



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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NEA PRESIDENT VISITS LOUISIANA DURING HER ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL TOUR



NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and her team visited Louisiana this fall during NEA's Back to School Tour. The annual tour highlights the great things going on in public schools across the nation. The crew spent two days with LAE leaders visiting schools in the Baton Rouge and Acadiana regions. During her stop in Louisiana, President Eskelsen Garcia met with LAE members and their students to discuss the innovative work they are doing in their schools.



and Jamie Alello.

In Baton Rouge, the team visited The Dufrocq School where President Eskelsen Garcia met with educators and read to classes taught by LAE members Diane Vickers, Marcia LeCompte, Angelica Johnson, Mona Myles, Vernecia Anthony,

President Eskelsen Garcia also made a stop at McKinley High School, where she visited with East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators member Ventress Cofer, among other educators, to experience the school's learning environment. Eskelsen Garcia said she could really feel the sense of pride and inclusivity across McKinley's campus.



"Students noted the importance diversity played in making McKinley High feel like a family," said Eskelsen Garcia. "McKinley is the perfect example of educators giving 110 percent for every

student regardless of how few resources with which they are given to work."

After their visit at McKinley High School, the NEA team attended a luncheon with Baton Rouge-area legislators. President Eskelsen Garcia praised those in attendance for being champions of public schools and encouraged them to continue to stand up for the best interests of Louisiana's teachers and students. The day culminated with a dinner/meet-and-greet with LAE members at the headquarters office in Baton Rouge.

The second day of the tour brought President Eskelsen Garcia and her crew to the Acadiana region to visit two schools in Vermilion parish: Erath High School and Eaton Park Elementary School. Vermilion Association of Educators member Emily Broussard led President Eskelsen Garcia on a tour of Erath High School, one of the state's top performing public schools. Emily introduced President



Eskelsen Garcia to a group of ambitious student-leaders who gushed about their cohesive school community. Several praised their teachers for making school feel like home.

President Eskelsen Garcia then joined Vermilion Association of Educators President Suzanne Breaux on a tour of Eaton Park Elementary, a high-needs school in Abbeville, Louisiana. Here, she had a chance to witness an enthusiastic vocabulary lesson in LAE member Libby Klein's first grade classroom. After visiting with the class and sharing a story of her experience on President Barack Obama's famous jet, Air Force One, President Eskelsen Garcia was invited to read a book to the eager students.



President Eskelsen Garcia's trip to Louisiana was one that provided her with much inspiration. She will share her experiences with our nation's leaders as she highlights public school success stories from across the nation.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

President John F. Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." These words hold much significance as we transition from one election cycle (Louisiana leadership elections) to another (LAE Leadership elections). We are currently looking for individuals with a sense of duty and loyalty to step into leadership roles within the LAE, to aid in our efforts of ensuring that the association remains the strong, viable advocate it has been for so long. Member-leaders infuse the association with local perspectives from across the state, and they help drive the mission, goals, and initiatives of the LAE; they provide feedback on advocacy initiatives and resource offerings. Member-leaders are the heart and soul of the association.

LAE leaders are considered thought-leaders on important public school matters that directly impact Louisiana schools, teachers, and students. We make it our mission to bring a voice to the table where we sit as equals with those who have the power to make change. We share the needs and experiences of Louisiana educators and students. LAE members play an instrumental role in paving the way for positive public school policy ideals to become reality.

In a democratically run organization like LAE, the strength of the whole is determined by those who lead. We are only as strong as those who carry the torch. I ask that you look deep within yourself. What are your goals as a professional? Are you willing to help us in our effort to make our colleagues stronger advocates for the profession?

If this sounds like you, please consider taking a leadership role within the association. It is extremely important! Take a look at the list of open positions, as well as the elections' timelines and procedures listed within this publication. If you are compelled to run for office, the nomination forms are available at lae.org/2016elections.

