

THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

Volume 11, No. 1 February 2015

THE NEA FOUNDATION NAMES LAE MEMBER AS FINALIST FOR PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

EAST BATON ROUGE ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS MEMBER CRYSTAL WILLIAMS GORDON
TO BE HONORED AT AWARDS GALA IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Crystal Williams Gordon accepts the LAE's 2014 Teacher Image Award from LAE President Debbie Meaux at the 2014 LAE Representative Assembly.

LAE member Crystal Williams Gordon, who teaches biology at Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge, will receive \$10,000 and recognition as one of the nation's top educators at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Awards Gala this month.

"Crystal is a model teacher, member, and a true asset, not just to the association, but to her students," said LAE President Debbie Meaux. "I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for this honor."

The NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence recognize and promote excellence in teaching and advocacy

for the profession. The awards are presented annually at a gala in Washington, D.C., which attracts more than 800 national leaders from the public education, philanthropic, and business sectors.

"Crystal has been selected for this award by her peers because she has attained the highest teaching standards, as shown by her exemplary instruction, advocacy for the profession, attention to diversity, leadership in professional development, and engagement of parents and community," said Harriet Sanford, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation. "Honoring her is our way of thanking her and all the public school educators she represents."

In addition to this recognition, students and educators at Crystal's school have produced a special video that will premiere at the awards gala.

Gordon was nominated for the award by the LAE after winning the association's annual *Teacher Image Award* in 2014.

The NEA Foundation will live stream video of the event on its website (<https://www.neafoundation.org/pages/nea-foundation-awards-gala/>), so that Crystal's students, peers, and family can join in the celebration. The event will be broadcast live on February 13, 2015, at 6:30 p.m.

The NEA Foundation and the National Education Association jointly present the awards with support from NEA Member Benefits, the Horace Mann Companies, the Pearson Foundation, Promethean, and California Casualty.



Debbie Meaux, President

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Over the next few months, I will visit several cities across the state asking education employees, parents, and community members one question: What immediate actions need to be taken in order to ensure that every Louisiana community has the public schools it deserves?

It's all part of the NEA's nationwide *Ask an Educator* campaign, where I, along with other state presidents and NEA President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia, will visit cities in order to foster discussions among educators and community members.

So far, I have spent some time in Monroe City. I visited several public schools there and spent an evening with parents and school employees. In my discussions, I heard a number of concerns—everything from pay issues to dissatisfaction with class sizes to concerns about too little preparation and resources to ready students for the PARCC tests. I spoke with educators about the redundancy in required training for certified, university-trained Pre-K teachers. I also heard about the dire need for smaller class sizes and the importance of having paraprofessionals in elementary school classrooms. I heard stories of how Monroe City's support professionals are living with below-poverty wages and are dealing

with a lack of materials needed to perform their jobs; how schools are understaffed, causing custodians to have to do more than their fair share of the work needed to maintain safe and sanitary facilities. A major concern for many, both certified and uncertified, is keeping our schools violence free. In light of the many school tragedies over the past 15 years, school employees everywhere deserve to know that their work site is secure.

These were just a few of the many concerns expressed by Monroe educators.

The LAE will use the issues that our members identify as important to craft legislation, decide positions of support/opposition on other pieces of legislation, and give testimony, both in the legislature and at BESE. In addition to driving our local efforts, all feedback gathered from our statewide tour will be sent to NEA leaders, who will use the information to also craft positions and legislation in Congress geared toward improving and strengthening public education nationwide.

As the 2015 Louisiana Legislative Session approaches, I hope you will watch your email closely, as well as your local, state, and national

publications for any call-to-action alerts asking you to contact your legislators and congressional representatives. The NEA recently issued a call for members around the nation to email members of Congress asking them to support the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with a provision for grade-span testing (testing once in elementary school, once in middle school, and once in high school). Additionally, leaders of the LAE have asked members to email the members of the Act 240 Accountability Subcommittee via Capwiz requesting their support on six proposals to improve the COMPASS evaluation system. It is my hope that you will answer these calls-to-action.

