

Seniors 2020 Covid-19 information

Due to the current COVID-19 concerns and subsequent proclamation by Gov. John Bel Edwards to extend the closure of all public-school facilities to students through May, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Board of Regents, the Governor and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) have granted regulatory flexibilities that enable students to complete the school year and graduate without penalty.

Throughout this school closure, our primary goal has been to keep our families safe. We are committed to providing our students with educational opportunities. We are equally committed to our Seniors. We are proud of our Seniors. We understand this will be a difficult end to 12 years of hard work. We are committed to honoring the many accomplishments of the SJP graduating classes of 2020.

Senior Graduation Guidance FAQs

What will happen with Senior Graduation and Celebrations - Graduation, ACE, Prom, etc.?

- **Graduation:** SJP High School Graduation commencements have been re-scheduled for Friday, June 19, 2020. If by Friday, June 19 we are still unable to gather (state guidance), we will deploy a virtual graduation program. In the event of a virtual program, a diploma pick-up will be planned for June 19 at each school site. Each school will announce details for diploma pick up on their Facebook page and/or website. While staff is available remotely in May, schools will utilize this time for planning a virtual program as a precautionary / proactive measure. SJPSS hopes to provide seniors with a traditional graduation commencement program on June 19th, but will be prepared either way to ensure senior accomplishments are recognized.
- **Prom** - Unfortunately, SJP High Schools will not be able to re-schedule Prom. SJP high schools are actively involved in activities for seniors. Please visit your school's website and social media outlets for more information on Covid-19 senior activities.
- **Senior Night or Class Awards** - SJP High Schools, including CTC, are planning senior award recognition and announcements. Schools (and sites) will announce via website and social media an award pick up process as applicable.
- **ACE** - Academic Champions of Excellence recognition will be announced virtually by May 26, 2020. SJPSS High Schools are working on identifying students (seniors and underclassmen). All ACE recipients will be notified by the school. The following provides some detail:
 - Eligibility determined based on GPA through December final grades
 - Seniors will be announced/recognized again at graduation (June 19- traditional or virtual setting)
 - ACE Awards will be distributed May 26, 2020 using a drive by method - 5:30-7:00
 - check school website and Facebook page for more detail (seniors and underclassmen)

When will I turn in my iPad or other items required prior to graduation?

- **iPad pick up with accessories** for Seniors will be May 11 - May 15 (underclassmen siblings may turn in iPads at the same time as Seniors if needed)
 - Drive-by times and locations will be posted on the schools' and district websites and Facebook pages.
 - Other items requiring submission prior to graduation will be collected during this week as well. More information will be shared on the schools' websites and Facebook pages as applicable.

Senior COURSE CREDIT GUIDANCE FAQ

Q: What options can schools provide to help seniors meet credit requirements?

The LDOE requires that high school students demonstrate they have met minimum course requirements to earn a Carnegie credit. SJPS has determined that a senior student must complete and earn a passing grade at the end of Marking Period 3 (MP3) for any course in order to meet this minimum requirement.

- SJPS Grades were calculated as of Friday, March 13, 2020 for Seniors with the exception of Dual Enrollment.
- All seniors (with the exception of Dual Enrollment) will see their final grade in MP3 (See Dual Enrollment Question below).
- Dual Enrollment Seniors will not have final grades until the college finalizes. Online courses and Face to Face courses have different timelines for finalizing grades.
- Finalization of all senior grades (DE and non-DE) will be completed within the normal graduation timeline.
- Diplomas will be issued on June 19, 2019 (re-scheduled graduation program).

Q: What if a senior is currently failing a course needed for graduation?

SJPS high school seniors who have not demonstrated proficiency in a course required for graduation at the end of MP3 will be provided with an online credit recovery opportunity beginning April 20th. Students will have the opportunity to complete the online credit recovery course by May 11 or be extended through the summer.

Q: What if a senior was scheduled for a half credit course in P4 that is required for graduation?

