

THE LAE VOICE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

Volume 21, No. 2 May 2025



From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dr. Tia T. Mills, President

*"For it matters not how much we own,
the cars... the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash."*

Linda Ellis

Hello, LAE Family! We've come to the end of my tenure as your President and I thought it would be appropriate to use a quote that former LAE President, Joyce Haynes used during her last moments in office to serve as a reminder of how we all should strive to be our best selves for the greater good. Despite this bittersweet point in the association, I am beaming with pride with all of the remarkable accomplishments we've made and the trials we've overcome. It is my prayer that each of you saw the dedication in this work and that this small town girl from

Maringouin, LA gave it 110%. My final day in office is July 14th and so much work still exists ahead of us. However, there is no doubt that LAE will continue to rise to the occasion! I'm excited about the great work that our new team will do! Our President-Elect D'Shay Oaks brings a wealth of knowledge to the position and will lead our association well! I can't think of a better person to hand the baton to. We must remain steadfast and diligent in our efforts to protect our students, our profession and public education! There are special interest groups fighting harder than ever to silence us-for such a reason, we must be even more determined to push harder for our dignity and continue to take ownership of our membership! Together we are powerful! It has been my honor to serve you. Solidarity forever!

One union. One Love. One LAE.

Signing off,
Dr. Tia T. Mills, LAE President
2019-2025





A GRATEFUL FAREWELL TO OUR PRESIDENT, DR. TIA T. MILLS

As July 14 approaches and LAE turns a new chapter, we pause to honor and celebrate the extraordinary leadership of our outgoing president, Dr. Tia T. Mills. After six years of dedicated service, she leaves behind a legacy of unwavering commitment, fearless advocacy, and heartfelt service to our members.

From the very start, Dr. Mills brought passion and purpose to every challenge faced. Whether navigating complex negotiations, championing workers' rights, or being a steady voice in times of uncertainty, she never wavered in the fight for fairness and dignity for Louisiana educators. Under her guidance, LAE has grown stronger, more unified, and more prepared for the road ahead.

Some of the milestones during Dr. Mills' presidency include:

- Defeated anti-labor bills.
- Advocated and assisted in the GPO and WEP repealed.
- Represented LAE on several community organization boards of directors.
- Mobilized members in the re-election of Governor John Bel Edwards.
- Implemented the Community Schools Initiative .
- Established a support system for Hurricane Laura victims.
- Revived LAE's Republican Caucus.
- Bridged relationships with BESE Board Members.
- Increased diverse representation on the LAE Board of Directors.
- Advocated and successfully obtained adequate raises for Louisiana educators.
- Worked with Governor Edwards and Senator Fields to ensure educators received vaccinations.
- Partnered with Senator Fields in ensuring the mandatory age of kindergarten is five years old.
- Successfully advocated the passing of Senate Bill 128, which provides mandatory 45 minutes of uninterrupted planning for teachers.
- Successfully advocated the passing of Act 311, which ensures supplemental pay for supplemental work.
- Assisted with the implementation of the Future Voters Project, an initiative that registered over 100 high school seniors to vote.

Beyond the wins on paper, Dr. Mills' leadership has been deeply personal. She made it a priority to be accessible to members, to listen, and to lead with empathy. That human connection made all the difference and will be remembered just as much as the accomplishments.

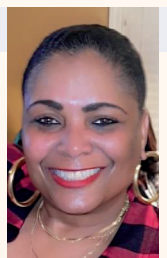
While Dr. Mills is stepping down from the role of LAE president, her influence will continue to be felt for years to come. She has laid a strong foundation and inspired a new generation of leaders who will carry the torch forward.

Dr. Mills' influence is evident in the several prestigious awards she won that built the foundation to inspire others through her achievements. The most notable among them are:

- 100 Black Women of Metropolitan Baton Rouge Honoree
- Louisiana Leading Ladies Honoree
- NAACP Benjamin Hooks Award, which she received at the 113th National Convention
- Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. Executive Leadership Program
- Faye B. Bryant Leadership Intensive
- Louisiana Democratic Women Caucus Honoree
- Defenders of Public Education Award
- Rebirth Legend Award
- Drum Magazine 21 People to Watch
- Network Coalition Award
- Rouge Collection Black Ball Honoree
- Southern University's 40 Under 40
- Horace Mann Award
- California Casualty Award
- LAE Teacher Image Award
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. South Central Region Soror of the Year

On behalf of the entire LAE family, we say thank you. Thank you for your tireless work, your courage, your compassion, and your belief in the power of solidarity. We wish you nothing but success, health, and happiness in your next chapter.

In Solidarity,
Karla Owens
LAE Interim Executive Director



Commitment and Dedication to LAE will always be a part of me.





