



# THE LAE VOICE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

Volume 14, No. 3 May 2018

## LAE SAYS *"IT'S TIME TO GET IT RIGHT"* AND PUT STUDENTS' NEEDS AHEAD OF BIG BUSINESS INTERESTS

Students need smaller classes, updated textbooks, and accessible school health services. Educators need adequate teaching tools, safe classrooms, and better pay. Teachers and support professionals across Louisiana know just how stretched schools are, financially. The urgency to find the money needed to fund education has never been so dire.

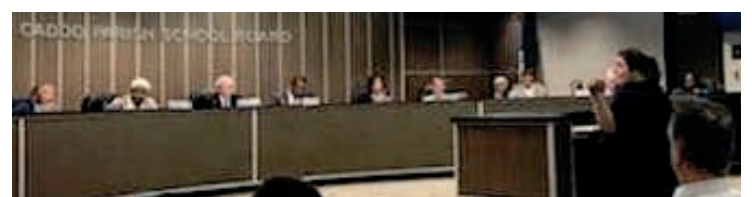
LAE initiated the "It's Time, Louisiana" campaign to take on the state's corporate tax giveaway program, known as the Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP). From 2006 to 2016, Louisiana parishes lost more than \$14 billion in local property tax revenue that could have gone to fund public schools. Empowered by Governor John Bel Edwards' 2016 executive order, local school boards now have the authority to approve or deny these local property tax breaks, and LAE and its locals are organizing to hold school board members accountable to returning these investments for classrooms.

In February, nearly 100 association members learned about ways to rally support for the rolling-back of tax breaks. Using what they learned at the training, the Caddo Association of Educators (CAE) in partnership with Together Louisiana, successfully convinced Caddo Parish School Board members to reject giving a Shreveport-based corporation a tax break – not once, but twice. Not only does this victory set a ground-breaking precedent for the consideration of other exemption proposals across the state, it also sends a powerful message that when we come together as the authentic voice of our schools and our students, anything is possible!

*It's time to get it right, Louisiana!*



By working together, we can show others there are reasonable solutions to the school funding crisis. Want to help champion this cause? Join the *Get it Right! Action Team* at [lae.org/actionteam](http://lae.org/actionteam). By joining this team, you'll be the first to receive campaign updates and alerts on ways to take action when the issue heats up in your area.





# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

Greetings to you as you enter the final weeks of the 2017-18 School Year. What a year it's been, not just for school professionals in Louisiana, but for educators across the country. From Louisiana's very own heroine of democracy, Deyshia Hargrave, to the many #RedForEd rallies happening across the nation, educators are starting to make bold moves in their efforts to articulate the needs of their schools and their students.

The education profession consists of trusted women and men who are best equipped to offer powerful insights on what's needed to ensure student success. The demonstrations in states across the nation are part of a growing movement that educators are leading. Parents and other concerned citizens are joining this movement, and speaking out against the fiscal irresponsibility that has robbed public schools and students of resources for years. The actions in Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and West Virginia show the strength we have when we work alongside parents and other community members to voice our concerns.

## What actions are you willing to take to show your support for this movement?

I recently held a tele-town hall meeting with your LAE member colleagues from across the state to find out. During the call, participants offered the following feedback on how funding impacts their districts:

- We asked participants to tell us about funding levels at their schools. **85% said their school was underfunded and as a result, felt their colleagues and students were struggling.**
- We wanted to get an idea of how educators would prioritize funding

if it were available. The top areas where participants said they would invest money were **competitive pay and benefits for educators, nursing and counseling services for students, extra-curricular classes, and school safety.**

School funding is an issue. That's no secret. Every single child in Louisiana should have access to a great public school, but in order to attain the schools our students deserve, our elected officials need to make sustainable investments in our K-12 public education system. How can we come together to make our officials understand the dire need to adequately fund our schools? On our call, we presented actions for members to take to help raise awareness about the lack of funding that impacts their day-to-day work with children. The following reflects the percentages of members who said they would join us in taking each suggested action:

- **86%** said they would show their support for their school community by participating in a school walk-in;
- **74%** said they would be willing to speak publicly about the needs of their schools;
- **67%** said they'd be willing to share photos showing their students' learning conditions; and
- **A whopping 89%** said they would participate in a rally at the Capitol.

The most important takeaway from the conversation was the need for members to help amplify these actions at the local level. If you weren't able to join us for this conversation, we still want to hear from you. So now, I ask YOU, **what actions are you willing to take to help us show the need for adequate school funding?** Go to [lae.org/itstimela](http://lae.org/itstimela) to let us

know what you'd be willing to do to help LAE in this ever-so-important fight.

Today is the day we must decide how far we're willing to go for our colleagues, for our schools, and for our students. The path we choose may present obstacles and setbacks, but regardless of this, we need to keep moving as one, united voice.

