# The LAE Voice

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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## EDUCATORS MOVE STATE BUDGET COMMITTEE TO REVIVE MAJOR PORTION OF "EDUJOBS" BILL

Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget surprised and pleased Louisiana educators when they voted to reject the governor's proposed plan to redirect $147 million dollars in federal job stimulus money promised to K-12 public schools. The governor wanted to use the funds (coming to Louisiana through the Federal Education Jobs Fund) to offset state higher education budget cuts and other state budget deficits.

"This is the best outcome that we could have expected from the meeting, but this fight is far from over," says LAE President Joyce Haynes. "We plan to aggressively lobby at the upcoming legislative session in order to ensure that our public school districts get the money that is rightfully theirs."

Earlier this year, Louisiana public school districts were each promised a portion of the $147 million dollars only to be told later that $68 million of those dollars had to be plugged into higher education budgets in order to meet federal rules set forth by a "Maintenance of Effort" agreement.

Tempers flared as Commissioner of Administration Paul Rainwater and State Superintendent Paul Pastorek laid out the timeline of the grant's history to committee members who expressed their discontent

*LAE President Joyce Haynes testifies at the November 19th meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, alongside LAE Vice President Debbie Meaux and Director of Instructional Advocacy Wayne Free.*

for the proposed plan. Some referred to the grant money as "tainted."

"Clearly congress' intention for this money was to aide local school districts, not to fix the state's budget deficit," explained Senator Lydia Jackson.

"The shell games, the schemes, the check kiting - all of these things occur because there is no leadership here in the executive branch and there's no plan to deal with a $1.6 billion dollar shortfall," said Senator Karen Peterson. "The governor is traveling all across the country not focused on Louisiana's problems."

After nearly 3 hours of testimony, Senator Jackson proposed a substitute motion which would re-allot the funds in order to meet the "Maintenance of Effort" requirements needed for the grant to be awarded. The remainder of the funds would be spent as the bill had originally intended, by being distributed to public K-12 school districts. The committee voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Rainwater tried to have the matter withdrawn from the committee's agenda, but was told he couldn't do so since the vote had been taken.

The surprise move means Louisiana public school districts could be back in line to receive up to $79 million in the current school year. The problem is that they will not receive as much money as they were originally promised. The plan is expected to be finalized at the upcoming legislative session, where a supplemental bill is expected to be presented. Once approved, the money will be distributed to school districts across the state in order to enhance their budgets.

## HIGHER EDUCATION ORGANIZING EFFORTS CONTINUE AS "LSUNITED" MOVES FULL STEAM AHEAD

Organizing efforts are well underway at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge where the newly formed "LSUnited" is creating a name for itself on campus.

LSUnited is the NEA/LAE affiliated higher education organizing committee for Louisiana State University faculty. The organization is well on its way to becoming a powerful voice for educators at LSU. Members of the organization strive for shared vision and collaborative governance for university faculty and staff. LSUnited's mission is to create a unified voice by advocating for job security, fair pay, benefits protection and shared governance.

The organizing committee's goal is to get nearly 75% of the university's faculty and staff to join, in order

*LSUnited member Dominique Homberger discusses the history of organizing efforts at LSU.*

to build a powerful shield against the current budget cuts facing Louisiana's higher education institutions. Professors say at this point pulling together seems to be the only way for them to defend their jobs and the university as an institution.

LAE is on hand to guide LSUnited through the early stages of organizing. The organizing committee hosts regular informational meetings to provide attendees with background information on the importance of unionizing.

LSUnited is on target to be Louisiana's first higher education faculty union. We are honored and excited to welcome LSUnited to the LAE family!

## TNT CONFERENCE 2010

On Saturday, October 23rd, the Calcasieu Association of Educators (CAE) sponsored the TNT-Teaching and Technology Conference. For over a decade, this event has been a successful partnership between the Calcasieu Parish Technology Department and the CAE. The annual conference helps educators from across the state integrate technology into their classrooms. This year nearly a thousand educators enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about cutting edge technology that will undoubtedly benefit their students. The CAE gave several door prizes to ensure participants did not leave empty handed.

CAE would like to thank those who worked so hard to make this year's TNT conference a huge success and encourage your attendance at next year's conference. Check out CAE's website www.calcasieueducators.org for more information.