There is truly power in numbers. Legislators, members of the BESE, and other advisory committee members do listen when large numbers of public school employees unite to carry a single message. Never doubt our power to influence our own fate.

Once again, I thank you for your commitment to Louisiana's children. I look forward to working with you in the coming months as we continue our advocacy efforts for our public schools, teachers, support professionals, and students. Stay motivated and strong! Your hard work does not go unnoticed!

In Solidarity,
Debbie Meaux
LAE President

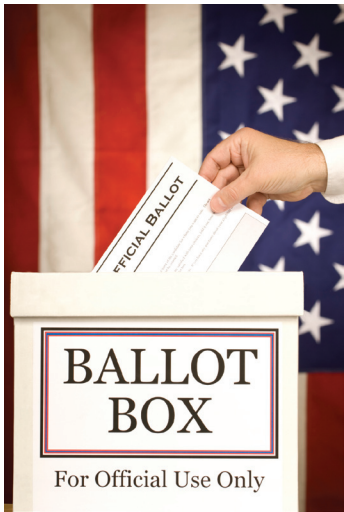
THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CAPITOL ALERTS TODAY!

It's important for you to stay in touch with the LAE Lobby Team during the 2015 Legislative Session. The LAE distributes the *Capitol Connection* in order to keep members informed on weekly happenings at the state capitol. This e-newsletter provides you with important updates on the bills that stand to impact your professional future.



We use Capwiz XC to send urgent email messages to members requesting immediate action. These are both quick and easy ways for LAE members to stay connected and have their voices heard during the legislative session. The 2015 session begins Monday, April 13; please sign up for the LAE *Capitol Connection* and Capwiz XC alerts today. Go to www.lae.org to get started!



THIS IS YOUR OFFICIAL NOTICE REGARDING VOTING IN LAE'S 2015 ELECTIONS

**ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ONLINE VOTING PROCEDURES
AND REQUESTS FOR PAPER BALLOTS**

Please let the candidate information provided within this newsletter serve as reference when voting in the LAE's 2015 Elections. Elections will be administered online. Our neutral, Election-America, will send elections

notifications to those LAE members who have provided the LAE with a valid personal email address. To update this information, contact the LAE Membership Department at 1-800-256-4523, ext. 101.

The elections portal will open March 10 and run through March 31, 2015. During that period, the online voting will be available 24-7. You can expect to receive an email to your personal email address notifying you that the online election portal is open. To avoid any confusion, you may want to make sure you are able to accept emails from Election-America.com. This email will provide you with a link to the elections website site, along with your LAE member ID required to access your online ballot.

If you do not receive this email, please visit lae.org between March 10 and 31 and look for the LAE Elections banner on the home page. Simply click the banner to be taken directly to the elections portal. You'll need your LAE member ID number on hand in order log in to access your ballot. ***This number can be found on your LAE Membership Card or above your name in the mailing address section of this newsletter.*** You will also be required to enter the last four digits of your social security number.



PROCESS FOR COLLECTING A PAPER BALLOT
Voting will be by online ballot method. For any member who would prefer to receive a paper ballot, you can request that one be mailed to you by contacting the neutral at help+LAE@election-america.com or 1-866-384-9978. This request must be made before Monday, March 2, 2015. You will need to have your LAE member number on hand for voter verification purposes. Again, this number can be found on your membership card or in the address section of this newsletter.

CANDIDATES FOR 2015 NEA DELEGATE/SUCCESSOR DELEGATES

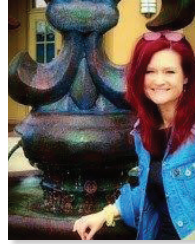
Please note: The biographies contained were not edited for content nor grammatical or spelling corrections. LAE reserves the right to alter the format of the submissions. If the candidate submitted a biography longer than 50 words, it is indicated with "..."

NEA DELEGATES – PLEASE VOTE FOR 12



1. Karen Richardson

I am a SPED teacher in Vermilion Parish currently serving as President of my local. I also hold positions on several committees. I am in my second term serving on the LAE Executive Board and Board of Directors for District 3. I would be honored to represent LAE and its ...



