

Catahoula and LaSalle Parish School Districts Receive Grant

A new grant received last week by the Catahoula Parish School Board and the LaSalle Parish School Board will allow high school students to earn money this summer while also earning academic credits.

The announcement was made last Friday by Dr. Gwile Paul Freeman, Catahoula Parish School District Superintendent, who noted that the two school systems joined together earlier this year to apply for a brand new grant offered by the Louisiana Department of Education called Jump Start Summers.

According to the LDE, the unique workplace-based learning will provide unparalleled opportunities for students to master essential workplace behaviors and communication skills, while making their academic schoolwork more relevant.

“This program is a first for Catahoula and LaSalle Parishes where students will receive money for participation and the attainment of industry-based credentials,” Dr. Freeman said. “We are very excited about offering this program to our students.”

The program will serve 54 students from both school districts with nine students per session per district. During June 2017, three sessions will be offered with only nine slots available for each district so students wanting to participate need to apply as soon as possible, with an application deadline of May 12, 2017.

“Applications for 2017-2018 10th graders, 11th graders, and graduating seniors can be picked up at any of the parishes’ high schools and more information can be attained by visiting with high school principals or with me,” Dr. Freeman said. This program is limited in the number of students that will be able to participate so if any student is interested they need to apply as soon as possible.

Although all students in those grades are able to apply, preference would be given to students currently in the Jump Start Pathways.

The program will allow students to work in area businesses in each parish while learning certain skills appropriate to the curriculum.

The first session will begin June 5 and conclude June 9. Each day students will participate from 8 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

The first session will focus on customer sales and service, including onsite interviews with workplace mentors as well as classroom visits from business and industry partners, along with Nepris sessions.

The second session, June 12-16, will focus on workplace safety. Here, the students will engage in the world of work through initial safety training through the completion of OSHA 10 and the American Red Cross First Aid/CPR curriculum. It will also include onsite interviews and authentic workplace experiences with mentors as well as classroom visits from business and industry partners to include Nepris sessions.

The final session, June 19-23, will allow the students to engage in the world of work through hands-on opportunities, including the completion of S/P2 Safety & Pollution Prevention Certification.

The session will focus heavily on onsite, authentic workplace experiences with mentors and students spending a portion of each day engaging in Career Ready 101 in preparation for Workkeys testing at the end of the week, pursuing the National Career Readiness (NCR) Certificate.

Along with the invaluable real-world work place experience students will attain through the program, they will also be paid \$7.25 per hour plus an additional \$50 per credential attained.

Nearly all of the grant will go towards student salaries. This equates to 80 percent of the grant allocated to the students.

This unprecedented program in Catahoula and LaSalle has the backing of both district superintendents, who realize the importance of aiding students in their careers before graduation as it provides students an opportunity to investigate career opportunities in parishes and attain industry-based certifications to support their chosen pathways.

“The Catahoula Parish and LaSalle Parish School Districts have had an extensive history of coordination and collaboration. We are excited to work together on this worthwhile project,” Dr. Freeman said.