



Impact of FAFSA as a State Graduation Requirement: A Road Map from the State of Louisiana

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During the 2014-2015 school year, the FAFSA completion rate nationwide was approximately 55 percent. Louisiana's public school completion rate was 48 percent.

- Louisiana students forego tens of millions each year in federal grants, state opportunities, and other funding for postsecondary education.
- In Louisiana, it is the students most in need financially who are not completing financial aid forms.
- Among students who qualify for a TOPS award, lower scoring students apply for the
- award at a much lower rate.
- Approximately 91 percent of students eligible for TOPS Opportunity awards seek
- awards.
- Only 21 percent of students eligible for TOPS Tech awards apply for awards.





- Forty-seven percent of 2015 graduates did not meet the requirements for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Tech awards. These students are thus highly unlikely to receive state aid for college or technical training programs.
- However, more than 11,000 of these students (56 percent) did not complete a FAFSA, making them ineligible to receive federal aid as well.



In December 2015, the Board approved a revision to Bulletin 741, Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, which requires that public school students graduating spring 2018 and beyond have taken one of the following steps as part of their Individual Graduation Plan:

- **Complete the FAFSA**
- **Complete the Louisiana TOPS form**
- **Submit a parent's signature on a non-participation form**
- **Receive a waiver through district hardship waiver process**

June 29th • 10am-2pm
EBR Parish Library
7711 Goodwood Blvd
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(Meet Us in the Teen Area)





Road to Requirement

- Recommended by Working Group to BESE
- Created through Policy not Legislation
- Provided several Opt-out Alternatives
- Required FASFA Submission

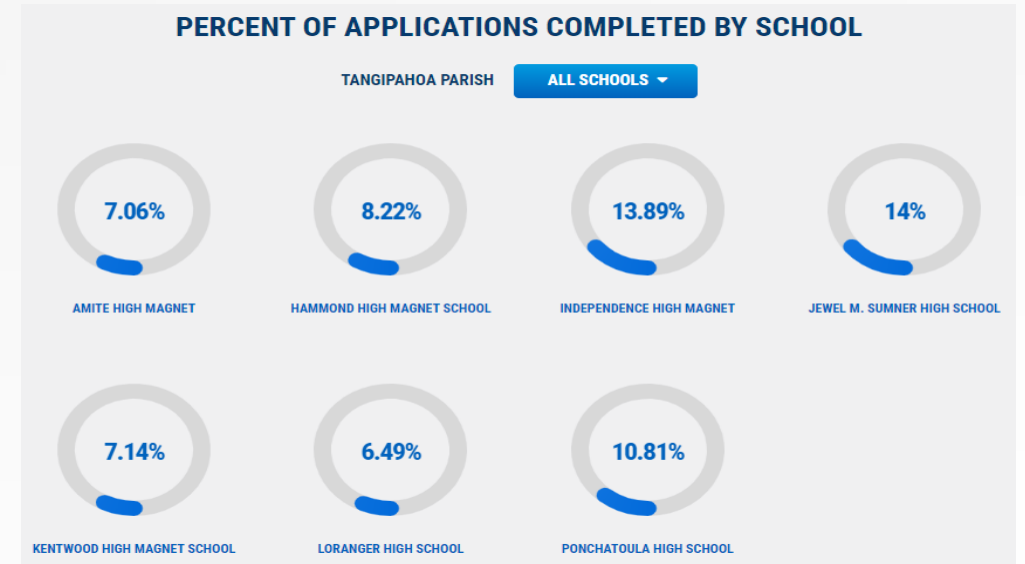
LOSFA @LOSFA · Nov 14
These students & parents completed the #FAFSA at LOSFA's FAFSA Lab, and you can too. If you need assistance completing it, LOSFA staff are available to assist you with completion of the 18-19 FAFSA from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on every weekday. To register: bit.ly/2zYP1Bu



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Identifying Best Practices for Completing the FAFSA





Best Practices

To increase FAFSA completion among Louisiana students, here are a few steps LOSFA took:

- **One-on-one approach.** One of LOSFA's strategies for increasing FAFSA completion was to work with students and parents separately on completing their respective portions of the application.
- Worked with the students during the school day to complete the student portion of the FAFSA.
- Invited parents to the school during the evening hours to complete the parent portion of the FAFSA.



