

# The LAE Voice

Official Publication of the Louisiana Association of Educators

Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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## WELCOME BACK!

In Louisiana, August brings the return of school and a renewed emphasis on learning for the new school year. As an education professional, you hold a unique place in the lives of your students. You are with Louisiana's children day in and day out. You set an example for them. No one can influence them the way you can. Remember this powerful

role that you play throughout the school year. Continue to be a pillar - a foundation - for the children who depend on you. Roll up those sleeves and get ready for another rewarding school year. LAE wishes you excitement and success in 2011 and beyond! Welcome back!

## NEA HELPS YOU "GET READY FOR BACK TO SCHOOL" VETERAN EDUCATORS SHARE ADVICE & IDEAS FOR STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF RIGHT

From setting up your classroom, to working with parents, to establishing reliable procedures and rules, a successful school year starts with good planning. NEA has collected ideas, tips and strategies from veteran educators across the country in order to help you prepare for the new school year. These tips are available to you FREE! Each section of the eight-page guide, "Get Ready for Back to School," is downloadable as a PDF file at [www.nea.org/backtoschool](http://www.nea.org/backtoschool). The guide is full of practical advice and links to more free online resources. Be sure to check it out TODAY!



## WAY TO GO LPAE MEMBER RODOLFO ESPINOZA!

LAFAYETTE EDUCATOR TO RECEIVE  
CALIFORNIA CASUALTY AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

LPAE member Rodolfo Espinoza is a recipient of the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence - a prestigious award for public educators. He is one of 35 awardees who will be honored at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in Washington, D.C. next year. Bravo Rodolfo! Thanks for making the members of LAE proud!



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Joyce Haynes, President

Welcome back to another year of teaching our precious products! We hope you had a relaxing Summer. LAE has been hard at work these past few months. We fought a challenging legislative session and stood proud at the annual NEA-RA. LAE leaders traveled to Marksville in order to strengthen their bonds with the association at the 2011 Summer Leadership Conference. We learned so much these past few months, and I cannot tell you how much I appreciate each association leader. I also appreciate you for your energy, your commitment, but most of all your dedication to the association. Standing up for public education is the right thing to do, and we've all worked very hard to meet the challenges this past year.

As the 2011-2012 school year kicks off, I ask that you begin yours the right way - by focusing on the truth. We must spread accurate information about public education by conveying our message to our communities and our legislators. I encourage you to gather support from your friends and family so that they can spread our message. Become an active advocate for the association and encourage your colleagues to join - we will need all the support we can get when it

comes to fighting special interests forces that continue to push for the privatization of public education. The battle is forthcoming as we face adversity on such issues as tenure, teacher evaluation, public school funding, TRSL funding, as well as upcoming elections for local legislators and the race for governor. More attacks are on the horizon, and we need you to help us fight - our voices must be heard. Remember, I am just a phone call away. If you would like for me or any LAE leader to advise local members on these issues, please call us and schedule a time for us to stop by your next association meeting. We're always happy to visit your local to share vital information and updates on important educational issues.

This school year, make it a goal to become more involved in your local association. Attend regional meetings and professional development courses offered by LAE. Sign up to be a part of your local Legislative Contact Teams. I encourage you to do anything and everything that you can to learn and build knowledge. We must all strive to be leaders in every part of the education world - from the school house to the White House. We need to start sharing our successes in order

to inspire our colleagues, our families, and our friends, to show them what we have done and what we continue to do. I have confidence in the dedication and creativity of the members of LAE.

Never forget that the LAE appreciates you more than you will ever know. You inspire us to be the best that we can be as we stand up for public education, the students and the profession. Stay strong and have a successful 2011-2012 school year!

*"Alone we can do so little;  
together we can do so much."*

- Helen Keller

Stay strong,  
President Joyce Haynes

## WHILE YOU WERE AWAY, WE WERE AT THE CAPITOL



After 40 days of discussion and debate, the 2011 Legislative Session ended on June 24th. Legislators tackled big budget issues, many of which will have a major impact

on public schools and teachers' retirement funding. The LAE Lobby Team followed the session every step of the way and kept a close eye on these bills. We lobbied aggressively to protect teacher rights. Be sure to read the recap of each big bill and the report card rating of each legislator in the insert provided. Also, you can see how each of your legislators voted by logging on to [legis.la.state.gov](http://legis.la.state.gov).

# HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT ALEC?

## GET UP TO SPEED ON THE EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA DICTATED BY PRIVATIZATION INTERESTS

New revelations have surfaced about carefully orchestrated plans by privatization interests to drive “education reform” in Louisiana. The planning and organizing group for this reform legislation is called “ALEC” which is an acronym for American Legislative Exchange Council. The group provides an opportunity for business interests to offer template legislation to supportive governors and legislators. The National Chairman for the ALEC group is Louisiana State Senator Noble Ellington.

LAE leaders encourage you to stay informed when it comes to issues surrounding ALEC, as we will hear this name mentioned often in the next few months. You can get more information on ALEC, and learn more about their harmful legislation motivations by visiting [www.alecexposed.org](http://www.alecexposed.org).

## 2011 LOBBY DAY - A HUGE SUCCESS!

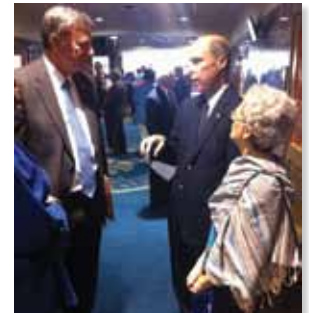
### LAE MEMBERS FLOODED THE LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL IN JUNE FOR LOBBY DAY

Dozens of LAE members came to Baton Rouge to meet with their legislators on important issues surrounding public education. The group attended legislative committee meetings and sat in on floor debates. If you missed this year's event, you can view a recap at <http://youtube.com/ER9dy3mGo48>.

Thanks to all of you who joined us! We hope that you will be inspired to continue to let your voices be heard. Please sign up for LAE's advocacy system Capwiz, and keep an eye out for action alerts. We continuously take action on any governmental policies that will effect public education even if the legislature is not in session.



*Lobby Day attendees gather for a photo outside the Louisiana State Capitol.*



*LSUnited members Mike Russo and Anna Nardo discuss issues with Senator Ben Nevers.*

## ROAD TO RELIEF: JOPLIN, MISSOURI

### LAE UNISERV DIRECTOR JASON WHITE LENDS A HAND IN TORNADO RECOVERY EFFORTS

Like many Louisianans, LAE UniServ Director Jason White's heart went out to those who were affected by the devastating tornadoes that ravaged the Joplin, Missouri area this past Spring. As the Memorial Day holiday weekend approached, Jason and a group of friends made plans to head to the area in order to offer help in any way they could.

“I went up with three guys who connected with a local church in order to offer assistance in recovery efforts,” said White. “When we arrived in Joplin, we were horrified by the devastation that stood before us! This was a very centralized strike - one mile wide and 14 miles long.”

Jason and his crew immediately got to work and began removing debris from homes, placing tarps on roofs and cutting down damaged trees.

“The work was hard, but rewarding,” said White. “We worked alongside home owners who had lost so much. Seeing their positive spirit and the outpouring of affection to the area, I have no doubt that they will rebuild, just as Louisiana cities have rebuilt from past hurricanes.”

Bravo Jason! LAE applauds you and your team on a job well done! If anyone is interested in helping in this endeavor, please contact LAE UniServ Director Jason White at [jason.white@lae.org](mailto:jason.white@lae.org).



*Tornado damage in Joplin, Missouri.*



*Volunteers repair home damaged by the devastating tornadoes that blew through the area this Spring.*

# LAE CREATES TEACHER EVALUATION ALTERNATIVE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

## ASSOCIATION OFFERS “TEAM” AS REPLACEMENT SYSTEM FOR VALUE-ADDED MODEL

LAE announces an alternative for teacher evaluations in Louisiana. The Louisiana Teacher Effectiveness And Measurement (TEAM) program would use elements from the Louisiana Teacher Assistance & Assessment Program (LaTAAP) as a foundation for its guiding principles.

“LaTAAP was an effective means of evaluating Louisiana public school teachers,” said LAE President Joyce Haynes. “Our new evaluation system, TEAM, incorporates many of this program’s successful elements, while combining additional concepts in order to make it applicable to all teachers – both new and veteran.”

