

THE LAE VOICE

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Great Public Schools for Every Louisiana Child

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From the PRESIDENT'S DESK

D'Shay Oaks, President

A message from LAE State President, D'Shay Oaks.

This time of year, brings excitement to many, as it ushers in the vibrant energy of football season. From Friday night lights to college Saturdays and NFL Sundays, nearly everyone in Louisiana has a team they passionately support. What's yours?

When I observe games, I'm often drawn to the interaction between coaches and players. A coach's effectiveness is evident in how players respond to their guidance, reflecting the level of respect and trust within the team. Good coaches cultivate high expectations, foster high performance, and most importantly, ensure their players feel genuinely cared for.

As educators, we can draw a powerful parallel with this dynamic in our classrooms. By demonstrating genuine care for our students and their interests, we can inspire

greater engagement and achievement. I found that students were more attentive and performed better academically when I took the time to support their extracurricular activities or sporting events. This personal investment showed them I cared, leading them to meet or even exceed expectations in their studies.

"Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students."

--Solomon Ortiz



A Message from LAE Vice-President, Cynthia Henderson of Caddo:

Welcome back, LAE members!

I'm truly excited to start this new school year with you. I want to wish each of you the very best and an incredible start to the school year! You give so much of yourselves to your school, students and your community. I hope you are feeling motivated, empowered, and ready to collaborate with LAE members to become more effective to lead your Union to the next level. Your voice matters. You can make a difference! In the coming days, your advocacy will be needed more than ever. I urge you to sign up and serve on your LAE committees. Tell your Building Representatives and your local President what issues concern you the most. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to your students, your profession and your union.

In Solidarity,
Cynthia Y. Henderson

BREAST CANCER REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON CANCERS AFFECTING WOMEN!!!



Breast Cancer Awareness is not just a campaign, it is a movement dedicated to education, early detection, support and ultimately, saving lives. Early detection improves the chance of successful treatment and survival. According to the American Cancer Society, the 5-year survival rate for localized breast cancer (cancer that has not spread outside of the breast) is about 99%.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and is symbolized by the pink ribbon. During the month, fundraising events, promotion of regular screenings, survivor stories, along with many pink themed promotions.

How Can You Help?

- Get screened regularly.
Breast Cancer Screenings | Your Attention Please
- Educate others about the importance of early detection.
- Support breast cancer charities through donations or volunteering.
- Wear pink in solidarity during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
- Listen and be present for someone going through breast cancer.

Breast cancer affects millions, but through awareness, early detection, and support, lives can be saved, and hope can be restored. Continue to talk openly, and stand in unity until breast cancer is no longer a threat to our loved ones and community.

DONNA'S STORY AS A SURVIVOR



**A Picture of Strength:
Surviving Breast Cancer Twice.**

This is a story of resilience through faith and courage. A battle that gives us hope.

When most people hear the words "you have breast cancer" their world stops. For Acadia Parish Educator and Local President, Donna Wilridge, it didn't happen once but twice.

On Thursday, March 12, 1987, I woke up excited to celebrate my daughter's eighth birthday. I also had my yearly medical checkup later that day. Unfortunately, my day did not end with the excitement that I had anticipated. The results of my mammogram showed a lump in my left breast that was possible breast cancer. I was stunned and yes, I did cry when I received my diagnosis, but I also prayed. At that moment I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself because I was determined to fight this disease.

As an only child I was blessed with supportive strong-minded parents, friends and pastoral guidance. Because of them we were ready to face this disease with all we had. Five days later I had surgery and was scheduling appointments for my chemotherapy treatments. After practically begging my doctor, he agreed that I could return to work three weeks later. I quickly went back to work because I needed my students as much as my students needed me. After work I would go to my chemotherapy treatments.

Fast forward: I faithfully went to my yearly checkups and did my mammograms. However, in August 2018 (31 years later) I was diagnosed again with right breast cancer. Sadly, to say I did not have my parents with me to go through this again. However, I did have my daughter and my three granddaughters, as well as other family members. Once again, my students and parents were a part of my support system. Four weeks later I returned to my classroom and students.

"Prayers, Faith, Strength and Support truly mean a lot to me."



