

# The LAE Voice

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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## LAE HOSTS SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP COVERING COMMON CORE AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

LAE's March *Common Core and A Whole Lot More* training was a huge success! Dozens of teachers from across the state gathered in Marksville to learn more about the Common Core State Standards and how to effectively implement them in the classroom. LAE President Debbie Meaux said it is the LAE's mission to provide educators across the state with high-quality instructional and professional development on the topics most relevant to their work in the classrooms. Right now, those topics focus on Common Core and Compass, especially in writing student learning targets (SLTs).

"Instructional development is extremely important to all teachers," Meaux said. "Teachers have been left in a state of disarray ever since the new reform measures have been put into place. They need more training on how to adjust to the changes, which is why the LAE stepped in to offer a special session focusing on Common Core and the areas that align with it."

The LAE hosted the day-long professional development opportunity earlier this spring and opened it up to both members and non-members of the association. Workshops centered around linking curriculum to instruction and assessment, transforming low-performing classrooms, grant writing, project-based learning, and integrating technology into the Common Core curriculum.

Calcasieu Parish Technology Supervisor and LAE Member Sheryl Abshire served as the day's guest speaker. Her discussion covered the importance of the use of technology in today's classrooms.

Overall, attendees said the event was very informative.

"I'm walking away with a lot of information about the Compass evaluation," said LaSalle Association of Educators President Ray Hodges. "I've been trying to focus on how we can help our members when issues come up surrounding this. This training really prepared me to help inform teachers in our district."



LAE President Debbie Meaux welcomes attendees to the Common Core and A Whole Lot More training.



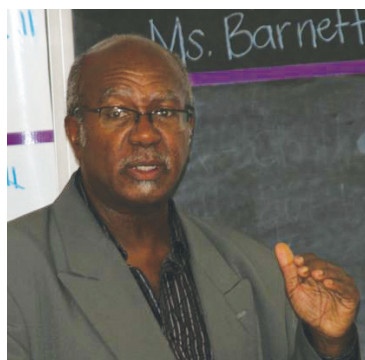
St. Martin Association of Educators Member Chelsy Taylor leads a workshop offering tips on how to do well on the observation portion of the Compass evaluation.



Attendees work on a team-building exercise during a break-out session led by LAE UniServ Director Terry Holden.



Calcasieu Association of Educators Member Sheryl Abshire talks about technology in schools during a lunch session.



Caddo Association of Educators Member Daryl Gates leads an informative discussion on instructional methodology and aligning curriculum with the CCSS.



Attendees listen intently as LAE Government Relations Specialist Shane Riddles leads a discussion on student learning targets and educators' legal rights.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

*Debbie Meaux, President*

The next few weeks are shaping up to be extremely busy. Teachers are evaluating their scores on SLTs, and schools are making end-of-the-year preparations for summer break. We're also gearing up to celebrate Educator Appreciation Week in May. Our most important area of focus over the next few weeks is our voice at the Louisiana State Capitol as the 2014 Legislative Session continues. We worked with several of our friends in the legislature to sponsor major pieces of legislation this session. As proceedings continue, we are working diligently to get four pieces of legislation passed.

Members of the LAE Lobby Team worked with Representative Wesley Bishop to submit HB 1172. The bill proposes allowing a teacher with good evaluations, proper support, and continued employment by the local public school system to attain the right to due process. Right now, due process rights are unattainable because teachers are required to achieve "highly effective" for five of six consecutive years under the current evaluation system. Since this requirement is unrealistic, teachers are subject to termination at any time, for any reason.

We worked with Representative Randal Gaines to bring forth HB 982, another piece of legislation dealing with teacher due process. This bill sets up a fair procedure for teachers with due process rights if they face charges and are up for dismissal. It's important to note that LAE leaders are currently in negotiations with Governor Jindal's staff to develop a more fair procedure that maintains the Constitutional rights of the teacher.

Representative Ledricka Thierry is also sponsoring a piece of legislation for the LAE. This legislation, HB 1129, focuses on required professional development for

educators and establishes multiple ways for teachers to improve their craft, content knowledge, interpersonal collaborative skills, and professionalism.

Representative Alfred Williams' HB 995 and Senator Ben Nevers' SB 34 focus on teacher evaluations. If passed, these bills will expand the system of evaluation — presently referred to as Compass — to a system more in line with research-based teacher assessments. The bills lay out the LAE's proposed teacher evaluation mechanism, TEAM, which uses the best elements from both the LaTAPP program and Compass. The system would bring a teacher from "novice" to "master teacher" over a period of years and require the state and local school systems to provide the necessary support and help to teachers at these various levels. It also establishes standards for an evaluation process once every three years at the "professional teacher" level or higher.

