



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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August brings the return of school and a renewed emphasis on learning. As an education professional, you hold a unique place in the lives of Louisiana's children. Remember the powerful role that you play throughout the school year. Continue to be strong for the children who depend on you. Roll up those sleeves and get ready for another rewarding year. LAE leaders wish you success in 2016 and beyond! Welcome back!

NATCHITOCHESS ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS MEMBER TO RECEIVE CALIFORNIA CASUALTY AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Natchitoches Association of Educators member Crystal Pierce has been selected to receive the 2017 California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence. She is among 43 public school educators from across the nation who will be honored in Washington, D.C. on February 10, 2017 at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Gala. Crystal's school, Fairview Alpha Elementary School, will receive a \$650 award because of this achievement.

"We honor these outstanding educators and hope to empower them to transform the profession by driving innovation that leads to positive student outcomes," said CEO of the NEA Foundation Harriet Sanford.

Crystal has also been invited to participate in a special global learning fellowship, an extensive, year-long professional

development opportunity to cultivate the global competence skills educators use to improve their practice and to prepare their students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Crystal will travel to China next summer to wrap up this year-long experience.

LAE nominated Crystal after she received the association's coveted *Teacher Image Award* at the Representative Assembly this past spring. Congrats, Crystal! Your colleagues are very proud!



Louisiana's 2017 California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence Winner Crystal Pierce



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

Une nouvelle année scolaire et quelle différence!

What a difference a year makes! Our nation's schools are now being governed by policies set forth in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a new federal law that stands to restore local control over education operations. I truly feel that for the first time in more than a decade, Louisiana's true public education stakeholders have the unique opportunity to directly influence how our kids are educated. With great power comes great responsibility, and we all know that educators are always ready and willing to rise to the challenge. Members of the LAE have proven this by leading the charge to ensure that our state education leaders properly and appropriately enact the law here in Louisiana.

So far, we've convinced Governor Edwards to establish an ESSA advisory council which will review the law, its regulations, and ultimately make recommendations on implementation. LAE has four seats on this council, where we plan to work closely with experts from the NEA to ensure that educators and students' needs are taken into consideration.

The association has a team of local members who have been trained and are ready to work as advocates for proper ESSA implementation in their respective school districts. We've also established a special ESSA toolkit for members who

want to help us in this endeavor; it can be found on our website at lae.org/essainla.

Many LAE members have already joined the movement by attending the Louisiana Department of Education's statewide ESSA forums. I was proud to see so many members out in full force, ready to take a stand for their students and their classrooms, but I worry that this energy will die down when school starts. It must not. Our conversations must continue. It is critical that we continue to communicate and collaborate on this important initiative, as the authentic feedback and engagement of rank and file community members, parents, and teachers is crucial to ESSA's success in Louisiana. Through working together, we are sure to experience positive educational outcomes for the children who live in our communities. This is why LAE leaders and members will be bold in our efforts to keep these discussions going by hosting a series of forums in major cities across the state beginning mid-September. Details on specific locations are forthcoming, but the forums will take place on the following dates:

- * Shreveport - September 14
- * Lafayette - September 20
- * Lake Charles - September 21
- * Morgan City - September 22
- * Monroe - September 27
- * Alexandria - September 28
- * Baton Rouge - September 29
- * LaPlace - October 4
- * Bogalusa - October 6

Event registration and specifics on times and locations can be accessed by visiting lae.org/communityconversations.

Those who join us can expect to get to work, as we will focus on collaborative discussion with the intent of establishing a community support plan. With this in mind, please make plans to join us for the forum taking place in the city nearest you, and be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to attend with you. We are serious about getting ESSA right for Louisiana's school children. It is time that Superintendent White, BESE, and the rest of our lawmakers not only hear, but act upon the concerns of the experts – those closest to our students and their classrooms. Our power to impact these types of decisions and others like them will ultimately lead to positive change in our schools. This power continues to grow; it is especially evident in our success in making major headway in an oftentimes hostile education reform environment. We must keep the momentum going. We must be persistent, but also patient in our expectations. Nothing will change overnight. Real change takes time. We have a chance to get it right for the children of Louisiana – don't miss out on your chance to be a part of this.

