



THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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LAE POLLS PUBLIC TO DETERMINE OPINIONS ON STUDENT TESTING; HOLDS COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS

This fall, LAE polled a random sample of Louisianians to gain a better understanding of their feelings on student testing. From this survey, the association determined: 1) the public thinks the state places too much emphasis on standardized testing practices; 2.) Louisianians don't agree with linking students' high-stakes test scores to teachers' performance reviews; 3.) parents' expectations for their children's educational experiences do not align with Louisiana's testing policies. LAE President Debbie Meaux said these findings prove that today's hyper-focus on student testing is cause for concern.

"We need to focus on what helps students. Kids don't get excited to go to school to fill in bubbles on a sheet. They get excited when they have opportunities to immerse themselves in the concepts being taught," Meaux said. "Of all the things we teach our kids, the most important is a love of learning, which no standardized test can measure."

In August 2017, the LAE conducted a two-week survey of the general public in Louisiana. Sixty-five percent of those surveyed feel the state places too much emphasis on student testing. More than half (55%) agreed that student test performance should not play a major role in determining a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Results from another poll administered at the national level - the 2017 PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools- show similar results. Feedback from the U.S. public shows that developing students' interpersonal skills, enhancing technology instruction, and expanding access to extracurricular activities are much more important indicators of school quality

than high-stakes assessments. Public opinion shows that there is minimal support for standardized testing, which contrasts greatly with what many enacted testing policies require for K-12 public schools.

Additionally, educators had a chance to weigh in on the testing issue through a poll conducted by the National Education Association in 2014. The NEA surveyed its teacher-members from across the nation and more than half (52%) said they felt they spent too much time preparing for tests; 45 percent said they considered changing careers due to the pressure brought on by standardized testing.

The LAE values this feedback and is actively continuing the exploration of the public's regard for standardized testing. In September, association representatives hosted a series of community conversations, where parents, school employees, and other concerned citizens had opportunities to voice their opinions on student assessments. With events in Baton Rouge, Alexandria, Shreveport, New Iberia, Monroe, Hammond, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and LaPlace, the public was given opportunities to collaborate on ideas and suggestions for changes to the state's testing policies. LAE leaders are in the process of compiling the feedback which will be shared with members, as well as top K-12 education policymakers in Louisiana.

The LAE continues to direct members interested in getting involved with the issue to the association's *Time to Learn* campaign website at www.timetolearnla.org.





FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Debbie Meaux, President

Happy Fall, y'all! It's so hard to believe the Holiday Season is right around the corner. This year has gone by so quickly. I hope you've had a chance to enjoy working with your students, as I know today's education climate can often present many challenges. I want you to know that the leaders of the LAE have your back as we continue to work toward raising the morale of the dedicated educators serving the students of Louisiana's public schools.

We continue to lead the charge in the fight to change the state's testing culture. LAE's *Time to Learn* campaign has made significant strides in raising awareness about excessive student testing in Louisiana schools. I serve on the commission recently established to study testing practices, and I want you to know that I voice the many concerns LAE members have expressed regarding the amount of time required to prepare for and administer tests. Association representatives have been busy hosting forums across the state concerning this very issue. These forums have been successful in engaging education stakeholders in healthy discussions to determine what methods of evaluation can be used to

replace the practice of over-testing kids. We are ready to see teaching time restored to its maximum level so that our students can spend their days in the classroom learning instead of testing.

As educators, we are called to do what is right for the children we serve. LAE leaders take this charge seriously by focusing on aiding teachers to develop their professional skills. The LAE Teaching and Learning Center has made tremendous strides in helping members become stronger professionals. The center continues to host courses on topics important to today's educators - courses on classroom management, cultural competency, social justice, and local education policy and instruction requirements. If you're interested in learning more about upcoming professional workshops, be sure to check out lae.org/teachingandlearning and register to attend a course of your choosing.

The association is committed to transforming Louisiana educators into outspoken advocates for the profession. Through powerful leadership development

and training programs focused on organizing, the LAE is growing its network of education activists engaged in our collective fight to establish sound practices and policies for our schools. The association continues to introduce advocacy trainings that allow members to make an impact on improving their working conditions and their students learning conditions. We can initiate change, but only if we continue to work together. I invite you to explore the many opportunities to engage with the association so you can add your voice to the many others carrying the message of the association.

Though the political environment for education is not always ideal, I know each of you continue to keep the faith as you work to make an impact on students' lives. I'm often reminded of a lesson learned from a valued mentor and friend: imagining fosters creativity; creativity leads to greatness. If we work together to **Build, Own, and Lead** our profession, then we will earn the respect to **Demand** change for our students. When change begins, we can claim success. Let's be **BOLD** together! Let us all make a commitment to bring others into our union so that we can continue to build our strength as a community of educators leading the path to educational excellence for our students.