2. Kimberly Domangue

Why LAE? 1) Strong representation in Baton Rouge; 2) Timely information; 3) PROFESSIONAL PRIDE!

Why me for "Seat C"? 1) Fearless advocacy; 2) Open communication; 3) Help to take-back YOUR PROFESSION!

Who am I? 1) Early Childhood Certified Educator (since 2008); 2) Public high school parent/public university parent ...



3. Sarah Scott

I am Sarah Scott, a kindergarten teacher at Denham Springs Elementary in Livingston Parish and treasurer of my local. I have served through the years as an advocate and a voice for all educators and support personnel. Please vote for me to be a delegate to the 2015 NEA Convention.



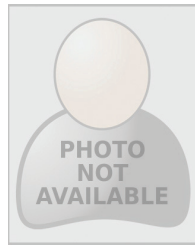
4. Gwendolyn Hill

I am Gwendolyn Hill, and I am running for state delegate. I have over 20 years' experience working with students in elementary schools. I take great pride in my work and am honest, dependable, dedicated, and extremely hard-working. I am very resourceful at finding effective new ways to accomplish goals.

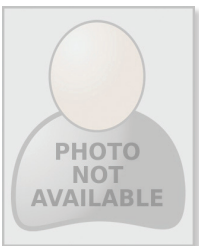


5. Rachel Gifford

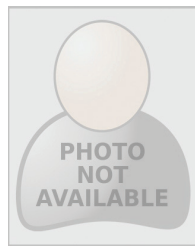
I am asking for your vote for NEA State Delegate. I have represented District I on the Board of Directors and served on multiple committees for LAE. I am former member of the NEA Resolutions Committee and currently serve as your NEA Director. Please vote. Let your voice be heard.



6. Carol McLaughlin



7. Linda Kay Paul

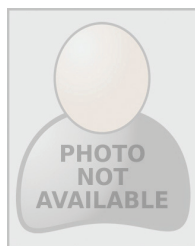


8. Katina Thompson-Givens



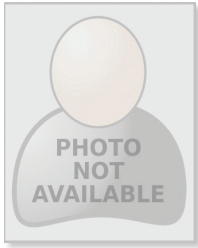
9. Anita Green

I am Anita H. Green, librarian at Greenville Superintendent's Academy. I have thirty two plus years experience as an educator. I currently serve as the Vice President of EBRPAE. I have attended the NEA-RA for the last seven years as a delegate. I received the 2014 LAE Ancillary Image Award.



10. Donald Fontenot

I am a teacher working as an Educational Diagnostician in Calcasieu Parish and have been an LAE member for over 36 years. I have represented Louisiana before at the NEA. I have been active and vocal at LAE and NEA. Please allow me to represent you this summer.



11. Patricia Colbert-Cormier

As a successful/outstanding classroom teacher for over 40 years; member of LAE and member of the LPAE Executive Committee, I have

- Successfully challenged LaTip/LaTap;
- Used my knowledge and expertise in speaking for teachers;
- Fought for the removal of Superintendent, Dr. Patrick Cooper

Please consider my nomination for NEA state ...



12. Jessica Hunter

I have taught Geometry at Sterlington High school for the last six years. I am currently working on my doctorate at Louisiana Tech and am a Louisiana Teacher Leader and Advisor. I am actively involved in improving the quality of education in Louisiana. Thanks for your support.



13. Dona Festervan

- Special Education Paraprofessional
- Caddo Association of Education member
- Vice-President of CAE
- LAE committee member
- Former CAE delegate to NEA Assembly
- Former member of the LAE Board of Directors



14. Almetra Pierce

I am Almetra Pierce, a member of the St. Mary Association and a 16 year special service educator. I currently serve on my local board as secretary and on the Board of Directors for LAE. If elected, I will continue to be a voice for my local and state associations.



15. Sherry Thompson

I have been dedicated to public education since 2006. When I'm not teaching in the classroom, I am tutoring after school to ensure that struggling students have a chance to become successful. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, listening to zydeco music, and shopping.