SJPS seniors will be given the required virtual half credit course beginning April 20.

Q: Can schools award a grade or can Pass/Fail options be utilized?

Bulletin 741 §2302 Uniform Grading Policy has been modified to allow senior Carnegie units to be reported with a Pass/Fail option. If the Pass/Fail option is utilized for senior course credit, it must be awarded for the entire course Carnegie unit. Pass/Fail options are not calculated into the Grade Point Average (GPA) for the purpose of Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). If the Pass/Fail option is selected, parents and students must consult with the school through the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) process to determine if Pass/Fail shall be used and how this may impact the TOPS GPA requirements.

- SJPS Pass/Fail (P/F) options provided to seniors are NOT automatically applied. Student and parents must choose/request the Pass/Fail option. Parents and students can decide which option is best after receiving the report card.
 - Report cards will be mailed out the last week of April for all seniors.
 - For Dual Enrollment (DE) Students - DE classes will report with an **“I” (meaning in-progress)**. Upon the completion of DE courses, DE students will receive another report card reflecting final DE grades. These report cards will be mailed out the week of May 11.
 - Pass/Fail request forms will be made available on the schools’ websites (and available for pick up) once reports cards have been issued (last week of April).

- If you decide to choose a Pass/Fail option, you must complete and submit the request form. The form can be submitted one of two ways - electronically or paper/pencil. Electronic submission directions will be on the school websites. Paper copies will be provided for pick up. Pick-up details will also be posted on the schools' websites and social media outlets.
 - Deadline for all non-DE **courses** for Pass /Fail is by May 15.
 - Deadline for all DE **courses** for Pass / Fail is May 22.
 - NOTE: DE students still need to submit P/F request forms for non-DE courses by May 15. The May 22 deadline is specific to current DE courses.
- Since it is the responsibility of the senior to decide if this option is beneficial, we have listed several links and resources to help you better understand the option and determine what is best for you.
 - Your TOPS Award Status can be found on your account on the Louisiana Award System (LAS)* - Refer to the link for more information:
https://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/TOPS_GPA_Calc.pdf
 - Visit the LOSFA website for information and examples of Pass/Fail options:
<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-QUESTIONS-AND-ANSWERS.pdf>
 - <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
 - Counselors can be emailed during normal working hours for general support with TOPS GPA information.
 - NOTE: *The minimum TOPS Core GPA required for the Tech or Opportunity awards is 2.50.*
 - *The minimum TOPS Core GPA required for the Performance or Honors award is a 3.00.*
 - *These values represent the minimum requirements for a TOPS award.*
 - *GPA's of 2.49 or 2.99 cannot be rounded up to meet award requirements.*

Q: Do schools have to check attendance daily while utilizing distance or alternative learning methods during mandatory school closures?

The provisions that require daily attendance be taken at schools at the beginning of each school day and start of each class period have been suspended for the current school year. Currently in SJPS, we are only offering distance learning to Dual Enrollment students and Credit Recovery Students. Credit Recovery Students are students who have failed a needed course for graduation.

Q: How does the waiver of attendance requirements impact graduating seniors?

All attendance requirements have been waived. Therefore, SJPS can award credit based on P3.

Q: What if a student is enrolled in a dual enrollment course with a college or university?

Board of Regents is bringing a policy recommendation forward in April 2020 that will codify allowing a student to:

- **continue the course via distance learning options through the higher education institution and earn credit when the course end**
- opt for an "In Progress" designation and have until August 31, 2020, to complete the course and earn credit (this option is only available for students who do not have access to the internet and/or technology); or
- opt for an "Administrative Withdrawal" and exit the course with no credit and nothing posted to the official college transcript.

SJPS students have all been given the opportunity to continue via distance learning options through RPCC and/or LSU (the two current Dual Enrollment Institutions). Should a student choose to “withdraw” from the college course, schools may opt to award the high school credit without the dual enrollment credit on the college transcript. Proficiency must still be determined for the high school course - complete and earn a passing grade at the end of Marking Period 3 (MP3) for any course. The “withdraw” process must be followed and you must contact your counselor or administrator.

