



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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LOUISIANA GOVERNOR JOINS THE LAE & THE NEA AT BATON ROUGE KICK-OFF EVENT FOR 2016 *ASK AN EDUCATOR TOUR*

More than 100 public school employees, administrators, and students gathered at Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge to share their perspectives on the state of Louisiana's K-12 public education system with Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards. LAE President Debbie Meaux, called the event groundbreaking.

"When it comes to crafting policies for education, no voice is more important than that of the individuals working in Louisiana's schools with Louisiana's children every day," Meaux said. "I'm encouraged to see we now have a leader in office who is truly committed to listening to the voices of the people he serves."

"I've been fighting the fight for education for the past eight years," Governor Edwards said. "And I'm not going to stop fighting that fight as your governor."

The event kicked-off the nationwide *Ask an Educator* Listening Tour, an initiative focusing on educators' feedback on the major issues currently impacting public schools. In 2015, the NEA established mini-town hall events in conjunction with their affiliates across the nation, where association representatives traveled to schools in their respective states to meet with members in order to provide them with an opportunity to elevate their voices. These events, coined "listening tours," were so successful that the NEA initiated a second round of tours for 2016.

NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss, who represented the NEA at the Louisiana kick-off event, said the tours are extremely effective in allowing the most important education stakeholders to hear directly from the men and women working in our public schools.

"Teachers and school support professionals want to see policies in place that truly focus on the educational experiences of all students," Moss said. "The Ask an Educator tour truly provides teachers, support professionals, and parents with an opportunity to offer feedback in order to help contribute to positive change for public school students."



Some of the major issues addressed during the discussion included testing, teacher evaluations, Common Core State Standards, and the need to increase the amount of time devoted to positive, compelling learning experiences for students.

"Our members are a powerful resource when it comes to the association's efforts to promote educational excellence," Meaux said. "We will use the feedback from our meetings in order to guide us in our legislative efforts, and ultimately, in collaboration with the new administration."

Moss said the NEA's mission is to work with affiliate groups across the nation to accomplish this same goal.

"It is our hope that we can be the facilitator in helping our nation's hardworking educators build deeper relationships with the communities they work in and with the students they serve," said Moss.

The LAE team kept the momentum of the event going with a series of school visits across the state. Find out more about the progress made, within this issue.



Governor Edwards addresses the crowd at Broadmoor High School as he offers remarks on the state of education in Louisiana.



LAE President Debbie Meaux, NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss, and Governor Edwards listen as audience members ask questions.



Governor Edwards joins Broadmoor High School educators and students for a quick photograph after the Listening Tour event.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

March 2016 certainly brought storms to our great state - both literally and figuratively. Positive thoughts are being sent to all those who have been affected by the floodwaters that inundated so many Louisiana communities. Good vibes are also being sent to our new governor, as he grapples not only with the clean-up following the devastating weather, but also the reality of Louisiana's still-looming fiscal crisis.

The special session came and went with no budget balance in sight. Certain legislators made it their mission to set up road blocks to needed revenue-raising avenues, forcing lawmakers into a cycle of legislative sessions that will run on until a solution to the state's serious budget gaps are finalized.

The regular session is now underway, and of course, the LAE will play a very active role in protecting the professional lives of our members, and more importantly, the educational landscape for the state's public school students. This year our work at the state capitol will be marked through a shared endeavor with the Louisiana Federation of Teachers as both organizations' views surrounding the most pressing K-12 issues align identically. In the past, we've successfully joined forces to push for positive change. Our previous efforts include restoring sanity to the state's school accountability system and due process procedures. In 2016, our efforts will focus on curbing the amount of time spent taking standardized tests so that the precious time needed to teach can finally be restored. We will also work to limit for-profit charter proliferation and push for a stronger system of reporting on both financial and academic matters so that all schools being funded with state dollars follow the same, strict accountability measures.

As the 2015-16 school year draws to a close, keep an eye out for LAE representatives in your school. Our staff will host a number of *Listening Tours* across the state, and it is our hope that we can meet and talk with Louisiana's educators - both members and potential members - about the concerns you have about district policies and the needs you have in your classroom. It is the LAE's mission to be in-tune with the members. Association leaders and staff use member feedback in testimony before legislative committees, BESE, and other entities that have a say in the crafting of state education policy. The same information is also used to help us build meaningful professional and leadership development programs.