In addition to leadership elections, we are asking local association leaders begin selecting representatives to our state convention. The LAE Representative Assembly will be held in Baton Rouge on April 9 and 10 of 2016. Please expect your local president to put out the call for nominations in the near future. The RA is an extremely important membership event every year, but this year it will be groundbreaking. With a new governor in office, the convention will focus on how to best move forward with the state's new administration. We have a chance to get things right in our schools and truly make a difference in our profession. During the RA, the member representatives in attendance will work to define the organization's direction by strengthening association policies and initiatives. I can assume that one major focus this year will address the path we must pursue in order to successfully break the "test and punish" policies that have been plaguing the education profession and children for far too long. Furthermore, LAE must make sure that the state's accountability plan aligns with the new reauthorization plan, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). LAE will maintain its status as a lead contributor to the crafting process for this and any other important education policies.

LAE leaders and staff have recently launched the LAE Teaching & Learning program. In the coming months, consider exploring this new program as we host trainings and events in your area. We plan to position LAE members as thought-leaders in professional development in the areas of classroom management, cultural competency, student learning targets (SLTs), response to intervention and PBIS, community conversation and outreach, National Board Certification support, and teacher leadership and advocacy, along with other important areas of professional growth. If you're interested in helping us in this endeavor, please contact LAE Teaching & Learning Coordinator Madison Poche at mpoche@lae.org or (225) 281-6608.

The changes on the horizon will bring several challenges, and that's okay. Anything worth fighting always comes with adversity. Our schools are worth the fight. Our colleagues are worth the fight. Our students are worth the fight. We are always our strongest when we come together; and together, we will bring positive change to our state.

In closing, I hope you will consider serving as a part of the LAE governance structure, dedicated to the advancement of our educators and the children we serve. Brighter times lie ahead for Louisiana. I look forward to collaborating with all of you in an effort to increase the professional stature and admiration of the talented educators of this state.

In Solidarity,
President Meaux

LAE LEADERS CONGRATULATE JOHN BEL EDWARDS ON HISTORIC GUBERNATORIAL VICTORY

LEADER, COLLABORATOR, AND UNITER WILL FIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT BY LOUISIANA FAMILIES



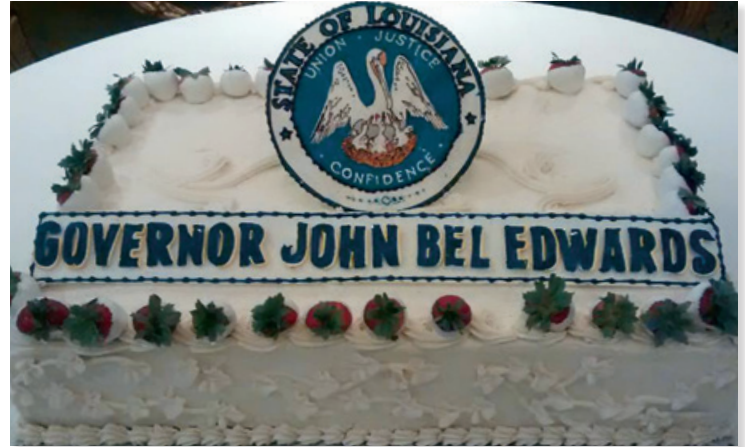
LAE leaders congratulate John Bel Edwards on winning the Louisiana Governor's Race.

"We find ourselves on the cusp of a unique opportunity; not only for public school teachers, parents, and students, but for every Louisiana citizen," said LAE President Debbie Meaux. "John Bel Edwards is the governor our state needs – a proven leader, collaborator, and uniter who will work hard to do what is right by Louisiana families."

Meaux said she takes pride knowing that LAE members played a significant role in helping Edwards spread his campaign message: a promise to promote policies that truly put Louisiana first.

"I want to thank each and every LAE member for the tremendous support they've shown over the past year," Meaux said. "LAE members from across the state helped in our campaign efforts – everything from making phone calls to placing campaign signs in their yards to talking to their families and friends – we couldn't have made progress in Louisiana's communities without you! This truly goes to show that with hard work, dedication, and faith, anything is possible."

During his time as a state representative, John Bel Edwards has been a consistent champion for Louisiana's public education system – grades pre-kindergarten through graduate school. Meaux said she's eager to begin the long road of redirecting



the past eight years of misguided policies enacted by the Jindal administration.