### LAE Mission Statement

***The mission of the Louisiana Association of Educators is to organize and empower local associations to promote quality public schools, strengthen the education profession, and improve the well being of members.***

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LAE

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*Joyce Haynes, President*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Anti-public education forces are threatening the rights of educators, seeking to silence organizations that fight for educators' rights. Loss of payroll deductions, collective bargaining and defined benefit pensions are no longer just threats – they're happening today in our states.

In Alabama, the State Senate passed legislation (SB 2) – a bill that would prevent associations like the Alabama Education Association (AEA) from collecting any funds (including membership dues) through payroll deduction. The bill contains very restrictive language that essentially renders the AEA and its members voiceless in debates on issues that impact their schools, students and personal pocketbooks.

In fact, vague language in the bill appears to prohibit any collection of membership dues or other funds by any means, which would essentially put the AEA out of business.

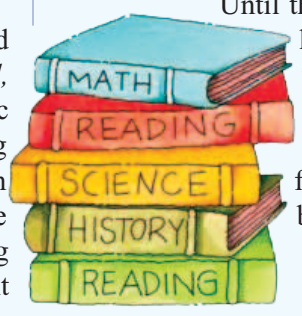
In Wisconsin, Governor-elect Scott Walker has called for rescinding the right of government employees to collectively bargain. The Republican-controlled legislature will likely support this idea.

In Minnesota, Governor Tim Pawlenty published an op-ed in the December 13th *Wall Street Journal,* calling for a large-scale confrontation with public employee unions. This would include "bringing public employee compensation back in line with the private sector and reducing the overall size of the federal civilian work force," and "ending defined-benefit retirement plans for government employees. "

These are just the tip of the iceberg; more states are sure to follow with similar anti-education, anti-union initiatives.

We're not going to wait for them to hit us here in Louisiana. Help us fight by signing up at **www.educationvotes.nea.org**. We want to revive our Dream Team to lobby, to email and text legislators our message to stand up for public education! Educators have a right to organize and advocate for policies that affect their jobs and the students they serve.

We carry this issue with us as we leave 2010 and make it one of our top missions in 2011.




Until then, I wish you a very happy holiday season. Please take time to reflect on your accomplishments as an educator in 2010. Enjoy your families, take care and god bless!

***See you in 2011!***

# LAE AND LSUNITED *RALLY FOR HIGHER* EDUCATION AT THE STATE CAPITOL

Hundreds rallied at the Louisiana State Capitol in November in an effort to remind elected officials that Louisiana can no longer afford to continue cutting funds for public education.

"Business leaders and politicians must understand that the future of this state rests on funding an effective education system," explains LAE President Joyce Haynes. "Investments in local businesses will not take us anywhere unless our education system can provide us with an adequately-trained employee base."

Well over 500 students, faculty, community members, even alumni gathered to send a unified message to the Legislature and governor's office. The rally responded to proposed budget cuts, layoffs and fee hikes which shrink access to public education and services statewide. Governor Bobby Jindal ordered the cuts in an attempt to shore up a $107 million budget deficit left over from the previous fiscal year. Academic campuses across the state will see their state support shrink by 3.7 percent.

"Events like these really show the community's support for our states' beloved institutions," says NEA Student Representative Brandan Trahan. "Higher education is vital to our region's economy; public officials need to recognize this and stop forcing these cuts on our university administrations."

While November's rally focused on higher education faculty and students, the issue is of critical importance to Louisiana's K-12 public education system.

"Students and faculty need to be assured that a strong higher education system will be there to provide them with the knowledge they need for success in their future endeavors," says President Haynes. "We can't afford to continue cutting these essential funds - the future of the state depends on it."

Rally sponsors included Save UNO Coalition, LAE, LSUnited, Save LSU, Save SELU, Proud Students (LSU), Link for Literacy (ULL), Stand Up! (Nicholls), AAUP (LSU) and LSUA.

*Louisiana college students rally for higher education.*

*LAE President Joyce Haynes gets into the mix!*

*NEA Student Representative Brandan Trahan addresses the crowd of more than 500. (Photo by Sara Kirkley)*

# THE JINDAL WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS

*The Caddo Association of Educators Says "Bah Humbug" to Governor Jindal*

When the Caddo Association of Educators heard about Governor Jindal's plan to redirect the "EduJobs" money, they feverishly got to work. CAE leaders met immediately to mobilize their members and began campaigning.