This summer, we will host our annual leadership conference in honor of the tremendous actions that have taken place across the nation. Demonstrations of solidarity, led by our colleagues, truly show the power we have when we come together. The #RedforEd movement is alive and well in Louisiana, and it's time we let our policy makers and communities know the true "Power of Red." LAE Leadership Conference events kick off Monday, June 11 and will continue through, Wednesday, June 13 in Marksville, LA. If you're interested in taking a more active role in your local to activate others in standing strong for their profession, contact your local organizational specialist and let them know you would like to be a part of your local team going to this conference.

As we think about the weeks to come, remember your reason for being a part of LAE-this collective body of women and men who are committed to making a change. Remember to believe in your power, have determination, and above all, be courageous. Remember why you do what you do every day. Remember the tremendous impact you have on children and the power you have to help this association make a real difference.

In Solidarity,  
Debbie Meaux  
LAE President

# ATTENDANCE AT APRIL 13, 2018 LAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

BOARD MEMBER	Attendance
<b>District 1</b>	
Elizabeth Sullivan	Present
Dawn Jordan	Present
Rachel Gifford	Present
<b>District 2</b>	
Ron Carr	Absent <i>*Reason for absence: Illness</i>
D'Shay Oaks	Present
Jane Green	Present
<b>District 3</b>	
Alisha Vallien	Present
Donna Wilridge	Present
Johnell Celestine	Present
<b>District 4</b>	
Cynthia Rutherford	Present
Tia Mills	Present
Anita Augustus	Present
<b>District 5</b>	
DeLisa Washington	Present
Vicki Guilbeau	Present
Wanda Milliman	Present

BOARD MEMBER	Attendance
<b>District 6</b>	
Janice Perea	Present
Almetra Pierce	Present
Kathy Randolph	Present
<b>Education Support Professional</b>	
Gwen Hill	Present
Ruthie Wright	Present
Carol McLaughlin	Present
Natasha Joseph	Present
<b>NEA Board</b>	
Suzanne Breaux	Present
<b>Retired</b>	
Emma Shepard	Present
<b>Student</b>	
Dennis Henderson	Present
<b>Administrator</b>	
Walter Brown	Present
<b>Vice President</b>	
Daryl Roberson	Present
<b>President</b>	
Debbie Meaux	Present

## WELCOME TO LAE'S NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS

### LAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*\*TERMS BEGINNING JULY 15, 2018.*

**FIRST ASSOCIATIONAL DISTRICT, SEAT C  
FREDRICK PINKNEY**

**THIRD ASSOCIATIONAL DISTRICT, SEAT B  
SHELLY BYRON**

### 2018 NEA DELEGATES

**ADMINISTRATOR:  
CYNTHIA HENDERSON**

#### MEMBER DELEGATES:

**CHRISTINE BADEAUX  
MATHEW BOUDREAUX  
SUZANNE BREAUX**

**EMILY BROUSSARD  
SHELLY BYRON  
GWENDOLYN HILL  
VICKY JOHNSTON**

**JENNIFER MATHIEWS  
WANDA MILLIMAN  
D'SHAY OAKS**



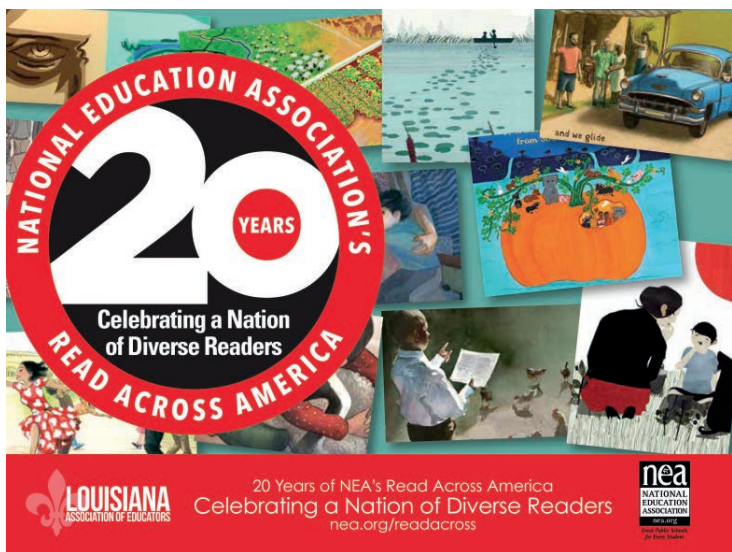
# LAE CELEBRATES A STATE OF DIVERSE READERS FOR READ ACROSS AMERICA 2018

In 2018, LAE took a different approach to Read Across America by focusing on books that showcase the diverse aspects of our society that make us all unique. Using NEA's 2018 theme, "Celebrating a Nation of Diverse Readers," LAE took advantage of the opportunity to help kids embrace their differences by introducing them to characters in books that look and act like them. Association leaders worked with authors from across Louisiana to arrange special guest reads at members' Read Across America celebrations. With the generous support of NEA, the association was able to purchase special copies of each author's book to donate to the students to whom

they read, with the goal of helping expand children's at-home book collections.