LAE offers TEAM in response to the recently-piloted Value-Added Model (VAM). LAE leaders are concerned with the current overemphasis on VAM, because its primary indicator of teacher performance is at odds with empirical research.

As it currently stands, VAM takes the focus away from teacher instructional behavior, professional pedagogy skills and the practice of teaching. The model, instead, forces educators and administrators to focus instruction on end of the year tests, rather than sustained cognitive development and learning.

“In the short run, this may improve student test scores,” explained Haynes. “In the long run, it really hurts effective instruction and student learning.”

LAE leaders and staff members interviewed teachers, administrators and education support professionals at school sites across the state. Staff visited 18 of the 20 districts involved in the VAM pilot program, and spoke with more than 70 teachers and administrators. A majority of those interviewed did not support VAM.

“What education professionals really want is to focus on the effectiveness of their instruction, and the deficiencies that lead to a lack of student understanding and cognitive growth,” said Haynes.

LAE leaders feel that the teaching profession should rely on the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LCET), which has a strong foundation and decades of proven research. TEAM would incorporate LCET and include such concepts as: peer review teams of teachers with a focus on appropriate grade level and/or content experience (i.e. all 3rd grade teachers or English teachers), as well as the use of a comprehensive software system designed to gather and retrieve data built to support the teacher/school evaluation process. The system would provide university instructors from subject areas to work with administrators/classroom teachers in research and classroom settings. The program would also take into consideration a locally developed design of evaluation time frames. All districts would follow the model for teachers new to the profession (0-3 years), but

would also include a comprehensive system of “formative” to “summative” evaluation for veteran teachers. A formative evaluation would take place every year for all teachers and might include stress triggers based upon student performance on standardized, norm referenced, criterion reference and/or end of year examinations.

“Teachers and administrators need ongoing training that effectively uses a wide variety of assessment and behavioral tools. We need clarity on how to develop effective classroom assessments,” said Haynes. “If we continue down the misguided path that is Value-Added, we will only continue to contribute to the devaluation of the key role of the teacher in the teaching/learning process.”

TEAM would be designed to encourage and support attainment of National Board Certification and/or other research-based certification systems.

LAE has requested placement on the agenda for the September ACEE meeting in order to make a presentation to the committee regarding this alternative to VAM. Check out the LAE website for updates on this matter. We’ll continue to keep you posted on further developments.

## BE PREPARED: HURRICANE SEASON 2011 IS UPON US

### LACK OF AWARENESS & PREPARATION ARE COMMON THREADS AMONG MAJOR HURRICANE DISASTERS

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), we can expect to see between three and six major hurricanes this season that will last until the end of November. This activity is said to be above normal. Officials at NOAA say there is a 70 percent chance of 12-18 named storms, 6-10 hurricanes and three to six major hur-

ricanes. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a disaster. Hurricane hazards come in many forms, including storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and flooding. This means it is important for your family to have a plan that incorporates all of these hazards. Go to [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov) for more information.

# LAE DELEGATES BLOW INTO THE WINDY CITY FOR THE 2011 NEA RA

Nearly 70 LAE representatives were among the 9,000 education workers who attended NEA's 90th Representative Assembly in Chicago this Summer. The RA is held every July during NEA's annual meeting. It is the world's largest democratic deliberative body, with voting delegates from across the country. LAE teacher and ESP representatives joined other NEA affiliate associations from across the nation to discuss current education issues. The assembly addressed and adopted NEA's strategic plan, budget, resolutions, legislative program, as well as other association policies for the upcoming year.

"With the nationwide attack on public education, this is our opportunity to learn from one another. It is our chance to come together and discuss major issues that will shape our children's future," said President Haynes. "Just like every other state, Louisiana has a story to tell, and we are determined to tell the truth."

LAE delegates lent their voices and voted on policies for the 3.2 million-member association. The assembly voted on the recommendation to support an early endorsement of President Barack Obama in the upcoming election based upon their collective belief that President Obama has the best overall vision for supporting America's students and working families.

Vice President Joe Biden addressed the delegates at the convention where he was greeted with a standing ovation. He spoke about the national budget cuts that are hurting working families.

