15, 2012, nearly 19,000 people have signed onto Louisiana Connect and activated their accounts.

Over 1,000 of those accounts belong to Professional School Counselors.

Britt Kelly, Justin Marshall, Kendra Woods and Jerri Mack performed as part of the Financial Literacy for You (FLY) Tour last month at the LA Gear Up Conference in Baton Rouge.

The FLY Tour focuses on using song, skits and poetry to convey a message of financial literacy and responsibility. This year, special attention is being paid to the Louisiana Connect portal and the benefits it offers students.





Benjamin Franklin High School in New Orleans was named the 76th best public high school in the country by Newsweek Magazine this month.

The magazine ranked schools across the country based on factors that included graduation rate, college-bound rate, average ACT and average SAT scores, the number of students who take Advanced Placement tests and the scores on those tests.

A charter school, Benjamin Franklin has a 100 percent graduation rate, as well as a 100 percent college-bound rate. Its average ACT score was 28 and its SAT score was 1886.

It was the only Louisiana school to be listed in the Top 100.

Six other Louisiana schools were listed in the top 500 public high schools in the country. They were Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy (141), Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies (208), Baton Rouge Magnet (285), Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (304), University Lab (377) and Thomas Jefferson (395).



The Miller-McCoy Academy for Mathematics and Business is proud to announce that its 2012 graduating class has achieved a 100% college acceptance rate.

The Academy is the only public all-boys charter school in New Orleans. It was created during the city's rebuilding efforts post Hurricane Katrina in 2008 and named after Kelly Miller, the first black mathematics graduate student in the U.S., and inventor Elijah McCoy. The college prep academy serves children from grades 5-12.

This year's senior class students will receive \$420,000 in college scholarship offers to begin their college careers. They will attend 27 different schools, six of which are in the state of Louisiana.

The Miller-McCoy Academy for Mathematics and Business serves 530 urban male students in East New Orleans. The school is open admission. Since the school's opening, there has been a 29-point percentage increase in math scores for sixth graders and a 34-point percentage increase in English language arts (ELA). The ninth graders had a 21-point percentage increase in math scores and a 33-point percentage increase in ELA.

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION 2012 - BILLS AFFECTING ROLE, SCOPE, OR MISSION
As of May 31, 2012**

	No.	Author	Subject And Summary	Status
1.	HB 926 Act 108	Simon	TOPS: Allows acceptance of a first time qualifying score on the ACT/SAT taken no later than the September 30 immediately after high school graduation, if the Commission determines the applicant was prevented from taking a timely test due to circumstances beyond the immediate control of the student and attributable to the administration of the test.	Signed by Governor 5-11-12
2.	HB 945	H Burns	TOPS: Extends the deadline for first-time, full-time enrollment for students who enlist in and enter on active duty in the U.S. military within one year of high school graduation from five years after high school graduation to the semester immediately following the one year anniversary of the student's separation from active duty. Extends the deadline for students on active duty who are suspended for grades to bring up their grades to the minimum required to include periods of active duty after reenlistment. This bill would allow the student to reenlist through retirement.	Passed by the House on 4-4-12. Passed by the Senate on 5-14-12. Signed by Governor on 5-22-12
3.	HB 954	Danahay	LOUISIANA TUITION TRUST AUTHORITY: Places the Authority within the Department of Education as established in the Title 36 Organization of the Executive Branch of Government. This is the same broad Department of Education in which the Board of Regents and Department of Education (K – 12) are placed. Currently the Authority is not placed within any unit of the Executive Branch.	Passed by the House on 5-1-12. Passed by the Senate with Technical Amendments on 5-15-12. Pending House Concurrence
4.	SB 62	Appel	EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Re-creates the Department of Education, including all statutory entities made a part of the Department by law.	Passed by Senate on 4-25-12 House Education reported Favorable on 5-15-12. Pending House Passage
5.	SB 458	Lafleur	START SAVING PROGRAM: Removes the restriction that START Saving Program funds must be used in a postsecondary institution that is accredited by a regional accrediting organization and makes the program requirements consistent with Section 529 of the IRC that only requires that the postsecondary institution have U.S. Department of Education approval.	Passed by Senate on 4-25-12 House Education reported Favorable on 5-15-12 Passed by House on 5-31-12 Pending Governor's signature

2012-2013 TOPS amount announced for LAICU schools

The Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission adopted the weighted average award amount for TOPS recipients who attend institutions which are part of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) at its May meeting.