In Solidarity,
President Meaux

ATTENTION: LAE BOARD VACANCIES

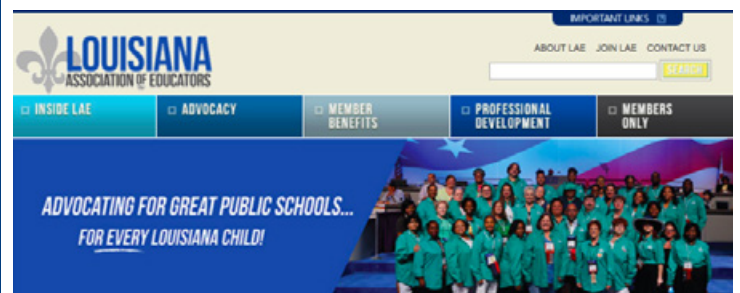
There is currently one vacant seat on the LAE Board of Directors. We would like to fill this position so it is occupied until LAE's next election cycle set to take place in March of 2018. You must have three years of association membership to be eligible to apply for this position.

District 4, Seat A: Representing East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Tangipahoa, Washington parishes; cities of Baker, Bogalusa, Central, Zachary; and the Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (LSDVI), Association for Correctional Employees (ACE-Baton Rouge), Special School District 1 (SSD1).

If you are interested in applying, please send your letter of intent and resume to Laurie Guillot at lguillot@lae.org by November 15, 2017. The next LAE Board meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2017, and the seat will be appointed at this meeting.

LAE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The LAE's website recently received a makeover! Go to www.lae.org to peruse the new site and while you're there, double-check your access to the Members Only section - you may have to re-enroll for access.



BATTLE TO CORRECT MISDIRECTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDS CONTINUES IN LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT

The LAE - and nearly a dozen of its affiliates from across the state - filed a lawsuit in September of 2014 to protect precious public school funding. Following several appeals by the state, the process continues as the LAE Legal Team continues to prove that using Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) dollars to fund Type 2 charter schools violates the Louisiana Constitution's provision requiring MFP funds to be allocated to parish and city schools; Type 2 charter schools do not meet this definition.

Because of demands placed on financial resources and other priorities, state and local governments are limited in their ability to fund public schools. For that reason, when the Louisiana Constitution was adopted, the people required the state to provide a minimum level of funding for public schools. Each year, the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) determines the minimum funding required. To ensure that MFP funds are spent appropriately, the constitution requires that all of the money appropriated by the legislature for the MFP each year be "equitably allocated to parish and city school systems." Keep in mind that when the constitution was adopted, the concept of "charter schools" was unknown.

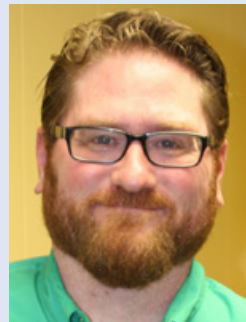
In recent years, the legislature has attempted to use the MFP program to advance various political agendas by allocating MFP funds to schools that are not "parish and city school systems." The Louisiana Supreme Court halted the practice of funding private school vouchers through the MFP back in 2013. LAE's case challenges whether new Type 2 charter schools approved by BESE can be funded through the MFP program. Simply stated, because new Type 2 charter schools are not parish or city school systems, they cannot be constitutionally funded through the MFP program.

Because the MFP formula takes local tax revenue into account, the use of MFP funds to pay for new Type 2 charter schools has had an overwhelming and devastating financial impact on city and parish school systems around the state. New Type 2 charter schools siphon state and local tax dollars from the budgets of parish and city school systems. As a result, local school systems located in the same districts as these charter schools have experienced budget crises that have led to cuts in staff and services. This result makes it virtually impossible for those school systems to provide every child access to a 21st-century education.

It is critical that all public schools in Louisiana be adequately funded. Just as the legislature found the money to fund private school vouchers outside of the MFP, it must also find a way to fund new Type 2 charter schools outside of the MFP. The overwhelming majority of students attending school in Louisiana learn in public school classrooms operated by elected parish and city school boards, and those students are as entitled to receive the funding the constitution promises as Type 2 charter school students.

One of LAE's top priorities is ensuring that every student has the opportunity to meet his/her potential. Attendance at a great public school furthers that goal, and we call upon the legislature to help achieve this by funding all public schools according to the dictates of the constitution.

ASSOCIATION WELCOMES THREE NEW STAFF MEMBERS TO THE LAE FAMILY!



Jim Croad joins the LAE team as Organizational Specialist for LAE's 5th Region. He has been an active member of the association, serving as a local president and on the LAE Board of Directors. He attended Syracuse and Eastern New Mexico University for undergraduate studies and received a Master's Degree in Education from Louisiana Tech. He comes to this position

with 14 years of experience teaching high school art.



