



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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EDUCATOR UPRISING: EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH SCHOOL EMPLOYEES DRIVE MAJOR RED FOR ED ACTION IN THE NAME OF SCHOOL FUNDING



Just like most public school systems across Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish faces a major budget crunch. For more than a year now, members of local LAE affiliate, the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators (EBRPAE), have explored possible ways for the system to overcome this troubling predicament. The EBRPAE determined that local school board members could help achieve major financial gains if they rejected corporations' requests for multi-million-dollar industrial tax exemptions, and instead, collected the local property taxes to boost the school system's budget. In order to put pressure on board members to do this, EBRPAE joined forces with other school advocacy groups to host an emergency meeting to engage school system employees in a protest against exemption requests at a meeting where global corporate giant, ExxonMobil, had several scheduled for debate.

Donned in her best "red for ed" attire, EBRPAE member Crystal Williams Gordon called on her colleagues to be bold in their efforts to take a stand.

"In extraordinary times, ordinary people must rise to the occasion and do extraordinary things. That's what we're doing tonight," she said.

The call for action saw overwhelming support, with hundreds of school system employees agreeing to take a personal day to attend a Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry meeting to weigh in on the granting of Exxon's exemption requests. Just one day after the news broke of school employees' intentions, the exemptions were removed from the meeting agenda - a move Baton Rouge-area Organizational Specialist Gretchen Lampe called significant.

"By standing up and taking this bold action, school employees showed big business, as well as top policymakers, that parish educators are serious about expressing the needs of our schools," she explained. "The issue of school funding directly impacts the best interests of students - educators in every job role realize this and are ready to take a stand. School employees would never do anything to negatively impact the students of the parish, but this issue is just that important. It's time our policymakers place the needs of our children above the wants of big business."

She went on to say that the action was only postponed until the items appear back on the agenda, as employees are fully prepared to take action whenever necessary.

The issue spans beyond East Baton Rouge Parish with districts across Louisiana losing out on funding that could otherwise go to enhance students' educational experiences and yes, increase the salaries of hardworking school employees. Earlier this year, educators in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and West Virginia initiated work actions to convince state lawmakers to approve school funding increases. In Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish has come the closest to seeing similar protests.

LAE has embraced the national *Red for Ed* movement and is building the capacity to influence lawmakers to explore school funding increases in Louisiana's 2019 Legislative Session set to begin April 8, 2019. Be sure to check out LAE's new website RedforEdLA.org for everything you need to know about upcoming Red for Ed actions across the state.

#GeauxRedForEdLA



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

As the craziness of the holidays swirls around us, I want to take a moment to wish each of you the happiest of holiday seasons. My wish for you is time spent with the best of family and friends – along with a day or two of “you time” so you can relax and rejuvenate.

Working in our schools with our children is a 24/7 job – one that not only occupies August through May, but countless hours of off-the-clock work. It’s important to find time to take care of yourself, so you can find the strength and energy to give your all to your students. I’ve walked this walk and admire all of you who are continuing to see your role as an educator both rewarding and worth the effort. I know your students appreciate all you do for them.

As we look back on 2018, we can certainly see some promising moves in the right direction for school employees. It seems there’s been somewhat of an awakening when it comes to educators finding their voices. From local to state to national politics, teachers and other school employees are standing up and speaking out, and people are taking notice.

I know we’ve been talking a lot about LAE’s (and now, Louisiana’s) involvement with the *Red for Ed* movement. As we prepare to kick off 2019, get ready to see that involvement amp up. Not only are association members engaging in visible actions on social media, but they’re also speaking up in their schools, at board meetings, and in their communities.

The 2019 Legislative Session begins April 8. This year, school employees have a unique opportunity to convince lawmakers to approve funding for across-the-board pay increases, but we’ll have to work for it. What do I mean by that?

We have to be serious and swift in our efforts to hold state representatives and senators accountable to their commitment to support Louisiana’s school employees. After several talks and strategy sessions with the governor himself, we’ve determined that an extremely important action moving forward is continued and consistent contact with legislators while they’re back home in the weeks leading up to the session. This means school employees having regular face-to-face discussions with lawmakers in their districts about school funding, with the ultimate goal of getting them to publicly commit to supporting measures to fund educator pay increases during the session. Every voice – including yours – is crucial to this conversation, so if you’re serious about fighting for a raise, be vocal about your personal experiences with school funding and inadequate pay. Commit to joining us for office meetings with your senators and representatives beginning in early January through April and sign up to attend a meeting in your area at lae.org/legislatormeting.

