

Summer
Edition

THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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INVEST IN OUR EDUCATORS: A WIN-WIN FOR LOUISIANA

The 2023 Legislative Session just wrapped up on June 8th in Louisiana. Teachers and Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) will receive a one-time stipend of \$2,000 for teachers and \$1,000 for ESPs, in lieu of the \$3,000 and \$1,500 LAE advocated for, and as Governor John Bel Edwards proposed. Through the efforts of our union and other supporters, we narrowly avoided the removal of educator raises altogether this year. However, a small stipend, rather than a permanent pay raise that gets educators closer to the Southern Regional Average of pay, does not come close to meeting the mark. It has become clear that educators are simply not respected as they once were. With an unprecedented surplus in the budget this year, Louisiana legislators had the opportunity to show their appreciation for teachers and school staff by funding a substantial, permanent pay increase. Thousands of educators and supporters wrote letters, sent emails, testified, attended meetings, and made calls to legislators and BESE members vying for them to prioritize paying our educators more. Instead, permanent pay raises are not guaranteed in upcoming years, and the security of those increases has been left up in the air and relies partially on incoming politicians and BESE members during an election year.

Missing the Mark- Pay is a Big Part of the Problem:

It's no secret that there is a pervasive teacher and support staff shortage. Coupled with fewer individuals entering the profession, and a mass exodus of both budding and seasoned educators leaving for other occupations or states, these are variables that have further strained our already burnt-out educators. Many teachers and ESPs are forced to get second and third jobs just to support their families, and this should not be the case. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the teacher pay penalty (pay gap) in Louisiana is 27.8%, meaning that teachers earn almost 28% less than comparably educated professionals. This is the 9th most significant gap in the country. Likewise, in recently released NEA Teacher and ESP Salary Reports, ESPs in Louisiana rank 43rd nationally for salary in 2020-21. Furthermore, 2007 was the last time Louisiana educators were in alignment with other states in the southern region regarding pay.

Follow the Leaders- Invest in Our Educators:

Louisiana needs to take a page from the playbook of surrounding states before it's too late.

Our neighboring states and states across the country have been making great strides in the past year toward paying teachers more, including in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and North and South Carolina. Additionally, this year, Arkansas proposed a \$10,000 raise, which would bring the minimum teacher pay to \$50,000 a year. Florida also proposed record spending for education, including raising the starting pay for teachers to \$65,000 a year. In addition, Texas suggested a \$15,000 pay raise for teachers and a 25% increase for support staff.

In stark contrast to their compensation, teachers and support staff have risen to the occasion through the pandemic and other unimaginable challenges, to provide students with a quality education and keep Louisiana schools running smoothly. The data is indicative of their hard work, and according to the latest state rankings released by the U.S. News & World Report, teachers and school employees in our state have stepped up! The report indicates that in 2023, Louisiana moved up 5 spots for Pre-K to 12 education, advancing from 46th to 41st in the nation. Among other notable achievements, these educator improvements are supported by "The Nation's Report Card", also released this year, where Louisiana 4th graders ranked No. 1 in the country in reading improvement. These numbers are not the only ones that make a case for paying educators

will be positively impacted based on the increased investment of \$800 million over 10 years. This investment represents just half of the current Louisiana surplus.

In the recent NEA report, they predict through modeling, that the investment of a portion of the surplus shows a significant positive impact on the economy in the first year and over the next 10 years in the areas of GDP, population growth, total employment, revenues, and personal income. "This scenario establishes that state investment of \$800 million in surplus will produce a strong and growing economy across all sectors and will ultimately benefit Louisiana's citizens, students, and families."

Total Gained Employment (Jobs)

22,627 jobs gained over 10 years

Total Gains in Population

41,919 population growth over 10 years

Total gained GDP

\$1.66 billion in GDP generated over 10 years

Total gains in Personal Income

\$2.2 billion in personal income gained over 10 years

"As this simulation illustrates, consistent investment in teacher salaries would bode well for the economic future of Louisiana. Conversely, the existing level of investment will strand Louisiana at its current growth and will hold the Louisiana economy back from the stronger recovery it would otherwise experience from this increased investment." Ultimately, as the research suggests, and what we know from experience, is that when you invest in teachers, school staff, and the local community, it pays off with a high ROI for the state.

The Silver Lining- HB 205 Supplemental Pay for Supplemental Duties:

Making our teachers and school employees feel valued and supported is another way to help with recruitment and retention. The question is, if not now, then when? It is the perfect time for us to show our educators that we value them and the efforts they put forth to educate the next generation of leaders. The consequences of any other option are far too great to bear.

