



# PRESS RELEASE

From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: November 6, 2014

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## **LOSFA Launches Texting Support for High School Seniors and will Begin Texting Freshmen TOPS Recipients in November**

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has begun using text messaging to convey critical college access information to more than 5,000 high school seniors and will begin sending text reminders to more than 14,000 college freshmen with tips on how to keep their TOPS awards in good standing later this month.

“LOSFA wants to do everything it can to increase the percentage of college freshmen TOPS recipients who persist beyond their first year in postsecondary education,” said LOSFA Executive Director Dr. Sujuan Boutté. “These students worked hard through four years of high school to earn their TOPS awards,” Boutté continued, “LOSFA wants to help them keep their TOPS awards by making sure that they understand the retention requirements and how to make up for early deficiencies within the academic year they occur.”

“Since the preferred method of communication among young people today is via text, “Boutté added, “it seems only logical that we recognize this reality and adapt our messaging accordingly.” Any high school or college student not initially receiving the text reminders from LOSFA may request inclusion by Emailing their name, school name and mobile number to LOSFA at [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov) with a subject line of “TEXT”.

LOSFA has always included retention information in the form of a TOPS Rights and Responsibilities document with the student’s initial TOPS eligibility letter. Those letters have historically gone out as soon as the student’s TOPS eligibility is determined, usually in the weeks immediately preceding the beginning of the fall postsecondary semester/term. “That is a timeframe when students and their parents are deluged with information, deadlines, orientation, scheduling classes, buying books, moving into housing, and so on,” Boutté stated. “In that environment, she added, “it’s easy for the TOPS information to get overlooked.”

LOSFA’s texting campaign for college students gets underway on November 17.

The same technology is being used to communicate important college access information to a pilot population of approximately 5,000 high school seniors. These high school seniors are receiving texts that remind them of testing registration deadlines; college application preparation assistance; Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance; financial aid and college access workshops and seminars; fee payment deadlines for college applications, housing applications, orientation applications, etc.

The participating pilot high schools were chosen from among those participating in LOSFA's Louisiana GEAR UP program which services 30 schools around the state which have large percentages of students who have the potential to become first generation college attendees. These schools receive intensive services from Louisiana GEAR UP and other LOSFA resources on a weekly basis throughout the year. Additional participating pilot schools are from among a pool of schools selected to receive concentrated LOSFA services throughout the year. These schools were also selected based on the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches and historically low-rates of TOPS qualifiers.

For more information, contact LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626 or visit us online at [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov).

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