The LAE Lobby Team also worked with Representative Vincent Pierre to bring forth legislation to change Bulletin 130 so that student growth scores and Compass observation scores cannot trump one another. The LAE also supports legislation designed to lower the percentage for VAM and SLTs to 25% or even 10%. If these bills do not pass this session, then Representative Pierre's change will ensure that the computation values of Compass should be no more than 50% each (a true average) and not 49%/51%, which allows either the predicted growth (VAM or SLT) score or the observation to trump the other.

The LAE Lobby Team will continue to fight for pensions, employee pay, discipline, return to work, working and learning conditions, etc., and against any harmful legislation that will adversely affect you or the public school children of Louisiana.

How can you help? Contact your legislators to let them know your opinions. Common Core is an extremely hot topic this year. The LAE supports standards — whether they are Common Core or some other set of standards — as long as they are developed and/or vetted by the classroom teachers of Louisiana. Make this point clear to all state legislators.

When we send out the call, please lobby your legislators with emails, phone calls, and/or personal contacts, and join us for any scheduled lobby days at the Louisiana Capitol. Furthermore, join us by helping the LAE to become a trailblazer in teacher-led instructional professional development (IPD) by sending us your name, phone number, non-work/personal email address, school district, school, and a description of the kind of classroom IPD you would like to see or are capable of presenting.

I also ask that you become more involved in your local association by joining members in advocating for the rights of public school students and employees.

In May, we will honor our nation's education professionals as we celebrate Educator Appreciation Week. I would personally like to send thanks to each employee who works to support the teaching/learning environment in our public schools. Louisiana's children are better for your love, compassion, wisdom, and professionalism. Though times are tough, I believe that your diligence and hard work will pay off in the satisfaction that you have helped mold the future of this state. Your unwavering dedication will be rewarded with the gratitude of the children you serve.

I truly appreciate your work with Louisiana's public school children. They are the best we have to give to the world, and I applaud each of you for giving your best to each child. Though we may never be rich in dollars, we will always be rich in the love and admiration of our students, their parents, and our communities. Stay strong. Stay positive. Stay united. And be sure to join the LAE as we promote equity in education for our members and the children of Louisiana!

In Solidarity,

Debbie Meaux  
LAE President

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING LAE LOBBY DAYS

**PLEASE BE PREPARED TO GET INVOLVED IN THREE UPCOMING DAYS OF ACTION!**



Please make plans to join the LAE Lobby Team at the Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge for three important LAE Lobby Days: Wednesday, April 23; Wednesday, April 30; and Thursday, May 8.

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup> LOBBY DAY: LAE MEMBERS LOBBY IN SUPPORT OF POSITIVE EDUCATION REFORM BILLS**

Governor Jindal has lost every legal challenge against his controversial public school "reform" laws, ever since the proposals passed the legislature in 2012. On Wednesday, April 23, LAE members will have a chance to turn things around with a better, more reasonable plan to set public education back on the right path. The House Education Committee will take up three LAE-backed pieces of legislation including:

- HB 995, sponsored by Representative Alfred Williams, stands to improve the teacher evaluation system by focusing on what LAE members believe teachers should be evaluated on as professionals — a broad range of measures. Although an important data point, student achievement as a measure of teacher effectiveness should be put into proper perspective. HB 995 also takes away the sting that the value-added model (VAM) trumps everything.
- HB 1129, sponsored by Representative Ledrika Thierry, brings to light the need for high-quality, professional development for all public school teachers. The legislation provides for an electronic means for teachers to keep track of their professional documents, evaluations, awards, and acknowledgments.
- HB 1172, sponsored by Representative Wesley Bishop, revises the process for how new teachers can attain due process rights in a reasonable and predictable fashion. Representative Bishop believes that teachers deserve due process rights once they have proven their skill in the craft of teaching.

Although these pieces of 21st century education reform will be heard during the April 23 House Education Committee meeting, local association members must be proactive in helping elected officials know that they want them to pass these items. In addition to joining us for this important LAE Lobby Day, here's what you can do to help:

- Talk with others in your schools to convince them to support LAE's "teacher-led reform" efforts.
- Familiarize yourselves with the legislation and call your local senator and representative to discuss the specifics of the bills. Ask them to support LAE's "teacher-led reform" efforts.
- And most importantly, visit, call, email, and/or fax the members of the House Education Committee to let them know you want them to vote YES on House Bills 995, 1129, and 1172.

