



LOUISIANA

2018 SNAPSHOT

Louisiana is one of the 10 states selected to participate in New Skills for Youth (NSFY), an initiative enhancing state efforts to increase the number of learners across the country who are prepared for success in both college and career. NSFY is a \$75 million national initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group.

In the first two years of the initiative, the Louisiana NSFY team built upon Jump Start, the state's industry-driven framework for Career Technical Education (CTE), to establish and scale high-quality career pathways for students. Key actions included engaging industry leaders to promote work-based learning and other opportunities for employer-student engagement and launching a new program called Jump Start Summers to connect learners with paid employment and industry-based credentials.

In 2018, priority strategies for the Louisiana NSFY team were:

- **Aligning incentives within the state accountability system to promote in-demand industry-based credentials:** Drawing on lessons learned from early implementation of the Jump Start initiative, Louisiana aimed to adjust the state accountability system to encourage learners to earn credentials relevant to high-growth industries.
- **Implementing the CTE Leadership Academy:** The first cohort of current and aspiring CTE leaders began the CTE Leadership Academy in July 2018.
- **Piloting work-based learning programs for students with disabilities:** A pilot of a new program in Bossier Parish provided access to work-based learning and mentorship opportunities to students with disabilities.

The Louisiana Context

Career readiness initiatives in Louisiana are organized under Jump Start, an initiative launched in 2014 to align K-12 CTE implementation with the state's economic development priorities.¹ Jump Start emphasizes parity between college and career readiness, offering students opportunities to earn both college credit and industry-based credentials.² Through Jump Start, Louisiana has emphasized the universal importance of career readiness and encouraged all students to obtain industry-based credentials.³

Louisiana was one of the first states to include a measure for career readiness in its state accountability system. Since 2014, Louisiana's Graduation Index has awarded schools and districts equal accountability points for equivalent levels of student academic or career readiness accomplishments such as earning a passing score on an Advanced Placement exam or earning a high-demand industry certification.

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Through NSFY, Louisiana has invested grant funds in what state leaders call “micro-industry engagement” activities — curated interactions between learners and industry leaders with structured learning objectives. Additionally, the NSFY team organized a network of industry mentors, who provided virtual drop-in visits to classrooms across the state through video conferencing technology. The state also designed and launched a program called Jump Start Summers, which allows learners to participate in onsite work-based learning over the summer while earning academic credits, industry-based credentials and a summer wage.

Aligning Incentives Within the State Accountability System to Promote In-Demand Industry-Based Credentials

The number of industry-based credentials earned in Louisiana has tripled since the introduction of Jump Start, reaching 90,000 in the 2017-18 school year. However, fewer than 2 percent of credentials earned in 2017-18 were in four- or five-star industries, which are determined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission based on labor market projections. Louisiana found that the structure of the existing accountability system did not sufficiently reward high-value credentials. The difference in point values for basic and advanced Jump Start credentials was small enough that districts and schools tended to support learners in attaining basic credentials rather than investing in the facilities, equipment and time necessary for students to earn four- or five-star credentials.

In 2018 Louisiana proposed to restructure its accountability system to incentivize high-value industry-based credentials. Under the proposal the Department of Education submitted to the Louisiana Accountability Commission in December 2018, four- and five-star industry-based credentials would be weighted higher in the accountability system. The new accountability framework is one of the core pillars of Louisiana’s Jump Start 2.0 strategy, which will draw on lessons from the early years of Jump Start to iterate and improve the program’s design.

Five-Star Occupations in Louisiana¹

- Registered nurses
- General and operations managers
- Welders, cutters, solderers and braziers
- Accountants and auditors

Another factor contributing to the low number of four- and five-star industry-based credentials is a lack of instructors qualified to teach the appropriate Jump Start courses. To address this challenge, districts can access additional state resources through Career Development Funding (CDF) to support teacher development. CDF is an uncapped funding source that provides an incremental \$238 per student per course for courses that are part of high-value credential pathways. CDF funds can only be used to support implementation of high-value career pathways through strategies such as teacher training and credentialing.

JumpStart 2.0 will also expand the state’s focus on additional university-aligned career pathways. Louisiana believes that all learners, not just those in CTE programs, should have access to a high-quality career pathway. As such, the state plans to develop and scale rigorous career pathways in fields such as pre-engineering; environmental restoration; and information technology/coding, which is now available to all Louisiana students due to NSFY support of dual enrollment and virtual course providers.

Implementing the CTE Leadership Academy

Louisiana recognizes that offering high-quality CTE opportunities in the state also requires strong CTE leaders — teachers, counselors and administrators who know the mechanics of the Jump Start initiative and can provide learners with opportunities to engage employers and earn industry-based

credentials of value. To this end, Louisiana developed the CTE Leadership Academy, a 13-month program that blends online and in-person training.⁴ The first cohort of current and aspiring CTE leaders began training at the Leadership Academy in July 2018.