The TOPS award for students attending LAICU schools in 2012-2013 will be \$3,636 a year or \$1,818 per semester.

Scholarships to be awarded at Trailblazer Camp

Attention Counselors: One Trailblazer at each camp (Northwestern State University: July 15-12, and Nicholls State University: July 22-24) will be selected by random drawing to receive a \$1,000 scholarship donated by LELA (the Louisiana Education Loan Authority), a non-profit college access resource for high school and college students. Based on previous camp attendance, that means each Trailblazer in attendance will have an approximately 1 in 100 chance (or better) of leaving the camp with a \$1,000 scholarship!

Additionally, the Trailblazers will receive training on how to maximize the many benefits of the Louisiana Connect portal and how to demonstrate those benefits to their fellow students. Each camp will also feature a live performance of the 2012 FLY Tour by the LOSFA FLY Team during the opening session.

If you haven't already done so, please nominate your student here:

www.osfa.la.gov/trailblazersnomination

Louisiana Award System Update

LOSFA is pleased to announce upgrades to the Award System for school users. Now in production, schools have increased access to screens and additional data. Updates were made based on user feedback.

► On the Student Tab, the TOPS Grade Information Screen replaces the TOPS Transcript Screen.

► Modifications to the TOPS Student Eligibility Screen include the addition of student's gender and removal of terminated exceptions. Additionally, the TOPS Cum GPA now displays consistently when a student enrolls in more than one institution during the same semester.

► On the Reports Tab, enhancements have been made to the TOPS Grades Not Paid and TOPS Paid No Grades reports.

We will continue to make adjustments to better serve our school population. If you would like to share your feedback, please use the Award System Help function.

continued from Page 1

letters via postal mail and that will continue for this award year. Beginning last year students could create an account on the Louisiana Award System (<https://www.osfa.la.gov/AwardSystem>) and check their account at anytime for their up to the minute TOPS status. That avenue is also still in place, but now students have a new, more expedient means of being notified of their TOPS status. By creating an account on the Louisiana Connect Portal (<http://www.osfa.la.gov/louisianaconnect>) and providing a mobile number, students will receive a text message and an email as soon as their TOPS status has been determined. Technological advances are moving forward at the speed of light and today's high school and college students are very technologically savvy. This new avenue of apprising students of their TOPS status is just another way that LOSFA is keeping pace with these advancements for the benefit of Louisiana's student population, a necessity as Louisiana's First Choice for College Access.

--Melanie

3 ways to receive notification of your TOPS status:

Processing for 2012 high school graduates awaiting their initial TOPS award begins the first week of June. Processing will continue weekly until all eligible students are awarded.

Three ways to receive notification of your TOPS Status!



For more information, please contact the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) at 1-800-259-5626 or e-mail custserv@osfa.la.gov.

1

Create an account on the Louisiana Connect Portal: <http://www.osfa.la.gov/louisianaconnect>
Once you have an account on the Louisiana Connect portal you can provide a mobile telephone number in order to receive a text message once your TOPS status has been determined.

2

Create an account on the Louisiana Award System: <https://www.osfa.la.gov/AwardSystem>
Once you have an account on the Louisiana Award System you can check your account at anytime for your TOPS status.

3

Wait to receive notification via United States mail.

Taking the ACT & Applying for TOPS?

Read carefully *before*
completing your
ACT Registration
form!

- TOPS processing cannot begin until LOSFA can match FAFSA data, high school academic data, and ACT score.
- This data is matched by **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**.
- IF YOU DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER** ON YOUR ACT REGISTRATION, YOUR TOPS PROCESSING **WILL BE DELAYED**.



For more information, contact LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626, Ext. 1012 or custserv@osfa.la.gov.



LOSFA employees enjoy a chicken dinner provided by the agency as part of Employee Appreciation Week in May.

Find us online:



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



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



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



www.Flickr.com/LOSFA



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

By Phone: 800-259-5626, Ext. 1012

By E-mail: custserv@osfa.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 LOSFA LOOP, please contact David Roberts at droberts@osfa.la.gov.