I know that ESSA is not perfect, but it far exceeds the policies which have preceded it. The U.S. Department of Education has put forth some questionable recommendations surrounding testing, and I've communicated our concerns and suggestions for strengthening this and other areas of the law. We will keep you updated on any developments as they take place.

I greatly appreciate the work each of you do for each and every student of this state. Louisiana's children are in capable and compassionate hands. So, without future adieu, welcome back and best of luck: Bienvenue et Bonne Chance! I know you'll make the 2016-17 School Year the best yet!

-President Meaux

ATTENTION: LAE BOARD VACANCIES

The LAE Board of Directors is composed of association leaders who are active education employees and who have been elected by their peers to act for the association in between meetings of the Representative Assembly. You must be a member for at least three years to be eligible to apply for the following vacancies.

If you are interested in applying, please send your letter of intent and resume to Laurie Guillot at lguillot@lae.org by September 9, 2016. The next LAE Board meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2016, and the seats will be appointed at this meeting.

Administrator-at-Large, Ex-officio

Second Associational District, Seat A: Avoyelles, Caldwell, Catahoula, City of Monroe, Concordia, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Franklin, Grant, Iberville, LaSalle, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Richland, St. Helena, St. Martin, Tensas, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, West Feliciana, and Winn

Sixth Associational District, Seat A: Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, St. Mary, St. Tammany, and Terrebonne

2016 RECAP OF 1ST EXTRAORDINARY, REGULAR, AND 2ND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE

June 23rd marked the end of a unique legislative season. With a new governor in office, legislators gathered for not one, but three sessions (one regular and two special), focusing on fixing the state's massive budget deficit. Legislators ultimately raised about \$1.5 billion in new annual revenue.

During the first special session, legislators found ways to raise \$1.3 billion in new state revenue. These dollars came mostly from a temporary one cent increase in the state's sales tax. Lawmakers also raised taxes on alcohol and tobacco, in addition to eliminating some exemptions to the state sales taxes. Governor Edwards also applied spending cuts where possible, adding almost \$300 million to the budget.

The \$263 million raised during the second special session came mostly from health maintenance organizations, homeowners with property insurance, large businesses that pay taxes on inventory, and companies that overpay their taxes. Looking ahead to the 2017 Legislative Session, LAE lobbyists predict that lawmakers will take a more permanent look at reforming Louisiana's tax structure since the one cent sales tax approved this session will expire in 2018.

As far as Louisiana's K-12 budget goes, LAE was successful in making sure that the 2015-16 School Year was not shortchanged. In addition, to securing \$20 million for the 2016-17 School Year, the LAE Lobby Team played a key role in the preservation of \$7 million in MFP funding which will protect educator pay. Unfortunately, schools will still face a \$24 million reduction in funding for the 2016-17 School Year; and as we all know, it is likely that this reduction will have a direct impact on every classroom in the state, as these dollars impact the implementation of higher learning standards, dual enrollment, high-cost special education services, and supplemental courses.

LAE leaders were instrumental in working with Governor Edwards to establish an advisory council to conduct an extensive review



of the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The group is charged with making recommendations on specific actions necessary for the implementation of ESSA in Louisiana. Not only did LAE push for the establishment of the council, leaders also secured representation on the council, which will ensure that authentic educator voices are taken into consideration when crafting policy under the new federal mandates.

LAE lobbyists worked closely with Senator Gerald Boudreaux to reduce the impact of the value-added model on teacher evaluations. After much negotiation with various stakeholder groups, the proposal (SB 477) gained overwhelming support from both the House and Senate before it was signed

into law by Governor Edwards. The new law changes the weight of the value-added model from 50% to 35%, meaning that the data derived through the "value-added assessment model" will not account for more than 35% of a teacher's evaluation on the quantitative side. The remaining 15% will be determined by student learning targets, which all teachers are using at this time.