16. Tia Mills

As a previous state delegate for LAE, I've served as Treasurer, chaired the Legislative Committee and served on the New Business Item Committee. With your support and vote, I can continue my efforts and enforce the best interests of the membership.



17. Diane Vickers

I am Diane Vickers and I am asking for your vote in my election as a delegate to the 2015 NEA RA. I am a proven leader, a professional educator, and active on the local, state, and national level in NEA. A vote for me, is a voice for you.



18. Lisa Hayes

I'm an educator, member of the LA Association of Educators representing Livingston Parish for over twenty years. Attending the RA conference will afford me an opportunity to return with new and innovative ideas to assist students, colleagues, parents as we move and maintain high standards of educating students.



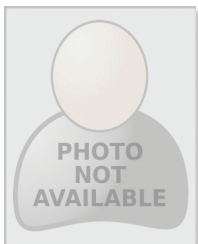
19. Fredrick Pinkney

I am Dr. Fredrick L. Pinkney, a 20-year career educator specializing in working with under-resourced children and instructional methods for educating diverse students. Currently employed by the Caddo Parish School Board, I am member of the Caddo Association of Educators where I conduct professional developments on the local, state, and ...



20. Ty Malone

I am a classroom teacher from Ruston, Louisiana. I graduated from Grambling State University. I am currently enrolled at LSU in Shreveport where I served as the 2013 LAE Student Body President while studying for a Master of Educational Leadership. My place of employment is Caddo Parish School Board.



21. Karen Bell

Karen is a 3rd grade teacher at Natalbany Elementary, in Tangipahoa. She has been a member of LAE for 37 years, serving on numerous local and state committees over the years, and is currently the President of the Tangipahoa Association of Educators, District 4 Board of Director, and on the ...

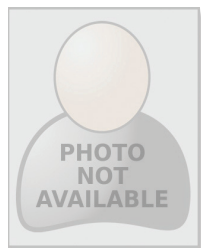


NEA ADMINISTRATOR DELEGATES – PLEASE VOTE FOR ONE



1. Cynthia Henderson

The LAE played an important role in my training for the position of Assistant Principal. I am offering my services and pledge to communicate effectively the mission and vision of NEA with LAE members who are Administrators. Vote Cynthia NEA State Delegate.



2. Kenneth Fountain

WELCOME TO LAE'S NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS!
THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES RAN UNOPPOSED AND WERE ELECTED BY ACCLAMATION.
CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO THE LAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

First Associational District, Seat B

Dawn Jordan (elected, unopposed)

First Associational District, Seat C

Vacant (no nominations submitted)

Second Associational District, Seat B

D'Shay Oaks (elected, unopposed)

Third Associational District, Seat B

Johnell Celestine (elected, unopposed)

Fourth Associational District, Seat B

Tia Mills (elected, unopposed)

Fifth Associational District, Seat C

Kimberly Domangue (elected, unopposed)

Sixth Associational District, Seat A

Sherry Thompson (elected, unopposed)

Sixth Associational District, Seat C

Vacant (no nominations submitted)

SERVICE MODEL VS. ORGANIZING CULTURE IN THE LAE

By Jonas Barriere

As all education professionals in Louisiana know, our public school system has changed a lot over the past five years. Public schools in Louisiana are in disarray; issues such as funding, charter schools, vouchers, SLTs, evaluations, and testing are just the tip of the iceberg. In order to address this myriad of issues, the LAE needs to make some changes, which is why the association, in coordination with its 68 locals and the NEA, is undergoing a change in structure. For years, the LAE has focused on building a “service model” association dedicated to serving member needs. This year, our focus will be to move toward building an association that advances student and educator success at the local, state, and national levels. This new structure will be focused on building an organizing culture in Louisiana.

Service model organizations focus on satisfying members’ needs and demands through direct staff or organizational support. This type of model is great for correcting problems and supporting member success on a case-by-case basis. It was an effective tool for the LAE for years, helping us to become the largest association for professional educators in the state. Service model organizations are effective in administering a well-organized organization; however, the model tends to eliminate any grassroots organizing for structural or permanent change, such as the issues mentioned above.