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup> LOBBY DAY: LAE MEMBERS LOBBY AGAINST ELIMINATION OF PAYROLL DUES DEDUCTION**

Designed to tie the hands of organizations that collect membership dues via payroll deduction, legislators have introduced House Bills 172, 451, and 1059 for consideration in the 2014 Session. These bills propose prohibiting any group engaging in political activity from receiving membership dues via public payroll deductions. Under current law, members of professional associations can opt to pay their dues through payroll deduction. This is neither a special privilege nor a burden on taxpayers; it is merely a service that is available to credit unions, insurance companies, and other recognized vendors and charitable organizations.

Freedom of speech and freedom of association are crucial to a representative form of government. Prohibiting the payroll deduction of professional association dues would stifle those freedoms and ultimately weaken the LAE's voice on your behalf.

The bills to eliminate payroll deduction will be heard in the House Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. Please make plans to join us on Wednesday, April 30 to lobby AGAINST HB 172, 451, and 1059!

## **THURSDAY, MAY 8<sup>TH</sup> LOBBY DAY: EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY AT THE LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL**

The LAE and NEA will have a table set up in the Louisiana State Capitol Rotunda in honor of Educator Appreciation Week. Join us for a day of recognition as we honor all of your hard work and accomplishments during the 2013-2014 school year. Members of the Louisiana Senate will make a special presentation to recognize teachers and members of the LAE. Don't miss this chance to join LAE leaders as we shine a positive light on the education profession!

We will be in touch with additional details including meeting times and locations via email. Please be sure to keep an eye out for these communications in the coming days. In the meantime, go to [www.lae.org](http://www.lae.org) or our facebook page, Louisiana Educators, for updates!

# BILLS TO SILENCE EDUCATOR VOICES TO BE DEBATED DURING THE 2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

**YOUR PROFESSIONAL FUTURE IS AT STAKE!**

**JOIN LAE IN CONTACTING LEGISLATORS TO TELL THEM YOU ARE OPPOSED TO THESE HARMFUL PIECES OF LEGISLATION**



Newly-empowered conservative leaders continue their attempts to silence your voice through anti-labor organization efforts. Designed to tie the hands of organizations that collect membership dues via payroll deduction, legislators have brought forth Senate Bill 440 and House Bills 172, 451, and 1059 for consideration in the 2014 Session. These bills propose prohibiting any group that engages in political activity from receiving membership dues via public payroll withholdings or deductions. This measure is designed to force the LAE and its members to choose between advocating for Louisiana schools and deducting their dues from their paychecks. If passed, the law would make it illegal for the LAE to undertake member opinion polling on critical education issues like Common Core and teacher evaluations. It would also ban the LAE from contacting members about urgent legislative matters. The

LAE Lobby Team wouldn't be allowed to publish updates on the actions of legislators through such LAE communications avenues as *The LAE Voice*, website, and annual legislative report cards. It is clear that the legislation is designed to make it more difficult for educators to be members of their chosen professional association.

Remember, your LAE membership gives you a voice. The loss of payroll deduction could have a devastating impact on the LAE and the voice you have in policy making for your professional interests. The LAE has fought for public school educators for more than 40 years, and we plan to do so for the next 40. It is up to us to stand up for our students and our public schools. We will bring you updates via *The LAE Voice* and on [www.lae.org](http://www.lae.org). Please stay tuned and stay vigilant.

## WELCOME TO LAE'S NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS!

Congratulations to the following members for being elected to serve as LAE Officers:

NEA Director:  
Rachel Gifford

NEA Delegates/Successor Delegates:

Karen Bell	Sarah Scott
Lisa Hayes	Brandan Trahan
Gwendolyn Hill	Devan Trahan
Ty Malone	Diane Vickers
Carol McLaughlin	Shelia Washington
Tia Mills	Ruthie Wright

NEA Administrator Delegate:  
Candace Robertson



## LAE MEMBERS ATTEND TRAINING TO GET CERTIFIED AS TEST ITEM REVIEWERS FOR THE PARCC TEST

LAE members from across the state recently attended a training in Washington, D.C., to get certified as test item reviewers for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Career (PARCC) test. Alana Benoit from Vermilion Parish, Brandan and Devan Trahan from St. Mary Parish, Daryl Gates and Karen Merritt from Caddo Parish, and Rachel Gifford from Bossier Parish spent their time at a test item review boot camp where they attended both general sessions and subject-area sessions in order to learn about the test item review process.

Before being approved for the database for the PARCC assessment, test items are reviewed by a committee for alignment to the Common Core State Standards, suitability of content, and age-appropriateness for a given grade level. Any recommended changes to test items are sent to item authors for revisions. Getting certified as item reviewers allows these LAE members to participate on these types of state educator review committees.

“It was a pretty intense training, but I think after we have time to digest the information, we will be able to share ways to use the items and PARCC website to direct and supplement instruction with our colleagues,” said Boot Camp Attendee



*Item Review Boot Camp Attendees pictured from left to right: Karen Merritt, Daryl Gates, Devan Trahan, Brandan Trahan, Rachel Gifford, and Alana Benoit.*

Rachel Gifford. “It was a great professional development experience.”