Our elected officials can’t continue to play the type of politics that put the quality of Louisiana’s public schools on the line. Expecting our local districts to do more with less is unacceptable, and as champions of our students, it is up to us to demand better. While this means investing dollars in 21st-century learning tools, it also means compensating all school employees with wages that honor their work. In the weeks leading up to the session, we are encouraging members in LAE locals across the state to expand upon the Red for Ed campaign’s visibility in our schools. Many have shown their support by wearing red, but there are other activities in which you can take part. I hope that every school

around the state holds a “walk-in.” These peaceful demonstrations (held before the beginning of the school day for about a half an hour) allow us to celebrate our schools and show the widespread support for our students and educators. They are meant to celebrate the power of a school community while generating enthusiasm for the role a school plays in the lives of children. Walk-ins are positive, pro-public education actions focused on getting others (whether it be members of the surrounding neighborhood, the news media, or other community groups) to take notice of the good that’s happening in our schools. A walk-in is a perfect opportunity to call upon local and state officials to get involved, since these are the individuals who have the power to make the decisions that impact school budgets and employee salaries.

We cannot let the opportunity to shed light on funding issues slip through our fingers. We can and must continue to work toward making Louisiana’s public schools the joyous and inviting havens that every child deserves. Join LAE in raising awareness of the funding inequities and the injustices that our educators and our students suffer because of inadequate funding.

As we close out yet another year, I hope you will find a renewed strength and determination to be proactive in LAE’s goal to advocate for the dedicated professionals working to better the learning experiences of Louisiana’s children – our future. Again, I wish each of you rest, love, and joy during your short time away from work. Rest up because when we return to advocate for the funding Louisiana educators and students deserve, we need you to be ready to harness your passion and your energy. We appreciate your work with our kids, your commitment to your colleagues, and your impact on our state’s future.

In Solidarity,
Debbie Meaux

JUSTICE FOR DEYSHIA: COURT SAYS LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD VIOLATED LAW WHEN IT FORCIBLY REMOVED A TEACHER FROM A PUBLIC MEETING

LAE union sisters and brothers in Vermilion Parish were victorious in their efforts to vindicate a teacher forcibly removed from a school board meeting in early 2018. Lafayette-area Judge David Smith ruled that the parish school board violated the state's Open Meetings Law when members of the board removed and arrested Deyshia Hargrave for asking questions during a routine public board meeting. Vermilion Association of Educators President Suzanne Breaux said the members of the association applaud the ruling.

"Every citizen has a right to speak up for their beliefs," Breaux said. "While Deyshia's treatment was unfortunate and extremely unwelcomed, it sparked a welcomed conversation. It's time our leaders start listening to the voices of the professionals in the field fighting for the best interests of children."

Most remember the startling video of Hargrave being forced out of a meeting, pushed to the ground, and placed into handcuffs. Over the course of just 24 hours, more than a million people viewed the incident online. Words of encouragement and messages of hope poured in from across the world, but most significant (and not surprising) were the stories of shared experiences. One comment on facebook read:

After seeing her courage and resilience, I am empowered to take a stand, along with fellow educators, against simply taking whatever crumbs we can get, and instead, fight for what we are worth...what we deserve.

Hargrave stands behind her decision to stand up to the board with tough questions.

"I chose to speak out. I hope you choose to speak out, too," she said. "Don't let what happened to me intimidate you. Instead, let it become your strength."

And Hargrave has the law on her side. In disposing of the issues raised in a lawsuit against the school board, a Louisiana court found that the board violated La. R.S. 42:15 (the state's Open Meetings Law) by "not opening comments prior to each agenda item." Additionally, the court held that Hargrave's "comments were most certainly germane to the agenda item 'Audience Concerns for the Superintendent'" and that it was "clear that the Vermilion Parish School Board violated the law by not allowing Hargrave to publicly comment on the agenda item, 'Public Concerns for the Superintendent.'" The court exercised its "wide discretion to remedy this injustice" by granting sweeping relief to VAE,



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including (1) an injunction to the board "to strictly adhere to and abide by the Open Meetings Law and board policy with respect to public comment at future meetings of the board," (2) declaring all action taken at the meeting (the only action taken was the approval of the superintendent's new contract) "null, void, and without legal effect" and (3) awarding "reasonable attorney fees and other costs of the litigation from the Vermilion Parish School Board to the Vermilion Association of Educators upon presentation and review of itemized expenses and affidavits by the Vermilion Association of Educators."

VAE Vice President Shelly Byron praised the ruling and tied it to the power of the union.

"As an association advocating for school employees' rights, members of the VAE were adamant about getting justice, not just for Deyshia, but for every single school employee in our district who has felt (or will feel) compelled to speak up on behalf of their students," Byron said. "We continue to encourage every educator to take an interest in, and ultimately stand up for, the best interests of our schools."

Hargrave, Breaux, and Byron all agree: the time has come for school board members to rethink their priorities and renew their commitment to the most important focus – the students of Vermilion Parish. Association leaders say they look forward to a productive, collaborative relationship with school board members in 2019 and beyond.