With that notion in mind, there was some good that came of the 2023 Legislative Session. LAE is particularly proud of our bill, HB 205, passing the Legislative Session! HB 205 was authored by Representative Marcus Bryant and carried by Senator Gerald Boudreaux on the Senate floor. It passed the legislature on Sunday, June 4th, 2023, and is awaiting the signature of Governor John Bel Edwards. HB 205 demands payment for additional duties assigned to teachers outside of their normal workday. We heard story after story of teachers experiencing burnout due to additional duties constantly being piled upon them, so we had to do something about it! In addition, HB 205 calls for payment when teachers are not receiving their daily, unencumbered, 45-minute planning period, or the weekly equivalent of minutes. This includes when teachers are asked to cover other classrooms, perform extra duties, and hold meetings. LAE passed the mandatory 45-minute planning period bill in the 2021 Legislative Session, and it is now Act 392.

We will continue to fight for all our members and know that we have not forgotten about our support professionals! HB 205's language does not include Educational Support Professionals, because they are already covered under federal labor laws as non-exempt employees. Under those laws, ESPs are already required to receive payment for work performed outside of their workday hours, along with mandatory breaks. The bottom line is that investing in our educators is a win-win. Paying teachers and school staff what they deserve makes dollars and cents, for both local Louisiana families, and is also a way to invigorate our economy. We appreciate each and every one of our educators and together we will continue to move Louisiana forward!

Model Behavior: NEA Simulation Shows Investing in Educators is a Win-Win

Using REMI (Regional Economic Modeling, Inc.), researchers with Kennedy Consulting LLC., found through their simulation that the Louisiana economy



From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dr. Tia T. Mills, President

"Summertime is always the best of what might be!"

-Charles Bowden

Greetings LAE Members,

It's that time of the year when summer is here! As many of you are enjoying a well-deserved summer break, know that your union is continuously working for you! After our 46th LAE Representative Assembly and an Election, we have the results of our Runoff Election for NEA Director, which you will see in this issue of *The Voice*. Member leaders just wrapped up LAE's Virtual Summer Leadership Conference, and the NEA RA is up next during the week of the 4th of July. When this edition is distributed, I hope to be meeting and collaborating with many of you there!

Another way LAE is gaining wins for you is in the legislature. This year's Legislative Session started on April 10th and concluded in the beginning of June. Though it was a tough battle, I and our legislative team worked tirelessly to get raises across the board for you, as well as fight against bills that threatened the state of public education, caused added difficulties for our members, and failed to protect our students.

I am happy to report that our members got involved in the process! When we band together, we are unstoppable. Certain legislators removed educator raises altogether from the state budget and some still believe that you do not deserve another pay raise, but we understood the assignment. The research, mass exodus of educators leaving the profession, and accounts from our own members showed us otherwise. While we were not able to get permanent pay increases for educators, we were successful in getting a one-time stipend in the amount of \$2,000 for teachers and \$1,000 for ESPs in the upcoming year. And rest assured, LAE's fight does not end because the session has. An investment in our teachers and Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) is an investment in

our Louisiana economy, and a win-win for our children. Students in every district should have a highly qualified educator in the classroom. Furthermore, respect for our teachers should not be conveyed for only one week out of the year. The vast contributions of teachers and support staff far surpass Teachers Appreciation Week, Administrative Professionals Day, or any other acknowledgment. I will not stop until we achieve more for you!

Know that we see you, we appreciate you, we support you, and we respect you! From our bus drivers and cafeteria workers to our custodians and aspiring educators, we always have you in mind! My hope is that you feel the love and respect from LAE, 365 days a year. As summer is in full swing, please take time for self-care and relaxation. The challenges you face are endless, but remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup. Prioritizing yourself will pay off, and you will be rejuvenated to come back refreshed for a new school year. In the meantime, let LAE do the heavy lifting. We have your back!

In Solidarity,
President Mills

NBI:

LAE shall develop and implement a comprehensive plan to communicate with members and potential members using modern forms of communication such as social media, email, and the LAE website. Such communications should be visually appealing, succinct and easily shareable via the same means of communication. Additionally, the LAE voice should be published monthly on the LAE website.

RATIONALE:

Since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, education has been catapulted in the 21st century.

It's imperative the Association follows so we can thrive utilizing the new advances in technology to grow membership and advance the causes of the Association.

Submitted by Julia Reed;
Lafayette Parish Association of Educators

Passed on the RA floor. April 2, 2023

LOUISIANA
ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

Stay Connected With LAE!

Change of address, email, or phone number? To keep current with LAE correspondence, make sure your information is up to date! To change or update your contact information email:

- dtbodeaux@lae.org
- rflowry@lae.org
- or mcarpenter@lae.org.