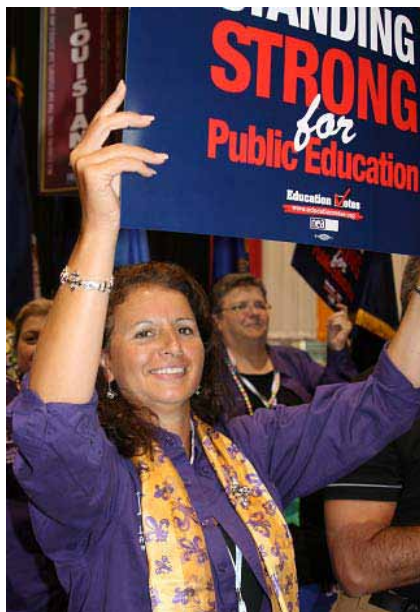
"There is an organized effort to place the blame for budget shortfalls squarely on educators and other public workers," said Vice

President Biden. "It is one of the biggest scams in modern American history."

Vice President Biden recognized that the voice of teachers is essential to improving education and encouraged educators to work closely with lawmakers so that all students in America have access to quality public schools. LAE representatives agreed.

"This is an important opportunity for us to help Louisiana teachers have a voice in public education," said Vermilion Association of Educators Vice President Karen Richardson. "Attending the RA helps us to ensure that the children of our state have an opportunity to receive the best education possible."

Delegates who attended had some fun as well. This year's annual LAE Mardi Gras Dance was a huge success with more than 1,000 association members from across the nation in attendance. Thank you LAE delegates for your hard work in Chicago this year. We are looking forward to a fun RA in Washington D.C., in July, 2012!



*Vermilion Association of Educators Member Suzette Riddle stands strong for public education.*



*LAE delegates at the 2011 NEA Representative Assembly.*



*Delegates Peronica Riley, Velva Trask and Maxine Gray take a moment to pose for a picture at convention.*



*Delegates Donald Fontenot, Mark Hayes and Diane Vickers take a break from the assembly to pose for a quick photo.*



*The 2011 RA Mardi Gras King and Queen reign over the party.*

# LAE LEADERS STRENGTHEN THEIR BONDS WITH THE ASSOCIATION AT SUMMER LEADERSHIP 2011

The 2011 LAE Summer Leadership Conference was held at the Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, LA. This conference is one of LAE's largest member gatherings, offering an opportunity for members to participate in professional development workshops and seminars.

During the Presidents' Academy, LAE presidents and vice presidents learned about effective team leadership skills and learned how to mobilize, energize and organize members.

Rising star leaders had a chance to develop their leadership styles and learned how to become more effective organizers for the association at the Emerging Leaders' training. LAE sends a big congrats to this year's driven class, President Tia Mills, Vice President Philip Norton, Anita Augustus, Dywana Howard, Heidi Noel, Janette Patterson, Craig Ratcliff, Judy Rockwell, Tyjuana Smith, Eewanyia Williams-Smith, Adrienne Williams, Donna Wilridge and Kalyn Young.

Attendees learned why the association is involved in politics and learned about LAE's political process while attending the Politics & You workshop. The session highlighted the importance of endorsing political candidates and how to allocate limited resources.

Attendees also learned about the importance of union membership and the need for stronger locals during the Building Stronger, Strategic, Member-Driven Locals seminar. This presentation offered useful tools and techniques to guide leaders in their quest to strengthen their local unions.

Other highlights included a communications workshop, as well as presentations on member benefits and recruitment. Pulitzer Prize-Winning Reporter David Cay Johnston, State Attorney General Buddy Caldwell and LA Representative Herbert Dixon all addressed attendees during opening session. Go to [www.lae.org](http://www.lae.org) for more photographs from this year's event.