Best Practices

- **Created a FAFSA competition.** The office of Federal Student Aid offers data on FAFSA completion at the state, high school, and district levels.
 - With that information, LOSFA made its own website portal – [Compete to Complete](#) – where stakeholders could see ranks, in terms of how many students had filled out the FAFSA.
 - For NCAN members who may not have the resources to create their own database and website, you can use NCAN’s #FormYourFuture FAFSA Tracker. This tracker monitors FAFSA completion at the high school, city, and state levels.
- **Engaged Parents with FAFSA Friday events.**
- **Worked with student FAFSA Ambassadors.**
- **Used FAFSA Office Hours.**
- **Offered FAFSA/Financial Aid Professional Development.**





Best Practices

- **Various modes of communication.** College access providers should communicate with students in different ways to remind them about FAFSA-related events.
- One-calls, which are automated phone messages that typically came from a high school principal, to remind parents about events. These messages included details about the materials parents needed to bring to a FAFSA completion workshop.
- Signal Vine's text messaging platform and social media campaigns to spread the word.


Hey McKenzie! It's LOSFA/Louisiana GEAR UP. How'd your first year of college go? Is there anything that we can do to help you prepare for the fall?

 Tiera LeBlanc 6/13/19 11:11 AM

Hey! It went really well and I'm excited to get ready for next year. I had a quick question. I'm working on my fasfa and it asked about federal aid. Is TOPS considered federal aid or state?

  McKenzie Steele 6/18/19 3:24 PM


Hey McKenzie! TOPS is state financial aid. Federal student aid would include the Pell Grant or any of the federal student loans.

 Tiera LeBlanc 6/18/19 5:32 PM

Thank you!

  McKenzie Steele 6/18/19 5:33 PM

You're welcome!

 Tiera LeBlanc 6/18/19 5:33 PM



Planning FAFSA Completion Events

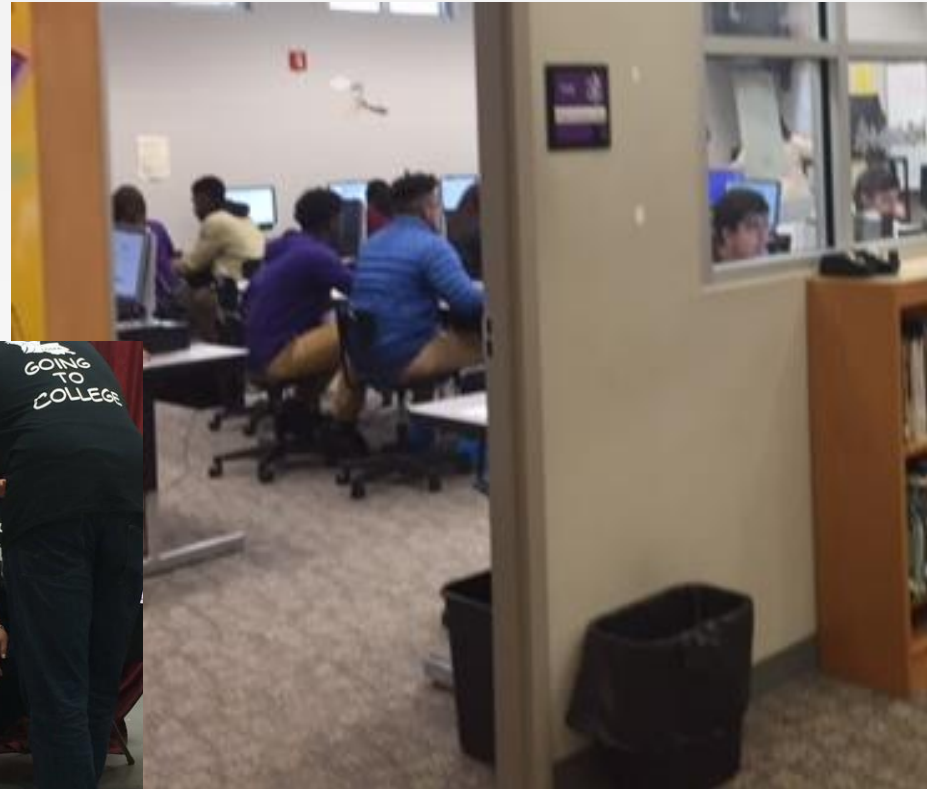


Louisiana: Impact of FAFSA as a State Graduation Requirement



Planning a FAFSA Completion Event

- Timing
- Location
- Marketing/Media
- Assistance
- Giveaways



Timing

Having several events at different times/days spread access to FAFSA resources to a broader audience.