If you've visited Baton Rouge in the past few weeks, you may have noticed that the LAE headquarters building is sporting a new look. There are two upcoming initiatives that I am asking you to get behind: the LAE B.O.L.D. campaign and the *#ThankAnEducator* initiative. B.O.L.D. is an acronym outlining the association's focus for the coming year - to **Build, Organize, Lead, and Demand**. Over the next several months, it is our mission to get LAE members on board as we work together empowering educators to stand up for the best interests of their professions. Any activities we do in the coming months will fall under one of these areas of focus. Please be sure to stay tuned for more information on this exciting campaign by visiting lae.org/laebold. Together, let us all be LAE proud, LAE strong, LAE B.O.L.D.

In an effort to show gratitude to our dedicated school employees, LAE will host "Thank An Educator Day" at the Louisiana State Capitol on May 4, 2016 from 10 AM until 2 PM. We invite public school teachers and support professionals

to join us for a day of acknowledgement by state lawmakers, as well as LAE leaders and staff. We encourage all who attend to come prepared to speak with their legislators - not just about areas of concern, but also about stories of success. We hope you can join us as we honor all of your hard work, but if you are unable, let me extend my gratitude for all that you do for the children of Louisiana. We encourage you to use *#thankaneducator* on your social media platforms in an effort to show appreciation to your colleagues, or even the educators who impacted you in a positive way. Join me in showing some love to our state's finest!

LAE continues to grow and expand its reach across the public education spectrum. Our mission is to be the go-to organization for one-of-a-kind professional and leadership development opportunities. If you have not already heard, the association recently launched the *LAE Teaching & Learning Center* (LAE-TLC). We are currently in the process of building this program through the training of member-educators to present innovative, relevant workshops with topics ranging from classroom management to cultural competency. The center is a partner with the National Board Certification Support Network on a Louisiana-NBCT Network-where nationally board certified teachers - past and present - have an outlet to offer their expertise to certification hopefuls. I welcome you to visit lae.org/teachingandlearning to learn more about program offerings and upcoming events. We welcome member engagement as participants and/or as presenters. If you wish to share your expertise in an area that we have not yet considered, please email me at dmeaux@lae.org.

In closing, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your work as professionals, but most importantly, thank you for inspiring the lives of Louisiana's children. Your time, love, and effort in providing the best educational opportunities to our state's public school students is acknowledged and celebrated by all LAE leaders.

In Solidarity,
Debbie Meaux
LAE President

ARE YOU A PROUD LAE MEMBER? JOIN US IN STANDING STRONG AS A BOLD VOICE FOR THE ASSOCIATION!

LAE LAUNCHES B.O.L.D. CAMPAIGN

It's the LAE's mission to empower educators to stand up for the best interests of their professions, their colleagues, their schools, but most importantly, their students. We are asking members to be B.O.L.D. in their advocacy efforts for public education. What does it mean to be LAE B.O.L.D.? It means you are committed to helping the association – members, leaders, and staff – as we take the lead on the following efforts:

BUILD association's impact through the promotion of and participation in LAE's innovative, statewide initiatives.

ORGANIZE colleagues to strengthen LAE's power – YOUR power – to enact positive change.

LEAD efforts to implement improvements to state education policy during the 2016 Legislative Session.

DEMAND access to better educational experiences for Louisiana's public school students.

Only when we stand together, can we make public schools great for Louisiana's students. Are you LAE proud? Are you LAE strong? Well, join us in being LAE B.O.L.D.! Contact your LAE UniServ Director to find out how. Go to lae.org/staff for UniServ contact information.



LAE STAFF MEMBERS BRING ASK AN EDUCATOR LISTENING TOUR TO SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ACROSS THE STATE

LAE LEADERS AND STAFF CONTINUE INITIATIVE TO FURTHER TO DIALOGUE SURROUNDING THE CURRENT STATE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The LAE team hit the ground running after February's national Ask an Educator Listening Tour kick-off event. So far, President Meaux and members of the LAE staff have traveled to several regions across the state in order to engage teachers and support professionals in discussions surrounding the current triumphs, struggles, and needs of those working in our state's public schools. The crew recently visited with educators in Calcasieu, Catahoula, East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Livingston, Madison, Ouachita, Sabine, and Tensas parishes. President Meaux said the goal is to be a facilitator in helping Louisiana's hardworking educators build deeper relationships with the communities they work in and with the students they serve.