"There is much to be done and educators are ready to join John Bel Edwards on the journey to restoring our state," Meaux said. "It's time we put Louisiana's public school educators and students first; and for this, the future looks brighter than ever before."

Upon the announcement of his win, Edwards released the following message to his supporters:

We won because of you. Thank you for voting to put Louisiana first.

You believed in our campaign to bring honor and integrity back to the state of Louisiana. My campaign slogan has been "put Louisiana first" from the start, and that is exactly what I plan to do for the next four years. To me, that has always meant bringing our people together, regardless of party, to celebrate the things that make our state strong and solve our greatest problems.

I promise you tonight that I will always do what is best for all Louisianians – for our children, our veterans, our senior citizens. I believe Louisiana is worth fighting for. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead our state.

Louisiana's future doesn't belong to a political party – it belongs to all of us. I will work every day to make you proud of your vote and of your state.



LAE CONGRATULATES MEMBER TIA MILLS ON HER APPOINTMENT TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MILLS WILL SERVE ACTIVE SYSTEM MEMBERS IN TRSL'S THIRD DISTRICT

The Board of Trustees for the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) made an interim trustee appointment at its November meeting. Dr. Tia Mills of Baton Rouge was appointed and sworn in to represent active members employed in District 3, which includes the parishes of Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Lafourche, and Terrebonne. Mills is a teacher at Magnolia Woods Elementary School in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The TRSL Board of Trustees meets monthly to develop policies for the administration of the retirement plan, monitor investment performance, and review system operations. The Board is responsible for safeguarding and managing the assets TRSL holds in trust to provide retirement income for system members.



LAE'S 2016 ELECTION SEASON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

"IN A DEMOCRATICALLY RUN ORGANIZATION LIKE LAE, THE STRENGTH OF THE WHOLE IS DETERMINED BY THOSE WHO LEAD. WE ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS THOSE WHO CARRY THE TORCH."

– DEBBIE MEAUX, LAE PRESIDENT

LAE is the voice of the education professional. Have you ever wanted to see a certain change in the association, contribute to initiatives, or serve on committees that can impact public school working conditions and students' learning conditions? If so, now's your chance!

LAE Election Season is right around the corner. In 2016, there are several LAE Board of Director seats up for re-election. It is required that all candidates have a minimum of three years of continuous association membership to be eligible to run for a seat on the LAE Board. A full list of offices up for election, procedures, and deadlines is provided within.

Members interested in having a say on policy decisions and the association's agenda on a national level might be interested in attending the NEA Representative Assembly as a Louisiana delegate. This is another position up for grabs this election cycle.

Interested candidates must submit a nomination form for the respective position of interest. In addition to the nomination form, each candidate has the option of submitting a short professional biography (not to exceed 50 words) and a high-resolution photo, which will appear in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. Nomination forms can be obtained by visiting lae.org/2016elections.

CHART OF SEATS OPEN FOR ELECTION

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 LAE Representative Assembly. You must be an LAE member for at least three years to be eligible to run for the offices listed below.

Position	Incumbent	Special Qual.	Term Expires	Length of Term
President	Debbie Meaux	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Vice President	L. Daryl Roberson	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
First Associational District				
Seat C	Vacant	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Second Associational District				
Seat A	Anthony Jackson	Minority	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Seat C	Michael Doughty	None	July 14, 2017	2 year term
Third Associational District				
Seat C	Mark Hayes	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Fourth Associational District				
Seat A	Diane Vickers	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Seat C	Anita Augustus	None	July 14, 2017	2 year term
Fifth Associational District				
Seat A	DeLisa Washington	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Sixth Associational District				
Seat C	Vacant	None	July 14, 2016	3 year term
Education Support Professional				
Seat A	Vacant	ESP	July 14, 2018	3 year term
Administrator Seat				
1 Seat	Vacant	Administrator	None	
NEA Director				
Alternate	Vacant		Aug. 31, 2017	

ATTENTION: LAE BOARD VACANCIES

The following seats on the LAE Board of Directors are currently vacant. We would like to fill these positions until LAE Elections take place in March of 2016. You must be an LAE member for at least three years to be eligible. If you are interested in applying, please send your letter of intent and resume to Laurie Guillot at lguillot@lae.org by February 17, 2016. The next LAE Board meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2016, and the seats will be appointed at this meeting.