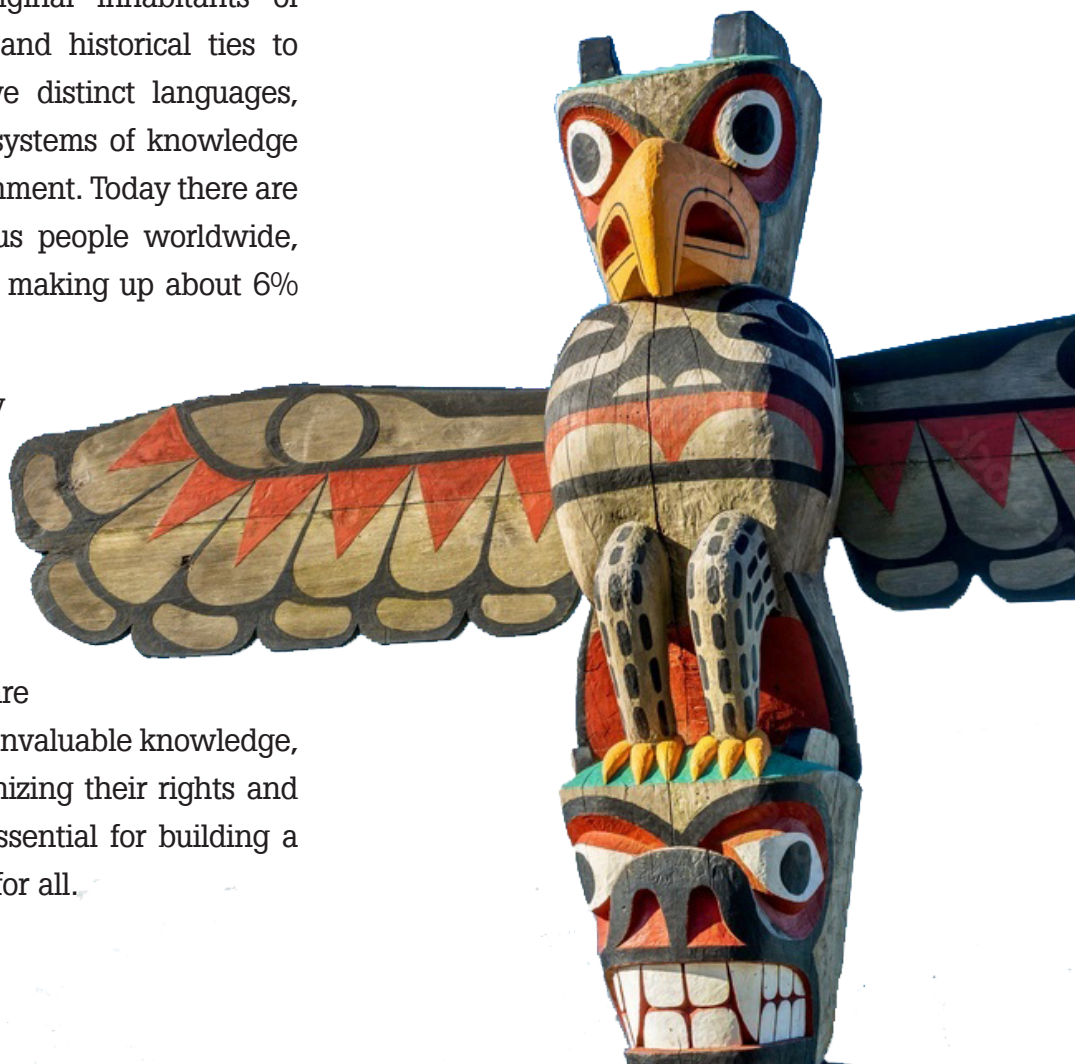
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

**Lets recognize and celebrate
the unique heritage, diverse
cultures and outstanding
contributions of First Nations,
Inuit and Métis peoples.**



Indigenous people are the original inhabitants of a region, with cultural, social, and historical ties to their ancestral lands. They have distinct languages, traditions, spiritual beliefs, and systems of knowledge that connect them to their environment. Today there are more that 476 million indigenous people worldwide, spread across over 90 countries, making up about 6% of the global population.

The historical challenges they have faced include but are not limited to colonization, displacement, discrimination, marginalization, loss of language and culture. Indigenous people are not just a part of history, they are vibrant, living communities with invaluable knowledge, traditions, and resilience. Recognizing their rights and learning from their wisdom is essential for building a more just and sustainable future for all.





MESSAGE TO MEMBERS: BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LAE ELECTION INFORMATION

Are you considering running for an
LAE Board seat or **LAE Elections**?

Nomination forms will be available
December 1, 2025, online at lae.org.

Board of Directors
ESP

LAE Administrator Board of Directors
LAE Administrator Delegate/Successor
NEA Director
NEA State Delegate/Successor

Please make sure your information is listed correctly with
LAE. If there any changes, to the information listed below
contact the LAE office at 225-343-9243 or send an email
to mcarpenter@lae.org.