As a result of the backlash surrounding the Common Core State Standards, BESE gave the green light on replacement standards recommended by Louisiana teachers and community members. The Louisiana State Student Standards were approved earlier this year and will go into effect for the 2016-2017 School Year. By supporting and helping to pass SB 262 (now Act 498) by Senator Blade Morrish and representatives Ed Price and Patricia Haynes Smith, LAE helped to safeguard schools, teachers, and students from any unintended consequences that may arise as a result of the transition to the new standards. Results from the assessments administered to students based on any new, standard-aligned assessments cannot be used for purposes of evaluating teacher performance or making placement decisions for fourth and eighth grade students. In addition, BESE will not be able to use results from the assessments as the basis for distribution of school and

continued on next page



Gov. Edwards meets with the LAE team upon the signing of an Executive Order establishing the ESSA Advisory Council. Pictured (from left): Calcasieu Assoc. of Educators member Ganey Arsemont, LAE Office Manager Laurie Guillot, LAE Exec. Dir. Lynda Guidry, Gov. Edwards, LAE Pres. Debbie Meaux, and LAE Assoc. Exec. Director Kenton Cooper.



LAE Pres. Debbie Meaux, Vice Pres. Daryl Roberson, Exec. Dir. Lynda Guidry, and Vermilion Assoc. of Educators member Suzette Riddle pose outside of the Governor's Mansion upon the governor's signing of the VAM reduction bill into law.



Gov. Edwards stands alongside LAE Legislative & Political Dir. Shane Riddle as he awaits introduction at the 2016 LAE Representative Assembly.

district letter grades that vary from the 2012-2013 assessment results, unless school/district performance is higher than it was in 2012-13.

LAE lobbyists and stakeholders helped to defeat legislation that would have limited assault leave benefits for educators who sustain life-altering injuries in the line of duty. Representative Kevin Pearson proposed amending current state law which allows educators to earn income while recovering from major injuries endured at work. The proposed changes would have limited compensation to one year, even if the educator were injured while trying to protect a student. The legislation's journey came to a quick end after Senate Labor Committee members voiced harsh opposition to the proposal.

On the retirement front, LAE worked closely with Senator Barrow Peacock and Representative Sam Jones to pass legislation to grant retirees a long overdue cost-of-living adjustment. The increase went into effect for eligible TRSL and LSRES retirees in July. Eligible recipients include: 1.) any retiree, other than a disability retiree, who has attained at least age sixty and who has received a benefit for at least one year; 2.) any beneficiary whose receipt of benefits is not based on the death of a disability

retiree, if benefits have been paid to the retiree or the beneficiary or to both combined for at least one year, and if the retiree would have attained age sixty; and 3.) any disability retiree or beneficiary who receives a benefit based on the death of a disability retiree, if benefits have been paid to the retiree or beneficiary or to both combined for at least one year. In addition, the increase will be payable only on the first sixty thousand dollars of a retiree or beneficiary's benefit.



Louisiana AFLCIO President Louis Reine, Calcasieu Assoc. of Educators Pres. Vicky Johnston, LAE Vice Pres. Daryl Roberson, LAE Exec. Dir. Lynda Guidry, LAE Pres. Debbie Meaux, and Legislative & Political Direc. Shane Riddle pose alongside Gov. Edwards at the 2016 LAE RA.

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS ADDRESSED AND MEMBERS HONORED AT ANNUAL LAE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY



LAE TEACHER IMAGE AWARD
Crystal Pierce



2016 ADMINISTRATOR IMAGE AWARD
Paula Cutler



ESP IMAGE AWARD
Linda Abshire



FRIEND OF EDUCATION
Mary Washington



LAE leaders pose alongside state representatives. From left: Representative Ed Price, LAE Lobbyist Tom Tate, LAE President Debbie Meaux, Representative Patricia Haynes Smith, Representative Bernard LeBas, and LAE Legislative and Political Director Shane Riddle.

LAE representatives from across Louisiana gathered in Baton Rouge for the 2016 LAE Representative Assembly. Highlights from this year's annual member meeting included a discussion surrounding association business, an address by Governor John Bel Edwards, a reception honoring legislative allies, and a speech by NEA Retired Vice President John Jensen.