First Associational District, Seat C: Allen, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Desoto, Jackson, Jeff Davis, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Union, Vernon, and Webster

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

Education Support Professional Representative, Seat A: Statewide seat

2016 LAE ELECTION CALENDAR

January 7: Nomination forms and attachments must be sent by mail or email by 11:59 pm.

January 9: LAE Elections Committee certifies the candidate and mails notification letters.

January 16: Obtain database of voting members.

January 19: Deadline to challenge the certification of candidates. Challenges shall be made in writing and submitted by certified or registered mail.

February 9: Deadline for printing biographical information of candidates.

March 10: All ballots distributed.

March 31: Deadline for receipt of all ballots to Neutral.

April 8: Report from the Neutral to the LAE Elections Committee. Notification of election results to the candidates.

April 18: Deadline to challenge primary results. Challenges to the elections shall be made in writing to the LAE Executive Director and sent by certified mail.

April 22: Last day for candidates to withdraw from runoff election by notifying the LAE Executive Director and sent by certified mail.

May 1: Election neutral distributes ballots for runoff election.

May 31: Deadline for receipt of all ballots to neutral.

June 11: Neutral reports results of runoff election to the LAE Elections Committee. Notification of election results sent to candidates.

June 21: Deadline to challenge runoff election. Challenges to the election shall be made in writing and sent by certified mail.

LAE Election Committee
c/o LAE Executive Director
8322 One Calais
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
Email: lguillot@lae.org

LAE ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. An article in *The LAE Voice* and on the LAE website will outline the nomination process and will include the election procedures and election calendar.
2. Nomination forms will be available on the LAE website, at the LAE Headquarters (candidates may call 800- 256-4523), and emailed and mailed to local presidents and Board of Directors in December.
3. Upon receipt of a candidate's nomination form, LAE will verify receipt by email. Candidates are strongly recommended to contact LAE if verification has not been received within one day of the expected arrival of the form at LAE.
4. Notification of receipt of a candidate's form will occur within one day of receiving a nomination form, except during the Christmas holiday break. Nomination forms arriving during the holiday will be receipted on the date of the reopening of the office.
5. The email address for electronically forwarding nomination forms - lguillot@lae.org - will be directed to the office of the Executive Director or her designee. **All forms must be fully completed and in the LAE Headquarters Office by January 7 by 11:59 pm.**
6. For reproduction purposes photos will only be accepted by mail or email. Quality of the photo may be affected by email in which case the Committee authorizes LAE to contact the candidate requesting a usable photo.
7. Biographical information composed by the candidates, not to exceed 50 words, will be included with the election information/ ballot. Bio information will be printed as submitted; it will not be edited for content or grammar.
8. Candidates will be notified by email (by January 10) when the nominations have been certified by the Elections Committee.
9. An article in *The LAE Voice* and on www.lae.org will inform members of the scheduled elections. The article will contain the bios of candidates along with a sample ballot and voting instructions. Ballots will appear in the March issue of *The LAE Voice* and will be posted on the website in the *Members-Only* area.
10. All voting will be online. Voting members will use their LAE ID assigned by NEA when voting. (ID appears on the membership card issued by LAE as well as above the name in the address section of every issue of *The LAE Voice*.)
11. A paper ballot can be available upon request from the Neutral.
12. The first vote recorded by the neutral will be the one counted.
13. March 31, 2016, is the deadline for receipt of all ballots by Neutral.
14. The Neutral will have the election results certified by a notary public. The certification is to be provided to the LAE Executive Director by overnight delivery. The LAE Elections Committee will meet as scheduled to certify the election results, and will invite candidates or their representatives to be present during the certification of the results. Candidates will be notified by mail of the election results.
15. All candidates who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be certified as elected by the LAE Elections Committee. Should no candidate receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff will be held between the top two candidates.
16. Should a runoff election be necessary, members of the appropriate district will be notified electronically and an announcement will appear in *The LAE Voice*.
17. After all election procedures and challenges have been followed, the LAE Elections Committee will declare any unopposed candidate as winner of the office sought. The ballot will not reflect any unopposed candidate.