It has become increasingly clear that the LAE and its many locals are facing more universal issues every year. Whether it is a national, state, or parish government, educators across Louisiana are facing issues that cannot be solved on an individual basis.

These issues can only be addressed through a sustained, grassroots organizing effort, led by Louisiana public school workers from all levels—hence the need to change our culture and get into organizing mode.

Transitioning to an organizing model will help the LAE and its local affiliates achieve lasting and structural success on issues that face all educators, schools, and students. If, as an organization, we wish to address issues such as Common Core, evaluations, compensation, job security, student success, discipline, paperwork, time to teach, etc., we need to come together at all levels and across all disciplines. Only through a sustained organizing culture will we be able to create meaningful change for our students and our professions.

The move from a service model to an organizing culture is not an easy one. It will take the coordinated time and effort of LAE members from every school and every parish in Louisiana. It is a big lift to bring such a diverse group together; however, if we do not band together now, we may not be able to realize our vision of a more fulfilling education for our students and better working conditions for us and our colleagues. When we are able to collectively achieve success on the issues most important to our schools, we will have created a better educational environment for all of Louisiana.

What will you do to help organize your school?
Please contact jonas.barriere@lae.org to let us know!

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LAE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND RULES

THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WILL BE VOTED UPON AT THE
APRIL 12TH LAE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Deletions: ~~Strikethrough~~
New Language: **Bold and Underlined**

PROPOSED CHANGES

Page	Article/Bylaw
3	Article III – Section 5 – Functions
4	Article IV – Section 5 – Ethnic Minority Guarantee
5	Article V – Section 2 – Composition
6	Article V – Section 6 – Ethnic Minority Guarantee
7	Article IX – Section 2 – Ethnic Minority Representation
13	Bylaw 3 – Section 3.1 & 3.2 – Representative Assembly
15	Bylaw 5 – Section 5.1 – Elections
15-18	Bylaw 6 – Section 6.1a-e & 6.2 – Election of State Officers, NEA Directors and State Delegates
19	Bylaw 9 – Section 9.2 – LAE-Retired (LAE-R)
22	Bylaw 12 – Section 12.3 – Ethnic Minority Guarantee

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Section 5. Functions.

b) Will elect state officers and LAE Board of Directors;

- Page 4

Section 5. Ethnic Minority Guarantee.

- a) The office of the President will alternate between an a ~~Black or other~~ ethnic minority and a white member of the Association.

- Page 5

Section 2. Composition.

The Board of Directors shall consist of:

- b) Two ~~Three~~ classroom teacher-members nominated through an open nomination procedure and elected by a secret ballot vote of the certified and registered delegates to the Representative Assembly ~~membership~~ from each of the six Associational Districts (one of the two ~~three~~ positions in each of the six districts shall be filled by an a ~~Black or other~~ ethnic minority candidate);
- c) At-large representation of the following groups: non-administrator, educational support members; non-administrator, higher education member(s); and administrator members who may be active, educational support, or higher education members; shall be

represented on the Board of Directors in proportion to their membership in the Association; and shall be nominated through an open nomination procedure and elected by a secret ballot vote of the certified and registered delegates to the Representative Assembly. The number of representatives allotted to each at-large group shall be based on the same proportion as that of the 12 ~~18~~ district representatives to the total number of Association members. Each at-large group shall be eligible for one representative on the Board of Directors for each multiple (or major fraction thereof) of the representation number for district members. [Representation number is defined in the Definitions section of the Bylaws.]

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Section 6. Ethnic Minority Guarantee.

The Elections Committee shall recommend a plan to the Representative Assembly that shall assure an ~~Black or other~~ ethnic minority representation on the Board of Directors at least in proportion to their membership in each particular job category.

- Page 7

Section 2. Ethnic Minority Representation.

Affiliates of the Association shall take all reasonable and legally permissible steps to achieve on their elective and appointive bodies ~~black or other~~ ethnic minority representation that is at least proportionate to the minority membership of the affiliate.