Event attendees also took some time away from business to honor several talented individuals with the *LAE Image Awards*. Natchitoches Parish Teacher Crystal Pierce walked away with the coveted *LAE Teacher Image Award*. Acadia Parish Paraeducator Linda Abshire was honored with the association's annual *ESP Image Award*. Retired teacher and civil rights activist Daniel Landry, Sr. received the *LAE Human and Civil Rights Trailblazer Award* – his daughter accepted the award on his behalf. Former LAE President Mary Washington was named LAE's 2016 *Friend of Education* and former LAE Executive Director Linda Day was honored with the 2016 *LAE President's Award*.

Thank you to all who attended! Be sure your mark your calendars for our 2017 event scheduled for April 22 and 23.



Ouachita Association of Educators members Angela Doublin and Paula Williams await the 2016 LAE RA activities.



Governor Edwards addresses delegates at the 2016 LAE RA.

LAE HOSTS “EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY” AT THE LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL TO PROMOTE AWARENESS OF TEACHER/ESP APPRECIATION WEEK

LAE hosted its annual Educator Appreciation Day at the Louisiana State Capitol this spring. During the event, association leaders served popcorn and soft drinks in order to raise awareness about Teacher and ESP Appreciation Week. Through our special popcorn bags, we reminded lawmakers, parents, school children, and others who were at the capitol that day to head to their social media platform of choice and thank their favorite educator. More than 200 bags of popcorn were served to capitol visitors. A special thanks goes out to Baton Rouge Coca Cola Bottling Company United for donating drinks.



SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION TO YOUR FAVORITE LOUISIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL ALL YEAR LONG: USE #THANKALAEducator TO SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE YOUR STORY OF THANKS

LAE wants to showcase the compassionate work of Louisiana’s public school professionals and we need your help! We will soon begin engaging our communities in a campaign focusing on how educators change lives for the better. Through a statewide story contest, we are asking Louisianans to go on to their social media platform of choice and use #ThankALAEducator to thank a teacher, school bus driver, paraeducator, cafeteria worker, etc. – past or present – who made a significant impact on their lives. We will pick three stories from the southeast, southwest, and northern regions of the state to be featured in monthly newspaper ads.

Can you think of a former educator who inspired your decision to work in the education profession? Have a special colleague that goes above and beyond the call of duty with little recognition? Consider thanking one of your own child’s teachers who does amazing work. Now’s your chance to spotlight these committed individuals and all the great things they do to make public schools great for Louisiana’s children! Remember, use #thankalaeducator to share your story TODAY!



LOUISIANA EDUCATORS UNITE, INSPIRE, AND LEAD AT 95TH ANNUAL NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

LAE members joined colleagues from across the nation to take action on annual association business at NEA’s 95th Representative Assembly. The event kicked off on July 4 in Washington, D.C. with nearly seven thousand delegates in attendance. As the top decision-making body for the three million-member NEA, members discussed association business, voted on proposed revisions to policy, and honored members, as well as friends of education. Delegates were visited by 2016 Democratic Presidential Nominee Hillary Clinton, who in a dynamic address spotlighted her priorities for public education, and vowed to elevate the teaching profession, de-emphasize standardized testing, and harness community resources to help create great public schools for every student.



At every RA, delegates are tasked with electing new NEA leaders. In addition to voting for new NEA Board members, delegates re-elected Maury Koffman of Michigan and Kevin F. Gilbert of Mississippi to serve another three-year term each on the NEA Executive Committee.

The 96th annual NEA RA will take place June 30 - July 5, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts. You can learn more about all the happenings and check out photographs of the 2016 event at ra.nea.org.

Delegates also approved a new policy statement surrounding the nation’s school-to-prison pipeline. The statement calls all NEA members to action in helping to create awareness surrounding the issue through the education of communities on the striking racial disparities among the students most affected.



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**LOUISIANA
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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 3
Committee Day

September 5
Labor Day
LAE Headquarters
CLOSED

September 9
Deadline to apply
for LAE Board
of Directors

September 10
LAE Board Meeting

October 21-22
Executive Committee

November 11
Veterans Day
LAE Headquarters
CLOSED

November 18-19
LAE Board
Meeting/Training

November 23-25
Thanksgiving Break
LAE Headquarters
CLOSED