The aim of the CTE Leadership Academy is not only to train participants in CTE administration but also to equip them with the leadership and communication skills necessary to lead Jump Start pathways and programs in their communities. Participants are required to attend in-person training events for a total of nine days in the 13-month period and can take supplemental online courses throughout the year. They are graded based on their performance in the modules and can receive course honors for implementing innovations in the real world, such as developing a new career pathway in their district.

In the future, participants will also be able to earn Leadership Academy badges in different areas, including work-based learning; student development/student advisement; program vision, leadership and implementation; and more. Participants will be eligible to receive incentive funding by earning certain combinations of badges.

With NSFY drawing to a close at the end of 2019, the Louisiana Jump Start team is focusing on the sustainability of the CTE Leadership Academy model. The state aims to graduate 80 percent of academy participants in the first year, and the first cohort has already demonstrated remarkable achievements. Seven of the 33 academy participants received promotions, and 60 percent of participants reported that they had taken on new responsibilities in the first six months of Leadership Academy training. Additionally, more than 40 percent of participants reported an increase in student enrollment in Jump Start courses at their schools.

The second Leadership Academy cohort, which met in November 2018, is fully funded by NSFY, but the NSFY team is looking for more sustainable funding in the future.

Piloting Work-Based Learning Programs for Students with Disabilities

In 2018 Louisiana made strides toward closing equity gaps for learners with disabilities in the state's work-based learning programs. One challenge with expanding work-based learning to learners with disabilities is that employers are often unprepared to work with and support these individuals in the workplace.

The Building Employment Skills for Tomorrow (BEST) program seeks to address this challenge. BEST was developed in partnership with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), a branch of the Louisiana Department of Labor that assists people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment.⁵

Performance Management Core Measurements

Academy participants are expected to master key leadership performance and communication skills, including:

- Developing concise/compelling program vision statements;
- Mastering enterprise financial planning for initiatives and programs;
- Significantly improving communication skills (written and verbal);
- Developing effective infographics, student success banners and credential/pathway posters;
- Developing effective advocacy/programming tools (creating videos, leveraging social media);
- Stakeholder engagement (e.g., recruitment of mentors and advisory board members); and
- Expanding work-based learning (onsite and virtual).

The program not only helps the state build a nationally relevant model for supporting learners with disabilities but also allows Louisiana to access Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) funds, which are made available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and match state funds at a rate of up to 3.8 to 1.⁶

This new program is currently being piloted in Bossier Parish, where a total of 29 students with varying disabilities from six schools are participating in the BEST program. Learners are connected virtually to industry mentors — mainly adults with disabilities who are successful in the workplace — as part of the pilot. Some students are taking internship courses or participating in community work-based learning through Bossier Parish Schools for Technology and Innovative Learning (BPSTIL), including four students with significant disabilities who are enrolling in BPSTIL for the spring 2019 term. All 29 students are engaged in work-based learning or school-based enterprises, with some students pursuing micro-enterprise credentials. Students also receive training in self-advocacy, career exploration, independent living and other skills.

Moving forward, Louisiana will focus on securing funding for the BEST program and expanding professional development for staff to ensure that learners with disabilities have the support necessary to participate and succeed in meaningful work-based learning and career readiness activities.

Looking Ahead

Looking forward, the Louisiana NSFY team is working to sustain progress after the end of the initiative and through state leadership transitions. This sustainability focus includes securing additional funding for the CTE Leadership Academy and continuing to leverage funds to expand and scale the work the state has already done to support learners with disabilities. Louisiana will also hold a gubernatorial election in November 2019.

With the upcoming launch of Jump Start 2.0, the state has shown a commitment to addressing quality concerns with the state accountability system and is taking steps to ensure that students are earning valuable industry-based credentials. The anticipated updates to the state accountability system are expected to create a stable — and sustainable — foundation for continued success in improving career readiness statewide.

Goals for Bossier Parish BEST Pilot Program

- Implement programming in partnership with LRS that will address the five required PreETS services found in WIOA.
- Expand Jump Start opportunities for students with disabilities.
- Ensure that all programming is based on best practices and predictors of postsecondary success for students with disabilities.

Acknowledgments

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¹ Louisiana Department of Education. Jump Start graduation pathways. Retrieved from <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/jump-start-graduation-pathways>

² Louisiana Department of Education. Graduation requirements. Retrieved from <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/graduation-requirements>

³ Louisiana Department of Education. What is Jump Start? Retrieved from https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/key-initiatives/louisianas-key-initiatives_jump-start.pdf?sfvrsn=5

⁴ Louisiana CTE Leadership Academy. Retrieved from <https://www.lacteleaders.com>

⁵ Louisiana Workforce Commission. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. Retrieved from http://www.laworks.net/workforcedev/lrs/lrs_main.asp

⁶ Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center. Pre-Employment Transition Services. Retrieved from <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services>