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3. REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

3-1. Delegates

- a. Allocation of delegate credentials to locals shall be on the basis of local membership ~~In the event of a fall Representative Assembly, delegate allocation shall be based on membership as of August 31 of the previous membership year. In the event of a spring Representative Assembly, allocation shall be based on membership as of January 15 of the current membership year.~~
- a. Each local affiliate should elect at the same time as many alternates as the total number of delegates elected. Alternates shall be numbered serially in order of the substitution for delegates.

3-2. Meetings: Time and Location

- a. There shall be a Spring Representative Assembly, the time and site to be set by the Board of Directors.
- b. In the case of an emergency, the Board of Directors may postpone the regularly scheduled meeting of the Representative Assembly by a two-thirds vote.

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5-1. Elections

A majority vote of those voting shall be necessary to elect a member to the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by a secret ballot of the certified and registered delegates to the Representative Assembly their constituency.

6-1. Election of State Officers

a. Nominations

Each candidate for State Officer, LAE Board of Director, and NEA Director ~~elected by the membership of the Association or by the membership from the respective Associational Districts~~ shall file with the Executive Director a nomination form letter.

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a. First Primary

Ballots shall be prepared by the Executive Director or his designee, with the approval of the chair of the LAE Elections Committee ~~and shall be distributed to each member of record as of January 15.~~ Candidate positions on the ballots shall be determined by a drawing conducted by the Elections Committee. ~~Ballots shall be distributed by March 10. The neutral party shall receive and tabulate the votes and submit in writing to the Elections Committee the results no later than April 15.~~ Elections shall occur on the first afternoon of the Spring Representative Assembly in accordance with the LAE Standing Rules. Only certified delegates are eligible to vote. All candidates who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be certified as elected by the Elections Committee.

- b. Should no candidate receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff will be held between the top two candidates on the second morning of the Spring Representative Assembly in accordance with the LAE Standing Rules. Positions on the ballot shall remain the same as in the regular election. ~~The neutral party as stated within this Article shall be chosen by the Board of Directors with recommendations from the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director.~~

e. ~~Runoff Election~~

~~Should no candidate receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff will be held between the top two candidates. Positions on the ballot shall remain the same as in the regular election. The neutral party as stated within this Article shall be chosen by the Board of Directors with recommendations from the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director.~~

~~Ballots shall be prepared by the executive Director or his designee, with the approval of the Chair of the Elections Committee, and shall be distributed to each member of record as of January 15. Ballots shall be distributed to members no later than May 1. The neutral party shall tabulate the votes received by May 31 and shall submit the results in writing to the Elections Committee no later than June 15. The announcement should be made in the next official journal.~~

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~~Candidates for runoff election may withdraw from the election by notification to the Executive Director or his/her designee, by certified/return receipt, no later than April 22. Upon receipt of such notice, the runoff election shall be canceled.~~

d. Challenges

1. Challenges to certification of candidates shall be made in writing and shall be sent by certified/return receipt, to the chair of the Elections Committee, in care of the LAE Executive Director, within ten (10) calendar days of the certification of the candidate by the Elections Committee.
2. Challenges to the ballot must be made one hour before the first business meeting of the Representative Assembly. Challenges must be submitted to the chair of the elections committee.
3. Challenges to the result of the elections shall be made in writing to the Chair of the Elections Committee within an hour of announcing the election results. The only challenge the committee will accept is a request for a recount, and shall be sent by certified/return receipt in care of the LAE Executive Director, within ten (10) days following the announcement of the results.

e. Appeal Process for Challenges to Certification/ Elections

The Elections Committee will meet after receiving a challenge(s) to hear the challenge(s) and to make recommendation (s) to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will meet to act on the recommendation (s) of the Election Committee. All decision(s) of the

Election Committee and the Board of Directors must be completed within 30 days of the receipt of the challenge to the Executive Director.

The Elections Committee will meet immediately upon receiving a challenge to the ballot or to the election result. The decisions of the committee are final.

6.2 Election of NEA State Delegates

Ballots shall be prepared by the Executive Director or his designee, with the approval of the chair of the LAE Elections Committee, and shall be printed in the February all member newsletter. Candidate positions on the ballots shall be Determined by a drawing conducted by the Elections Committee. The election for state delegates will occur by internet voting. Internet voting will occur from March 1st through March 15th. All candidates will be notified of the election Results via email by March 22nd. All candidates who receive a majority of the votes cast shall be certified as elected by the Elections Committee.