LAE SALUTES STUDENT MEMBERS AT LSU-SHREVEPORT FOR GIVING BACK TO THE CHILDREN IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Earlier this fall, LAE Student Program members at LSU-Shreveport hosted a day of exciting educational activities with students at a local elementary school. Volunteering with the *Fully Devoted Developer of Children Winner's Circle Camp*, up-and-coming educators got a chance to put what they learned in their college courses to good use helping local elementary school students grow in their math, reading, writing, and enrichment skills. LAE Student Program advisor at LSU-S, Lisa Cooper, leads the initiative on campus. She emphasized the importance of education majors' engagement with these types of community endeavors.

"These types of opportunities are invaluable to those learning the ins and outs of the teaching profession," Cooper said. "Working with children in their community helps up-and-coming educators learn more about their students' needs - their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the communities they live in, their way of life, etc. - this is crucial to understanding how to best reach them in the classroom."

LAE applauds these members for taking the appropriate steps to grow as education professionals.



LSU-S students (from left): Ali Dickerson, Morgan Estep, Fouzieh Mansour, Danielle Sellers, Amy Crain, Tobias Haren dedicate their Saturday to giving back to Shreveport's Oak Park Elementary School.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT NOMINATIONS FOR THE LAE IMAGE AWARDS

The *LAE Image Awards* are presented annually to recognize members 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 with these prestigious awards.

The association is now accepting applications for the 2019 Awards. Get a head start and submit your application, today. The deadline is January 31, 2019. You can download nomination forms at lae.org/imageawards.



LAE CELEBRATES PARTNERSHIP WITH NEA'S CENTER FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO EXPAND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS FOR MEMBER EDUCATORS



Nearly one year ago, LAE joined forces with NEA's Center for Great Public Schools to establish *The Teaching and Learning Center (LAE-TLC)*, the professional development arm of the association committed to providing practical and relevant professional courses for Louisiana educators. The center incorporates a "teacher-teaches-teacher" model to not only help grow training offerings, but to also provide LAE members with opportunities to grow as leaders.

The mission of the LAE-TLC is three-fold: 1.) support the work of early-career educators; 2.) improve cultural proficiency; and 3.) increase member engagement. Since its establishment in 2017, the center has produced exceptional results in the following areas of focus:

Early Career Success Strategies

The Teaching and Learning Center trained more than 35 facilitators on how to administer an Early Career Success Strategy course. So far, these facilitators have reached almost 1,000 educators (both members and potential members). This curriculum, designed to meet the needs of educators new to the profession, provided a basic structure for the first ever LAE Early Career Educator Conference in October of 2018.

PRAXIS Test Prep

For aspiring teachers or those who are still working on certification, facilitators with The Teaching and Learning Center hosted PRAXIS Test Prep trainings for nearly 186 participants in 9 different school districts and local associations across the state.

Mentorship

Through its Mentor Teacher training, the Teaching and Learning Center offered face-to-face learning sessions to 17 members in the spring of 2018 with the intent of offering a new blended-learning format in 2019. So far, 20 members are signed up to participate. Upon completion of this training, facilitators will be prepared to host a student-teacher or mentor a new teacher in their building.

Cultural Proficiency

To ensure educators' awareness of educational equity, The Teaching and Learning Center offers a course on Cultural Competency. To date, more than 75 members have been trained to be facilitators for this curriculum with more than 700 educators across the state having received this training.



Employees in a Teaching and Learning Center partner school district prep for PRAXIS in a study session led by LAE trainers.

National Board Certification (NBCT)

The Teaching and Learning Center embraces the importance of National Board Certification by hosting informational meetings about the process of certification across the state. NBCT JumpStart, an exclusive curriculum designed by NEA for affiliate use, is a current Teaching and Learning Center curriculum offering available for Louisiana educators interested in pursuing national board certification. So far, center facilitators have trained 65 NBCT hopefuls across the state in the JumpStart curriculum.