LAE members in attendance also had the opportunity to network with their colleagues from other states by participating in a Twitter Town Hall discussion. LAE leaders send thanks to the attendees of this training for their outstanding service to the organization!

## NEA’S TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK HONORS AMERICA’S EDUCATORS

WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION KICKS OFF SUNDAY, MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>

Throughout National Teacher Appreciation Week, thousands of communities across the country take time to express their gratitude to local educators and acknowledge the crucial role that education professionals play in ensuring that every student receives a quality education. During this week, the LAE wants to acknowledge as many classroom superheroes as possible. We are calling for nominations of LAE members who best exemplify what it means to be a phenomenal educator. Please submit the name of a teacher or support professional who is worthy of such recognition, along with a brief description of what they do that makes their work stand out. We would also like

a photograph of the nominated educator in action. The LAE will then feature these educators on our website and Facebook page so that these accomplishments can be showcased. It is so important for the community to know the impact LAE members have on classrooms and schools across the state. Please send this information to LAE Communications Specialist Ashley Davies at [ashley.davies@lae.org](mailto:ashley.davies@lae.org) by no later than Thursday, May 1, 2014.

Please know how much the leaders of the LAE appreciate all that you do every day to make Louisiana’s public schools great for every child!



# READ ACROSS LOUISIANA & AMERICA FUN!

LAE MEMBERS IN ACADIA, BOSSIER, CADDO, CALCASIEU, EAST BATON ROUGE, AND ST. MARY PARISHES CELEBRATE THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BOOKS



LAE President Debbie Meaux kicks off Read Across Louisiana 2014 with the Dr. Seuss book, "Take Me to the Zoo."



Baton Rouge children gather alongside Clifford the Big Red Dog and the Chic-Fil-A Cow to hear a book read by a local celebrity.



WAFB-TV Morning News Anchor Lauren Westbrook joins in the reading fun.



Members of the LSU football and track teams mingle with kids as they celebrate Dr. Seuss!



Livingston Association of Educators Member Gwen Hill spends the day volunteering at Read Across Louisiana at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge.



East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators Member Sherleen Sanders and President Tia Mills take a quick moment to smile for our cameras!



Bossier Association of Educators President Rachel Gifford poses alongside Representative Henry Burns, LSU Football Player Brandon Harris, the Cat in the Hat, and Representative Jeff Thompson at Read Across Louisiana in Bossier City.



The Cat in the Hat mingles with kids while celebrating reading in Shreveport.



Bossier City children listen attentively as teacher, Brian O'Nuanain, reads to them.



Cheerleaders from Bossier High School help make hats and pass out books to participants at Bossier's Read Across Louisiana celebration.



Caddo Association of Educators President Daryl Roberson and LAE Retired Member Emma Shepard pose with Shreveport City Councilman Jeff Everson and his two-year-old son at the Read Across Louisiana celebration at the Mall St. Vincent in Shreveport.



Members of the Caddo Association of Educators honor Dr. Seuss' birthday with a huge cake!



Shreveport-area kids listen to a special guest read, "Hop on Pop."



A crew of cats in hats at the Caddo Association of Educators' Read Across LA celebration.



Members of the Calcasieu Association of Educators take a quick moment to take a picture during the Read Across Louisiana celebration at Prien Lake Mall.



Sunshine Jean and Danielle Foreman from LAE's student chapter at McNeese make truffle trees from "The Lorax."



State Senator Ronnie Johns reads "The Cat in the Hat" to some very interested children.



Acadia Association of Educators members Natasha Joseph, Carolyn Wheeler, Donna Wilbridge, Linda Abshire, Bernadine Stewart, and Mona Prudhomme celebrate Read Across Louisiana 2014!



Acadia Association of Educators Member Bernadine Stewart poses alongside event volunteers.



Acadia Association of Educators Members Carolyn Wheeler and Natasha Joseph dress up as Thing 1 and 2 as they read to a group of excited children.



St. Mary Association of Educators President Sherry Thompson strikes a pose at the Read Across LA celebration in St. Mary Parish.



A group of kids in St. Mary Parish get silly as they celebrate reading!



St. Mary Association of Educators Member Almetra Pierce reads to kids at the St. Mary Association of Educators' Read Across LA celebration.

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**



**4/18-21:**  
Spring  
Holiday  
Headquarters Closed

**5/5-9:**  
Educator  
Appreciation  
Week

**5/9:**  
LAE Executive  
Committee  
Meeting

**5/26:**  
Memorial  
Day  
Headquarters Closed