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## **College Knowledge Nights and Summer Camps Planned**

BATON ROUGE, La. – Parents of middle school students across Louisiana are invited to spend an hour learning information that could save them thousands of dollars and help their children earn a college degree. The Louisiana Board of Regents, Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and LA GEAR UP are working together to better educate parents and students about the opportunities available and the requirements that must be met for a student to be eligible for college. The three groups together have received a two-year, federally funded College Challenge Access Grant to spearhead communication with potential college students and their families.

In the first of a series of planned events of the grant, LOSFA will hold *College Knowledge Nights* at selected middle schools around the state during the first week of March. LOSFA will unveil a new interactive, website about the importance of starting early when it comes to planning both financially and academically. Parents and students will learn about the financial resources available and how to access them, as well as the steps parents and students must take now to prepare for college.

“College begins in preschool and that is that why we must start as early as possible to prepare our children for a life of learning,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Sally Clausen. “It is great to be working collaboratively with these groups to better educate parents and students about the many different paths they can take toward higher education and a successful future,” said Clausen.

“We are so excited about the upcoming *College Knowledge Nights*,” said Executive Director of LOSFA Melanie Armhein. “We have been trying to find a way to work with the middle school population for several years now. This grant presents a great opportunity to start an initiative that we can continue to grow in the future. We are also pleased that this event has allowed us to embark upon new partnerships with organizations like the Council of Student Body Presidents (COSBP) and the Alliance for Community Development as well as expand existing partnerships with the Board of Regents and LA GEAR UP,” Armhein continued.

In addition to *College Knowledge Nights*, grant dollars will be used by LOSFA to plan summer learning camps at Nicholls and Northwestern State Universities. The Board of Regents is working on creative ways to inform middle school students of higher education opportunities. LA GEAR UP and TRIO are working one-on-one with students to help them become college ready as well as planning summer camps for their own for middle school students.

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Every year LA GEAR UP sponsors a series of summer learning camps at Louisiana universities for students from participating schools. At the camps, LA GEAR UP students receive individualized academic support and tutoring, develop peer leadership skills, research and plan for their future education and career, enjoy daily recreation and field trips, and participate in College Knowledge activities. Funding from the College Access Challenge Grant will provide an opportunity for an additional 600 students to attend LA GEAR UP summer learning camps in 2009.

“Accurate and timely college-access resources are vital to fulfilling the LA GEAR UP mission to increase the number of Louisiana students who attend and succeed in postsecondary education programs,” said LA GEAR UP project director Kerry Davidson. “Together, LA GEAR UP and LOSFA interventions can help dispel the myths and misunderstandings that often prevent students and their families from considering the pursuit of postsecondary education,” Davidson said.

The list of locations for *College Knowledge Nights* is below with all seminars scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. and end at 7 p.m. If you can’t attend the seminar in your area or would like more information, go to: [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov) or call 1-800-259-5626 extension 1012.

### **MARCH 2, 2009**

New Orleans – Alice M. Harte Charter School Cafeteria

### **MARCH 2, 2009**

Shreveport – Bethune Middle School Cafeteria

### **MARCH 3, 2009**

Monroe – Robert E. Lee Jr. High School Cafeteria

### **MARCH 3, 2009**

Baton Rouge – Prescott Middle School Cafeteria

### **MARCH 4, 2009**

New Orleans – Esperanza Charter School Resource Room

### **MARCH 5, 2009**

Lafayette – Milton Elementary/Middle School Library

### **MARCH 5, 2009**

Coushatta – Red River Jr. High School Cafeteria

### **MARCH 5, 2009**

Patterson – Patterson Jr. High School Cafeteria

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