Yvonne "Yvie" Johnson joins the LAE staff as Organizational Specialist in Early Career Educator Support. Yvie's education training took her from North Carolina and Virginia to Evangeline Parish, where she experienced, first-hand, the struggles of young educators balancing student needs, personal demands, and economic realities. Dedicated to students with special needs

and her fellow educators, Yvie has served as Special Education Teacher Leader, NEA Ambassador, and President of Evangeline Association of Educators. She looks forward to working with locals to support the education profession's newest members across the state.



Suzanne Harris joins the team as the LAE Teaching and Learning Center Coordinator. A native of Louisiana, she received her Undergraduate Degree from Centenary College of Louisiana and her Master's and Doctorate Degrees from Southeastern Louisiana University. She comes to LAE with 18 years teaching experience in elementary schools, most recently in Ascension Parish. She has

also served as a supervisor for student teachers at Louisiana State University. Dr. Harris co-authored a chapter in the book, *Marketing the Green School*, and has presented at Mid-South Educational Research Association and Louisiana Educational Research Association. She is excited to expand the work of the Teaching and Learning Center to continue the association's efforts to help teachers grow in their profession.



LAE Retired President
Emma Shepard

ANNOUNCING NEW LEADERSHIP FOR LAE'S RETIRED CHAPTER

Members of LAE-Retired welcome a new group of individuals to lead the organization. Emma Shepard from Caddo Parish now serves as president. Jane Crews is vice-president. Donald Fontenot from Calcasieu Parish is treasurer, and Barbara Knight from St. John the Baptist Parish takes over as secretary.

President Shepard says she looks forward to serving and hopes retired members get involved in offering support to active educators.

These new LAE-Retired officers will serve until August 31, 2019.

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

Enjoy the holidays more by planning now and shopping early! NEA Click & Save, the exclusive online discount buying service for NEA members, highlights select retailers and merchants each month. Check out these featured "Buy-lights" for November and check the Click & Save site often for unadvertised, limited time offers, including discount dining certificates from Restaurant.com. Go to www.neamb.com/clickandsave and start saving today!



- HomeClick.com:** Save on selected kitchen and bath products, including small electrics, tableware, and cookware, plus outdoor items such as grills, fountains, fireplaces and mailboxes.
- BedBath&Beyond:** Spruce up your home for the holidays with daily deals. Get free shipping on orders of \$29 or more.
- OmahaSteaks.com:** Not just steaks! Find great prices on seafood, deli-style meats, desserts, and appetizers.
- ThePopcornFactory.com:** Celebrate any occasion with a festive gift of gourmet popcorn or other special treats.
- MovieTickets.com:** Save on tickets to the latest blockbuster movies and Broadway shows such as The Lion King, Wicked, The Book of Mormon, and Hello Dolly!
- eBags.com:** eBags is the world's largest online retailer of bags and accessories for all lifestyles. Get free shipping on orders of \$49 or more.
- C&S Apparel Store:** Check out fall new arrivals and holiday picks from such retailers as Macy's, Columbia, Nordstrom Rack, and UnderArmour.



Relax. Explore. Discover.



Grab a coffee and head online to check out NEA edCommunities - a place for teachers, school support professionals, and community members to share ideas and resources to improve student success. Gain access to FREE, interactive online resources including:

Ideas for unique classroom activities

Innovative lesson plans

Professional development webinars

Education policy discussion boards

And much, much more!

EdCommunities allows you to connect with colleagues across the nation on key educational issues to help you become a stronger professional for the students you serve!

Sign up TODAY at

www.mynea360.org



*SIP WHILE YOU SURF! THE FIRST 100 PEOPLE TO ENROLL WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING FOR A \$100 STARBUCKS GIFT CARD!

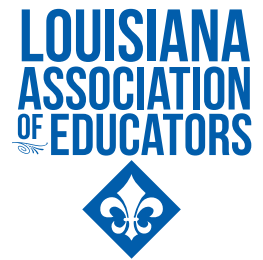
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In this Issue...

1. LAE Polls Public to Determine Opinions on Student Testing; Holds Community Conversations to Continue Discussions
2. From The President's Desk
3. Attention: Board Vacancies
4. LAE Continues To Fight Misdirection of Public School Funds in Supreme Court Challenge
5. Association Welcomes Three New Staff Members to the LAE Family!
6. Announcing New Leadership for LAE's Retired Chapter
7. NEA Click & Save "Buy-lights" for FALL: Hot Deals and Discounts from NEA Member Benefits
8. Upcoming Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13
Veterans' Day*

November 17-18
Board Meeting/Training

November 22-24
Thanksgiving Holiday*

*LAE Headquarters CLOSED