Of course, members from LAE affiliates in Bossier, Caddo, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Monroe City and Ouachita took part in the annual tradition of hosting public reading events at local malls and libraries.

Between reading events at schools and larger public celebrations, LAE was able to donate more than 1,000 diverse books to kids across the state.



*Sheila Hebert-Collins reads her book, "Jacques et la Canne a Sucre: A Cajun Jack and the Beanstalk," to 3rd graders at J. Wallace James Elementary School in Lafayette.*



*Margeaux Johnson reads her book, "Auntie's Crown," to 2nd graders at Greenbrier Elementary School in Baton Rouge.*



*Valerie Pugh-Love reads her book, "Kindness from A to Z," to students at Keithville Elementary/Middle School in Caddo Parish.*



*Alice Couvillion and Elizabeth Moore read their book, "Louisiana Indian Tales," to 5th graders at Central Elementary School in Bogalusa.*



*Shreveport Mayor Ollie Tyler joins the Bossier and Caddo Associations of Educators at their Read Across Louisiana celebration.*



*Mayor Sharon Broome stops by the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators' Read Across Louisiana celebration to join in the fun.*



*The Cat in the Hat gets intergalactic as he joins a crew of Star Wars characters to read to kids at the Read Across America celebration in Lafayette.*



# LAE CONTINUES TO FIGHT FOR EDUCATOR PAY INCREASES IN UPCOMING SPECIAL SESSION

In the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature, LAE worked with Sen. Blade Morrish to pass Senate Resolution 164 to bring awareness to the continuing decline in teacher and support professional pay. The resolution urges Governor Edwards, legislators, and members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to work together to explore ways to increase educator salaries to meet the average pay level for school employees in the south. Providing all education professionals with competitive salaries not only encourages Louisiana's best and brightest to enter the profession, it also

serves as an incentive for excellent teachers to establish lifelong careers in our schools.

Governor Edwards recently called another special session to further deal with the state's looming budget crisis. This will be our opportunity to stand up and demand that permanent dollars be placed in the budget to accommodate educator pay raises. LAE will need members' help to make this happen, so please be sure to look out for actions surrounding this issue.

## ASSOCIATION BUSINESS ADDRESSED AND MEMBERS HONORED AT ANNUAL LAE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Member representatives from across Louisiana gathered in Baton Rouge for the 2018 LAE Representative Assembly. Highlights from this year's annual member meeting included two days of discussion surrounding association business, an address by Governor John Bel Edwards and First Lady Donna Edwards, and a powerful speech by LAE President Debbie Meaux. This year's business was done in honor of former LAE President Mary Washington, who passed away just days before the RA.

Event attendees also took some time away from business to honor several talented individuals with the LAE Image Awards. Lafayette Parish Social Studies Teacher Jonathan Cole walked away with the coveted LAE Teacher Image Award. St. John the Baptist Principal Bernetta Ambres was honored with the 2018 Administrator Image Award. Lafayette Parish School Psychologist Vicki Guilbeau was honored with the association's annual Ancillary Image Award. Civil Rights Activists Kevin Davis and Corey Jack received the LAE Human and Civil Rights Trailblazer Award for their work with The Youth Literacy Foundation of Acadiana. President Meaux awarded her 2018 President's Award to Louisiana's First Lady Donna Edwards.

Deyshia Hargrave received a special award, The LAE Courage Award, for her relentless bravery in standing up for her colleagues and her students when the school board voted on a controversial pay raise for the superintendent.

Thank you to all who attended! Be sure to mark your calendars for our 2019 event scheduled for April 13 and 14.



*President Debbie Meaux addresses the delegates at the 2018 LAE Representative Assembly in Baton Rouge.*



*LAE members join Governor and First Lady Edwards and Former LAE President Linda Day for a photo at the 2018 LAE RA.*



*LAE Image Award Winners (from left): Teacher Image Award Winner Jonathan Cole, Administrator Image Award Winner Bernetta Ambres, President's Award Winner Louisiana First Lady Donna Edwards, Ancillary Image Award Winner Vicki Guilbeau, LAE Human and Civil Rights Trailblazer Award Winners Kevin Davis and Corey Jack, and LAE Courage Award Winner Deyshia Hargrave.*

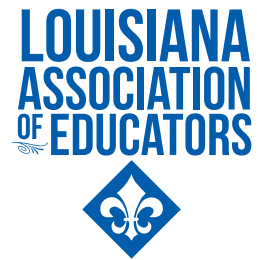
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Kenton Cooper, Executive Director

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 28:  
Memorial Day\*

June 2:  
Special LAE  
Board of Directors  
Meeting - 2 pm

June 11-13:  
LAE Summer  
Leadership Conference

\*LAE Headquarters AWSED

## RETIRING?

**DON'T FORGET TO JOIN LAE-RETIRED.**

Email Laurie Guillot at [lguillot@lae.org](mailto:lguillot@lae.org)  
for more information.