"We want to hear from educators about issues we know they are passionate about," Meaux said. "School employees' voices are valuable tools in the crafting of more sound educational

policies that stand to benefit Louisiana's students. We've heard about issues ranging from the concern over the frequency and misuse of standardized tests to increasing the amount of time to teach. We will take all areas into consideration as we work to communicate educators' needs to legislators during the 2016 session."

The team has also received feedback which will help inform the association's areas of focus for program offerings for the LAE's new *Teaching and Learning Center*.

LAE UniServ staff are scheduled to make stops in Caldwell, Catahoula, Iberia, Lafayette, St. John, St. Mary, Tensas, and Terrebonne parishes over the coming weeks. If you are interested in hosting the LAE team at your school, please contact LAE UniServ Manager Kenton Cooper at kcooper@lae.org.



The LAE UniServ team debriefs after a day of listening tour events in Livingston Parish.



49-year teacher Sarah Scott and LAE UniServ Director Aurelia Young at the LAE Listening Tour in Livingston Parish.



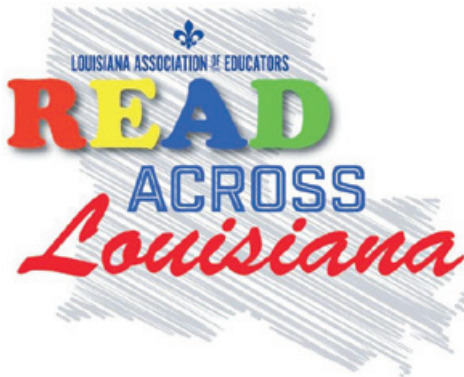
Audubon Elementary School teacher Kelli Cottongim becomes a member during the LAE team's visit to her school.



Monroe City member Alicia Calvin during LAE's visit to Mini Ruffin Elementary.

LAE MEMBERS ACROSS THE STATE CELEBRATE READ ACROSS LOUISIANA 2016

THANKS TO MEMBERS IN SHREVEPORT, MONROE, AND ACADIA
FOR HOSTING EVENTS AND PROVIDING PHOTOGRAPHS



Acadia Association of Educators host "Dr. Seuss Fun Day" at the Rayne Public Library.



Members of the Caddo Association of Educators and the Bossier Association of Educators welcome Caddo School Board member Mary Trammel and Shreveport City Council members Jeff Everson and Jasmine Green to Read Across Louisiana 2016.



Bossier Association of Educators President Rachel Gifford greets Bossier City Schools Superintendent D.C. Machen.



Monroe City Association of Educators President LaMonica Jones welcomes Monroe City Mayor Jamie Mayo to MCAE's Read Across Louisiana Celebration.



Shreveport Mayor Ollie Tyler reads to a group of eager kids at the Mall St. Vincent in Shreveport.



Teachers dress up for Dr. Seuss Day at Thomas Jefferson Upper Elementary School.

EDUCATORS BECOME DRIVING FORCE BEHIND NEW EDUCATION MANDATES

Congress recently passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the has already taken action in being an active player in the implementation of the law here in Louisiana. Earlier this spring, association leaders from across the state participated in a groundbreaking training hosted by the Montgomery County Association of Educators. Joining LAE President Debbie Meaux and UniServ Director Gretchen Lampe in Rockville, Maryland, were Leslie Birdon, Suzanne Breaux, Jim Croad, Yvonne Johnson, Brenda Loyd, Dawn Jordan, Daryl Roberson, and Delores Zenon. The group engaged in developing a plan to engage educators, community members, and parents in an effort to ensure that the high level of stakeholder input required under the new law is acknowledged. In addition to having the opportunity to meet with like-minded

leaders from across the country, LAE participants worked to create a plan to ensure that members' voices and the voices of other educational stakeholders are included in the implementation of the ESSA in Louisiana. This training laid the groundwork for Louisiana educators to have the opportunity to establish a common-sense path to educational excellence. This is our chance to truly infuse our voices into the development of sound educational policies that will positively impact our schools. We plan to engage LAE members in fulfilling their own roles in helping us to create the 21st education pathways that will promote excellence for each child. Please stay tuned for updates surrounding this exciting opportunity, and be sure to visit lae.org/ESSAinLA for more information.



LAE's ESSA Implementation Team in Rockville, Maryland. Bottom row (left to right): Leslie Birdon, Brenda Loyd, Delores Zenon, Debbie Meaux, and Gretchen Lampe. Top row (left to right): Daryl Roberson, Suzanne Breaux, Jim Croad, Dawn Jordan and Yvonne Johnson.