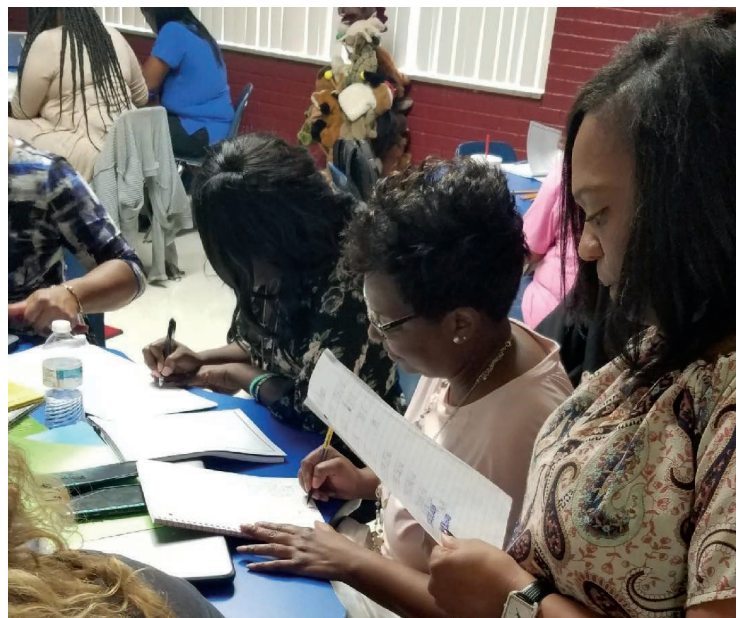
A fantastic year of Professional Growth

LAE's partnership with NEA's Center for Great Public Schools has been essential to the association's efforts to break ground in its ability to offer one-of-a-kind professional development programs to Louisiana educators. Teachers helping their colleagues grow professionally is the essence of what makes the profession so special. LAE's ability to focus on supporting new educators and engage members in leadership roles, helps the association in its overall mission to attract new members to the association.

Association leaders look forward to future work through our partnership with the Center for Great Public schools as we continue to expand Teaching and Learning Center options in 2019.



TLC facilitators visit Iberia Parish to provide a JumpStart training for local NBCT candidates.



LAE member Tamara Ross reviews the work of a PRAXIS Test Prep participant at study session in Monroe.

LAE'S 2019 ELECTION SEASON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

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. We have some BIG races in 2019 for LAE President and Vice President, as well as several LAE Board of Directors seats up for election. It is required that a candidate have a minimum of three years of association membership to be eligible to run for a seat on the LAE Board.

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/elections.

Good luck!

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 all-member convention, the LAE Representative Assembly. You must be a member for at least three years to be eligible to run for the offices listed below.

POSITION	SEAT	RACE RESTRICTIONS	TERM OF OFFICE
LAE President		Minority	3 years
LAE Vice President			3 years

POSITION	SEAT	RACE RESTRICTIONS	TERM OF OFFICE
First Associational District	C	None	3 years
Second Associational District	A	None	3 years
Third Associational District	C	None	3 years
Fourth Associational District	A	None	3 year
Fifth Associational District	A	Minority	3 years
Sixth Associational District	C	None	3 years
Education Support Professional	A	ESP	3 years

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 LAE's 2018 Holiday Break (December 20, 2018 – January 2, 2019). Nomination forms arriving during this time period will be receipted on the date of the reopening of the office - January 3, 2019.
5. The email address for electronically forwarding nomination forms - lguillot@lae.org - will be directed to the office of the Executive Director or his designee. **All forms must be fully completed and in the LAE Headquarters Office by Monday January 7, 2019 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 LAE Elections 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 12) when the nominations have been certified by the LAE Elections Committee. The deadline to challenge the certification of candidates is January 22, 2019. Challenges shall be made in writing and submitted by certified or registered mail to the LAE Executive Director, 8322 One Calais Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.
9. An article in *The LAE Voice* and on lae.org/elections 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 2019 issue of *The LAE Voice* and will be posted on the website in the *Members-Only* area.
10. Ballots will be distributed by March 10, 2019. 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 is available upon request from the Neutral.
12. The first vote recorded by the Neutral will be the one counted.
13. March 29, 2019 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 by April 10. 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.

*A more detailed calendar is provided at lae.org/elections.

NEA CLICK & SAVE "BUY-LIGHTS" FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON: HOT DEALS AND DISCOUNTS FROM NEA MEMBER BENEFITS

Holiday shopping is in full swing. Be sure to check out the best-in-market pricing at the NEA Click & Save Holiday Fair! Plus, there are other exciting events planned throughout December like Free Shipping Day, 5 STAR for a Day, and post-holiday sales!

Visit neamb.com/clickandsave to get the best deals as they happen!

nea Click
& Save



SHARE YOUR STORY

ABOUT THE NEED FOR

SCHOOL FUNDING INCREASES!

IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE...

AND THAT CHANGE STARTS WITH OUR LAWMAKERS!

We need YOU to join us in connecting with your state representatives and senators in the weeks leading up to the 2019 Legislative Session. School employees from across the state are planning to visit with legislators to emphasize the dire need to increase the state's budget for education so we can ultimately secure a pathway to fund school employee pay increases.

SIGN UP AT

LAE.ORG/LEGISLATORMEETING

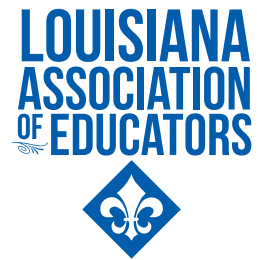
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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 12:
LAE Committee Day:
LAE Elections Committee

December 20 -
January 2:
LAE Winter Break*

January 21:
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day*

February 15 & 16:
LAE Executive
Committee Meeting

*LAE Headquarters CDS&ED