LOUISIANA
ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SEAT VACANCIES

DISTRICT 3 - SEAT C DISTRICT 6 - SEAT A

- Must be an LAE member for at least 3 years to be eligible
- Interested parties must submit a letter of interest & resume.
- Respond by July 12, 2023



Please send your letter of interest & resume to:
mcarpenter@lae.org

GREGG MILLS APPOINTED AS UNISERV MANAGER



A native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and employed by LAE for 25 years, Gregory Mills was selected as the new UniServ Manager and Lead Organizer, by an interview panel of member leaders back in December of 2022. Mills has been working in his new capacity since January 23rd of this year. Within this new role, Gregg is responsible for the growth and care of our membership, and the training and development of staff.

Throughout his tenure at LAE, Mills has dedicated the bulk of his career to union advocacy and has functioned in a multitude of positions, including working as a UniServ Director,

since 1998, and taking on the responsibility of LAE Advocacy Coordinator, from 2015 – 2021.

An alum of Southern University A & M College and earning a Master of Divinity degree from United Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MI, Mills has a wealth of knowledge that he brings to his job.

Prior to LAE, Mills also worked as a teacher in the Rapides Parish Public School District for nearly a decade. In addition, his teaching certification was received from Northwestern State University and Louisiana State University.

Gregg's motto in his personal and professional life is: "The best is yet to come!" As if his work achievements were not impressive enough, Gregg Mills has also led the flock at Starlight Missionary Baptist Church in Alexandria, LA, for 32 years! We at LAE commend Mills for his loyalty to our membership and congratulate him on the work that he continues to do to advance the association.

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WINNER OF THE ELECTION RUN-OFF FOR NEA DIRECTOR IS



DR. ELIZABETH SULLIVAN

2023 LAE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: PASSED PASSED AT THE LAE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY ON APRIL 1ST.

AMENDMENT NO.1:

Amend Article V., Section 2 to read:

Section 2. Composition.

The Board of Directors shall consist of:

- a) The President, who shall serve as Chair; and the Vice-President, who shall serve as Vice-Chair.
- b) Three classroom teacher-members nominated through an open nomination procedure and elected by a secret ballot vote of the membership from each of the six Associational Districts ~~{one of the three positions in each of the six districts shall be filled by an ethnic minority candidate}; In the event that the first two (2) directors from each district do not include at least one (1) ethnic-minority person, the Association shall take all legally permissible steps to elect a third director who is from an ethnic-minority group.~~
- c) At-large representation of the following groups: non-administrator, educational support members; non-administrator, higher education member(s); 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. The number of representatives allotted to each at-large group shall be based on the same proportion as that of the 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.]
- d) the state elected Louisiana members of the NEA Board of Directors; and
- e) the LAE Aspiring Educators Program President and the LAE-Retired President shall be an ex-officio member.
- f) An Administrator nominated through an open nomination procedure and elected by secret ballot vote of the membership shall be an ex-officio member.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING ATTENDANCE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2022

Members Present: Sullivan, Jordan, Pinkney, Ross, Ellis, Carr, Wilridge, Jacobs-Freeman, Thompson-Givens, Johnson, Belona, Sims, Washington, Reed, Lefevre, Mouton, Williams, Clark, Joseph, Augustus, Allen, Henderson, Oaks, Mills

Absent: Dier, Cook, Lawson

ONE UNION. ONE VOICE: A RECAP OF THIS YEAR'S LAE RA



On Saturday, April 1, 2023 – Sunday, April 2, 2023, the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE) hosted its 46th Annual Representative Assembly (RA) at the Baton Rouge Marriott. A convening of delegates and guests from across the state gathered for the first solely in-person RA since the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of “One Union One Voice” was selected to describe our unity and collective power when we come together as one voice: for education, educators, support professionals, and especially our students. Day one’s dress code was all about representing school spirit. Participants sported gear from their alma maters, their children’s schools, and the schools where they worked. Back by popular demand, a superlative competition allowed attendees to interact and vote for their favorites in several categories: RA King and Queen, RA Enthusiast, and the Early Bird Award.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS:

Once the RA was called to order by President Mills, Milton Gholar of Washington Parish led the assembly in prayer, followed by Vice President D'Shay Oaks leading the reciting of the pledge, and a member of Glen Oaks High School Band then played a rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner. Other highlights from the Opening Ceremony, included remarks from the Mayor-President of the City of Baton Rouge, Sharon Weston Broome, and the Louisiana Superintendent of Education, Dr. Cade Brumley. Congressman Troy A. Carter Sr., of Louisiana’s 2nd Congressional District, also extended video greetings to those in attendance, commending LAE leadership on the longevity and success of the association.

