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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UTILIZING PANDEMIC FUNDS TO OFFER FREE ACT® TESTS TO HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES, SENIORS

Feb 24, 2021

Louisiana ACT® NOW will give students an additional opportunity to earn TOPS, qualify for scholarships and gain admission to the college of their choice

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education is investing $2 million in pandemic relief funds to help ensure more high school students are on track to success after graduation. The Louisiana ACT® NOW program provides vouchers for eligible students in grades 10 and 12 to take an upcoming ACT®. Since 2013, Louisiana has offered the ACT® free of charge to high school juniors. This endeavor will give students in grades 10-12 the opportunity to receive an additional ACT® this spring at no cost to the system, student or family.

Louisiana ACT® NOW will give students an additional opportunity to be placed in appropriate entry-level college courses, earn TOPS, qualify for scholarships and gain admission to the college of their choice. It can also help students become eligible for a Dual Enrollment program or other academic programs that require an ACT® score.

“This use of pandemic relief funds removes financial barriers and opens doors for our students,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley. “This additional testing opportunity could be life-changing for some students. An improved ACT® score can make college more affordable and expand a student’s post secondary options."

The ACT® is used for college admissions and access to scholarships and financial aid, including TOPS. Louisiana’s Class of 2020 earned an average ACT® Composite score of 18.7 (will open in new tab). Louisiana’s score is at an all-time low since the state granted all students access to the test in 2013. The number of seniors earning a college-going ACT® score also dipped for the third consecutive year.

The Department will begin working with school systems this week to provide additional information on submitting voucher requests for eligible sophomores and seniors. Vouchers can be used for the April 17, June 12 or July 17 administrations this school year. Students must meet the registration deadline. Any late registration fees will be the responsibility of the student. ACT® NOW is being funded through $2 million from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund.

“I appreciate Governor Edwards for honoring my request to fund this opportunity for students,” said Dr. Brumley. “His support has allowed this program to quickly move forward.”

Students in grade 12 are eligible for an ACT® voucher if all of these apply:

- The student has not earned an ACT® score that qualifies them for college admissions or TOPS, or who are seeking an opportunity to enhance their current level of TOPS Tech, TOPS Opportunity, TOPS Performance, TOPS Honors, or to seek other merit-based scholarship opportunities.
- The student is on target to complete all coursework necessary to graduate no later than August 31, 2021.
- The student is on target to meet all state assessment graduation requirements no later than August 31, 2021.

Students in grade 10 are eligible for an ACT® voucher if:

The student requires an ACT® score to qualify for enrollment in a Dual Enrollment program (will open in new tab) or other academic program(s) that require an ACT® score.

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