DAY OF ACTION

WEDNESDAY: MAY 14, 2025
8:00-4:00



Join Louisiana Association of Educators at the capitol to meet with legislators, share our stories, and demand that educators, working families, and public schools be prioritized. This is our chance to amplify our voices and make sure lawmakers hear directly from those who will be most affected by their decisions.

LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL
900 N. THIRD STREET, BATON
ROUGE, LOUISIANA.

RSVP: MCArpenter@LAE.org



AUTOPAY

**WE HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE!
SIGN UP TODAY.**

**SWITCHING
IS EASY!**

Anti-public education politicians want to weaken the Louisiana Association of Educators by ending payroll deduction for your membership dues. Switching to LAE AutoPay protects our union—and it takes just a few minutes!

Stand up to anti-public education politicians with LAE AutoPay.

STEP 1

Head to lae.org/autopay

STEP 2

Type in your membership number, ZIP Code, and account information, such as your bank account and routing numbers or credit card info.

Please reach out to Robin Bender at rbender@lae.org if you don't know your NEA Member ID.

STEP 3

Spread the word to your fellow LAE members.
Together, we can protect our union.

**PROTECT YOUR UNION
SO IT CAN PROTECT YOU.**

Anti-public education politicians want to weaken our union by eliminating your option to pay your dues through payroll deduction.



AUTOPAY

**SCAN HERE TO
GET STARTED
WITH AUTOPAY!**



**SCAN HERE TO
CONTACT YOUR
LEGISLATORS AND
TELL THEM TO STAND
UP FOR PUBLIC
EDUCATION!**



**JOIN THE FIGHT.
SWITCH TODAY.**



LAE 2025 ELECTION RESULTS

LAE Board of Directors

LAE State President – D'Shay Oaks, Concordia

LAE Vice President – Cynthia Henderson, Caddo

First Associational District – Dr. Fredrick Pinkney, Caddo

Third Associational District – Laura Francis, Vermilion

Fourth Associational District – Katina Thompson-Givens, East Baton Rouge

Fifth Associational District – Delisa Washington, Lafayette

Sixth Associational District – Brandy Nora, St. John

Educational Support Professional – Dona Festervan, Caddo

NEA RA State Delegates

Shirleen Sanders, East Baton Rouge

Kendrick Golatt, Bossier

Gwendolyn Hill, Livingston

Dawn Jordan, Caddo

Cheryl Shirley, Caddo

Rachel Gifford, Bossier

Derron Cook, St. John

Anita Green, East Baton Rouge

LAE WELCOMES PRESIDENT ELECT, D'SHAY OAKS, CONCORDIA PARISH



D'Shay Oaks is a 28-year veteran teacher and librarian from Concordia Parish. She has been a devoted member and leader within LAE for 27 years and has served in the positions of LAE Vice-President, LAE Board Member for district 2, LAE Budget Committee Chairperson, Concordia Local President, Secretary, LAE and NEA RA delegate. Ms. Oaks is a faithful member of Vidalia First Baptist Church and a strong supporter of Relay for Life.

LAE WELCOMES VICE-PRESIDENT ELECT, CYNTHIA HENDERSON, CADDO PARISH



Cynthia Henderson has been a devoted educator for over 40 years. She brings a wealth of knowledge to LAE and her peers. Ms. Henderson wears many hats within LAE, and she is currently a board member for district 1, serves as LAE Administrator at-Large, LAE and NEA RA delegate. In previous years, Cynthia has served as a local president and a NEA Resolutions Committee member.

Welcome President Elect D'Shay Oaks and Vice-President Cynthia Henderson. We look forward to your leadership and the great things ahead for LAE.



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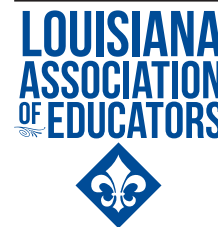
THE LAE VOICE

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Dr. Tia T. Mills, President
Karla Owens, Executive Director

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In This Issue

1. From the President's Desk
2. A Grateful Farewell to Our President, Dr. Tia T. Mills
3. AutoPay Join the Fight
4. NEA Member Benefits
5. LAE Election Results
6. LAE Welcomes President Elect, D'Shay Oaks
7. LAE Welcomes Vice-President Elect, Cynthia Henderson
8. LAE Day of Action

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 7
Day of Action at the
State Capitol

May 26
Memorial Day
(Office Closed)

June 10 - 12,
2025
LDE Teacher Leader
Summitt

June 19
Juneteenth
(Office Closed)

July 2-6
NEA RA

July 4
Office Closed

July 15
Transition of
LAE Leadership