Throughout both days, LAE leaders conducted association business. Innovation Committee members covered the superlatives, explained the voting procedures, and helped everyone onboard to the Nearpod platform to vote. The Preliminary Credentials Report, presented by Pat Thomas, chair of the committee, established a quorum. Current local presidents, past LAE state presidents, and the LAE Board of Directors and Executive Board were also recognized. Next up, was a review and adoption of the Standing Rules, administered by NBI and Resolutions Chair, Crystal Williams Gordon, followed by the Adoption of the Order of Business and Approval of the Minutes from the 2022 RA, by President Mills. LAE’s 2023–24 Budget was explained by the chair, Vice President Oaks, and a proposed Constitutional Amendment (which can be found in this issue) regarding minority elections positions was also relayed. Both the adoption of the budget and the proposed amendment were voted on and passed on the first day. Almetra Stansbury, Chair of the Elections Committee, presented the Election report after a brief break, and then the assembly broke for lunch.

AN IMAGE OF EXCELLENCE:

After a brief recess for lunch, delegates returned for the LAE Image Awards Ceremony, honoring this year’s LAE Presidents’ Awardees, the Teacher of the Year, the Human and Civil Rights Trailblazer, and the Ancillary Award recipients.

With an expansive resume and heart for children, Robin White Clark, an educator in East Baton Rouge Parish, was awarded as the 2023 LAE Teacher of the Year. No stranger to LAE, Vice President Oaks, received the 2023 Ancillary Award, and LAE Board Member and prolific activist, Derron Cook from St. John the Baptist Parish, was honored with the Civil Rights Trailblazer of the Year Award. President Mills also awarded 3 legislators with the Friend of Education President’s Award, for their extensive contributions and strong commitment to public education and our children: Senator Katrina Jackson, Representative Vincent Pierre, and Representative Marcus Bryant. Governmental Relations Director, Marcus Thomas, accepted the awards on their behalf. The work of the day was rounded out with an evening of fun, food, and fellowship, at the PAC Reception. DJ Marquis kept the crowd dancing, and guests mingled throughout the event.

RED FOR ED DAY:

Things kicked off again early in the morning on April 2nd, with a Local President’s Breakfast. Afterward, a sea of crimson filled the venue, for Red for Ed Day! Committee chair, Pat Thomas, returned to share the Final Credentials Report. Then, the Chair’s Report outlined the year in living color, highlighting Dr. Mills’ year of activism through vibrant pictures and video as she relayed in a voiceover the biggest wins, travels, and accomplishments of the association. Additionally, an NBI submitted by Julia Reed, President of the Lafayette Association of Educators, centered around the implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy for LAE to benefit members, and the installment of a monthly, digital edition of The Voice. Crystal Williams-Gordon then came back to thank her committee. Legislative Updates were the next item, and the Legislative Chair, Julia Reed, presented them. PAC information was then shared by Marcus Thomas. A well-received addition to the program, Executive Director, Naila C. Holmes provided her own report on the future of the association before it was time to conclude.

A FESTIVE FAREWELL:

Towards the end of Day 2, guests who donated to the LAE PAC Fund, and LAE-Retired PAC Fund, were excited to learn who the winners of some very desirable prizes were. The 2023 RA Enthusiast was awarded to Dawn Jordan, and there was a tie for the Early Bird Award, given to Vice President Oaks and Cheryl Shirley. This year’s RA King and Queen are Derron Cook and Tresa Augustine. The 2023 RA Enthusiast was awarded to Dawn Jordan, and the Early Bird was voted as Vice President Oaks. When all the agenda items were complete, President Mills acknowledged all the committees and staff, responsible for making the RA possible and helping the association move forward, including recognition of the Special Committees that were not on the RA program but worked fervently throughout the year: Professional Practice and Advocacy, Women’s Concerns, and Minority Affairs. She then adjourned the meeting with best wishes and safe travels for all, and with a rap of her gavel, that was a wrap on the 2023 RA. Commemorative pictures cemented the memories until next year’s RA. Next up is the NEA RA in July!



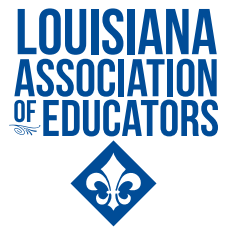
THE LAE VOICE

The 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
LAE Advocacy Center: 1-877-452-3477
advocacycenter@lae.org

Dr. Tia T. Mills, President
Naila C. Holmes, Executive Director

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