Q: Will a TOPS Tech Career Diploma student be eligible to graduate if school closures impacted their ability to earn an Industry Based Credential (IBC)?

The IBC terminal graduation requirement has been waived for seniors who will graduate by May 8, 2020.

Q: Under Act 833, what if a graduating senior with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) needs to take a LEAP 2025 high school assessment to be eligible to graduate?

The spring LEAP 2025 testing window has been cancelled, and the requirement has been waived for currently enrolled graduating seniors, including those eligible under Act 833, who will graduate by August 31, 2020. SJPS is waiting for additional guidance from the Louisiana Department of Education on documentation.

Q: Do the LEAP 2025 high school assessment waivers apply to students classified as juniors that have not yet been identified as seniors in data systems but who would be qualified as seniors this school year?

If a student is eligible for graduation then the waivers applicable to graduation requirements would apply to that student. The senior waivers are not applicable to seniors not eligible to graduate in the current school year.

Q: Do the LEAP 2025 high school assessment waivers apply to students who are not graduating seniors?

The Department will recommend to BESE a policy change to waive the assessment graduation requirement for a high school assessment-eligible course earned by a student in 2019-2020 if the student would have been an initial tester. The policy change would not apply to any student who needs to retake the assessment to meet graduation requirements.

Q: If seniors have not had the opportunity to take the ACT, will this be waived so these students can graduate?

Seniors are not required to test as a condition of graduation. However, ACT exam options are available in June 2020 that can be used for TOPS eligibility. The new date for ACT administration is June 2, 2020.

Q: Will the cancellation of the April 2020 ACT test have any implications concerning TOPS eligibility for Fall 2020?

The state administration of ACT has been rescheduled for June 2, 2020. The national ACT test administration has been moved to June 13, 2020, and the Board of Regents will ask the Legislature to allow a student to qualify for Fall 2020 TOPS with the June test date. The Board of Regents will provide updates once action is taken.

Q: If a student is planning to graduate early this year, have all of their testing requirements been met? Will these requirements be waived for early graduates?

If the student’s IGP plan indicated they were on track for a three-year graduation and the student has the necessary credits, they have met graduation requirements.

Q: Will testing requirements be waived for 5th and 6th year graduates?

Yes, all testing requirements have been waived. As long as they have met the course requirements of each class, they will be able to graduate.

Q: Will a student who has not completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) be eligible to graduate?

The financial aid requirement has been waived for graduating seniors who will graduate by August 31. Schools will maintain a list of those students and complete a hardship waiver. For any student needing to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), online and phone support can be accessed by sending a request to ldfianancialaid@la.gov. It should be noted that, although FAFSA has been waived as a graduation requirement, students and parents need to confirm the FAFSA requirements for TOPS as established by the Louisiana Office of Students Financial Assistance (LOSFA). The FAFSA is still a requirement for TOPS, and other state and federal financial aid.

There are benefits to still completing the FAFSA; the primary reason is to reduce post-secondary expenses. In addition to state financial aid programs (e.g. TOPS and LA Go Grant), there are also Federal Student Aid programs that require FAFSA completion, including:

- Pell Grant
- Supplemental Education Opportunity Program/SEOG
- Federal Work Study
- Federal Direct Loans

Certain scholarships, like the Bill Gates Scholarship, require FAFSA completion. Several institutions even use the FAFSA as the scholarship application. Additionally, in order to be awarded scholarships at many highly selective institutions, a student must complete the FAFSA and College Scholarship Service Profile.

Q: How is credit awarded in a course with a LEAP 2025 high school assessment?

Spring LEAP 2025 assessments have been cancelled for all students in the current school year and are not a graduation requirement for current seniors.

Q: If I am a senior and I have questions, who do I contact?

Please email your school principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor or call 2252584500 with any questions regarding senior graduation or senior guidance.