## ATTENTION: LAE BOARD VACANCIES

**District 2, Seat C:** Avoyelles, Bienville, Caldwell, Catahoula, City of Monroe, Concordia, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Richland, St. Helena, Tensas, Union, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, West Feliciana and Winn

**District 4, Seat C - Minority:** Baker, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Tangipahoa, Washington, Zachary, City of Bogalusa, Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired

**District 5, Seat B:** Lafayette, Iberia, St. Martin, St. James, Ascension, Iberville and Assumption

**If you are interested in running for one of these vacant seats, you must submit your resume to Laurie Guillot ([laurie.guillot@lae.org](mailto:laurie.guillot@lae.org)) by August 25th, 2011.**



*The crew from Acadia Parish looks snazzy in their new shirts as they say cheese at Summer Leadership!*



*President Joyce Haynes chats with local presidents during Presidents' Academy.*



*Congrats to the 2011 Emerging Leader class!*



*Keynote Speaker David Cay Johnston shocks conference attendees with his findings on government spending.*

# KNOW YOUR RETIREMENT: NEW RETURN TO WORK LAWS

## DEFINITION OF "RETIRED TEACHER" EXPANDED

Article by Shane Riddle, LAE Government Relations Specialist

On July 1, 2011, Governor Bobby Jindal signed into law Act 347 which expands the definition of "retired teacher" for return-to-work purposes.

Previously under Act 921, a TRSL member had to meet one of the following three criteria to be considered a "retired teacher."

- A retiree who retired from TRSL and returned to work in a TRSL position on or before June 30, 2010 (grandfathered group).
- A retiree who returns to active service (full or part-time) as a K-12 "classroom teacher" in a declared critical shortage area, and who is not in grandfathered group or
- A retiree who returns to active service as a full-time certified speech therapist, speech pathologist, or audiologist whose position of employment requires a valid Louisiana ancillary certificate approved and issued by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) in a school district where a shortage exists in those positions, and who is not in grandfathered group.

The New Law (Act 347) basically expands the provisions under Act 921 and allows certain TRSL retirees to receive retirement benefits upon re-employment. Act 347 applies to TRSL retirees who meet all of the following criteria:

1. Retired between May 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010, and
2. Returned to work in a position requiring a valid Louisiana teaching or ancillary certificate.

The new law requires that the position the eligible retiree fills is a position that requires a valid Louisiana teaching or ancillary certificate. As part of the TRSL enrollment process, employers must certify that the position being filled meets the requirements of the new law under LDOE Bulletin 746.

It's important to note that TRSL retirees re-employed before July 1, 2010, are retired teachers no matter what position they hold, and may continue in return-to-work status for as long as they want; may work full-time or part-time; and may stop working, then return to work later.

### Return-to-work provisions

Type of retiree		Criteria	Employer certification
Retired teachers:	Re-employed on or before June 30, 2010 (Grandfathered Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-month waiting period already met</li> <li>• Eligible to receive full retirement benefit</li> <li>• Unsheltered contributions deducted and remitted to TRSL</li> </ul>	None
	Re-employed as a full-time K-12 "classroom teacher"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be in a declared critical shortage area</li> </ul>	Must certify shortage within 45 days of enrollment notification to BESE and TRSL
	Re-employed as a part-time K-12 "classroom teacher"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-month waiting period applies, resulting in suspension of benefits if re-employed within 12 months of retirement</li> </ul>	
	Re-employed as a full-time certified speech therapist, speech pathologist, or audiologist whose position requires a valid Louisiana ancillary certificate approved and issued by the Louisiana Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible to receive full retirement benefit following 12-month waiting period</li> <li>• Unsheltered contributions deducted and remitted to TRSL</li> </ul>	
	Retirees who retired during the period of May 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010, and return to work in a position that requires a valid Louisiana teaching or ancillary certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-month waiting period already met</li> <li>• Eligible to receive full retirement benefit</li> <li>• Unsheltered contributions deducted and remitted to TRSL</li> </ul>	Must certify that position requires a valid certificate within 45 days of enrollment notification
Retired members:	Re-employed retirees who do not meet the definition of "retired teacher"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit suspended for duration of employment</li> <li>• Contributions are not required</li> <li>• Termination must be processed before benefit payments can resume</li> </ul>	None

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

August 26-27  
LAE Board Meeting

September 5  
\*\*Labor Day

September 10  
Committee Day

October 14-15  
Executive Committee

October 22  
Primary Elections

November 4-5  
LAE Board Meeting

November 11  
\*\*Veteran's Day

November 19  
General Elections

November 23-25  
\*\*Thanksgiving Break

\*\*LAE HEADQUARTERS CLOSED