The LAE ESSA Implementation Team brings the Rockville, Maryland work back home as they work together to prepare Louisiana-specific items for distribution.

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES AT THE LAE LEADERSHIP, ACTION, & EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE

LAE'S 2016 SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON THE BOLD NEW LAE

For the last eight years, educators in Louisiana have been forced to work under less than favorable education policies and mandates. Act 1 and the improper implementation of the Common Core Standards broke the spirit of many Louisiana public school employees. The lack of adequate resources take a major toll on our districts, teachers, and support professionals. LAE leaders know the dire need for such precious resources so that Louisiana educators are able to reach all of Louisiana's children – especially those impacted by poverty, disability, and other factors that disenfranchise them. With the recent signing into law of the "Every Student Succeeds Act," Louisiana educators have a tremendous opportunity to have a say in decisions regarding education policy for the children who need it most. Our summer conference – set to take place at the Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, LA, Monday, June 13 through Wednesday, June 15, 2016

– will focus on what educators, parents, and communities can do to infuse their voices into the new ESSA. Here's what attendees can expect at this year's event:

LEADERSHIP, ACTION, & EXCELLENCE
2016
CONFERENCE
THE NEW LAE

LAE'S LEADERSHIP, ACTION, & EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE: THE BOLD NEW LAE

Monday, June 13 ~ Tuesday, June 14 ~ Wednesday, June 15
Paragon Casino Resort ~ Marksville, LA

OPENING EVENT

- Legislative Updates featuring Special Guest Governor John Bel Edwards
- A Discussion surrounding Poverty in Louisiana

OPPORTUNITIES WITH ESSA

- Understanding the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Opportunity Dashboard
- "Community Schools" and how they benefit families
- Organizing to be LAE BOLD
- Cultural Competency Training of Trainers
- Classroom Management Training of Trainers
- Know Your Rights: A training on Professional Advocacy

MOVIE NIGHT FEATURING "INEQUALITY FOR ALL"

- Networking with colleagues, community members, leaders, and area legislators

Be sure to visit lae.org/summerleadership2016 for additional details and event registration information.

LAE TO HONOR TEACHERS & ESP'S DURING SPECIAL EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY AT THE LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL

National Educator Appreciation Week 2016 is May 1st through 7th and LAE leaders want to make sure Louisiana educators feel the love and admiration during this time. The association has planned a special lobby day at the Capitol from 10 am until 2 pm on May 4, in which we invite educators to join us in the rotunda for some treats – popcorn and drinks – while we meet with legislators to discuss the importance of supporting public school employees. Educators will also be recognized by legislative members for their dedication to Louisiana's students.

Between now and the month of May, we are encouraging students, parents, and proud public school colleagues to use **#ThankAnEducator** to show some love to Louisiana's phenomenal education professionals.

Join the

 LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

and

#THANK AN EDUCATOR



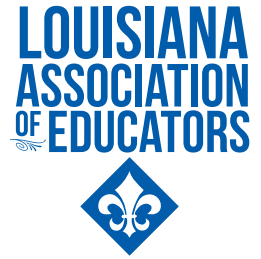
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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1-7
Educator
Appreciation Week

May 4
Educator Appreciation
Day at the Louisiana
State Capitol

May 9
LAE Executive
Committee Meeting

May 30
Memorial Day
LAE Headquarters
AOS&ED

NEA-Retired Now More Than Ever. The Commitment Continues.

"As an active member and national leader of the NEA, I joined years ago as a pre-retired subscriber and looked in my NEA dues for life. It's never too early to sign up for Retired membership. I encourage you to do so today!"
—Lily Estelove Garcia, NEA President

Did you know...
that as an active NEA member, you can join the over 25,000 NEA active members who have subscribed to an NEA-Retired membership for the one-time fee of \$250 (plus applicable state dues), and locked in their NEA dues for life?

Some of the advantages of being a pre-retired subscriber for NEA-Retired life membership include:

- Information about pre-retirement planning so you'll have a head start on making the most of your retirement years.
- Subscription to NEA Today magazine for NEA-Retired members.
- Continuation of member benefit programs you currently have without any lapse in coverage or benefits such as insurance programs, credit programs, deposit savings accounts, investment programs, and loan and mortgage programs.

Don't be confused by invitations from other retired teachers' associations.

NEA-Retired is the only official national retiree organization of the NEA and is dedicated to promoting the interest of NEA members.

Contact your state affiliate today for more information, or visit the NEA-Retired website at nea.org/retired and click on Join NEA-Retired.