REMINDER: PROPOSED LAE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT SUBMISSIONS

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT IS JANUARY 8, 2016

If you are interested in offering an amendment to the LAE Constitution, Bylaws, and/or Standing Rules, please do so prior to the submission deadline on January 8, 2016. Please send any proposals to lguillot@lae.org.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START GETTING YOUR MATERIALS TOGETHER FOR THE LAE IMAGE AWARDS!

LAE's Image Awards are presented annually to recognize Louisiana educators whose leadership and actions in their professions have advanced public education in Louisiana. Every year, the LAE chooses one outstanding teacher, ESP, administrator, ancillary personnel, friend of education, and human and civil rights trailblazer to honor at the annual LAE Representative Assembly. The winners of these awards are then nominated for recognition at the national level.



LAE honors Lafayette teacher, Civil Rights activist, and association member Patricia Colbert-Cormier with the 2015 Trailblazer Award.

Last year's LAE Teacher Image winner, Brandan Trahan, was submitted for the NEA's Award for Teaching Excellence; he'll be recognized at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in February. As a result of his nomination, Trahan's school received a \$650 grant from California Casualty. The award has also paved the way for other exciting adventures for Trahan, as he plans to take part in a professional development course in Peru this summer. Trahan has access to this one-of-a-kind professional development opportunity all because of his LAE Image Award win; YOU can be next! LAE is now accepting applications for the 2016 Image Awards. The deadline to submit nominations is February 24, 2016. Go to www.lae.org/2016imageawards for nomination packets.



LAE President Debbie Meaux and Vice President Daryl Roberson present LAE's 2015 Teacher Image Award winner Brandan Trahan with award at the 2015 LAE Representative Assembly.

ARE YOU ENROLLED IN LAE'S NEW *EDUES* SERVICE? IF NOT, IT'S TIME YOU MADE THE SWITCH!

CHECK OUT WHY MEMBERS ACROSS LOUISIANA ARE FLIPPING THEIR DUES PAYMENTS FOR LAE

Members are switching from having monthly dues deducted from their paychecks to paying by credit card or bank draft. This is what LAE is calling its "Flip 4 LAE" campaign."

There are many reasons why members have chosen to make the switch. Here are just a few:

"Several states have eliminated payroll deduction as an option for the payment of union dues - our legislature came a few votes shy of taking away this right from us last year. I wanted to be proactive and change my payment so that I could get ahead of the game." -Cammie Claytor, Lafourche Association of Educators

"I get perks when I use my charge card. Paying my dues by credit card gives me a chance to gain additional cash back and other benefits." -Johnell Celestine, Evangeline Association of Educators

"It was extremely easy to do - it only took about a minute to make the switch!" -Diane Vickers, East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators

"I feel like the school system has the upper hand when administrators know which employees are members. Eliminating the central office from the dues payment process will ensure that members have the option of keeping their membership confidential." -Vicky Johnston, Calcasieu Association of Educators

"LAE advocates for fairness. I want to protect the integrity of this work." -Ruthie Wright, Webster Parish Association of Educators

Ready to make the switch? Contact the LAE Membership Department at 225.330.0401 or 225.330.0402 to get started.

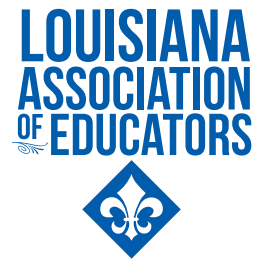
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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 4-5
LAE Executive
Committee Meeting

December 21 -
January 4
LAE Winter Break*

January 9
LAE Committee Day:
LAE Elections
Committee

January 18
Martin Luther
King, Jr. Day*

February 20
LAE Board
Meeting

*LAE Headquarters CLOSED