Within 72 hours of Superintendent Pastorek's announcement, *The Jindal Who Stole Christmas* campaign was well under way. Thousands of flyers outlining the detrimental effects that the proposed plan would have on the Caddo Parish public school system were distributed to all Caddo Parish school staff. The CAE also developed and distributed petitions to every Caddo Parish school employee.

The CAE began forming alliances with the Caddo Parish School Board as well as other key organizations who were opposed to the governor's decision. They began making plans to meet with local representatives, senators and key influencers who would have the final say in approving the proposed fund diversion. The CAE was determined to move forward until a decision was made in favor of public school districts across the state.

The movement didn't stop there. On November 16th, CAE President Daryl Roberson spoke before the Caddo Parish School Board and shared hundreds of signed petitions. President Roberson was very vocal about his disapproval of Governor Jindal's plan.

"It's appalling that the governor and Superintendent Pastorek, the two men who should be the greatest advocates of public education, are now acting like our greatest enemies," said President Roberson.

Mr. Roberson also lobbied at the meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget on November 19th, alongside Superintendent of Caddo Parish School Board Gerald Dawkins. Both testified in front of the committee, offering compelling testimony which ultimately resulted in the committee moving to revive a major portion of the "EduJobs" bill.

The LAE applauds CAE for their hard work on this initiative!

# A JOB WELL DONE

*Congratulations*

to D'Shay Oaks for her service to TRSL. D'Shay was recognized at the December 2010 TRSL meeting where she received a plaque in recognition of her service to the Teacher Retirement Fund.

D'Shay is a committed representative to her constituents in the Fifth District where she's served on the Personnel and Membership & Entitlements Committees. She provides steadfast leadership and thoughtful analysis on many pension-related issues.

Bravo D'Shay! Nice work!

# LAE ELECTIONS 2010 - 2011

Nomination forms are now available at www.lae.org and at the LAE Headquarters. Forms can be emailed/mailed to local presidents and Board of Directors members. Upon receipt of a candidate's nomination form, LAE will verify receipt by mail or email.

Notification of receipt of a candidate's form will occur ***within*** one day of receiving a nomination form, except during the Christmas holiday break (12/20 – 12/31). Nomination forms arriving during the holiday will be receipted on 1/3/2011.

The email address for electronically forwarding nominations forms (laurie.guillot@lae.org) will be directed to the office of the Executive Director or his designee. Nomination forms can be mailed to the Executive Director at 8322 One Calais, Baton Rouge, LA 70809. All forms must be in the LAE Headquarters Office by **January 7 by 11:59 pm.**

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.

Biographical information composed by the candidates is not to exceed 50 words and will be included with the election information/ballot mailed to eligible voters. Bio information will be printed as submitted; it will not be edited for content or grammar.

Candidates are strongly recommended to contact LAE if verification has not been received within one day (three days for mail response) of the expected arrival of the form at LAE. Candidates will be notified by mail when the nominations have been certified by the Elections Committee.

An article in the LAE *Voice* will inform members of the scheduled arrival of ballots. It is the responsibility of members not receiving a ballot to contact LAE immediately. (1-800-256-4523, ext. 201)

The office of the Executive Director or his designee will verify that the person that called is a member and will compare the address. That information will be forwarded to the Neutral. The Neutral will verify that the member has not voted and mail a new ballot by first class. The Neutral will be directed to mail ballots via first class mail by the last week of February, 2011.

The election will be conducted with the voter having a choice of voting methods – paper ballot, telephone or internet. Each voting member will be assigned a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) to be used when voting by phone or internet. The same PIN will be bar-coded on the paper ballot the member receives.

The first vote recorded by the vendor will be the vote counted. **March 31, 2011** is the deadline for receipt of all ballots by Neutral. The Neutral will have the election results certified by a notary public. The certification is to be provided to LAE Executive Director by overnight delivery. The Elections Committee will meet as scheduled to certify the election results. The committee 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.

All candidates who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be certified as elected by the Elections Committee. Should no candidate receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff will be held between the top two candidates.

After all election procedures and challenges have been followed; the Elections Committee will declare any unopposed candidate as winner of the office sought. The ballot will not reflect any unopposed candidate.