Candidates for NEA delegates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected according to NEA's allocation. Successor delegates shall be selected according to the number of votes received. Candidates for NEA state delegates shall be elected in accordance with NEA delegate election guidelines. Challenges to the certification of candidates, ballots or election results must be submitted within 10 days of email notification to the Chair of the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee will meet after receiving a challenge(s) to hear the challenge(s) and to

- Page 18

make recommendation(s) to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will meet to act on the recommendation(s) of the Election Committee. All decision(s) of the Election Committee and the Board of Directors must be completed within 30 days of the receipt of the challenge to the Executive Director.

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9-2. LAE-Retired (LAE-R)

The LAE-Retired (LAE-R) shall be an organization comprised of any person who has retired from educational employment solely of the retired members of the Association. The president of LAE-R shall be chosen by the retired members. LAE-R shall be recognized as a statewide local affiliate. The LAE-R shall operate in accordance with Bylaws adopted by LAE-R subject to approval by the Board of Directors. Such Bylaws shall be compatible with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association. The LAE-R shall conduct all elections with open nominations and secret ballot.

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12-3. Ethnic Minority Guarantee

~~Black or other~~ Ethnic minorities shall be represented on all Committees at least in proportion to their membership in the association.

ATTENTION: LAE BOARD VACANCIES

The LAE Board of Directors is composed of association leaders who are active education employees elected by their peers to act for the association in between meetings of the Representative Assembly. You must be a member for at least three years to be eligible to apply for the following vacancies:

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

Second Associational District, Seat C: Avoyelles, Caldwell, Catahoula, City of Monroe, Concordia, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Franklin, Grant, Iberville, LaSalle, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Pointe Coupee,

Rapides, Richland, St. Helena, St. Martin, Tensas, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, West Feliciana, and Winn

Fifth Associational District, Seat C: Ascension, Assumption, Iberia, Lafayette, and St. James

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

If you are interested in applying, please send your letter of intent and resumé to Laurie Guillot at laurie.guillot@lae.org by February 6, 2015. The next LAE Board Meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2015, and the seats will be appointed at this meeting.

WELCOME TO LAE'S NEW STAFF



After serving the organization for more than 30 years, Lynda Guidry has been named executive director of the LAE. Since coming to work for the association in 1984, Lynda has served in numerous positions including field staff, field staff manager, and interim executive director. Before joining the LAE team, Lynda was a teacher for eight years in the St. Martin Parish public school system.



Jonas Barriere is the new lead organizer for the LAE in Lafayette and Vermilion parishes. His role is to help our local and state associations transition from a service model to an organizing model. Jonas has previously organized in California, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. A graduate of the University of New Hampshire, Jonas majored in History of Political Thought.



Gretchen Lampe comes to Louisiana with 30 years of experience in working with NEA affiliates. She has worked as a UniServ director in the field advocating on behalf of members, organizing and recruiting members, and facilitating the building of strong locals. She has also worked as a registered lobbyist, research director, and chief negotiator. Gretchen will work in the LAE's Northeastern Region – Region 2 – serving the Monroe area.



Kenton Cooper has been hired as the LAE's Director of Organizing. He previously served as UniServ director in East Baton Rouge Parish from 2005-2008. Kenton also serves as organizational specialist in NEA's Center for Organizing and is the lead organizer for the Education Summer Internship project. Kenton formerly served as a leader in Kentucky's state and local education associations and is a veteran classroom teacher and school bus driver. In addition to Louisiana, Kenton has actively worked in organizing roles in the state associations of Arizona, Florida, West Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Arkansas.



Nick Green will serve as an NEA organizer for the Baton Rouge area. A native of North Carolina, he is a cum laude graduate of North Carolina Central University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. He was a North Carolina Teaching Fellow. Nick has four years of classroom experience teaching seventh grade social studies and math. His organizing experience comes from his work with the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP and the Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Change. Nick looks forward to working with the East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators and building an even more powerful LAE.