Example 1: [Saturday June 29, 9:00a-1:00p](#), Goodwood Library

Example 2: [Monday and Wednesday March 4 and 6, 5:00p-7:00p](#), Edna Karr High School



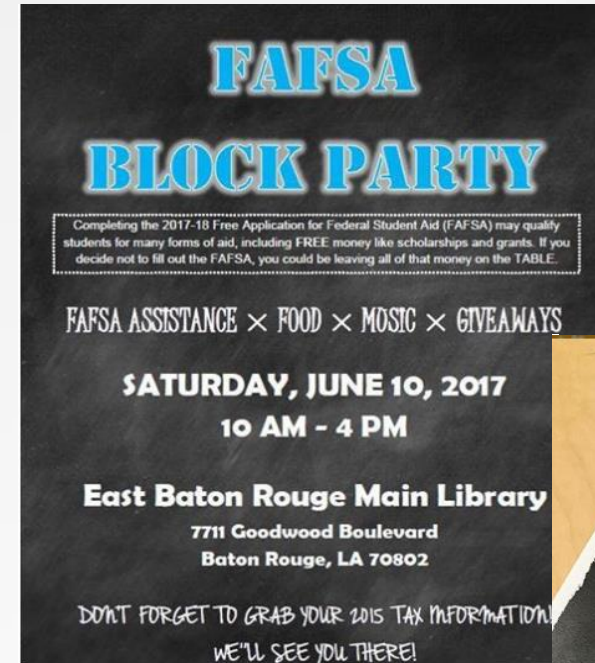


Location

Events have to be easily accessible to parents/students

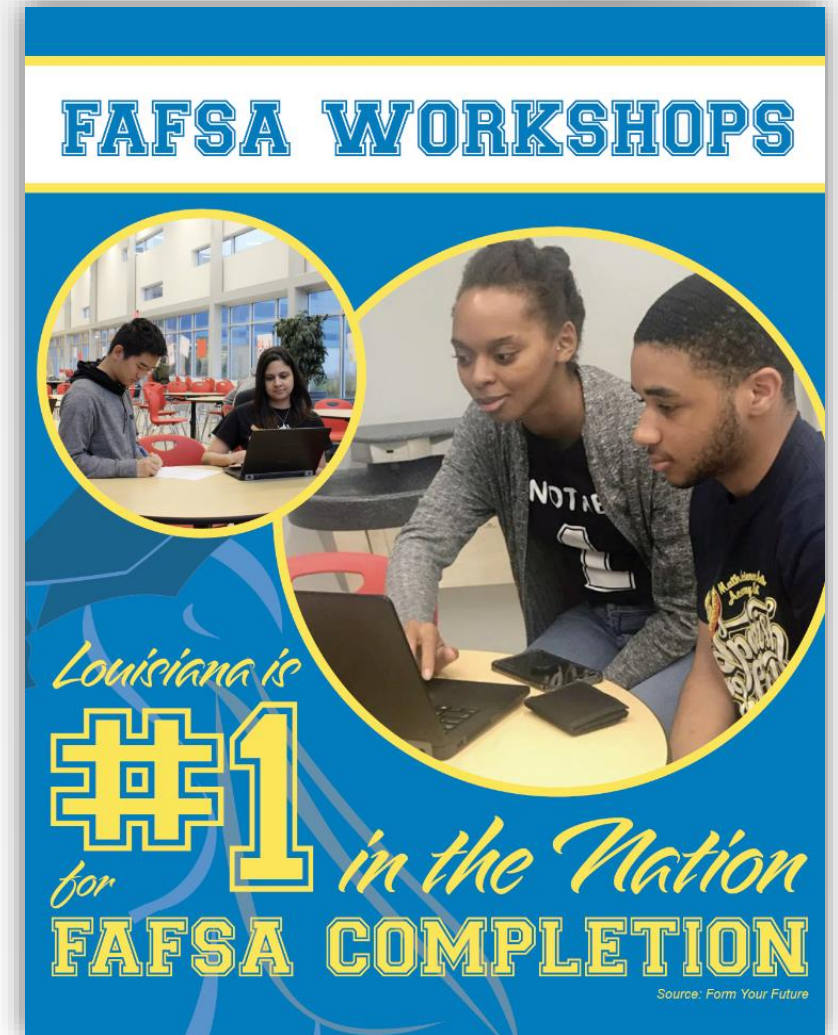
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Goodwood Library

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Marketing/Media

- Social Media
- Flyers/Posters
- Radio/News (Public Service Announcements)
- Ambassadors/Student Leaders
- School Events (Sporting)
- Feeder Schools





Essential Partnerships (Assistance)

- Enlist help of the financial aid counselors at neighboring post-secondary institutions (2-year, 4-year, technical/trade, etc.) for troubleshooting
- High school stakeholders (school counselors and educators)
- College access partners (Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Education and Loan Authority, Louisiana Board of Regents)
- Community partners (Library, radio stations, news media)



Giveaways

- T-shirts
- Wristbands
- Snacks
- Private Funding/Donations
 - Dorm room vouchers
 - College supply vouchers
 - Gift cards



A Look to the Future

- Emphasis on Early Completion (Priority Deadlines)
- Emphasis on Equity of Access (Schools Seeking College Access Assistance)
- Emphasis on No Assumptions (Who Knows it is a Requirement)
- Emphasis on Completion versus Submission
- Emphasis on Wrap-around Services
- Emphasis on Persistence



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