Phone

Address

Work Location

Job Classification (Important for LAE Elections)



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.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LAE UNISERV DIRECTORS

MEET YOUR LAE UNISERV MANAGER AND DIRECTORS



LaMonica Harris
LAE UD Manager
lharris@lae.org
225-773-0890



Caleb Holmes
UniServ Director Region 1
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Grant Shreiner
UniServ Director Region 3
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Ascension, Central, City of Baker, City of Bogalusa, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, LSUnited, Orleans, Plaquemines, Southern, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington, Zachary

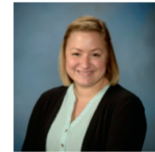
As a member and educator one of the most important things you should do is Get to Know Your UD. The UD serves as your advocate and support system. UDs are trained to build membership, assist members with workplace concerns, contracts and grievance procedures. Whether you're negotiating your rights, or seeking professional development resources, your UD is there to ensure you are informed and supported. Union strength depends on active and engaged members. Your UD can help you find ways to get involved, whether through committees, lobbying efforts, or community outreach. By building a relationship with your LAE UD you ensure your voice is part of a collective effort to shape the future of education in Louisiana.



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Acadia, Allen, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, St. James, St. John, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Vernon, West Baton Rouge



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Evangeline, Lafayette, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. Landry, ULL, Vermilion, West Feliciana

2025 LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION UPDATE : SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Act 48 – Adds scholarships, grants and federal student financial aid forms to high school financial literacy course

Act 174 – Requires certain college students to complete anti-hazing course

Act 222 – Constitutional Amendment to eliminate three education trust funds to pay off 2billion I debt for Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana providing savings to local school systems

Act 270 – Prohibits inclusion of test scores or data from students with certain attendance records in teacher evaluations

Act 347 – Expands TOPS scholarships creating an excellence level for students scoring 31 or above on the ACT and revises eligibility for TOPS – Tech awards

Act 353 – Requires teachers to be trained in numeracy

Act 356 – Requires schools to use a 10-point grading scale to calculate TOPS eligibility

Act 359 – Lowers ACT score requirements for home study students for TOPS eligibility

Act 366 – Requires school systems to provide a permanent salary increase for teachers (\$2250.00) and support workers (\$1125.00) using interest savings from debt payments to Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana

Act 420 – Removes prohibition of guns on campus at private Vo-Tech schools

Act 447 – Transfers the University of New Orleans to the Louisiana State University System

Act 449 – Requires high school students to have access to available vocational and technical courses

Act 469 – Provides for mental health screenings in school

Act 472 – Reduces standardized testing for students in science and social studies to every other year

Act 497 – Modifies disciplinary procedures for students in grades 6 through 12 who are found with certain substances on school property

Act 504 – Requires schools to provide mental health assessments to certain students

Being an NEA member means No-Cost Benefits

Your No-Cost Benefits are Waiting for You.

NEA Introductory and Complimentary Life Insurance, as well as the Student Debt Navigator and NEA Mental Health Program are no-cost benefits that are generously provided by the Members Insurance Trust.

NEA® Introductory Life^{1,2,3}

Life insurance protection, exclusively for *NEW* members

NEA® Complimentary Life Insurance^{1,2,3}

Life insurance protection for members

Student Debt Navigator²

A 1-year, paid subscription to the Student Debt Navigator – members who use this tool save an average of \$2,000 annually on their student loans

NEA Retirement Program

Access to the Kiplinger Monthly Retirement Report – a great resource for educators of all ages

NEA Travel Program⁴

Register to get \$500 travel dollars plus gain access to exclusive travel discounts

NEA Mental Health Program²

A complimentary subscription to AbleTo, a mental health app developed by experts that ensures the highest quality care

Learn More
neamb.com/nocost



¹NEA Life Insurance coverages are issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ. 1067017-00001-00.

²Provided by the NEA Members Insurance Trust. ³NEA Retired members are eligible for the \$50,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage only while acting on Association business in the capacity of an Association Leader. Life members must be actively employed in the field of education. ⁴Travel Dollars not applicable to airfare. You will receive \$100 Travel Dollars once you complete the flight.

THE LAE VOICE

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8322 One Calais Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Phone: 225-343-9243

Toll Free: 1-800-256-4523

Fax: 225-343-9272

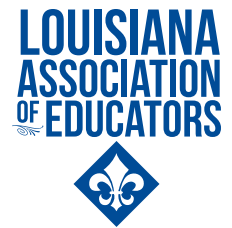
www.lae.org

LAE Advocacy Center: 1-877-452-3477

advocacycenter@lae.org

D'Shay Oaks, President

Karla Owens, Executive Director



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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 13th
Columbus Day/Indigenous
People Day
Office Closed

November 11th
Veterans Day
Office Closed

November 2nd
Daylight Savings
Time Ends

November 26-28
Fall Break
Office Closed