## POSITIONS UP FOR ELECTION

| *Board of Directors* | *Ethnic Restrictions* | *Term of Office* |
|---|---|---|
| First Associational District, Seat A | Minority | 3 years |
| First Associational District, Seat B | None | 1 year |
| Second Associational District, Seat C | None | 3 years |
| Third Associational District, Seat A | None | 3 years |
| Third Associational District, Seat B | None | 1 years |
| Fourth Associational District, Seat B | None | 1 years |
| Fourth Associational District, Seat C | Minority | 3 years |
| Fifth Associational District, Seat B | None | 3 years |
| Sixth Associational District, Seat B | Minority | 3 years |
| Education Support Professional, Seat C | None | 3 years |
| Education Support Professional, Seat D | None | 3 years |
| NEA Director | None | 3 years |

## 2010 - 2011 ELECTIONS CALENDAR

| | |
|---|---|
| **January 7, 2011** | Nomination forms and attachments must be sent by mail or email by 11:59pm |
| **January 8, 2011** | LAE Elections Committee certifies the candidate and mails notification letters |
| **January 15, 2011** | Obtain database of voting members |
| **January 18, 2011** | Deadline to challenge the certification of candidates Challenges shall be made in writing and submitted by certified or registered mail |
| **February 11, 2011** | Deadline for printing biographical information of candidates |
| **March 10, 2011** | All ballots distributed |
| **March 31, 2011** | Deadline for receipt of all ballots to neutral |
| **April 9, 2011** | Report from the neutral to the Elections Committee. Notification of election results to the candidates |
| **April 22, 2011** | Last day for candidates to withdraw from run-off election by notifying the Executive Director and sent by certified mail |
| **April 19, 2011** | Deadline to challenge primary results Challenges to the elections shall be made in writing to the Executive Director and sent by certified mail |
| **May 1, 2011** | Election neutral mails ballots for run-off election and special election |
| **May 31, 2011** | Deadline for receipt of all ballots to neutral |
| **June 4, 2011** | Neutral reports results of run-off election to the Elections Committee Notification of election results sent to candidates |
| **June 15, 2011** | Deadline to challenge run-off election Challenges to the election shall be made in writing and sent by certified mail |

# DID YOU KNOW ABOUT...

## THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

In 1997, the Louisiana Legislature created the School and District Accountability Commission (ACT 478). The commission is tasked with advising the Board of Secondary Education (BESE) on how to communicate - to both schools and the public – on how well a particular school is performing. They also advise BESE on how they can best recognize schools for effectiveness in demonstrating growth in student achievement and focus attention, energy and resources on those schools that need help in improving student achievement. The commission panel consists of teachers, principals, state officials, superintendents and others.

In early December, the commission met with members of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to discuss the most effective ways to move forward as the state faces significant changes to its public education system. The LDOE suggested that the commission focus on examining the influence of accountability on school performance and determine which levels would be most effective. Other focuses they requested the commission move forward with included helping to position the state on how to be prepared for Common Core Standards and Assessment, streamlining policy and continuing to raise expectations for schools, educators and students.

A major topic of discussion at December's meeting was the LDOE's request for the commission's recommendation for the upcoming transition from the "star" labeling system to a letter grade accountability policy. The transition comes as a statutory requirement via Act 718 (passed in 2010) where BESE is charged with developing a letter grade system reflective of school and district performance. The system must include the assignment of a letter grade to each public elementary and secondary school and district that is based upon the current method of determining school and district performance scores. The system must be based, in part, on growth in student achievement using a value-added assessment model.

The commission submitted their recommendation to the BESE for action during the December meeting. BESE ignored the Accountability Commission's recommendation and adopted a plan supported by Chas Roemer. According to blogger and former LAE Executive Director Michael Deshotels, Roemer's system is "even more punitive to struggling schools than that proposed by Superintendent Pastorek."

The Roemer plan will assign a minus to the letter grade of any schools that decline in their "student performance score" (SPS). Schools will get a plus added to their grade only if they meet the LDOE growth target.

Similar to the "No Child Left Behind" federal legislation, the Roemer plan establishes a statistically impossible event where every Louisiana school should reach and sustain the highest achievement mark,120, by 2014.

LAE will continue to fight against this unsound and punitive rating system.

The grade system as passed:

A - schools with a 120 SPS
B - schools with a 105 to 119.9 SPS
C - schools with a 90.0 to 104.9 SPS
D - schools with a 64.0 to 89.9 SPS
F - school with 64.9 and below

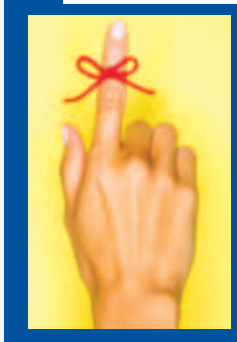
Visit lae.org for more information.

## REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY REMINDER!!

Deadline January 1st, 2011

Your local president has received the information regarding delegates to the 2011 LAE Representative Assembly in April. The deadline is fast approaching. Check with your UniServ Director or Laurie Guillot at laurie.guillot@lae.org to see if your local has submitted members to serve as delegates.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



| | |
|---|---|
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 31 | New Year's Eve |
| Jan. 3 | Back to School |
| Jan. 8 | Budget Committee Meeting<br>Elections Committee Meeting |
| Jan. 14-15 | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Jan. 17 | Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday |
| Jan. 29 | Committee Day |
| Feb. 4-6 | S.E. Regional Conferences |
| Feb. 11-12 | Training: Introduction to Bargaining |
| Feb. 14 | Valentine's Day |
| Feb. 18-19 | Board Meeting |
| Feb. 21 | President's Day |

Don't forget to use NEA Click-N-Save and Working Advantage to save money on your Christmas gifts.

# Benefits of LAE Membership:

- Legislative Initiatives
- Legal Assistance
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Great Member Benefits
- Informative Publications and Website
- CapWiz Legislative Advocacy Alerts
- Help Desk Support

# LOOKING AHEAD: READ ACROSS AMERICA 2011

As 2010 comes to a close and we charge full speed ahead into 2011, we'd like to remind you about Read Across America. It's now time to start thinking about your area's events. We want everyone's 2011 events to be successful so we need to start planning our statewide events now!

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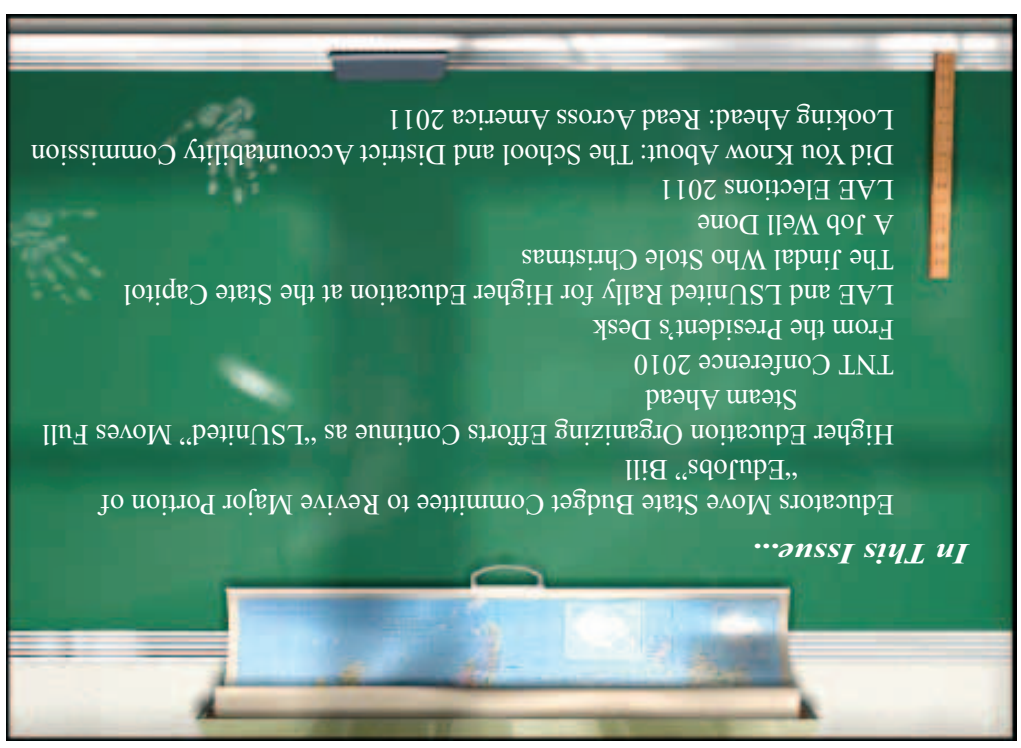
If you are looking for fresh ideas or suggestions for your local event contact LAE Communications Specialist Ashley Davis in order to brainstorm possible event plans/promotions. She can be reached via email at ashley.davis@lae.org.

Also be sure to check out www.nea.org where there are tons of ideas, resources and free materials on how to make your next Read Across America event one to remember!



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