Ray Hodges is a third generation educator in service to the students of LaSalle Parish and Louisiana. Prior to joining the LAE team, Ray taught at Jena High School in an award-winning automotive technology program. As the LAE's newest UniServ director, Ray says his objective is to build, organize, and support the local associations in the LAE's Northwestern Region – Region 1 – serving the Shreveport area.



Robin Bender joins the LAE associate staff for organizing, communications, technology, and training. She is a native of Louisiana and has spent most of her professional career working in Baton Rouge. She attended Baton Rouge Community College and Woodlawn High School. While attending college, Robin was a substitute teacher for the EBRSS. After graduation, she worked for the open computer labs, library, and IT helpdesk at BRCC. Robin is looking forward to using many of her skills with her work at the LAE.

Welcome to the family, Jonas, Gretchen, Kenton, Nick, Ray, and Robin, and congrats on the new position, Lynda!

LAE LAUNCHES NATIONAL ASK AN EDUCATOR CAMPAIGN IN MONROE

ASSOCIATION LEADERS TEAM UP WITH THE NEA TO HEAR EDUCATORS' THOUGHTS SURROUNDING THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES OF LOUISIANA STUDENTS

The National Education Association (NEA) kicked off a nationwide tour in Louisiana this January. Leaders of the country's largest professional organization for public school employees are partnering with the LAE on the *Ask an Educator* campaign, an initiative aimed at continuing the dialogue around educators' thoughts regarding the current state of public schools. LAE President Debbie Meaux will work in conjunction with NEA representatives as she travels across the state to meet with Louisiana public school employees to discuss issues ranging from the misuse of standardized tests to increasing the amount of time to teach.



The LAE team kicks off the statewide Ask an Educator campaign.

"I enjoyed meeting with President Meaux and sharing some of my most pressing concerns," Farley said. "All educators want what's best for their students. We are the ones who work with them every day to become better 21st-century learners. We know their needs, passions, and struggles. It's important for us to share our observations with those who can help us

shine a light on the areas that need improvement."

One of Farley's major concerns is the amount of time Louisiana students spend taking standardized tests.

"We are spending way too much time preparing for end-of-the-year, state-mandated tests and not enough time on innovative classroom activities," she said. "A great education inspires students' natural curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn. It's time we bring creativity and exploration back to Louisiana classrooms. I hope my conversation with President Meaux will spark a discussion at the state level on the need to explore lessening the impact of high-stakes tests."

Meaux said the association will use all of the feedback from the meetings in order to guide association leaders in future public school advocacy efforts.



LAE President Debbie Meaux and LAE UniServ Director Gretchen Lampe visit with Monroe City member Nancy Farley on the first stop on the statewide listening tour.

"We want to hear from educators about issues we know they are passionate about," Meaux said. "It is our hope that we can be the facilitator in helping Louisiana's hardworking educators build deeper relationships with the communities they work in and with the students they serve."

Another focus of the tour is to inform early career educators about ways to reduce student loan debt.

Events kicked off in Monroe at J. S. Clark Magnet Elementary School, where Meaux met with several school employees including Nancy Farley, a science teacher.



MCAE President Nancy Farley and President Meaux host community-wide discussion as part of listening tour series.

Be sure to check out www.lae.org to stay updated on the dates and cities we'll be visiting on our tour.

TIME-SENSITIVE
LAE ELECTIONS
INFO INSIDE!

THE LAE VOICE

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Louisiana Association of Educators
8322 One Calais Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Phone: 225-343-9243
Toll Free: 1-800-256-4523
Fax: 225-343-9272
www.lae.org
Help Desk: 1-877-452-3477
helpdesk@lae.org

Debbie Meaux, President
Lynda Guidry, Executive Director

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Feb. 16-17
Mardi Gras
Holiday*
- LAE Headquarters
Closed

Feb. 14
Valentine's
Day

Feb. 28
Read Across
Louisiana

March 10
Louisiana Regular
Legislative Session
begins

April 11-12
LAE
Representative
Assembly

April 13
2015 Legislative
Session begins